

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF VINTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 6:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2015, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET, VINTON, VIRGINIA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bradley E. Grose, Mayor
Matthew S. Hare, Vice Mayor
I. Douglas Adams, Jr.
Sabrina M. Weeks

MEMBER ABSENT: William W. Nance

STAFF PRESENT: Christopher S. Lawrence, Town Manager
Theresa Fontana, Town Attorney
Susan N. Johnson, Town Clerk
Ryan Spitzer, Assistant Town Manager
Donna Collins, Human Resources Specialist
Mary Beth Layman, Special Programs Director
Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer
Mark Vaught, Lieutenant-Services
Joey Hiner, Public Works Assistant Director

The Mayor called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

to year requests for funding presentations by some of the community agencies. After the Town Manager made brief opening comments, Lisa Kornegay on behalf of the William Byrd High School After Prom Committee expressed thanks to Council for their donation last year. She commented that the Prom this year is May 9th, the After Prom theme will be the children's book "Where Wild Things Are" and their total budget is approximately \$10,000. This year the Committee has joined forces with Lord Botetourt High School to share each other's props and to help cut down on costs for both schools. Ms. Pitts next commented that most of the funds for the event come from local businesses and the booster clubs from the school. The goal is to keep the event free and William Byrd is the only school in the County and the City that offers this free to the students. They feel that if they have to start charging it would give kids a reason to not come. There are usually around 350 kids who participate in the event. Over the past two years there has been about an 80% retention rate of kids that stay from 12 midnight until 3:30 a.m. which has grown from 25% four years ago. The funds received will be used to purchase t-shirts, buy whatever food items are not donated and pay for the games and inflatables.

The next presenter was Debbie Pitts on behalf of the Vinton Historical Society. Ms. Pitts recognized Mattie Forbes, Barbara Hargis and Judy Cunningham who were in the audience. She expressed thanks to Council for the funds that were given for the Museum last year. There are over 3,000 artifacts in the Museum and last year 1,400 people visited the Museum. The Historical Society is currently expanding its services to include more

genealogical and historical research resources and they are actively involved in a capital building fund to raise money to preserve, upgrade and enlarge the Upson House. This will be an ongoing effort and to date \$7,000 has been raised. Ms. Pitts further commented that they are trying to raise awareness and increase their membership through launching a website and through their Face Book page. They will also begin to offer more public programs.

The next presentation was by Corrie Prater on behalf of the Mountain View Humane Spay/Neuter. Ms. Prater began by commenting they have two clinics, one on Peters Creek Road and one in Christiansburg that serve clients from Southern West Virginia to the other side of Bedford, to Martinsville and Wytheville. The clinics are low-cost, high-quantity and high-quality and performing 30-40 surgeries a day at both clinics. They have performed over 33,000 between the two clinics. Typically the cost is \$73 for a female dog spay and a full-services veterinarian may charge anywhere from \$300-500. Many people get animals and they really want to do the right thing, but some cannot afford the cost at a regular veterinarian. Almost 65% of their clients cannot even afford their low cost, so they raise funds for subsidy funding which allows them to help those individuals who are not able to pay the full amount.

They are asking the Town for funding again and know they are making an impact here locally. They work with the RCACP and any animal that comes out of the RCACP for adoption goes to Mountain View first. In 2013 approximately 5,000 dogs and cats were turned in and 1,800 did not make it out whether they died in care or euthanasia. Last year 4,700 dogs and cats were turned in and only 1,300 did not make it out. Ms. Prater further commented that this year they are asking for funding for their feral cat spay and neuter program. They typically charge \$35 for feral cats.

The Town Manager commented that in the past, the Town gave the funds directly to Mountain View. This year we have a coupon program that allows Town residents to get \$25 off of any spay and neuter. This allows the residents to go any veterinarian, but we encourage them to go to Mountain View because the cost is low. Ms. Prater commented that there are a stack of coupons at the RCACP and the Town Manager commented that our Animal Control Officer would also have some in the truck to hand out. For almost six months we have not had a true Animal Control Officer since the Police Department has been short-staffed, but another Officer is moving into that position in a few weeks.

