

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2014, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET, VINTON, VIRGINIA.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bradley E. Grose, Mayor  
William W. Nance, Vice Mayor  
I. Douglas Adams, Jr.  
Matthew S. Hare

MEMBER ABSENT: Robert R. Altice

STAFF PRESENT: Christopher S. Lawrence, Town Manager  
Susan N. Johnson, Town Clerk  
Elizabeth Dillon, Town Attorney  
Ryan Spitzer, Assistant to the Town Manager  
Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer  
Gary Woodson, Public Works Director

**The Mayor called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.** Roll Call  
The Town Clerk called the roll with Council Member Adams, Council Member Hare, Vice Mayor Nance, and Mayor Grose present. Council Member Altice was absent.

After a Moment of Silence, Mr. Hare led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

**Under upcoming community events/ announcements, Liz Lively** with the Chamber commented that 2013 was a good year for the Chamber and its events. On January 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a joint meeting at the Woodland Place from 7:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. with the Town to discuss some marketing for 2014 and 2015. The Town Manager commented that this is a tentative date.

On February 8<sup>th</sup> is the winter concert with Tru Sol Band at Woodland Place from 6:30 p.m. until 11:30 p.m.

The Mayor announced that at the next Council meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup>, we plan to recognize Mike Altizer for his years of service representing Vinton on the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors.

The Town Manager announced that staff will be hosting a community meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at the War Memorial. This will be a time for the community to see all of our downtown design plans along with preliminary designs for the Glade Creek Greenway and the Walnut Avenue sidewalk improvements.

**Vice Mayor Nance made a motion that the consent agenda** be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Mr. Adams and carried by the following vote, with all Approved minutes of the regular Council meeting of December 3, 2013

members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) - Altice.

**The next item on the agenda was to consider adoption of an Ordinance adopting the VACo/VML Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund and authorizing the Treasurer/Chief Investment Officer to execute the Trust Joinder Agreement.**

Barry Thompson commented that the Town has an opportunity to participate in the Virginia Investment Pool. This Pool is similar to the Local Government Investment Pool which the Town has participated in for a number of years. This is being sponsored by the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League.

This Pool is a trustee organization that the City of Chesapeake and the City of Roanoke have committed funds to. The Town is not committing any funds to it at this time, but this is just an investment opportunity. If the rates were favorable for us to receive bids for investment monies, it would be a good and safe place for us to put some of our monies. We are very pleased with our local investment opportunities now, but this gives us another resource that has been approved by the State. This became available to us the first of January and if we want to take advantage of this opportunity, we need to amend our Investment Policy and move forward with a Joinder Agreement.

Mr. Thompson summarized by stating that an Ordinance is before Council approving the town's participation in the Investment Pool and authorizing the Treasurer/Chief Investment Officer to execute the Trust Joinder Agreement. A Resolution is also provided to allow for the amendment to our current Investment Policy.

Vice Mayor Nance commented that obviously this Pool is for long-term investments and a Town our size would only be placing funds in this Pool that we would not have to move except for unforeseen emergencies. Mr. Thompson responded that part of our monies are for operating needs and we want to keep them liquid so we can get to them. But there are some funds that we could invest for at least a year or even a little longer and this would be a good resource to look at and receive bids. Those funds now are in a money market account.

Mr. Nance said the Agreement does not appear to show any penalty if we put funds in the Pool and the emergency arose where we would have to tap into it. Mr. Thompson responded that you would have to give at least five days' notice, but does not think there is any penalty for an early withdrawal. Mr. Nance further commented that there is

some language stating that if you reduce the portfolio by over 10% they can limit the amount of withdrawal. But since there are larger cities and political subdivisions involved, the likelihood of the Town being able to invest that much would seem impossible.

