

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2009 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET, VINTON, VIRGINIA.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bradley E. Grose, Mayor  
Robert R. Altice  
Carolyn D. Fidler  
William W. Nance  
William E. Obenchain, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Lawrence, Town Manager  
Elizabeth Dillon, Town Attorney  
Darleen R. Bailey, Town Clerk  
Ben Cook, Police Lieutenant  
Mike Kennedy, Public Works Director  
Joey Hiner, Assistant Public Works Director

Agenda

- A. 7:00 P.M. – Roll Call and Establishment of a Quorum
- B. INVOCATION
- C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U. S. FLAG
- D. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, PRESENTATIONS
- E. CITIZENS' COMMENTS AND PETITIONS
- F. TOWN ATTORNEY
- G. TOWN MANAGER
  - 1. Request to Appropriate Funds for Wastewater Septic System Study (Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Grant) – Resolution No. 1810
  - 2. Update on System Development Fees
  - 3. Discussion - Purchase of Hanging Flower Baskets
- H. MAYOR
- I. COUNCIL
- J. CLOSED MEETING
  - 1. Request to Convene in a Closed Meeting Pursuant to § 2.2-3711 A (1) of the Code of Virginia as Amended, for Discussion of a Personnel Matter – Town Manager Review
- K. RECONVENE - Adopt Certification of Closed Meeting
- L. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Grose called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. | Roll call, invocation  
Following roll call, Adam Watts, Assistant/Youth Pastor for Vinton | and Pledge of  
Wesleyan Church, gave the invocation and the Mayor led the Pledge | Allegiance to U.S.

of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Flag.

Ms. Fidler read a letter from Police Chief Cooley naming Chase Ferguson as Dispatcher of the Quarter ending December 31, 2008 and Mr. Nance read a second letter from Chief Cooley naming Monica McCullough, Detective and David Cooper, Master Police Officer as Officers of the Month for December, 2008.

Recognized Dispatcher of the Quarter and Officers of the Month

Mayor Grose awarded a Certificate of Recognition to honor the team members and coaching staff of William Byrd High School's Football Program who had received the Civitan's Sportsmanship Award for 2008. The certificate was presented to Dr. Richard Turner, the Principal of William Byrd. Dr. Turner noted that the Southwest Virginia Officials Association, who represents over 40 schools, determines the recipient of the award. The school's Athletic Director thanked Council for the award and for their support of the athletes and coaches. Tyler Snow and Robert Collins, the two team captains, were introduced. Coach Jeff Highfill thanked both the team and the coaches for their efforts in earning this award. All the Council members congratulated the team members and the coaches.

Awarded certificate to the William Byrd High School Football Team

The Town Manager reported on a request to appropriate grant funds in the amount of \$20,000 for a Wastewater Septic System Study. Mr. Lawrence reported that the Town has received the grant funds and the Engineering firm of Anderson and Associates has already begun work on the study. He further reported that the proposed resolution authorizes the expenditures and appropriates the funds for the study

Adopted Resolution 1810 appropriating funds for a Wastewater Septic System Study.

It was noted that the study will focus on any properties in the Town's Utility Service System that are not connected to the Town's sewer system. Mr. Altice moved to adopt proposed Resolution No. 1810 appropriating funds for the Wastewater Septic System Study. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nance and approved unanimously by Vinton Town Council.

Mr. Lawrence updated Council on the Town's system development fees. He advised that the update was a part of the Town's on-going efforts to stay aware of how the Town's utility services are operated and what it costs. He noted that until about two years ago when the new fee system went into effect, a developer could connect to the Town's water system for \$100, but it was costing the Town \$5,000 to connect them.

Discussed request to increase system development fees and charges

Mr. Kennedy pointed out that the methodology used to determine what the system development fees should be is nationally recognized and is the standard he is following. He went on to say that system

development fees apply to primarily new development. Until two years ago, developers were not paying their fair share of the costs which forced the rate payers to assume that cost. Mr. Kennedy explained that the fee is based on the value of system capacity and the amount of capacity needed by the customer which means that the larger the meter size, the more it will cost the customer.

Mr. Kennedy reviewed service connection charges, inspection charges and meter setting fees. He recommended Council look at the charges on an annual basis in order to avoid large increases in system development fees and to avoid financial loss. He gave some examples of how the proposed increase would affect new single family residential service, commercial property and industrial property. During review of inspection charges, he noted some would not change while others would be increased by one or two percent. He also noted that meter setting fees would not change.

Mr. Kennedy proposed that Town Council hold a public meeting on February 3, 2009 to allow the public to speak on the issue. He advised that he would have a new resolution ready with the new fees and charges at that time for their consideration that would become effective the following day. He added that Council could make any needed adjustments in December, 2009.

Mr. Lawrence further explained that Council could continue with the schedule as outlined by Mr. Kennedy; it could be included as a part of the budget process; or Council could decide not to raise the System Development Fees. He pointed out that if the rates are not increased this year, Council would have to "play catch-up" next year with larger increases.

Mayor Grose questioned whether there had been any recent negative reactions from developers to the rate increase that took place two years ago. Mr. Kennedy replied that there has been very little if any negative reactions as most of the costs are passed on to the new property owner.

Mr. Altice commented that he feels the Town needs to look at the fees and charges on a yearly basis in order to avoid large increases.