The last presentation was by Angie Lewis on behalf of the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Lewis first

commented that funding is important to the Chamber in assisting the Town to promote economic development and the revitalization of the downtown which includes the new library, encourage business development and to assist with the exposure and promotion of the new "In Vinton" branding. The Chamber is celebrating their 65th anniversary this year. Over the last year alone, the Chamber membership has grown by 70 members, one being Magnets USA, which will be having a ribbon cutting on March 18th at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Lewis next commented that the Chamber has expanded their special events calendar to 13 major events over the past few years. With these events in conjunction with other events, new businesses and our new library have the potential to bring very large crowds and a lot of traffic to Vinton. They will be joining the Roanoker magazine again this year to produce an issue of the Vinton Magazine which will come out in July.

Vice Mayor Hare asked why they are requesting to double their funding. Ms. Lewis responded that with all of the new events along with being the Chamber's 65th anniversary, they want to doing a little something special with those. Also, they want to talk to some new businesses around the area and outside the area to look to Vinton and they need funding to help with this.

The work session ended at 6:30 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 Weeks, Vice Mayor Hare and Mayor Grose present. Council Member Nance was absent. After a Moment of Silence, Council Member Adams led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Roll call

Under upcoming community events/ announcements, Council Member Weeks announced the 60th Annual Vinton Dogwood Festival which will start April 22nd with the parade being Saturday, April 25th at 2:30 p.m. She also commented about the variety of events for the Senior Adults and announced the Senior Expo sponsored by the Chamber on March 24th at 10:00 a.m. at the War Memorial. Also, the Vinton Relay for Life will be May 1st-2nd at the William Byrd High School field.

Council Member Adams made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Hare and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Weeks, Hare, Grose; Nays (0) - None; Absent (1) - Nance.

Approved minutes for the regular Council meeting of February 3, 2015

The next item on the agenda was a Proclamation declaring March 2015 as American Cross Month. Council Member Weeks read the Proclamation and presented it to Paula Poston, Disaster Program Manager for the Red Cross. The Town Clerk mentioned that last year's Proclamation indicated there were 444 volunteers in the Roanoke Valley and now there are 615.

Vice Mayor Hare read a Memo from Chief Cook naming Detective Corporal Brandon Hill as Officer of the month for January.

The next item on the agenda was a request for funding presentation by the Dogwood Festival Committee. Penny Mullins, a Committee member, first thanked Council for their long-standing support of the Dogwood Festival financially, the numerous in-kind services and the personal support of the Town. They are asking for \$2,000 again for 2016. The Committee is always trying to provide ways for the community to come together and have as much free entertainment as possible. In addition to the financial support for 2016, there is also another need. The Board has been notified by Roanoke County that possibly they will not have a venue for the carnival because of the old William Byrd School property being on the market for sale. Ms. Mullins indicated that if anyone has ideas of venues to have the carnival in 2016 and beyond, they would appreciate those ideas being passed to the Committee. The percentage of the sales from the carnival is a big part of the revenue that they get for the Festival each year.

Vice Mayor Hare asked if the War Memorial parking lot be an acceptable site and Ms. Mullins responded possibly it would be. Council Member Adams asked if they had talked to the vendor that runs the carnival to see what square footage requirement would be and she responded she would pass that information along to Todd Bailey and get back with Council in that regard. Vice Mayor Hare asked if there had always been a carnival and Mary Beth Layman responded at least the last 15-20 years. The first carnival was at the Farmers' Market, but because of the great response, it has continued to grow in size over the years. The Town Manager commented that staff will continue to work with the Dogwood Committee to find a new venue. One of the suggested sites was Vinyard Park, but that is a heavily used athletic field and the reality is the impact would destroy the grass on the field and they need nine months of athletics to run on those fields.

The next item on the agenda was to consider approval to compensate all essential employees who worked during the snow event on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, with eight (8) hours paid leave. The Town Manager commented that the administrative offices of the Town were closed on

February 17th due to the significant snow event. As we did for last year, those who did not have to work received normal pay for that day. However, the essential employees worked on that day and we are requesting to credit those employees with an extra day off that they can take by the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2015.

Vice Mayor Hare asked that since the Governor declared a State of Emergency, do we get to apply for any funding. The Town Manager responded that we did not declare a State of Emergency locally because we were able to handle the event with our own resources. If we thought we were going to have to ask for State resources, then we would have declared a State of Emergency. When a Federal State of Emergency is declared, that is when funds start becoming available.

