

The regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia was held on March 13, 2017, in the Warren County Government Center's Board Meeting Room. Mayor Tharpe led Council and those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and a Moment of Silence. The roll was called at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Hollis L. Tharpe
Councilman John P. Connolly
Councilman Bébhinn C. Egger
Councilman Jacob L. Meza
Councilman Christopher S. Morrison
Councilman Eugene R. Tewalt
Town Attorney Douglas W. Napier
Interim Town Manager Joseph E. Waltz
Clerk of Council Jennifer E. Berry, CMC

(The above listed members represent the full body of Council as authorized in the Town Charter.)

Councilman Tewalt moved, seconded by Councilman Egger moved that Council approve the Regular Council Meeting minutes of February 27, 2017 and Special Meeting minutes of March 6, 2017 as presented.

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Egger, Meza, Morrison, Sealock and Tewalt

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)

RECEIPT OF PETITIONS OR CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PUBLIC

Linda Allen, of 416 Salem Avenue, noted that there was a new group in town called Continuing the Conversation. She noted that while Council may be experts on many community issues, this new group and Council and may find common ground in order to benefit the community. Ms. Allen announced that they would meeting on April 1st at the Waller Open House on E. Main Street from 1-4 p.m. and she invited all members of Council in hopes that Council members will come and contribute to the group.

Interim Town Manager Joseph Waltz noted that Staff has prepared for the snow event this evening and he reminded everyone to keep their eyes open for plows on the roadway and stated that they would do their absolute best to get through the snowstorm.

Felicia Hart, the Town's Community Development Director, presented the following report to the Town Council:

[Thank you for this opportunity to update you on what we have accomplished thus far – and our work in progress.](#)

[Our last scheduled training in partnership with the Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center was supposed to be tonight. Training has been rescheduled for Monday, March 27 at Samuel's Library. This training is about HR for the small business owner. 22 people had signed up to attend. This partnership with LFSBDC has proven to be a success. We agreed to 6 trainings throughout the year and each session has been well attended – and well received.](#)

I do plan on following up with FRIBA, the Chamber and Merchants on Main to determine what other trainings do they want – and will participate in and we'll go from there. Speaking of trainings, I've partnered with the United Way and together we're hosting monthly non-profit brown bag luncheons. Our first one was designed as a networking event hosted in Town Hall. We had 32 people attend. Since then, we've been hosting monthly trainings, each with a specific topic and speaker. These are taking place, with an average attendance of 20 non-profits at the Community Center at no cost thanks to Doug Stanley. Our next session, originally scheduled for tomorrow is on "Data Collection - Telling Your Story" with Kim Herbstritt of Literacy Volunteers as our speaker. It has been moved to March 28th at Town Hall.

I've started participating again in the regional Continuum of Care that is hosted many times right here in Front Royal. These meetings are well attended with upwards of 30 participants from localities from as close as Winchester to as far away as Harrisonburg. By working together, we've been gaining ground regarding our federal funding for those in need of housing assistance. But clearly, there's still work to do.

At one of your recent Council meetings, Brandon with the Regional Commission presented to you the Outdoor Asset map that I have been working on with them for two years now. Finally, we are seeing the end in sight. It has been a long process regarding this grant, but we should soon be able to utilize this through our Visitor Center, with our tourists – and especially those businesses that cater to the outdoors.

I've been meeting regularly with many of our local merchant groups. Our social media page is working – and by working, I mean – they are starting to talk to each other and share information. Regular meetings with the FRIBA, Merchants on Main and the Chamber is helping to get the word out about all the things going on around out town.

We're hosting the next Taste of the Town on April 28 – in partnership with Randolph Macon's 125th anniversary. This will give their out of town guests another reason to visit our downtown.

Speaking of events, I'm sure many people have heard that the group that was hosting our farmers market have decided to retire. A special thanks to them for getting this event up and running. Now, a new person, Destiny Sargent, who owns Beezy Bees on Jackson Street, is willing to take it over – and keep it downtown. I've had several meetings with her and she has already submitted her application for the Town Manager's approval and signature. I'll be introducing her at the next merchant meeting. She wants all the store owners to be aware and even participate. She'll be working hard to make this event even bigger than it has been in the past.

