

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 6:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET, VINTON, VIRGINIA

- MEMBERS PRESENT: Bradley E. Grose, Mayor  
Michael W. Stovall, Vice Mayor  
Sabrina McCarty  
Laurie J. Mullins
- MEMBERS ABSENT: Keith N. Liles
- STAFF PRESENT: Pete Peters, Town Manager/Town Clerk  
Antonia Arias-Magallon, Administrative Manager  
Jeremy Carroll, Town Attorney  
Fabricio Drumond, Police Chief  
Andrew Keen, Finance Director  
Nathan McClung, Assistant Planning and Zoning Director

**The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00** p.m. The Administrative Manager called the roll with Council Member McCarty, Council Member Mullins, Vice Mayor Stovall and Mayor Grose present. Council Member Liles absent.

Roll call

**After a Moment of Silence, Council Member** Mullins, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

**Under upcoming community events/** announcements, Council Member McCarty announced the following: February 24 – Phlegar Hill; February 25 – Low Low Chariot; March 3 – The Oddfellows and March 4 – Breaking the chains Stevie Nicks – all at 8 p.m. at Rosie’s; Theater on Ice every Saturday – 10:45 a.m. – 12 Noon and Open Skate weekdays – 1 p.m. – 3 :30 p.m. – at the Lancerlot; every Wednesday – 5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. – Bingo; every Thursday – 5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. – Trivia; every Friday and Saturday night – Live Music; February 26 – Baby goat snuggle – 2 – 4 p.m. all at the Twin Creeks Brewery; Tuesday and Thursday is \$2.00 per game and Friday and Saturday is \$15.00 for unlimited games at Vinton Bowling.

**Under requests to postpone, add to or change** the order of agenda items, Andrew Keen, Finance Director requested to add item 2 under Section G, Consent Agenda, to consider adoption of a Resolution appropriating funds in the amount of \$500.00 received from AMVETS to the Vinton Memorial Operating Supplies Account.

**Council Member McCarty made a motion to** approve the Consent Agenda as presented; the motion was seconded by Council Member Mullins and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – McCarty, Mullins, Stovall, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) – Liles.

Approved minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of February 7, 2023; adopted Resolution No. 2533 appropriating funds in the amount of \$500.00 received from AMVETS to the Vinton War Memorial Operating Supplies Account.

**Mayor Grose questioned the history of AMVETS.**

Mr. Keen commented that there will be more information at a later time when the allocation of the funds is decided.

**Under awards, introductions, presentations and**

proclamations, Roanoke County Real Estate Valuation Director, Ken Fay, gave a briefing on the 2023 Roanoke County Real Estate Reassessment. Mr. Fay reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office as part of the permanent record. Mr. Fay commented that all properties located in the County are assessed every year by January. The Code of Virginia requires Real Estate to be assessed at 100 percent of fair market value. Appraisal staff works in identifying, locating, and estimating the value of all properties in the county for tax purposes. Real estate values for Residential and Commercial have increased significantly. Most of the increase is due to market values in the residential sector. From 2015 to 2019, the inflation rate stayed at a steady rate. The inflation has increased the past couple of years. The median sale prices for single family residential homes have increased in the past couple years for Roanoke County and Vinton. There has been a decrease in the number of total sales and foreclosures. For next year, the Federal Reserve continues to increase interest rates. Real estate markets are slowing as a result of these increased rates. Assessment notices were mailed in January. The final deadline to apply for an appeal is September 8, 2023.

Council Member Mullins questioned if the tax freeze option is still available to residents. Mr. Fay commented that it is and to call to the Commissioner of Revenue for any questions. Mayor Grose commented on the increase of value and taxes for property owned in Vinton. Mr. Fay commented that the Board of Supervisors will be meeting at the end of March or beginning of April to set the rate for this year.