Vice Mayor Hare then asked about the cost of granting the leave and the Town Manager responded that we do not have that information available, but employees will be allowed to take these eight hours instead of annual leave. Barry Thompson commented that he can have that information for the next Council meeting. Vice Mayor Hare commented that some employees have more time on the books than they can take. He wants the time given to be perceived by those employees that we sincerely appreciated what they did even though they cannot take advantage of the time off.

Vice Mayor Hare made a motion to compensate all essential employees who worked during the snow event on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, with eight (8) hours paid leave, said hours to be taken by June 30, 2015 with the Town Manager being allowed the discretion to extend the June 30th deadline. The motion was seconded by Council Member Adams and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Weeks, Hare, Grose; Nays (0) - None; Absent (1) - Nance.

The next item on the agenda was a further update by

The Advancement Foundation regarding a business incubator in the top floor of the Health Department Building. The Town Manager commented that this concept was presented to Council at a prior meeting. We have invited Annette Patterson back to present the concept again with a little more in-depth information regarding the vision and operational costs. Ms. Patterson began by commenting that the proposal was to partner with the Town of Vinton to create the incubator in the main floor of the Health Department building. She then began a Power Point presentation and restated the vision of the incubator. The Town's partnership would entail allowing the use of the building and helping with the maintenance and utilities on the building.

Approved compensating all essential employees who worked during the snow event on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, with eight (8) hours paid leave, said hours to be taken by June 30, 2015 with the Town Manager being allowed the discretion to extend the June 30th deadline

In the last meeting, Council asked that she talk with some of the neighbors right around the Health Department building. She met with Mr. Campbell who owns the barbershop across the street and he liked the idea, but his main concern was parking. Ms. Patterson assured him that they had some strategies to make sure that the individuals that would be in the business incubator would not be using the community parking on the street and even proposed some sort of decal system. She met with Reverend Coles of the First Baptist Church who presented the idea to his entire congregation and they were in full support of the project and have several members who are going to become advisors to some of their small business entrepreneurs. She also met with Suzanne Renegar of the Health Department who was very supportive and suggested that we meet with her staff so that they would be aware of opportunities that might be available to some of the individuals that they work with.

Ms. Patterson next showed slides and commented on the Gauntlet event that was held on January 17th, which was a great success. They gave away \$10,000 in prizes, some in cash, in-kind services and computers. She next commented that Council had requested the actual costs involved to run the program. She presented a draft budget to Council for their review. In essence they are asking the Town for the costs of \$15,582. The budget includes \$26,000 in value for the use of the building. The key items would be the utilities and insurance which the Town is already paying. The only new cost would be for the phone and internet connection at \$3,000. The items listed as the responsibility of The Advancement Foundation contributions would not happen immediately. They will have to hire a program director and are allocating AmeriCorp Vista and two AmeriCorp State members to the program. Other program expenses listed that The Advancement Foundation will contribute brought their total contributions to \$95,590.

They have a three-year sustainability plan. Ms. Patterson reported they did not get the Operation AmeriCorp grant mentioned in her last presentation to Council. However, she has had conversations with the USDA that is very interested in business development and are combining two grants to create one larger local grant opportunity. Also, the Department of Housing and Community Development visited with them, took a tour of the building and they were able to tell them about the program. They were interested because this program will not only create office space for businesses, but will help to coach and sustain small business owners and also help them to utilize community resources like the IDA program. They have several grants for program development and two-year opportunities to support the operations of such a program.

Ms. Patterson next commented that they will create earned income streams to support the program such as sliding scale rentals, fees for services and sponsorship opportunities and then reviewed the project goals for the program.

Vice Mayor Hare asked if the Health Department was linked to the Municipal Building in any way and the Town Manager responded no. However, the new library will have a large information bandwidth demand and Roanoke County has upgraded their fiber ring to get a 50 megabyte bandwidth into the library. We worked with the County to get that bandwidth provided into this building and we will share that with the library. We do have fiber to the Fire House that we installed when we did the EMS building which is behind the Health Department building. We would have to check and see if we can get a much broader bandwidth into that building.

Vice Mayor Hare asked what the next step would be and the Town Manager commented that if there is a commitment from Council, then staff can work with Ms. Patterson to develop a formal lease agreement from a building and a program standpoint. Vice Mayor Hare then commented that he is excited to be able to partner with The Advancement Foundation in this endeavor and the Mayor expressed the same sentiments. Ms. Patterson also commented that she will be meeting with Angie Lewis and Todd Creasy of the Chamber regarding the concept. After further comments from the Town Manager, Council gave their consensus to proceed with developing a formal lease agreement.