Mr. Nance then asked if the portfolio mentioned is the entire group's investment or individual investments for different pools of money and the response was individual investments. In response to additional questions about the portfolio, Mr. Thompson commented that they will invest funds in different types of investments and the five days' notice is required because they will have to liquidate certain investments in order to get our funds, It will not hurt the entire portfolio.

The Mayor commented that our first action item is to approve the Ordinance adopting the Investment Pool Trust Fund. Mr. Hare commented that in keeping with our normal practice of putting action on a new item ahead to the next meeting, he would feel more comfortable if we postponed it to January 21<sup>st</sup>. Vice Mayor Nance also commented that the Finance Committee was not able to review the matter at their meeting because they ran out of time. Council then postponed action on the Ordinance regarding the Investment Pool and the Resolution approving an amendment to the Statement of Investment Policy to the January 21, 2014 meeting.

Adoption of Ordinance continued to the January 21, 2014 Council meeting; adoption of Resolution approving amendment to the Statement of Investment Policy also continued to the January 21, 2014 Council meeting

Mr. Thompson indicated that he would invite someone from the VACo/VML to come to the meeting to further explain the program and answer any questions that Council might have.

**The next item on the agenda to consider adoption of a Resolution authorizing the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$10,200 to Gay and Neel for consulting work relating to the Regional Surface Transportation Project award for Walnut Avenue Phase I.**

Ryan Spitzer commented that on April 16<sup>th</sup>, Council was presented three projects that staff wanted to submit for the RSTP funding through the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPO). Through the first initial disbursement of funds, the Town was awarded \$100,000 to do sidewalk improvements along Walnut Avenue from the new bridge to the Farmer's Market. This request is an appropriation of \$10,200 in this year's budget that was not previously appropriated because we were not aware of the funds being available until after our budget was formulated. These funds will pay for the site plans to be developed by Gay and Neel. All of these funds are 100% reimbursable and after the project has started, we will be submitting invoices for this reimbursement.

Adopted Resolution No. 2048 authorizing the appropriation of funds in the amount of

Mr. Adams made a motion that the Resolution be adopted as presented; the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Nance and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) - Altice.

\$10,200.00 to Gay and Neel for consulting work relating to the Regional Surface Transportation Project award for Walnut Avenue Phase I.

**The next item on the agenda to consider adoption of a Resolution approving the acceptance of funds from the Volunteer First Aid Crew in the amount of \$25,348.66 for the purchase of a Rehab Response Vehicle through a Virginia State Contract.**

The Town Manager commented that the Town had a Rehab Response vehicle until it was retired two years ago. The Volunteer First Aid Crew has developed a proposal where they will fund completely a replacement for this vehicle with a new four-wheel drive Ford F-250 truck. The best price for this particular vehicle can be found on the State Contract. Because the Town can purchase by State contract, but the First Aid Crew cannot, this request is to acknowledge the First Aid Crew submitting \$25,348.66 to the Town and the Town ordering the truck on the State contract. When received the vehicle will be titled to the Town, insured and maintained. This request was reviewed by the Public Safety Committee in October and their recommendation was to proceed.

Chief Philpott commented that the reason the Rehab vehicle was not replaced at the time the old one was retired was due to the fact that they were putting their funds toward the replacement of an ambulance. Now, the funds have been accumulated again for this purchase. Vice Mayor Nance asked if the Crew has found a need for this vehicle since the prior one has been missing from the fleet. Chief Philpott responded that during this time they have taken all of the equipment and stuffed it into the crash truck which is a poor application.

Mr. Hare asked Chief Philpott to explain for those present what the uses for this vehicle will be. Chief Philpott commented that in an extended fire situation, there is a need for bottles to be exchanged and to supply water and food to those working the fire. We have developed a program with Roanoke County that if we work Rehab in another area and buy food and supplies, the County will reimburse us for those costs. The old vehicle was used during the derecho because of the four-wheel drive and wench and we were able to pull trees out of the street. It can be used for any type of extended activity, such as a search and is very adaptive to any situation. Also, if we get into back woods areas it is difficult to get an ambulance in that area. The Town Manager commented that it will be used for special events as well which will keep an ambulance in service, but allow the crew to have a presence.