Mr. Kennedy commented on water rate increases that would be done during the budget process, Mr. Lawrence advised that staff would be looking at areas to cut the budget and areas to raise revenues. Mr. Nance advised that he liked the transparency of having the process done separately and not being buried in the budget process. Mr. Obenchain agreed with Mr. Nance's comments. Ms Fidler stressed

that it is the cost of service that is driving up the rates, fees and charges and she felt people do understand that fact when it is explained to them.

The Mayor stated that he liked the idea of making changes in the rates, fees and charges all at once rather than doing them all separately but since the System Development Fees do not affect most of the Town's citizens, he felt this increase could be done separately. He also felt the process needed to be transparent.

Following further discussion, It was the consensus of Council to place the proposed increases for Service Development fees and charges on the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting agenda.

Mr. Lawrence pointed out that last year, the Town did not purchase hanging flower baskets or have the usual landscaping done in front of the Municipal Building or the Health Department due to possible severe drought conditions that had been forecasted for the area. He went on to say that at this point, there were no indications that suggested severe drought conditions occurring this year and asked Council's opinion on whether he should go ahead with ordering the flower baskets. The Town Manager proposed placing them only in the core downtown area so as to distinguish the downtown business area that attracts more pedestrian traffic from the Virginia Avenue and Washington Avenue business areas that attract mostly faster moving vehicle traffic. Purchasing drought resistant flowers for the baskets was discussed but Mr. Kennedy pointed out that flowering plants would not be drought resistant and that any type of flower would have to be watered at least three times a week for them to survive.

Discussed purchase of flower baskets

Mr. Kennedy reported that about \$1,300 would be saved if the Town purchased baskets for only the downtown area and about \$5,000 in labor costs would be saved. Mr. Nance asked how these costs compared with what it cost the Town when the baskets were placed on Washington Avenue and Virginia Avenue as well as downtown and was advised by Mr. Kennedy that it had cost about \$12,000 in the past to place flower baskets on the two corridors.

During a discussion on whether to place baskets on the corridors, Mr. Lawrence stated that the corridor areas would continue to have the banners that are changed out each season.

Following considerable discussion on the issue, it was the consensus of Council that the flower baskets be limited to the downtown area.

Mr. Obenchain asked if the Town's liability insurance would cover volunteers to assist in keeping the flower baskets watered. Mr. Lawrence replied that he would check with VML, the Town's insurance carrier, to get their recommendation.

The Mayor congratulated his fellow Council members and staff who took part in the Council retreat that had taken place the week before. He also commented that Matt Hare, who serves as a Vinton representative on the Greenway Committee, was instrumental in putting together the new inter-governmental agreement that would be signed by all the local governments.

Mayor Grose commented on the day's Presidential Inauguration activities and expressed his pride in the country and the peaceful way the transition of power took place.

Mr. Nance expressed his thanks to the staff for putting together the recent Council retreat and was impressed with the dedication of his fellow Council members to the Town. He stated that he looked forward to hearing about the staff retreat that took place after the Council retreat.

Ms. Fidler reported that a Recreation Facilities Board meeting had taken place earlier in the day and they should have an answer by June on the future of the Explore park or at least, a request for an extension on the lease. She went on to say that the developer of the proposed park, Mr. Van der Maten would be present in April at their next meeting with a press conference afterward.

Ms. Fidler moved to convene in a closed meeting pursuant to § 2.2-3711 A (1) of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, for discussion of a personnel matter, 3-month performance review for Town Manager. The motion was seconded by Mr. Obenchain and unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

At 10:17 p.m., the Mayor reconvened the regular meeting. The Certification that the Closed Meeting was held in conformity with State Law, was read and adopted on motion by Mr. Obenchain, seconded by Mr. Nance and approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Lawrence reported on a conflict that was brought to his attention by staff regarding the Employee Manual Section II.13 Smoking Policy and the Administrative Policy designating smoking areas for town facilities. The recently approved employee manual states that smoking is prohibited in Town owned buildings and

Comments from Council

Reconvene and adopt Certification of Closed Meeting

Town Manager report on a Smoking Policy conflict

facilities. The Administrative Policy permits smoking in the apparatus bay of the Fire Station. Therefore, the employee manual does not allow the town's nine firefighters from smoking in the apparatus bay, but the Volunteers and Roanoke County Firefighter/EMS staff is permitted to smoke in the bay.

Mr. Lawrence stated that his long term goal is to phase out smoking completely from the Fire and EMS station, however, given the circumstances and to be consistent with the Roanoke County Fire/EMS Department's policy on smoking in apparatus bays, he recommended modifying the Employee Manual to allow town employees to smoke in the apparatus bay. Further discussions regarding the goal of being entirely smoke free indoors would include future discussions with the department and volunteer crews.

The Employee Manual states that the Town Manager may modify the Policies and Procedures Manual with the concurrence of Town Council. Therefore, Mr. Lawrence respectfully requested that Town Council concur with his proposed modification to the Manual to allow smoking in the apparatus bay of the Fire Station and EMS Station. He also stated that as part of this modification, he would direct staff, Fire and EMS Volunteers, and others to only smoke in the designated smoking area to the rear of the station and not congregate out front on Jackson Street to smoke.

Town Council discussed the modification and concurred with the Town Manager's recommendation to modify the Employee Manual and also agreed with not allowing smoking in front of the stations and designate the area at the rear of the stations as a smoking area.

Mayor Grose adjourned the meeting at 10:35 p.m.

ADOPTED:

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Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Darleen R. Bailey, Town Clerk