Our work on the Community Development Block Grant is finally ending. A lot of community effort has gone in to this and I want to personally thank all the members of our Project Management Team - especially

- Jeremy Camp – Director of Planning and Zoning
- BJ Wilson – Director of Finance
- Taryn Logan – Warren County Planning Director

- David Beahm – Warren County Building Inspector
- Niki Foster – with the Chamber
- George McIntyre – with the Apple House
- Craig Laird – with FRIBA and Royal Oak Computer
- Tim Smith – Tourism Director
- Linda Allen
- Herb Melrath with Main Street Daily Grind
- Angela Toler – with the Board of Architectural Review
- Katrina Meade – with City National Bank

And all the others who have helped us get to this point.

All have put in a lot of time and energy to get us this far. We're finalizing the answers to the last 40 questions we must submit to state. I know Council was given copies of all our work – and I hope this is something that we can continue to work from. An artists' rendering of our gazebo area was just completed that shows the proposed location of our outdoor bathroom facility, the new water fountain, enhanced crosswalks and our proposed new open air community meeting space. We'll be showcasing these renderings in different locations throughout Town to continue to keep the community involved in the dialogue. Our final submission date is March 29th so we look forward to getting all this finalized – and then the waiting begins. Hopefully we, the Town, will hear back from the State by September or October. And remember, we have two years to implement all that we need to get done.

And as an update, I just talked with Jerry Welcome and they are still putting together their costs and evaluating the old police station for a potential brewpub. Things are coming along there.

Other exciting things happening here in Town include the sale of several major properties – not only in our Town – but along our Main Street. One local couple that I've been working with for a couple months now, has recently just purchased the Weaver Building – where the Lucky Star was and the building where Hometown Bakery, Main Street Travel and the Vine and Leaf are located. They are already working with their architects. They have intentions to purchase other properties along our Main Street too. I would like to take this time to introduce Tim and Kerry Barnhart to Council.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the willingness of this Council, Town Departments and community members who have been working with me. And just as a reminder, I'm always available to meet with anyone who has ideas, concerns or suggestions – or just wants to educate me as to what's going on.

Councilman Sealock noted that there were many phases related to the safety of pedestrians and motorists in the community. He noted that there were crosswalks available for pedestrians and vehicles should give pause to those crossing and enforcement to protect the safety of all.

Councilman Egger announced that she will be resigning her Council seat as she will be marrying and moving out of Front Royal. She noted that she will continue to work over the next few months for the best of the Town, and she remains very grateful to those who voted for her and there were many good items ahead for the Town and she looked forward to seeing where Front Royal would go.

Mayor Tharpe recognized the service of Philip E. Funk, a retired employee of the Town, who was employed from March 1985 until December of 2016, and presented him with plaque in honor of his diligent and dedicated service to the Town.

Mayor Tharpe asked if there were any proposals for additions or deletions to the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Resolution to Establish Charter Agreement for Skyline Regional Justice Academy
- B. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Proclamation – Recognition Day for National Service
- C. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Purchase of Additional Water Meters

Councilman Tewalt moved, seconded by Councilman Egger, that Council approve the consent agenda as presented.

RESOLUTION OF THE FRONT ROYAL TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL

Resolution to Establish Charter Agreement for Skyline Regional Justice Academy

WHEREAS, The TOWN OF BERRYVILLE, the COUNTY OF CLARKE, the COUNTY OF FREDERICK, the FREDERICK COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER, the TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL, the LORD FAIRFAX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, the TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN, the NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL JAIL AUTHORITY, the RSW REGIONAL JAIL AUTHORITY, the TOWN OF STEPHENS CITY, the TOWN OF STRASBURG, the COUNTY OF WARREN, the CITY OF WINCHESTER, the COUNTY OF RAPPAHANNOCK, have agreed to form a regional criminal justice academy pursuant to Section 15.2-1747 et. seq. of the Code of Virginia in order to furnish the highest achievable level of professional law enforcement and criminal justice-related training to the participating jurisdictions through the development and operation of initial recruit training, continuing in-service training and advance training programs; and,