**The next item on the agenda was the Annual** Update from the Roanoke Regional Partnership by John Hull. Mr. Hull reviewed a PowerPoint

presentation, which will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office as part of the permanent record. Mr. Hull commented on the regions that the Roanoke Regional Partnership covers and the five-year strategic plan. The Roanoke Regional Partnership raised \$4 million dollars for the next five years and has matched every public dollar. The four strategic priorities include economic growth and innovation, talent attraction and workforce development, commercial real estate and infrastructure, and placemaking & livability. Eight projects have expanded, bringing a lot of businesses to the region. Last year was the best year since 2017. Roanoke Regional Partnership is working with businesses, digital advertising, leaders, and others to bring more to the region. There is over \$150 million dollars being invested in the next two years. In 2021, staff supported efforts to increase site readiness throughout the region. The Roanoke Regional Partnership will be launching a new site study soon to identify additional regional collaboration. A new job board will be available on Get2KnowNoke. An announcement about the job board should be out early next year. The Foot Levelers Blue Ridge Marathon's reputation is spreading and this past April, the region welcomed 2,864 participants representing 40 states and five countries, and the race brought \$1.2 million in economic impact. Mr. Hull expressed appreciation towards the Vinton law enforcement officers for their support. Virginia's Blue Ridge Go Cross joined, and kicked off, the United States Cyclocross race series in 2022. This attracted a new audience of cyclocross racers. The GO Outside Festival returned to downtown Roanoke with an expanded footprint in Elmwood Park and new attractions. It was another successful year with a 12 percent increase in attendance. The total Economic Impact for 2022, with just events was \$3.7 million. That includes the marathon, GO Fest, GO Cross. Actively investing in the outdoors with \$150,000 over last three years in funding and proceeds received by events and those who invested. There have been a good mix of projects, maintenance and new structures. Mr. Hull expressed appreciation for the research staff.

Mayor Grose expressed appreciation and commented on how well of a job the region is doing.

**Under reports from Council Committees,** Mr. Keen commented that the committee meeting covered two months of financial statements for November and December 2022. Pari-mutuel tax

collection is at 59%. Food and Beverage tax collection is at 43%. The occupancy taxes for short term rentals is at 88%. Cigarette stamp sales are at 66% of budgeted revenue. Real Estate tax revenue generation was at a 44% collection rate for the fiscal year. Mr. Keen commented that many residents pay their taxes during the first billing in May, causing the first half of real estate tax collection to fall in the previous fiscal year.

Mr. Keen commented that the cash and financial health remain strong at \$11 Million between investments and operational cash. The Grant Fund had a noticeable decrease due to the last ARPA payment to the Western Virginia Water Authority. \$2 million was moved from the utility fund to an investment fund. The Town opened a secondary account with Bank of Botetourt to house repurposed ARPA funds which is fully insured by the FDIC.

Mr. Keen commented that AMVETS, which supports the nation's 20 million veterans, donated \$500.00 to the Vinton War Memorial.

Mr. Keen commented on the Town is awaiting final numbers from VDOT for the Mountain View Road project. There is approximately \$600,000 of Town money and \$500,000 of VDOT revenue sharing money on the project. The Town has plans to put another \$500,000 of local dollars on the project from future Water Authority revenues in fiscal year 2024. The total of the project is estimated by VDOT to be \$1.6 million. The use of local Town money will help expedite the project, whereas going to more revenue sharing money from the state could prolong the project. The project that VDOT has put forward will help the Town receive some savings.

Mr. Keen commented that Ms. Collins stopped by to discuss a possible change in the classification of a full-time employee to be decreased from 40 hours to 30 hours per week, which is more in line with the Affordable Care Act. The employees who would work 30 hours per week would receive the same full-time benefits as those working 40 hours a week. Ms. Collins next commented on exempt employees whom are paid the same whether they work 40 or more hours per week and are eligible for discretionary time. The new policy would not require exempt employees to fill out their timesheets unless they use PTO. The current PTO policy proposes that employees cannot accrue PTO while they are suspended or on administrative leave. The new

policy would not allow employees to accrue any PTO during any unpaid leave of greater than 40 hours or during any type of unpaid leave. The current policy for holiday pay allows full time employees receive a full day of 8 hours pay. The new policy would allow part time employees to receive a half day pay depending on their hours.

Ms. Keen next commented on Ms. Collins' proposal on the Police Department Contract which proposes that recruits who are not certified would be required to serve three years from the date of hire and certified officers would be required to serve two years after training. If the recruits resign prior to the number of years required by contract, they would not receive the PTO payout made up of the time accrued during their dates of employment. They will also be required to reimburse the Town \$400 for the cost of a vest fitted specifically to the individual.

