

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 5:45 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 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.
Robert R. Altice
Matthew S. Hare

STAFF PRESENT: Christopher S. Lawrence, Town Manager
Theresa Fontana, Town Attorney
Susan N. Johnson, Town Clerk
Ryan Spitzer, Assistant to the Town Manager
Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer
Karla Turman, Associate Planner/Code Enforcement Officer
Joey Hiner, Assistant Public Works Director
Anita McMillan, Planning & Zoning Director
Ben Cook, Police Chief

The Mayor called the work session to order at 5:45 p.m.

to hear request for funding presentations by some of our community agencies. Christine Drake with the American Red Cross-Roanoke Valley Chapter, began by commenting that the Red Cross has submitted a request to help victims of local house fires. The majority of the 70,000 disasters that the Red Cross responds to each year are local house fires and floods. In FY 2013, the Red Cross responded to five incidents in Vinton, four single-family fires and one single-family flood. These incidents affected 17 people and they received immediate disaster relief. Also, all residents of Vinton who wished were afforded shelter and food following the Dericho. Ms. Drake then introduced Chris Bruner, the Disaster Services Program Manager, who made brief comments on what the Red Cross does on a day to day basis.

Doug Forbes commented next as Treasurer of the Vinton Historical Society. The Society operates the Vinton Museum, which is the only historical museum in the County. He expressed thanks for the operating fund grant and the use and support of the Upson House where the Museum is housed. There are approximately 3,000 artifacts currently at the Museum and we are collecting more. We have outgrown the present facility and need to expand; however, we would like to stay in our present location because of its proximity to the new library branch being built downtown. A 25th anniversary celebration of the Museum is planned for April 12th and everyone is invited to attend. Mr. Forbes also recognized the members of the Historical Society who were present--Barbara and John Hargis, Mattie Forbes, Mayor Grose and Doug Adams.

Liz Lively, current President of the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce, commented that she is excited about the upcoming projects and the coming together with some of the local business owners to look at how we can better help and serve them. The Chamber is looking to grow the partnership with the Town, to grow the strength of the businesses already here and to help bring in new businesses. The focus is on what we have and how we can grow and make it better. Over the next 24 months the Chamber intends to partner with the Town in several areas, one being advertising to help with economic development.

Vice Mayor Nance asked Ms. Lively how specific she could be about the proposed usage of their requested funding increase. Ms. Lively responded that the Chamber wants to allocate \$5,000 to partner with the Town to host joint town membership meetings at venues in Vinton for free of charge. We want to bring in some high caliber speakers that can help some of the local businesses. Also, over the past couple of years we have not been able to use any of that money for economic development, economic growth or to put new programs into place. Mr. Nance then commented about the banners needed for the new streetlights and he recalled the Chamber helping with those banners. Ms. Lively responded the Chamber has provided the funds for the banners every year in the past and the costs would be coming out of this year's bottom line. Mr. Nance then asked if the Chamber would be tying in the new branding campaign with that and the response was yes. Over the past two weeks, the Chamber has changed everything we use such as logos, signatures and everything in social media to include the "In Vinton".

The Mayor commented that he, the Town Manager, Angie Lewis and Ms. Lively meet about once a month. Their recent discussions have been along the lines of formulating some type of group that can call on businesses. The Town Manager commented that with the request for extra money, an agreement is being drafted, that will spell out how these funds will be used.

Kelly Cass, on behalf of the Mountain View Humane Spay/Neuter, presented a handout to Council. She began by commenting that each year we ask the local governments of the areas that we serve to fund spay/neuter assistance for their residents. Last year the Town gave a \$500 grant and we have served 96 animals from Vinton and only 19 of those animals used the funding provided by the Town. Other resources of funding were found for 33 of the animals and 44 required no subsidy. We are requesting the same \$500 amount again this year. After other comments, Ms. Cass read a letter from a Vinton resident who did receive assistance for a kitten. The Town Manager commented

about how Mountain View did not request their funds up front, but waited until they had used the \$500 as a subsidy for Vinton residents. He also commented that the Pound is going to start a coupon program that individuals can use at Mountain View or other local veterinarian offices for spay and neuter services.

The last presentation was by Lisa Kornegay on behalf of the William Byrd High School After Prom Committee. She announced that the After Prom is this weekend and is a safe alternative for the kids from midnight to 3:30 a.m. William Byrd is the only school in Roanoke County that offers the event for free. The After Prom is run 100% on donations and fundraisers and the budget this year is \$10,000. The Committee appreciates the donation from the Town last year and we want to keep it free as long as possible. Ms. Kornegay further commented that last year the Committee put out a request to all of the parents in Vinton for gift cards for prizes and through their contacts collected 150 gift cards. The retention rate (number of kids that stay for the entire event) was the highest last year at 87%. There are incentives to stay such as a t-shirt and chances at some great prizes.