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the participating members to enter into an agreement establishing the regional criminal justice academy that sets forth the relationship between the members and the regional criminal justice academy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Front Royal Town Council of the Town of Front Royal as follows:

1. The Front Royal Town Council hereby agrees to establish the Skyline Regional Criminal Justice Academy pursuant to Section 15.2-1747 et. seq. of the Code of Virginia.
2. At its regular meeting of March 13, 2017, the Front Royal Town Council authorized the Front Royal Town Manager to sign the Charter Agreement Establishing the Skyline Criminal Justice Academy, a copy of which is attached to this Resolution.

NATIONAL SERVICE RECOGNITION DAY
PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges; and

WHEREAS, the nation's [counties/cities] are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants address the most pressing challenges facing our communities, from educating students for the jobs of the 21st century and supporting veterans and military families to providing health services and helping communities recover from natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, national service expands economic opportunity by creating more sustainable, resilient communities and providing education, career skills, and leadership abilities for those who serve; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants serve in more than 50,000 locations across the country, bolstering the civic, neighborhood, and faith-based organizations that are so vital to our economic and social well-being; and

WHEREAS, national service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve, both through their direct service and by managing millions of additional volunteers; and

WHEREAS, national service represents a unique public-private partnership that invests in community solutions and leverages non-federal resources to strengthen community impact and increase the return on taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, national service participants demonstrate commitment, dedication, and patriotism by making an intensive commitment to service, a commitment that remains with them in their future endeavors; and

WHEREAS, the Corporation for National and Community Service shares a priority with county officials and mayors nationwide to engage citizens, improve lives, and strengthen communities; and is joining with the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Cities of Service, and mayors and county officials across the country for the Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service on April 4, 2017.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Hollis L. Tharpe, Mayor of the Town of Front Royal, do hereby proclaim April 4, 2017, as National Service Recognition Day, and encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of national service in our county; to thank those who serve; and to find ways to give back to their communities.

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Egger, Meza, Morrison, Tewalt and Scalock
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A
(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)
(By Roll Call)

**PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT/APPROVAL OF
RESOLUTION FOR LOCAL COMMITMENT - Community Development Block
Grant (CDBG)**

Summary: Council is requested to solicit public input on local community development and housing needs in relation to a proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) proposal to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) for the “2017 Downtown Revitalization Plan: Envision 2.0”. Council is further requested to approve a Resolution for Local Commitment regarding the use of funds provided by the (VDHCD) through the CDBG Program, as presented. Council directs the Mayor to execute the necessary documents upon approval.

Mayor Tharpe opened the public hearing. As no one came forward to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Connolly moved, seconded by Councilman Egger that Council approve a Resolution for Local Commitment regarding the use of funds provided by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, as presented. He further moved that Council directs the Mayor to execute the necessary documents.

Councilman Egger thanked Town Staff, the Main Street merchants and County Staff as well for their hard work for the work on this project. Councilman Connolly noted that this initiative and the work that has been accomplished so far and it is a shining example of what can be done when a community comes together. He noted that their fingers were crossed for success.

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Egger, Meza, Morrison, Tewalt and Sealock
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – N/A
(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)
(By Roll Call)

Resolution from Town of Front Royal for Local Commitment

Regarding Use of Funds Provided by the VDHCD through CDBG Program **WHEREAS**, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; and,

WHEREAS, the CDBG provides funding to units of local government to address community development needs: housing, infrastructure and economic revitalization; and,

WHEREAS, Town Staff, the Project Management Team, and Northern Valley Regional Commission have developed a plan over the past year, titled *2017 Downtown Revitalization Plan*, or simply *Envision 2.0*; and

WHEREAS, *Envision 2.0*, includes a number of activities that will increase tourism, promote economic development within the downtown business district; and will meet the national objective to prevent or

eliminate blight in communities with at least a 25 percent level of physical blight or at least a 50 percent vacant rate; and,