Approved Resolution No. 2049 approving the acceptance of

Mr. Adams made a motion that the Resolution be adopted as presented; the motion was seconded by Mr. Hare and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) - Altice.

**The next item was an update on the Branding Initiative** presented by Elevation to the Branding Committee. The Town Manager commented that Ryan Spitzer will be doing the briefing tonight. We will be inviting Elevation to come to an unveiling public meeting to make their presentation. We are trying to work out the details of this meeting which will include the Chamber.

Ryan Spitzer commented that the Branding Committee was given this presentation and recommendation by Elevation on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. He began with a Power Point presentation setting out the objectives for branding, findings from interviews, and their recommendations.

Remember that branding is not a logo. It is the way to tell the story of the Town with a few sentences or by visual means. The goal was to create the brand that is unique to Vinton and captures the core values of the Town. One that will be easy to remember, that automatically refers you to Vinton and that will differentiate us from our surroundings.

Elevation went through a process of conducting internal interviews with six groups of two stakeholders of the community. They also sent out an external survey which was completed by 190 individuals of a good mixture of people, both male and female and different age groups as well as high school students. Primary research was also done by looking at what similar size towns have done and what the region is doing.

Mr. Spitzer next commented that there were ten major ideas that came out of the interviews: Finding 1: Warm and Welcoming (Vinton is a community that is open, friendly and welcoming.) Finding 2: Close-Knit (Vinton is seen as a classic “small town” where everyone knows everyone.) Finding 3: Small (The Town of Vinton is geographically small.) Finding 4: Family Focused (Vinton is viewed as an excellent place to raise a family.) Finding 5: Hard-Working (Vinton is seen as a “blue collar” town where hard work is valued.) Finding 6: Caring (Vinton is caring community that rallies to support its own—and others, too.) Keep in mind that there are core themes that everybody mentioned in the interviews.

Finding 7: Access to Nature (Vinton’s location makes it ideal for those who love the outdoors.) Finding 8: Strong Services (Services provided by the town are outstanding—

funds from the Volunteer First Aid Crew in the amount of \$25,348.66 for the purchase of a Rehab Response Vehicle though a Virginia State Contract

and driven by strong customer service.) Finding 9: Convenient Location (Vinton offers easy access to both the city and rural environments, plus the Parkway and the Lake.) Finding 10: Making Progress (Vinton is a town on the rise that is making excellent progress and starting to turn heads.)

Mr. Spitzer then commented on the findings from the surveys which were shown as pie charts in the presentation. The blue and gray areas showed that between 70 and 90 percent of those who took the surveys strongly agree or agree with the same findings.

From the interviews and the survey, they began to build the brand by combining the attributes into three categories, relationship, functional and values. Out of these attributes, they came up with people, values and places and how the town is a connection between all of these. Vinton is a community of connections—where we create strong connections to others, celebrate our connections to small-town values, and enjoy our connections to a wealth of amenities. This is what Vinton is and what the town needs to portray to everyone else.

There are also challenges in the town that were identified in the survey below as falling below the 50 percent mark of agreeing such as are we a town that is an excellent place for business, do we have excellent place for shopping and dining, is it a diverse place to live, are we a town on the move and are we innovative. The people who were interviewed, the stakeholders of the town, knew about all the new projects in town, but the percentages in the survey went down from there. This shows a lack of communication between the town and the citizens. So, how do we better communicate to the citizens. When asked if people love Vinton, are they proud to live in Vinton and is it a town with a bright future, the percentages went back up again.

The conclusion is that we must promote the many pleasant surprises that so many already believe to be great in Vinton—while simultaneously inspiring others to get on board. A solution recommended by Elevation is to leverage our connections to people creating a feeling of being “insiders”, to small-town values creating a feeling of being “in the know” and to amenities creating a feeling of being “in the middle of it all.”