Consensus of Council to proceed with developing a formal lease agreement with The Advancement Foundation for the top floor of the Health Department building for a business incubator program

The next item on the agenda was a general update on revenues/expenditures for the proposed FY2015-2016 budget. Barry Thompson, Finance Director/Treasurer began a Power Point presentation by first commenting that this will be a general overview of revenues and expenditures as they stand at this point. The budget team and the leadership team have been working diligently on formulating the budget and right now the projected revenues total \$12,403,284 broken down by General Fund of \$8,785,134 and Utility Fund of \$3,618,150.

Mr. Thompson next commented on each of the categories that make up the General Fund. The first category was general property taxes for a total of \$503,402 which is very close to last year's figures. The next category of other local taxes totaling \$4,140,200 is only showing growth in a couple of categories. The pari-mutual tax was zeroed out because of the closing of Colonial Downs and the admissions tax was lowered from \$2,500 to \$500. The transient occupancy tax comes from the Efficiency Inn. If there was ever a new hotel in the Town, we may want to look at that tax rate because it

is very low. The Mayor asked if other localities have a different tax rate for standard hotels as opposed to extended-stay hotels. Mr. Thompson responded that he could check with Roanoke City because they have a Main Stay Hotel and report back to Council. The prepared meals tax was lowered by \$5,000 and the cigarette tax was lowered to \$250,000 because it is not doing as we anticipated even after lowering the rate. We did increase the sales tax by \$15,000.

The categories of permits and fees and fines and forfeitures remained the same. Under use of money and property, the investment income category had an increase due to some earnings from the bond issue. Under charges for services, the fee for transport was increased because of a better flow of payments from Roanoke County. We were running behind in payments, but they are now being kept up-to-date.

Vice Mayor Hare asked about the swimming pool admissions and Mr. Thompson responded that it was reduced to \$29,000 and due to looking at what had taken place historically over the past few years. We looked at the revenues and expenditures on the pool and it costs the Town about a \$40,000 deficit to operate. The War Memorial income revenue is \$177,000 and \$10,000 from other departments for a total of \$187,000. Vice Mayor Hare commented about the large increase in this proposed budget based on what the revenue has been for this fiscal year.

Mr. Thompson continued with the miscellaneous revenue category. This includes the Roanoke County gain sharing of \$550,000 which is the same amount that we received this fiscal year. Vice Mayor Hare asked if the renovations at the Fire House would affect this calculation. The Town Manager commented that he did not think so because the County is paying their part out of the Fire Department generator capital project where they had a savings. Mr. Thompson commented that the re-appropriated fund balance of \$50,000 is the Novozymes match for the Glade Creek Greenway.

The recovered cost and non-categorical aid categories remain the same. Under categorical aid, the Town received an increase last year in the highway maintenance fund and we projected \$1,294,898 because we have received no information as to whether this amount will be increased or decreased. This category also includes fire and police grants along with the VDOT revenue sharing, the Greenway and the CDBG grant funds that are anticipated to be spent in next year's budget. The Town Manager commented that the ROCO-EDA funds are the contribution from Roanoke County for the Greenway.

Mr. Thompson next commented on the 2015 real estate assessment. Based on the assessed values less new construction, there is a net increase of \$2,445,100. The new

assessment will generate \$137,802 which is an increase of \$1,112 over last year, or .81%. Another slide showed the tax rate comparison for Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Salem City, Botetourt County and the Town. Vice Mayor Hare asked about Bedford County and Mr. Thompson indicated he could get that information. The Town Manager commented for clarification that those who live in the Town pay \$1.09 to the County and \$.03 to the Town for a combined \$1.12 per \$100 of assessed value. For personal property, the combined rate for Town residents is \$4.50 per \$100 of assessed value.

Mr. Thompson continued by commenting that on the General Fund Expense side, the department requests estimate totals \$9,337,872. He gave a breakdown of what is included in each category and commented that the debt retirement of \$390,063 is a decrease as a result of the refunding that we did in June of 2013. The transfer category includes \$132,782 which has been set aside for Council to consider a raise for the employees. Also, we have taken into consideration the demographics of the employee population and the effect of retirements on the budget regarding any pay-outs. We have not allowed for this in the past, but we have set some funds aside for this purpose that can be transferred to the affected department. Based on the projected revenues and expenditures, there is a shortfall of \$520,238.