WHEREAS, *Envision 2.0* proposes includes a proposed budget of nearly 2 million dollars for the implementation of the proposed activities, of which, 1 million are proposed through the CDBG program, \$352,500 are proposed as through private sources, and the remaining funds, approximately \$633,430, are proposed as local match by the Town, either paid for as new funds or in-kind contributions of Town staff and existing resources; and,

WHEREAS, a CDBG implementation grant is in the drafting stage to be submitted by March 29, 2017; and,

WHEREAS, the Front Royal Planning Commission found on February 15, 2017 that the proposed activities within the Downtown Revitalization Plan conform with the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan and Town Vision; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Town Council authorizes Town Staff to proceed with preparation and submission of the CDBG Grant Application; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Front Royal commits to funding the local match portion of *Envision 2.0*, and shall make such funds available for use within the proposed 2-year implementation period, following execution of a contract and signing of all documents and resolutions required by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

PUBLIC HEARING – Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Tax Rates (1st Reading)

Summary: Council is requested to consider the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Real Property Tax rate at \$0.15 per \$100 assessed value, which represents an increase of \$0.02 from the current year's rate; and the Personal Property Tax rate at \$0.64 per \$100 assessed value, which represents no increase over the current year's rates. Council also establishes the personal property tax relief rate of 60% of value on the first \$20,000 of assessed value for qualifying vehicles with an assessed value greater than \$1,000; and a personal property tax relief rate of 100% for qualifying vehicles with an assessed value of \$1,000 or less, pursuant to Virginia Code §58.1-3524. Council is further requested to affirm on its first ready an ordinance to amend Front Royal Town Code Section 75-44.C. accordingly.

Mayor Tharpe opened the public hearing. As no one came forward to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Egger moved, seconded by Councilman Connolly that Council affirm on its first reading that the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 real estate tax rate remain the same at \$0.13 per \$100 assessed value, and the personal property tax rate remain the same at \$0.64 per \$100 assessed value. She further moved that Council does hereby establish the personal property tax relief rate of 60% of value on the first \$20,000 of assessed value for qualifying vehicles with an assessed value greater than \$1,000; and a personal property tax relief rate of 100% for qualifying vehicles with an assessed value of \$1,000 or less, pursuant to Virginia Code §58.1-3524. She continued to further moved that Council affirm on its first reading Front Royal Town Code Section 75.44.C accordingly.

Councilman Egger noted that raising ½ cent would only gather about \$55,000 in the Town's budget and she opined that there was most likely that same amount that can be cut from the budget instead. Councilman Meza noted that the Town Council was asked to raise it ½ cent and the trajectory the Town is on the Council would need to raise the tax rate. He noted that the no increase budget this time is fine, though raising slight increments would be preferred over a 13 cent to an eventual 16 cent increase.

Councilman Tewalt noted that he had proposed that raising a penny to place towards the Police Department building would be preferred, in order to place funds aside, as eventually the rates would need to be increased. He added that small increments would be best, as it would be preferred to one large increase all at once.

Councilman Tewalt moved, seconded by Councilman Sealock, moved to amend to 14 cents with half of the amount going to the Police Department.

Councilman Sealock voiced concern when pre-planning for tax rates and budgeting does not happen. He noted that Town Staff is doing better at presenting the budget earlier, though he felt better planning for such larger projects needs to take place.

Councilman Connolly noted Council chose, just a month ago, to move \$400,000 from fund reserve for projects, in essence borrowing for what they felt were necessary projects, and now they are considering a penny increase. Mr. Connolly stated that it is Council's responsibility to plan for the future and have a sound budget and he felt it should not be kicked down to the Town citizens. He opined that the Town can balance the budget with 13 cents. He explained that major projects cost a lot of money and Council has asked for a 40 year plan for an expandable Police Department, and he does not see the need for a one cent increase at this point. Councilman Connolly stated that the proposed increase is a proposal for a permanent tax rate increase.

Councilman Meza clarified if the ear marking was for the Police Department was a ½ cent at this point. Councilman Tewalt noted that ½ the funds going to the Police Department is the intent of his motion.

Mr. Napier noted that they cannot bind a future Town Council, they can only state their intentions for the future. Mr. Tewalt noted that he would have no need to make the motion then.