**Mr. McClung reviewed a PowerPoint** presentation, which will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office as part of the permanent record. Mr. McClung commented on the Downtown Fire Block Demolition and Re-Design project. Hill Studio of Roanoke has provided the Town with the design concepts and the demolition permits have been pulled by the contractors. A road closure was implemented for safety reasons. The preliminary concepts are in early phases with options of having two to three stories.

Mr. McClung next commented on the Vinton History Museum. There are no ADA rules or regulations triggers. Hill Studio designed an elevator/lift to match the museum infrastructure. The Town allocated \$25,000.00 last year. The Town staff will not be allocating new funds this year due to there being funds not utilized.

Mr. McClung next commented on the Cleveland Mart Development project. Current investors provided three different development options. The first scenario included a multi-use of apartments and office, which is preferred by the Town. There are two alternative scenarios depending on the cost. The overall investment is \$1.1 million based on the developer's budget. The goal is to create more use for the town.

Mr. McClung next commented that Marshall Stanley, Economic Development Specialist, gave an update on the Town's communication using social media

and its outreach. The partnership with RVTV has also created more engagement with residents. There will be an upcoming e-newsletter and all of Council is signed up.

Mr. McClung next commented the General Capital Project's update. The Town has been working to fix the posts in the basement of the War Memorial building. The Town has been working to fix the humidity levels and the goal is to have it fixed by the summer.

Mr. McClung next commented on the Walnut Ave Parking Lot project. The goal is to have the construction of the lot out to bid by this month. The engineer internal to the Hughes and Associates Firm, left to work with another firm in the middle of the project. The Principal of the Hughes and Associates Firm stepped in and started working on the project. In the transition, there have been some delays.

Mr. McClung next commented on Council visiting the Annex before the meeting. The Annex project has been going through a lot of in-house work. Currently, the Annex is going through data wiring and interior infrastructure. The Annex will be a secure space that will not have a reception area and will be by appointment only.

Mr. McClung next commented on the Vinton Farmers Market water damage where pipes were busted in the bathroom. The Town undertook in house work, saving the Town money.

Council Member Mullins questioned how the pipes burst, and Mr. McClung commented it was a volunteer that turned off the electric, which turned off the heaters in place.

Mr. McClung next commented on the Tree Inventory Grant that will provide a list of all of the trees on the Town's public land and any trees that are in the right of way that can be a potential danger. Gathering information on the trees will help identify if there are any diseased trees. The Town is currently looking for a tree company to execute the grant. The goal is to have the inventory completed by the end of the year.

Mr. McClung next commented on entering phase two of the Virginia Housing Study. Phase one of the Housing Study received from Virginia Housing was analyzing the housing market of the entire Town.

Phases two and three focus on the shopping center itself. Phase two of the project is the site plan development to turn the shopping center into a multi-use town center. The last phase will be the feasibility study to see if it will be affordable and practical for the future developers.

Mr. McClung announced the following: March 24 – Council Retreat; April 1 – Clean Valley Day; April 6 – State of the Town and April 28 – Arbor Day Event.

Vice Mayor Stovall commented on the Fire Block Demolition. Mayor Grose commented on utilizing in house staff for the repair for the Farmers Market.

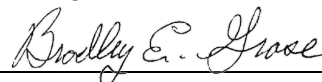
**Council Members commented on Pancakes with Police**, that happened earlier in the morning. Council Member Mullins expressed appreciation on the Town performing in house work on a lot of projects. Mayor Grose expressed appreciation for service that staff has provided for decades on the water system. Mayor Grose commented on the Water Authority working on Cleveland Avenue. Council Member McCarty commented on a local networking event at the Twin Creeks Brewery on February 28 from 5 to 7 pm that the Chamber will be hosting.

**Mayor Grose expressed appreciation to the staff** for continuing to do a great job and appreciation to AMVETS for their donation three years in a row. Mayor Grose expressed appreciation to Marshall Stanley for the Town videos, publicity for the town, and the communication with citizens.

**Council Member Mullins made a motion to adjourn the meeting**; the motion was seconded by Council Member McCarty and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – McCarty, Mullins, Stovall, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) – Liles. The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned

APPROVED:



Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:



Richard W. Peters Jr., Town Clerk