The Mayor expressed thanks to all the agencies that made a presentation this evening and all of their requests will be considered as part of the budget process.

The Work Session ended at 6:20 p.m. and Council took a recess.

The Mayor called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Town Clerk called the roll with Council Member Adams, Council Member Altice, Council Member Hare, Vice Mayor Nance, and Mayor Grose present. After a Moment of Silence, Mr. Hare led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Roll Call

Under upcoming community events/announcements, Doug Adams announced that the second meeting on the small pocket park will be on March 27th. The Town Manager announced that a ground breaking for all of the downtown projects will be on April 3rd at 10 a.m. on the site of the new library. Invitations will be going out today. Ryan Spitzer announced the Senior Expo on March 25th at the War Memorial. The Mayor reminded everyone of the Dogwood Festival to be held April 23-27.

Mr. Adams made a motion that the consent agenda be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Nance and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None.

Approved minutes of the regular Council meeting of March 4, 2014

Vice Mayor Nance read a letter from Chief Cook naming Detective Sergeant James Testerman and Detective Brandon Hill as Officers for the Month for February 2014.

The next item on the agenda was a Public Hearing to receive comments regarding setting of the real estate, personal property and machinery and tools tax rates for calendar year 2014. Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer, gave brief comments and reviewed the assessment rates as advertised for the Public Hearing. The rate was a 0.25% decrease for a total amount of \$349.

After the staff report, the Mayor opened the Public Hearing at 7:11 p.m. Hearing no comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 7:12 p.m.

Public hearing opened and closed, no comments

Mr. Hare commented there is no proposal to change the tax rate and Mr. Thompson responded that the proposed rate for 2014 is \$0.03, the same as it was for 2013. Mr. Hare asked when would the bills go out and the response was the first week of April. Mr. Hare then asked if in theory they could have one more Council meeting to act on this and Mr. Thompson said it would push the schedule because Roanoke IT is looking at the last week in March to make all of the changes for the billing.

Mr. Hare further commented that these questions were prompted by the struggle with what to do on the challenge we have on the Fire/EMS side. There is not an unlimited pool of money in the budget and public safety is the No. 1 priority. With the potential to have to add staffing, we know it is going to cost us \$70-80,000 in personnel costs along with a potential loss of \$30,000 in ambulance recovery fees. Mr. Hare stated that he is not a proponent of tax increases, but he would not want a couple of cents difference to come between his family's safety and not having it.

After additional comments from Mr. Hare and the Mayor, Mr. Altice said it is rather unusual how it is set up, you set the tax rate and then you prepare the budget. Mr. Thompson then commented that if we wanted to increase the tax rate, we would have to advertise again for two times, which would put us into April. The Town Manager asked Mr. Thompson what a penny increase would be and he responded about \$46,000.

The Mayor asked Mr. Thompson what would happen to this schedule if this was delayed for one meeting and he responded that it would be doable. However, if we are looking at increasing the tax rate, we would have to advertise twice for a Public Hearing and April 15th would be too late.

Vice Mayor Nance asked what had been requested of the department heads as far as budget goals. The Town Manager responded that he has asked for two proposals, one was level budget and with that there is still a \$200,000 gap right now. We also asked for a 5% cut to each budget and we are working through those numbers.

Mr. Adams stated that next year he would like to be able to discuss this at an earlier time where Council is not locked into a time period. The Town Manager commented that usually we do a revenue presentation, ask for approval to advertise a certain rate and then we have the Public Hearing in March. We can move that whole schedule back to February if Council desires.

Mr. Altice made a motion to adopt the Ordinance setting the real estate tax rate for calendar year 2014 as presented; the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Nance. After additional comments by Council, the motion was carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0).

Adopted Ordinance No. 946 setting the real estate tax rate for calendar year 2014

After comments by Mr. Thompson, Mr. Hare made a motion to adopt the Ordinance setting the personal property and machinery and tools tax rate for calendar year 2014 as presented; the motion was seconded by Mr. Altice, and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0).

Adopted Ordinance No. 947 setting the personal property and machinery and tools tax rate for calendar year 2014

The next item for consideration was a Resolution to set the allocation percentage for the Personal Property Tax Relief for the 2014 tax year. Mr. Thompson made brief comments and stated that for 2014, the rate for the Town is 63.41%. Vice Mayor Nance made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented; the motion was seconded by Mr. Adams and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0).

Adopted Resolution No. 2056 setting the allocation percentage for the Personal Property Tax Relief for the 2014 tax year

The next item was to consider adoption of an Ordinance decreasing an excise tax on the sale of cigarettes from \$0.35 to \$0.25 on each package containing 25 or fewer cigarettes. The Town Manager commented that last year when he proposed increasing the tax \$0.15 his primary focus was on the continued financial need primarily in capital. The increase was approved and we estimated it would bring in about \$460,000 which is an additional \$160,000 over our previous year's budget. If we look at what we approved in the budget, revenue to date and our new projection, we are expected to be down around \$130,000 by June 30th of this year. Based on information from the wholesalers and the

retailers, sales are down; however, if this decrease is approved, that will put us at about \$165,000 under budgeted.