Mr. Spitzer then played the short video again that was shown at the State of the Town meeting. The next slide showed the brand of “Are you IN” by emphasizing the IN from the name Vinton. This can be used in all aspects of town such as eat in Vinton, shop in Vinton, gather in Vinton, play in Vinton and live in Vinton. The distressed font that

was chosen came up in their research as being very hard working with a blue collar mentality. The bold font catches your eye and the green color is for our connection to the outdoors. The green color can be changed to other colors for different applications, such as orange for the terriers, into blue to promote the new boat ramp or blue way.

Vice Mayor Nance commented that as one of the committee members he thinks that Elevation's research and their inspiration is very appropriate. He likes the flexibility and is very enthusiastic about the brand and how it can be used in a number of ways. He hopes that the Chamber will be as excited about and that we can look into some type of promotional partnership. The Mayor expressed his excitement about the brand and its flexibility as well. It is unique that it ties into our values and traditions, but yet it has a feel of being new and fresh.

Mr. Adams said from the first time it was revealed at the War Memorial, he thought the consultant did a very good job. It will catch your eye and bring attention to Vinton.

Mr. Hare said he is pleasantly surprised and he can see a lot of uses for it. He then asked how we will be able to integrate this with the War Memorial. He sees the concept with using the font that is distressed and hardworking, but this is not what we are trying to promote about the War Memorial. Vice Mayor Nance responded that the War Memorial is a phase of the branding that we need to focus on, but this brand would not be posted on the front of the War Memorial. What we might see is a small emblem of it on the War Memorial web page, but it will not change the character of the branding initiative of the War Memorial because they are two very different products and serve two different purposes. If we have an [invinton.com](http://invinton.com), which is one of their suggestions, we would have a link to the War Memorial website, but we would not have the War Memorial website being cast into this market plan.

The Town Manager commented that the Committee has another part of the presentation that is not being given tonight which is for the War Memorial. We want to get the brand done first and at a future date we will present the War Memorial side with their recommendations.

Mr. Spitzer continued by reviewing what Elevation envisions the marketing plan being for this brand. There are three phases, essential elements, potential elements and future elements. Elevation's style is more gorilla marketing than your traditional marketing which means very grassroots with Facebook, Twitter, stickers, bumper stickers, t-shirts, posting on websites and blogs. The type of marketing that gets away from your traditional paper type of marketing like

brochures that you find at hotels or a visitor's center. We are not saying we will not do any of this, but it will not be the primary focus.

Under the essential elements, they see the website as the main item, a new [invinton.com](http://invinton.com) website. This will be different from our current website and will have more of a calendar of events, dining and shopping information and will allow us to take quick polls and will have an RSS feed for social media posts. They recommend that we create the hashtag #invinton to start twittering about events and what is happening today. In response to a question from Mr. Hare as to who would be doing all of this, Mr. Spitzer commented that various people would be assisting with it. The Town Manager stated that there would be a little more engagement from staff to keep it up to date, but a lot of the social media side is more community driven.

Promotional materials could include bumper stickers, t-shirts, posters and reusable canvas bags. Environmental elements could include light pole banners, oversized magnets on school busses and bumper stickers on all town vehicles. Advertising could be a banner at the Terriers football field or an ad in their sports program. The business marketing would be to update the Chamber of Commerce's map, add more content to the Blue Ridge Parkway Directory and Travel Planner and to the interactive Blue Ridge Parkway map on their website.

Potential elements suggested could be creating more pages on the website, holding drawings for giveaways and creating a spotlight on a resident each month and how they are planning to promote Vinton. Other suggestions are buying Wine Festival glasses with the brand on them and some other environmental elements such as a large art installation or sign in the town or to change the name of the Farmer's Market to Community Market.

