

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2010, 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  
Matthew S. Hare  
William W. Nance

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Lawrence, Town Manager  
Consuella Caudill, Asst. Town Manager  
Darleen Bailey, Town Clerk  
Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer  
Herbert Cooley, Police Chief  
Michael Kennedy, Public Works Director  
Joey Hiner, Assistant Public Works Director  
Mark Vaught, Police Lieutenant

Agenda

- A. 7:00 P.M. –Roll Call and Establishment of a Quorum
- B. INVOCATION
- C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U. S. FLAG – Cub Scout Pack 235 – Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church
- D. CONSENT AGENDA
  - 1. Request to Approve Minutes for Regular Council Meeting of September 21, 2010
  - 2. Request to Re-appoint Matthew Hare to the Roanoke Valley Greenway Committee
  - 3. Resolution in Support of Roanoke County’s Legislative Agenda to Ban New Drug Called “Spice”
- E. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, PRESENTATIONS
  - 1. Recognize Judy Cunningham on her Retirement from the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce
  - 2. Officer Of the Month for September – Master Police Officer Gregory M. Chieppa
- F. CITIZENS’ COMMENTS AND PETITIONS
- G. OLD BUSINESS
- H. TOWN ATTORNEY
  - 1. Request to Approve Debt Set-Off Program – Ordinance No. 903
- I. TOWN MANAGER
  - 1. Authorization to Amend and Restate Voluntary Flexible Benefit Plan

- J. MAYOR
- K. COUNCIL
- L. ADJOURNMENT

WORK SESSION

1. Discussion – GRTC Connector Service from Roanoke to Lynchburg Amtrak Location

Mayor Grose called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Following the invocation, Cub Scout Pack 235 from Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Roll call, invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to U.S. Flag.

Ms. Fidler asked that Item No. three of the Consent Agenda be pulled and discussed under the Council portion of the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Fidler to approve the first two items of the Consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Altice and passed unanimously.

Mayor Grose presented a proclamation to Judy Cunningham on her retirement from the Vinton Chamber of Commerce after 37 years of service. He commented that Ms. Cunningham has always been involved in everything that has gone on in Vinton for the last 37 years and he counted her as a great and loyal friend. He presented Judy with a key to the Town and a flower arrangement.

State Delegate Onzlee Ware presented a proclamation from the Virginia General Assembly in memory and in celebration of the life of the late William E. Obenchain, Jr. who had served as Vice Mayor for the Town before his death on December 23, 2009.

Mayor Grose opened the floor for comments on Judy Cunningham's retirement.

Hal Mabe stated that Judy always knew what was going on and always had information at hand on any event that is taking place in Town at any given time. He acknowledged that he had learned a lot from her about the history of the Town, the Chamber of Commerce, about businesses in Vinton. He thanked her for her years of service and her commitment to the Town.

Greg Lee, a State Farm Insurance agent in Vinton, commented that Judy has always been there to tell him what needed to be done and where he needed to go. He advised that Judy helped him make his business a success.

Anthony Conner stated that at one time selling ice cream was the only way to make money for the Chamber but that Judy had progressed the Chamber to a position where it offers many events and fund raisers. He noted that the difference in the budgets of years ago and the budget of today is phenomenal and is due to her tireless efforts to assure that these events took place.

Dan Vance, who had been editor of the Vinton Voice, stated that efforts to get the newspaper up and running would not have been possible without Judy Cunningham.

Moe Maddox thanked Judy for her support over the last 26 years and for being willing to go over and beyond the normal duties of a volunteer.

Mr. Maddox commented that the members of the Vinton Historical Society also worked tirelessly to support the Town and that Ms. Cunningham is now working with them on a part-time basis. He asked everyone to consider joining the organization.

Frank Stone noted that he was president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1973 and his biggest accomplishment that year was to hire Judy Cunningham.

Chief Cooley stated that the Police Academy was Judy's idea and she had been an important part of it ever since.

Consuella Caudill, Assistant Town Manager, stated that Judy has been a great resource over the five years she has known her and had always gone above and beyond what was expected of her.

Dave Jones, Manager of the Southern States Feed Mill, stated that Judy was one of two people who gave him a "jump start" when he first came to Town. He thanked her for all she had done for the community and stated that it had been a great 37 years.

Ms. Fidler stated that it had been an honor to know Judy and to work with her. She further stated that Judy had done a wonderful job for the Chamber of Commerce and is honored and respected by everyone for that.

Mr. Altice added that if anyone ever needs help with anything, Judy is always there.

Mr. Nance commented that he could go on and on about what she had done for the Town and the way she has avoided the limelight.

He went on to say that the best testament for her is this evening's full chamber. He congratulated her on her retirement.