The Town Manager next commented that we are obligated to only spend what is approved and only if the revenue is there to cover those expenditures. We began looking at the budget in January to see where we could trim and the first items to consider were capital improvements. We were able to save \$90,000 and are now looking at trimming in other areas.

The Mayor commented that this is not an encouragement for people to smoke more. Vice Mayor Nance commented that when the tax increase does not help the Town, does not increase the revenues and hurts our businesses, it makes for a pretty easy decision. Council received two emails from citizens who discouraged them from decreasing taxes on cigarettes because they felt it was encouraging people to smoke and may send a wrong message. Mr. Nance further stated that the taxes in the Town are to fund the working of this government and to fund the infrastructure, public safety, public works and the services we provide to our citizens and stakeholders and nothing else. He is in support of the decrease.

Mr. Hare commended Council and staff for taking a look at this issue and recognizing the need to change direction. The funds received over the last several years from this tax have funded some important infrastructure and personnel needs for our community. By responding to the needs of our community that this is not what we want and is not what we are going to support, that sends a strong and valuable message that the Town is still open for business and wants people to come and purchase items in Vinton. The Mayor added that the tax did not work and we are willing to admit that and make the appropriate changes. Mr. Adams commented that we listened to our citizens, researched the issue, realized it was not the right thing and are willing to correct it.

Mr. Hare made a motion to adopt the Ordinance as presented; the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor, and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0). The Town Manager commented that this decrease will go into effect tomorrow.

The next item was to consider adoption of a Resolution approving the final Revolving Loan Program Plan and Guidelines Manual and its supporting documents to administer the Revolving Loan Program as part of the CDBG Program. Ryan Spitzer reviewed the change on Page 4 of the Program Plan and Guidelines Manual to add that the Loan Review Committee can determine if a loan can be

Adopted Ordinance No. 948 decreasing an excise tax on the sale of cigarettes from \$0.35 to \$0.25 on each package containing 25 or fewer cigarettes

subordinate or not based on the amount or specifics for the loan. There were also changes on Page 2 of the Loan Agreement under Section 2 and there will be a requirement for other loan closing documents to be completed along with this Agreement.

In response to a question about participation, Mr. Spitzer commented that four different businesses have inquired about the loan program. Mr. Hare commented that if the decision to allow subordination will happen at the time the Committee reviews the application, what would happen if someone comes back later and asks to subordinate. Mr. Spitzer responded they would have to go back to the Committee as a matter of procedure.

After further discussion about subordination, the Town Attorney commented that because the Town loan is first, it cannot be subordinated without the Town's permission. The Agreement is to memorialize that they have gone through the process and we have agreed to loan them a certain amount of money. The loan is subject to the applicant signing all of the closing documents and prior to that, the Committee will identify what collateral is going to be used, who needs to be a party to the closing documents and the appropriate documents will be recorded.

Mr. Hare made a motion that the Resolution be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Mr. Adams and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None.

Under briefing, the item related to required amendments to Division 4, Accessory Buildings and Temporary Buildings, Sections 5-15 through 5-17.2, of Article V, Supplementary Regulations, of Appendix B, Zoning, of the Town Code. Karla Turman began by commenting that in the past Council had approved temporary health care structures that were mandated by the State. These are structures that localities have to allow on properties if they meet certain requirements in a residential district. During the 2013 legislative session, the General Assembly amended the ordinance to add some definitions to clarify "activities of daily living", "assistance", and also if the couple is married, one of them can live there as long as one of them is assisting the one who needs the help. This new legislation also requires that once the structure is no longer needed, it can remain on the property for 60 days instead of 30.

The Town Manager asked if we currently have any of these structures in Town and Ms. Turman responded no. She stated that it would be difficult for anyone to have one because of the setback regulations and there are not that

Adopted Resolution No. 2057 approving the final Revolving Loan Program Plan and Guidelines Manual and its supporting documents to administer the Revolving Loan Program as part of the CDBG Program

many properties that would accommodate one of these structures.

Mr. Hare asked about Section 5-17.2 (b)(5) that refers to a married couple and how would that stand up now that our Constitution has been amended and how does it define a married person. Ms. Turman responded that she does not know and the Town Attorney responded in the same way. Ms. Turman further commented that possibly that issue would be challenged in the future and that there are also couples who are not legally married that would not fall under this. The Planning Commission Public Hearing is scheduled for March 25th and the Council's Public Hearing is scheduled for April 15th.