A slide was next shown of the suggested large art sign that people could stand behind and take pictures and then post them on Facebook. Other potential elements could be in advertising and business marketing particularly at Smith Mountain Lake.

Future elements could be creating an E-store to sell the promotional materials and creating additional products. Environmental elements could be a float for parades, putting the new website on the computer in the Municipal Building lobby and other methods of advertising.

Mr. Spitzer then commented that for us to do all the essential elements that Elevation's is recommending would cost approximately \$50,000. Of the total, 50% would be

for promotional materials production and 33% website/social media creative development. The War Memorial business marketing is not included in this figure. He then reviewed a breakdown of the costs as prepared by Elevation.

Mr. Hare asked about the signage that currently exists and Mr. Spitzer responded they view that as more of a wayfinding signage program such as the entrance signs. This signage will be part of the downtown grant to make those signs compliment the ones that we do for downtown. The Town Manager further commented that wayfinding signs are directional, not marketing. Mr. Spitzer stated that the lifespan of branding is about seven years, but entrance signs are for 20-30 years. It is not the best way to spend the funds by redoing those signs that could last for 20 years.

Mr. Hare next asked if we would ask businesses to take any stake in the branding or do we produce a lot of t-shirts and just give them away. Mr. Spitzer responded that to start out we would have to spend some money to get the word out, but after that we could contact businesses. He could see the Chamber doing "In Vinton" shirts instead of the "I love Vinton" shirts. The Town Manager commented that we have paid Elevation for the product and now it is ours to distribute any way we want to. If a local business wants the image, it can download it off the internet and use it. It will be so much better if the community does take it on and buys into it.

After questions and discussion about future costs, Vice Mayor Nance commented about the Chamber hopefully forming a partnership with the town to promote the brand and help with those costs. Mr. Spitzer commented that there are varying degrees to all the elements that have been presented.

The Mayor commented that our Chamber is very community oriented and there has already been a lot of interest expressed in the new branding. Mr. Adams stated that with everything else that is going on there could not be a better time to begin promoting this new branding.

The Town Manager summarized that at this time staff needs a consensus from Council to proceed with the branding. A consensus of Council present was given.

Consensus of Council to proceed with the branding

**The Mayor commented that we do have a lot of excitement and momentum in the town right now. We have gotten some exposure and publicity and 2014 is shaping up to be an exciting year. We need to make a lot of decisions on economic development to build on this excitement and the moving ahead on the branding initiative is very important.**

**Mr. Hare commented that the Finance Committee met** right before the Council meeting. We spent most of the meeting discussing some of the audit comments and our intent is to try and start working on these items so they will clear off of the next audit. With that, he asked if we could postpone the review of the November 2013 Financial Report until January 21<sup>st</sup>.

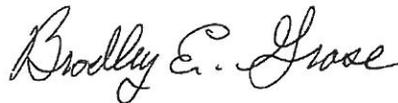
The Committee did focus some again on the cigarette tax and in December we asked the Town Manager to review our capital spending and see if there were items we could delay to see how these funds continue to come in. At the end of November we were down about \$60,000 and as of the end of December, we are now down about \$90,000. The Town Manager has put together a very helpful memo setting out the CIP for the year showing what has already been spent or committed, what is still outstanding and the recommendation from staff as to what they will do to counteract the shortage in revenues.

We are still running favorable in sales and meals taxes and in early April once we have the March statements, we will be more inclined to make a final determination and what we will possibly need to move to next year.

**Mr. Adams commented about the very quick response** at 3:00 am this morning in the extreme cold from the volunteer and career staff in helping to find an elderly gentleman who was missing from his home.

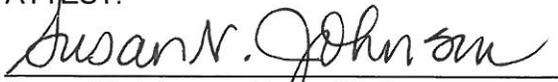
Mr. Hare made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Nance and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) - Altice. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

APPROVED:



Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:



Susan N. Johnson, Town Clerk