Councilman Tewalt withdrew his motion, Councilman Sealock withdrew his second.

Councilman Sealock expressed concern with the lack of preplanning of large projects.

Councilman Meza asked if the Town voted for 13 cents today, and return to 14 cents at the next reading. Mr. Napier noted that they could, Council just not go above 15 cents.

Councilman Egger clarified that the Wastewater Treatment Plant was not paid for by tax increases. Town Staff indicated that was correct.

In response to questions from Council, Finance Director, Mr. Wilson, explained that the previous two cent increase went towards Leach Run Parkway and the West Main Connector Road.

Councilman Sealock, moved seconded by Councilman Tewalt, to amend the motion to 14 cents.

In response to Mr. Tewalt's inquiry, Mr. Napier noted that Council cannot bind a future Town Council, as future Council's can always vote to undo a past Council's prior vote. He noted that future Council's can choose to honor the request, though they are not bound to continue to keep the vote of the prior Council.

Councilman Egger noted that the Town does plan well for their projects, regardless of what had been said during this meeting. Mr. Connolly added that this is citizen funds they are planning with and he felt it would be wrong to sit on a pile of money.

Vote: Yes – Sealock and Tewalt
No – Connolly, Egger, Meza and Morrison
Abstain – N/A
Absent – N/A
(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)
(By Roll Call, to amend to 14 cents, MOTION FAILED)

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Egger, Meza, Morrison, Sealock and Tewalt
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – N/A
(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)
(By Roll Call, for 13 cents, MOTION CARRIED)

COUNCIL APPROVAL – Request to Use Trolley – Humane Society

Summary: The Humane Society of Warren County has requested that the Town contribute the rental rate of \$1,037.00 (\$518.50/each) for the use of two (2) Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) Royal Trolleys from 8:00am – 4:00pm on Saturday, August 12, 2017 to transport participants in their fundraiser “Waggin’ for Dragons” Boat Race from the Lowes/Wal-Mart Parking Lot to the Front Royal Country Club.

Councilman Egger moved, seconded by Councilman Connolly that Council approve the donation of \$1,037.00 for the use of two (2) Royal Trolleys to be used by the Humane Society of Warren County for their August 12, 2017 fundraiser event “Waggin for Dragons”.

Councilman Connolly noted that for several years now the Waggin' for Dragons event has continued to grow and has become a major fundraiser for the Humane Society. He added that he was pleased that the Town of Front Royal could assist.

Councilman Egger thanked the Humane Society for their ongoing efforts and wished them great success with the races.

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Egger, Meza, Morrison, Sealock and Tewalt
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – N/A
(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)

(By Roll Call)

COUNCIL AUTHORIZATION – Proceed with Advertising Bids for Construction of New Police Department Headquarters

Summary: Moseley Architects presented their results of their 100% final design for the new Police Department Headquarters to be built at the northwest corner of Monroe Avenue and Kendrick Lane at Council's Work Session held on March 6, 2017. The current construction cost estimate for the building is \$9,313,422. Moseley is currently working on permits and tentatively scheduled for advertising construction bids in April 2017. Staff is currently finalizing details on funding through the New Market Tax Credit Program.

Councilman Meza moved, seconded by Councilman Connolly, that Council authorize the Town Manager to provide notice to Moseley Architects to proceed with advertising bids for construction for the new Police Department Headquarters after funding is finalized.

Councilman Egger opined that the Town did not need this large of building for a community the size of Front Royal.

Councilman Connolly noted that 10-15% of the amount listed was for contingencies; Mr. Waltz noted that was correct.

Councilman Meza stated that this would be going out for bids and he too has concerns. He added that the Town is invested in thus far in the project and he would like the building constructed in a timely manner.

Councilman Tewalt asked if it included the Clerk of the Works. Mr. Waltz noted it does not, adding that the Clerk of the Works funding is encumbered and some would come from the New Market Tax Credit program.

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Meza, Morrison, Sealock and Tewalt

No – Egger

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

(Mayor Tharpe did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)

(By Roll Call)

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

APPROVED:

Jennifer E. Berry
Clerk of Council