The Town Manager commented that the delivery of the proposed budget will be delayed two weeks. After we adjourn our meeting, he would like to check everyone's calendar to schedule the department presentations. He would also propose to use the fifth Tuesday in April as a budget work session as well. That will leave the May 5th meeting for additional budget discussion and then the Public Hearing can be scheduled for May 20th and the adoption of the budget set for the first meeting in June. However, the adoption could be done at the second meeting in June. The Town Manager further commented that VRS and our health Insurance are going up and revenues are going down in a couple of areas.

The Mayor expressed thanks again for those who helped during the recent weather events. He also expressed thanks to staff for their monthly reports which are very informative and detailed.

Comments from Council: Mr. Hare asked about getting information out about the cigarette tax decrease and Mr. Thompson responded that a mailing has been prepared to send out tomorrow.

Anita McMillan announced that April 5th is Clean Valley Day for the Roanoke Valley and that April 17th will be the Town's Arbor Day Celebration at the Craig Center at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Hare asked Ms. McMillan about the status of the boat ramp. She responded that we applied for a grant through the Roanoke Valley Foundation, but did not receive it. There is a budget for it of \$3,500-7,000 to improve a section of the parking area and to put proper signage as required by our insurance. We are talking about \$3,500-7,000. There is an area where we need to stabilize a section to prevent any future erosion, but at least \$2,100 we can probably get in donations or possibly get it done as a boy scout project. Mr. Hare then asked if there would be any way-finding signs and

the response was just the sign to meet the insurance requirements. Mr. Hare then commented that he wants to make sure we are a part of the overall effort in the Valley to promote outdoor recreation. Ms. McMillan responded that she is on the Blue Way Committee and there will be a press release and a map showing the boat access coming from Tinker and 22 other access points to the Roanoke River. She is also on the aesthetic committee working on signage to let people know where the Greenways are and the trails, but also for safety management for individuals in case they get hurt on a trail, they will be able to identify exactly where they are by markers or signage.

Mr. Adams made a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Hare and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 5-0; Yeas (5) – Adams, Altice, Hare, Nance, Grose; Nays (0) – None. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Meeting adjourned

The Work Session was continued to hear funding presentations by the Vinton Volunteer First Aid Crew and the Vinton Volunteer Fire Department.

Tom Philpott, Chief of the Vinton Volunteer First Aid Crew gave the first presentation. Mr. Philpott began by stating how much the Crew appreciates all that Council does for them. This year we are requesting \$17,000. We have eight new members we need to equip with the basic uniforms and personal protective equipment at a cost of around \$800-900 per person. We would also like to replace a couple of computers and need funds for training, batteries for equipment and service on equipment to keep it certified. In October the Vinton First Aid Crew will be celebrating 75 years and there will be an event that everyone will be invited to. We are putting the Rehab Truck together and the offer is still on the table to pay the Town's portion on an ambulance. We know the Town is in a financial situation and we appreciate anything the Town can do.

The Mayor commented that he appreciates all the Crew does and this is one of the oldest partnerships with the Town. Mr. Philpott stated that the Crew did answer over 1,300 calls this past year and this past weekend the training officer conducted classes in Town and awarded some 840 continuing education hours for people from all over the State.

Mr. Altice asked how much we received in transport fees and Mr. Thompson said around \$175,000. Mr. Adams commented that he would like to have a better understanding of the reporting because he does not understand how the number of calls are going up, but the dollar amount is staying the same. Mr. Thompson commented that Chief Simon is sending a report that reflects the payment we get from

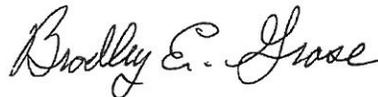
Roanoke County and he will be glad to send that report to Council, but it does not give the details of each of the calls. The Town Manager commented that he can check with the County about getting such a detailed report.

Richard Oakes, Chief for the Vinton Volunteer Fire Department, began his presentation by commenting that we are asking for the same amount again this year. The funds will be used for station uniforms replacement and shirts, contract fees, office supplies, travel for some out-of-town classes that are not available locally and equipment replacement. This past February is the first time in about five years that we were able to go to the Chiefs' Conference in Virginia Beach. Mr. Oakes expressed appreciation to Council for all they do for the department. Mr. Adams asked about the new brush truck and the response was we still need to add side steps, but that it was used on a brush fire call last week.

Mr. Hare commented that he has the pleasure of serving with Chief Philpott and Chief Oakes along with Mr. Adams on the Public Safety Committee and in regard to the 24-hour fire coverage, they have stepped up and attended extra meetings. They are willing to give up their personal time with the family to serve their fellow citizens. Mr. Adams commented that Chief Cook, who was present in the audience, is also on that Committee.

The Work Session was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

APPROVED:



Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:



Susan N. Johnson, Town Clerk