Mr. Hare reported that during the short time he had been on Council, it had become evident to him of the work she has always done behind the scenes. He noted that she had begun traditions that will carry on for his children to see when they are grown.

Aaron Lyles commented how patient and kind she had been during his campaign for Town Council in May and congratulated her.

Fred Swisher spoke saying that Judy's father was the founder and organized the first Chamber of Commerce in the Town of Vinton. He stated that he does not know of anyone who has contributed as much to the Town as Judy has.

Mayor Grose stated that he believes there is yet a lot in store for Judy and that her retirement years will be very busy. He thanked her and congratulated her on behalf of the entire Town.

Mr. Nance read a letter from Chief Cooley recognizing Gregory Chieppa as Police Officer of the Month for September.

Mr. Barry Carter of 231 Woodmere Drive in the Lindenwood section of east Roanoke County, spoke to Council regarding the extremely poor condition of water lines in Lindenwood. He stated that in the 16 years he has lived in Lindenwood, the Town has had to dig up his yard 8 times to repair broken water lines located in the Town's right-of-way. Mr. Carter noted that he has complained about the condition of water lines in Lindenwood several times over the years but the Town has not made the needed repairs. He pointed out that Council needs to replace the water lines in his neighborhood in the very near future even if water rates have to be raised to fund it. Mayor Grose replied that Council is aware that the water lines are in bad shape in Lindenwood and need to be replaced.

Heard complaint from Barry Carter regarding the need to replace water lines in Lindenwood

Ms. Fidler advised Mr. Carter that this is a problem that faces almost every municipality in the nation. Mr. Altice stated that the Town is trying to accumulate the funds to make the repairs. He added that water rates are scheduled to increase by \$.10 each year for the next five years which will help cover some of the costs for the water line replacements.

Mr. Lawrence stated that he had spoken with Mr. Kennedy about the situation with the water lines in Lindenwood several times and noted that Lindenwood is the Town's top priority for waterline replacement.

Ms. Debbie Richardson, who lives at 651 Missimer Lane, questioned the water quality in the Crofton neighborhood as it has a very strong chlorine odor when the tap is turned on. She asked if anything is going to be done to improve the situation. Mr. Kennedy explained that the problem exists for a variety of reasons, primarily due to the change in weather that caused a spike in the chlorine levels. He advised that his technicians have been gradually dropping the chlorine levels down for the last few weeks and noted that the levels are now continuing to decline. He advised that he would have someone come out the next morning to take a sample of her water so that a chlorine level can be gauged for her location. He noted that most complaints for this problem have come from the Dillon Woods area and that this is the first complaint he had gotten from the Missimer Lane area.

Mr. Thompson reported on a request to approve a debt set-off program for the Town of Vinton. He advised that the issue had been discussed at a work session during the last Council meeting on October 5, 2010. He asked that Council adopt the proposed Ordinance allowing an administrative charge of 25% up to \$25.00 for the debt set-off program.

Adopted Ordinance No. 903 authorizing the Town's debt set-off program

Mr. Nance noted that the ordinance does not make reference to the 25% administrative charge and questioned whether it was allowed by a policy that did not need to be in the ordinance. Mr. Thompson replied that authorization for the Town to collect this fee is spelled out in the State Code section. Mr. Hare pointed out that the collection of the 4% collected by the state was not referenced in the ordinance either and asked if it needed to be included. Mr. Thompson replied that the Town can collect the 4% as it is spelled out in another section of the State Code.

Mr. Nance moved to adopt proposed Ordinance No 903 authorizing the Town's debt set-off program and allowing the collection of a 25% administrative fee, up to \$25.00, for the program. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fidler and passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

The Town Manager reported that the Town's Flexible Benefits Program administrator, Anthony Conner, needs to have official action taken by Council to formalize the relationship with Mr. Conner's company and to provide him with a signed document to maintain on file authorizing the Town to keep track of the employees' Flexible Spending Plan.

Approved amendments to employees' Flexible Benefit Plan

Mr. Nance made a motion to give the Mayor authorization to

approve and sign a request to amend and restate the Town employees' voluntary Flexible Benefit Plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fidler and approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mayor Grose thanked the Town Manager for his report and summary on the recent VML Conference that he had attended. He pointed out that the conference is very worthwhile and recommended that at least some members of Council make an effort to attend next year if at all possible.

The Mayor commented on the beautiful new fall landscaping at the Municipal Building and at the entrance signs and thanked staff for coordinating those efforts. He also noted that one of the entrance signs at PFG was recently replaced and looks great.

Ms. Caudill reported that the new sign to be installed at the Vinton Business Center had been delivered and AEP had been contracted to install the lighting which should have been completed during the previous week. She noted that some landscaping remains to be completed.

