

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2011, 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, Assistant Town Manager  
Elizabeth Dillon, Town Attorney  
Stephanie Dearing, Acting Clerk  
Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer  
Michael Kennedy, Public Works Director  
Anita McMillan, Planning Director  
Ben Cook, Police Captain

Agenda

- A. 5:30 P.M. – Work Session
  - 1. Presentation by Roanoke County Schools’ William Byrd High School for Community Electronic Message Board Sign in Town Right-of-Way
  - 2. Access Easement Between Town of Vinton and Stafford Property – 605 Maywood Drive
  - 3. Vinton Business Center Rezoning Update
  - 4. Citizen Satisfaction Survey Discussion
- B. 7:00 P.M. - Roll Call and Establishment of a Quorum
- C. INVOCATION –Pastor Brian Geiser, First Christian Church of Vinton
- D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U. S. FLAG
- E. CONSENT AGENDA
  - 1. Request to Approve Minutes for Regular Meeting of May 3, 2011 and for a Budget Work Session on May 10, 2011
- F. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, PRESENTATIONS
- G. CITIZENS’ COMMENTS AND PETITIONS - This section is reserved for comments and questions for issues not listed on the agenda
- H. PUBLIC HEARINGS
  - 1. Proposed Budget for FY 2011-2012
- I. TOWN ATTORNEY
- I. TOWN MANAGER
  - 1. Adopt Resolution Allowing Town to Require VRS Plan 2 Employees to Pay Employee’s share of Retirement – Resolution No. 1925
- K. MAYOR
- L. COUNCIL
- M. ADJOURNMENT

5:30 P.M. WORK SESSION

**1. Presentation by Roanoke County Schools' William Byrd High School – Community Electronic Message Sign in Town Right-of-Way**

Mr. Lawrence introduced Mr. Mike Stovall, Roanoke County School Board Member, and Dr. Richard Turner, Principal of William Byrd High School, who presented Council with a proposal to place a community electronic message board in a Town right-of-way at the intersection of Washington Avenue and the By-Pass. Mr. Stovall advised that the sign would be paid for with surplus funds of \$40,000 the High School had received. He stated that the sign would be used to advertise school functions as well as Town and Chamber functions and other events taking place in the surrounding area. He went on to say that after checking out the area to determine the best placement for the sign, it was decided that the Washington Avenue/By-Pass area would be the best location for the sign.

Dr. Turner discussed the type of events to be advertised by the High School and advised that he felt the sign would benefit the school and the Town if it is placed at the Washington Avenue and By-Pass site. He stated that he did not want to see anyone upset over placement of the sign but felt it would greatly benefit the community and help generate revenue for the school and its programs at that site.

Mr. Stovall discussed the height of the sign and the type of buffers that could be used to hide it from near-by residents. Ms. Fidler asked if any other sites had been considered and Mr. Stovall responded that they had looked at other locations but was unable to find an area that would be as visible to as many people as the Washington Avenue/ By-Pass location would be.

Dr. Turner commented that the sign would have to be placed within the Town limits or on private property as VDOT would not allow the sign in their right-of-way.

The placement of the sign on the site was discussed. Mr. Nance asked about minimizing the amount of light put out by the sign that could impact the homes located near the proposed sign. Mr. Stovall replied that the sign would be designed and placed so there would be no impact from the light on residents. Mr. Stovall stated that the sign could be set to turn off at a certain time of night if necessary.

Ms. Fidler asked if there had been any consideration on how the sign would affect traffic safety. Mr. Stovall responded that they have not looked at safety but that other schools in the County have similar signs and to his knowledge, there have been no safety problems.

Mr. Stovall and Dr. Turner assured that Mr. Lawrence or someone from the Town would have access to change the message on the sign in case of an emergency.

Mayor Grose questioned whether Mr. Stovall and Dr. Turner would be willing to work with near-by residents regarding the type of buffer that would be used. Mr. Stovall replied that

he would be happy to do that. He recommended using red tipped bushes which would make a good buffer as they become very dense as they grow.

Mr. Nance recommended a couple of sites that might be considered;1, the bank at Linhaven Circle and secondly, the old William Byrd High School property. He also suggested placing it somewhere on the Library's site.

Mr. Charlie Hartman whose son lives across the street from the proposed site, spoke in opposition to placing the sign at that location and was concerned about the safety of his grandchildren. He recommended the sign be placed at the old William Byrd High School property. Mr. Hal Mabe spoke on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce in favor of the proposed location. He felt this was the best location according to traffic counts.