The Town Manager commented that in the six years that he has been the Manager we have never shared this preliminary number. In the past, we have gone through the budget in detail and balanced it with recommendations for revenue enhancements and/or reduction or cuts of services. At this point we are usually around a shortfall of around \$500,000 almost every year. Our challenge is how to get to the balanced budget.

In past years, we have been able to do more things within the budget, but there is a whole lot less room this year to make adjustments that are not going to have a direct impact. Some key items are a proposed two percent (2%) raise, which is not guaranteed. Regarding the retirements, we have been looking analytically of what the real financial costs are. We have some long-term employees, who we hope will not retire because they are valuable, but the reality is they do retire. When you have one or two 20+ year employees retire, it is expensive. To make sure we are competitive with our salaries, we have plugged in \$20,000 to do a market assessment compensation study for all of our employees. Another big number relates to paving. We have done a lot of presentations and a lot of education on our paving program which is very under-funded. We have invested in the E-Roads program and have budgeted \$175,000. Another big item included is \$120,000 to hire two more firefighters. We

will present the proposed budget on April 7th with our recommendations on how to balance it.

Mr. Thompson continued with the Utility Fund showing operating revenues of \$3,602,150 which includes the 8.9% increase that Council approved effective July 1, 2015. The addition of use of money of \$1,500 plus recovered cost of \$14,500 brings the total to \$3,618,150. On the expenditure side, the estimated total is \$3,217,444. Based on the projected revenue less the expenses, the Utility Fund is projected to be favorable in the amount of \$400,706.

The Town Manager commented that we were able to set aside approximately \$100,000 last year and we should be able to put a little more aside this year. The other key factor is that the rate study program uses the three rate increases to get us to FY2016-2017 to consider another \$2 million worth of debt.

The Town Manager next commented that a one percent (1%) salary increase for our employees would be \$45,000. We have included a two percent which would be split between the General Fund and Utility Fund. Also, there is currently no CIP capital included in the budget. We will come back and make recommendations as we establish our capital fund balance reserve and see how best to balance those.

Vice Mayor Hare asked if there is any change to our payment to VRS. Mr. Thompson commented that the actuarial will be the same as this year, but it will be evaluated again the following year. Vice Mayor Hare then expressed concern about not fully funding the plan and having to one day in the future come up with a way to fully fund it.

The Town Manager next commented that the health insurance will not increase for next year.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the real estate tax assessment for Calendar Year 2015 and request to advertise a public hearing for March 17, 2015 to set the real estate tax, personal property tax and machinery and tools tax rates.

The Town Manager commented that our real estate assessment will only give us \$1,112 additional revenue next year. There are adjustments we will be able to make over the next few weeks, but there is a budget gap. He reminded Council that this year we are using \$120,000 in fund balance to balance the budget. That equates to two full-time firefighters. Those other costs between \$120,000 and \$500,000 are real costs that we have to prioritize. We are trying to be very conscious and responsible and will bring back to Council service-level choices within the budget and recommendations.

The current real estate tax rate is \$.03. If Council desires to do any amount more than the \$.03, it has to be advertised. We can advertise an increase and adopt anything less than the advertised amount, but we can never go above what we advertise. For example, if we advertise \$.06, we can do anything in between up to that amount. We do need direction from Council tonight in order to meet the required advertisement deadlines. The Public Hearing needs to be held on March 17th. We will have a special Council meeting on March 31st at which meeting the actual tax rate will need to be set to allow for the real estate tax bills to go out in April.

The Town Manager next commented that he knows he must have \$120,000 for two new firefighters which equates to a \$.03 tax rate increase. There may be other ways that we can figure out to pay for it, but this is a direct service to all of our citizens. His recommendation is to advertise a \$.06 real estate tax, which is a \$.03 increase. Then, as we go through the Public Hearing and the budget process, Council can decide what tax rate to set.

The Mayor asked about advertising the real estate tax and would that also apply to personal property and the Town Manager responded yes. Staff has looked at the personal property tax rate and an increase of \$.01 would amount to \$5,000. To increase the personal property taxes to where we need to be plus added to Roanoke County's rate, would put the Town so far above all the other localities. Other taxes and fees are decided in the budget process and are options to consider, but they do not have the same advertising requirements as the real estate taxes.