Mark McKaskill from the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission, reported that the Regional Commission is one of three agencies in Virginia to receive a national Sustainability Grant which will culminate in a Regional Sustainability Plan at the end of three years. Mayor Grose thanked Mr. McKaskill for keeping Council updated on activities at the Regional Commission.

Ms. Fidler referred to a report she had made at the last Council Meeting on the drug "Spice" and hoped that the proposed State legislation requested by Roanoke County and supported by the Town, would be a warning for parents of the drug's dangers. She moved to adopt proposed Resolution No. 1891 supporting Roanoke County's legislative initiative to ban the drug "Spice". Mr. Altice seconded the motion that was unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

Ms. Fidler reported that the Explore Park site was currently being used to film a movie and that she had viewed a couple of clips from it at a Virginia Recreation Facilities Authority Board meeting earlier in the day.

Mr. Nance suggested language for a plaque honoring the late Vice Mayor, Billy Obenchain shown below:

Approve Resolution No.1891 recommending the ban of the drug Spice

“In honor of his years of service as a fireman, Councilman and Vice Mayor, Billy was the consummate Vintonite, public servant and a friend to all who met him”.

It was the consensus of Council that Mr. Nance’s words be placed on a bronze plaque that would be hung in Council Chambers. Mr. Lawrence stated that he would have it drawn up for Council to review before the actual plaque is ordered. He noted that he would obtain Karen Obenchain’s (Mr. Obenchain’s wife) approval also.

Mr. Hare thanked everyone who had helped with the Fall Festival. He also thanked the Public Works Director, Mike Kennedy for responding so quickly to his personal questions regarding the water quality at his home.

Mr. Hare advised that he had been a part of the current Police Academy and commented that he now has a new respect for what police officers have to deal with. He noted that the Town’s police officers are very brave men and women.

Mayor Grose adjourned the regular meeting at 8:24 p.m.

## **WORK SESSION**

### **1. Discussion – GRTC Connector from Roanoke to Lynchburg Amtrak Station**

Ms. Caudill updated Council on the Greater Roanoke Transit Company (GRTC or Valley Metro) Connector Service from Roanoke to Lynchburg. She noted that GRTC would be submitting a grant to the Virginia Department of Rail and Transportation to fund bus service to the Lynchburg Amtrak Station from Roanoke. The service would be run by Valley Metro. Ms. Caudill reported that the GRTC Board is currently working on a feasibility study that is scheduled to be released in early November. She went on to say it is expected the report will show there is a desire and support as well as a need for rail service in the Roanoke Valley which would also support the need for connector service to Lynchburg’s Amtrak station. As a part of that, GRTC is working with the Roanoke Valley, the City of Bedford and the City of Lynchburg to acquire a \$45,000 grant match. She advised that the grant amount would be \$300,000, the annual operating costs for the connector service. Ms. Caudill reported that the City of Salem had agreed to provide \$5,000 toward the grant match.

It was pointed out that Mr. Palmer, General Manager of the GRTC had not asked for a specific amount from each locality but is seeking to see if localities would be willing to support the initiative. She noted that Mr. Palmer will also be contacting Roanoke College and Hollins College to request their support because of the number of students that would likely be using the service.

Ms. Caudill stated that Mr. Palmer has offered to come meet with Council or will meet with the Town Manager and the Assistant Town Manager to discuss the issue.

Ms. Fidler felt that a connector point in Roanoke would be good and would lend a measure of safety to those who travel to the Amtrak station in Lynchburg. Mayor Grose questioned whether the initiative would eventually establish a clientele for rail service from Roanoke. In response to a question from Mr. Altice regarding support from the Town, Ms. Caudill explained that the Board would like to have the \$45,000 in secured pledges from the partners (localities) when they submit their grant application. Mayor Grose inquired as to when the GRTC Board would need an answer and Ms. Caudill replied that they would need to know by January.

Mr. Hare asked if the grant would be a perpetual grant and Ms. Caudill replied that she could not answer that question at the present time. Mr. Nance questioned whether the Town should consider providing more funding for Valley Metro than it already does. Mr. Altice advised that he wants to know more about the plan and what the survey is going to show. Ms. Fidler asked if Mr. Palmer would be willing to come to talk with Council about the issue and Ms. Caudill replied that he would. Mr. Hare questioned whether the Town had enough money to consider funding the request. Mr. Nance recommended that Council forward their questions to Mr. Palmer rather than having him come to Council. It was a consensus that Ms. Caudill would get some of their questions answered before asking Mr. Palmer to come to Vinton. Mayor Grose advised Ms. Caudill that they may have to discuss this issue further at another work session.

The work session adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Darleen R. Bailey, Town Clerk