The Mayor reported that a petition had been submitted to Council that was signed by approximately 24 citizens in opposition to the proposed sign location.

Mr. Robert Obenchain of 1041 Washington Avenue, whose property is directly adjacent to the proposed location, spoke in opposition to the sign placement. He expressed concerns regarding the light coming from the sign and the fact that the sign could be a safety hazard for those who would try to read it while driving. Ms. Peggy Fizer Harmon who lives at 644 Dillon Drive and owns a home on Washington Avenue, also spoke in opposition to the request. Stephanie Rawling of 1112 E. Washington Avenue expressed concerns about safety as there had been several accidents in that area.

Ms. Gail Obenchain asked if the sign going up at W. E. Cundiff would be similar to William Byrd's sign. Mr. Stovall responded that it would be similar but would only be used for W. E. Cundiff events. Ms. Fizer questioned the total height for the sign and was advised that it would be eight feet high.

Mr. Stovall offered to meet with every citizen who signed the petition to discuss the placement of the sign.

Mayor Grose questioned whether there was enough Council interest to take the issue to a regular session for a vote. Ms. Fidler responded that she did not feel the Washington Avenue/By-Pass location was a good location. Mr. Altice was also opposed to the location. Mr. Hare expressed concern with the size of the sign. The Mayor felt that before he could vote to approve the location of the sign, he would have to know exactly what the size of the sign would be. Mr. Hare supported moving ahead with the request. Mr. Nance stated that he cannot support an eight foot sign but might be able to support it if it was smaller and they knew for certain how the lights would impact the surrounding neighborhood. Mayor Grose echoed Mr. Nance's comments. He stated that he felt the sign would be good for the Town and had heard enough positive information to warrant bringing the issue back to Council for a vote at a regular meeting. Mr. Stovall stated that he would try to have a replica of the sign erected before the issue comes before Council for a vote.

2. **Access Easement Between Town of Vinton and Stafford Property – 605 Maplewood Drive**

Mr. Lawrence reported that Ms. Kathy Stafford is attempting to sell a home that her mother, Ms. Eula B. Ayers, owns at 605 Maplewood Drive, but an issue came up during the sale of the property that needs to be cleared up before it can be sold. He explained further that the Town owns an old well site lot that is no longer being used located adjacent to Ms. Ayers' property. He stated that Ms. Ayers' driveway crosses over the Town's old well site property and that without a formal easement, her property cannot be sold. He noted that an easement would clear the Town's title as well. He also noted that another property owner's driveway crosses the Town's property as well and that would have to be dealt with sometime in the future.

Mr. Lawrence stated that the issue would be considered by Council on June 21<sup>st</sup> if all of the paperwork has been completed by that time.

3. **Vinton Business Center Rezoning Update**

Mr. Lawrence reported that Roanoke County has proposed amendments for the Vinton Business Center's covenants which will require the property to be rezoned. This will put the Town and County into a better position to market lots in the Vinton Business Center. The Town Manager noted that it would be up to the County to make the legislative decision as to whether the property would be rezoned.

Consuella Caudill reported that staff feels it is necessary at this time to clean up the covenants and make them and the Master Plan more cohesive and more like other County Industrial Parks. She noted that she and Anita McMillan had input along with County staff for the draft covenants. Ms. Caudill highlighted the major changes in the covenants for permitted uses and noted that the draft covenants had been presented at a public meeting for the residents of Montgomery Village whose properties adjoin the business center property.

Ms. Caudill advised that the proposed draft covenants will be presented to the Roanoke County Planning Commission at a meeting later in the evening and to the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors next week.

The work session was continued until after adjournment of the regular meeting.

**7:00 P.M.**

Mayor Grose called the regular meeting to order and the Town Clerk called the roll. Pastor Brian Geiser, First Christian Church of Vinton, gave the invocation and Councilman Altice led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

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

The Consent Agenda was approved on motion by Councilman Hare and seconded by Mr. Altice. The motion passed with all in favor.

Approved Consent Agenda

Mayor Grose opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. to take comments and questions on the proposed budget for FY 2011/2012. The Town Manager reviewed some of the changes that had been made since the presentation of the proposed budget. He thanked the Finance Director/Treasurer for his leadership through the budget process as well as other members of the budget team.

The following includes a few comments made by the Town Manager regarding the proposed budget:

- (a) there would be no new taxes nor any increases in taxes for the proposed budget
- (b) the only increase in fees would be in the cost of parking tickets
- (c) there would be an increased focus on economic development
- (d) a reduction in the subsidy from the Utility Fund to the General Fund by \$56,000 which is 50% less than in the past.

Mr. Lawrence reported that the budget total, as advertised, was \$10.4 million which was a reduction of \$10,000 over the original proposed budget. He advised that the proposed General Fund Budget was reduced from \$7.39 million to \$7.38 million. He went on to say that the Utility Fund remains at \$3.09 million which is a decrease of 1.39% from last year's budget.

The Town Manager reported that revenues seem to be stabilizing. After reviewing some revenue accounts, he noted that budget revenues and expenses are balanced. He pointed out that the proposed budget increased 1.6% over last year or about \$116,000.

Mr. Lawrence advised that a position in the Utility Department that was approved a couple of years ago, remains unfunded. He discussed changes that would take place in the Finance Department. He noted that he had not proposed a pay for performance increase for Town employees or any pay plan adjustments. He further noted that the employee health insurance premium would not increase this year but recommended that employees pay \$48.00 per month on their health insurance if they remain on the premium plan. He went on to say that if employees revert to a lower plan, they will not have to pay anything toward their premium.

Following a brief discussion on VRS Plan 2 for employees hired after July 1, 2011, he reported on Utility Fund revenues and expenses. He noted that expenses for the Wastewater Treatment Plant has decreased by 12%. He noted that staff eliminated the purchase of a new tractor to allow for the installation of new pressure reducing valves.

After reporting on outside agency budget requests, Mr. Lawrence advised that Council is scheduled to take action on the budget on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

There were no public comments on the proposed budget. Mayor Grose closed the Public Hearing at 7:35 p.m.

Mr. Lawrence reported on proposed Resolution No. 1925 that would authorize the Town to require VRS Plan 2 employees to pay the employee's share of VRS retirement now being paid by the Town. He explained that VRS Plan 2 employees are employees that have been hired since July 1, 2010 and were not previously part of the VRS Retirement system. He advised Council that if they approve this authorization, it would save the Town several hundred thousand dollars over the next 10 to 20 years. It was noted that Plan 2 employees would have to pay up to 5% of their VRS costs. He noted that this policy would affect two current employees that were hired after July 1, 2010. He asked that Council authorize a refund of their contribution payment since they were hired with the understanding that the Town would pay this amount. He advised that the refund would have a two-year limit and would be paid out on a twice yearly basis. In response from a question by Mr. Hare as to whether the pay-out had been included in the budget they had just adopted. Mr. Lawrence advised that the refund would be budget neutral.

Adopted Resolution No. 1925 authorizing VRS Plan 2 and reimbursement to 2 Plan 2 employees

Mr. Altice moved to adopt proposed Resolution No. 1925 that would authorize Plan 2 VRS employees to pay their share of VRS retirement and to authorize reimbursement of these costs to the two Town employees that are VRS Plan 2 employees on a twice yearly basis. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nance and passed with the following vote:

Mr. Altice	Yes
Ms. Fidler	Abstain
Mr. Hare	Yes
Mr. Nance	Yes
Mayor Grose	Yes

Mayor Grose announced that the Regional Storm Water Summit would take place the following Thursday at 8:00 a.m. at the Green Ridge Recreational Center. He also announced the dedication of the Vinton/Roanoke County Veterans Monument on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Grose adjourned the regular meeting at 7:45 p.m.

## **WORK SESSION**

### Citizen Survey

Mr. Lawrence reported that Anthony Lizan, the Town's Summer Intern, is working in conjunction with Virginia Tech to conduct a Citizen Survey for the Town this summer. He asked Council if they had any issues or concerns they would like to see included in the survey and for their opinion regarding the survey questions that are being asked by Mr. Lizan on the draft survey.

Mr. Lizan briefed Council on the three broadest categories of questions in his survey, satisfaction with general services; budget priorities; and overall perceptions of government performance. He noted that he planned to send out between 600 and 750 surveys by the middle of June and hoped to get a return of at least 300.

Budget Work Session

Council moved to the Conference Room where they discussed employee supplemental compensation. Following their discussion, Council came to a consensus that full-time employees would receive a supplemental payment of \$500 and part-time employees would receive \$250.

The work session adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Darleen R. Bailey, Town Clerk