Vice Mayor Hare commented that the local government needs funding to provide the services that the citizens have asked for, appreciate and have come to expect. Everything gets more and more expensive and we have shown in the past few years that we have tightened our belt and it has had an impact on the community. It has also put a lot more on our employees.

If there is going to be an increase in a tax or fee, it has to be attached to something tangible for the citizens to see what they are paying for. We knew going into last year's budget that we were going to have to go to 24-hour fire coverage and we were going to have to make a decision one way or another. We cannot continue to dip into our savings. Vice Mayor Hare further commented that he wants to serve his community, but he also wants to leave a strong vibrant Town for his children and others. He would support advertising an increase so we can have the conversation with the public to understand what is happening and to allow them to have a say. They may choose to say they do not want a tax increase, but are willing to give up something else.

Vice Mayor Hare then commented that he would support advertising a \$.04 increase instead of a \$.03 increase to give us flexibility. We can tie a \$.03 increase to the two firefighters, but there are other things that need to be funded. We can be given a list of everything we are not doing and this will give us the lee-way to decide. He also stated he appreciated seeing the unaltered version of the budget because the community does not always see this, but it is important that they know. We can choose services and service-levels, but in the end there is still a cost to running the Town.

Council Member Adams agreed with the comments by Vice Mayor Hare. He also commented that the equipment that our Fire Department is using, for instance the ladder that we depend on is 20 years old. It is getting tough to see the other areas in the Town that need funding such as paving and water lines. It may not be the popular thing to do, but at the end of the day it is the right thing to do. He would support the \$.07 advertisement, but only set the rate as far as we prove that is absolutely what we need to do. Council Member Weeks agreed with what has been said and she feels that the misconception a lot of times is that people do not understand what we have to do.

The Mayor said he agreed with advertising the \$.07 which gives some flexibility in our discussions. In his opinion this Council and certainly staff has been very responsible particularly over the past several years by cutting everywhere we can and it has reached a point where if we are going to continue to offer the services we have and considering an increase in service with the 24-hour fire protection, there is a cost associated with that. He would be opposed to any tax increase where we could not prove exactly where the funds are going.

Vice Mayor Hare made a motion to advertise for a public hearing for March 17, 2015 for a \$.07 real estate tax rate; the motion was seconded by Council Member Weeks and carried by the following roll call vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Weeks, Hare, Grose; Nays (0) - None; Absent (1) - Nance.

Approved advertisement for a public hearing for March 17, 2015 for a \$.07 real estate tax rate

Under update on old business concerning the 3rd Street dumpsters, the Town Manager commented that on January 20th, Council was briefed by staff regarding three options for the dumpsters. One was to eliminate the dumpsters which would be approximately a \$10,000 savings, but it was felt that there would be a significant impact by eliminating this service.

There are several factors to be considered, One is that this is a high-level service because we have curbside service, the dumpster site and we pay for citizens to dump at the Resource Authority. Second, the site is next to the canoe-

launch that will be opening to the public as part of the blue way system which we believe will be heavily used. And third, we have to also realize that this is an industrial piece of property in an industrial district that is a Public Works operational area. It is not a pristine park.

The second option was to keep it as it is and put up some screening which would still not be the most attractive site for guests who are coming to use the canoe launch.

The third option was to flip the dumpsters and internalize them to provide screening, but continue the service. The dumpsters would not be visible from the parking lot and turned inward. There is a current entrance that says "facility entrance" that can be open to allow access. This entrance does need some improvement because it is a little bit steep, but we can improve that and hard-surface it with chip and seal. It is recommended to use railroad ties and boulders since that is what will be used for the canoe-launch area. The refuse truck can still get in and out backwards like they currently do. We also recommend putting covers on the dumpsters. It is not a driving factor for why the vultures are there, but it is a contributing factor.

A summary cost was also provided to Council for consideration. In response to a question, this option would provide that the site continue to be open 24/7.

Vice Mayor Hare asked about communicating and educating the public about the change and the Town Manager responded that could be done through signage. Also, it may be feasible to pay a staff person to monitor the site on the heavy trash days for several weekends or so. We can get the word out through the media, but primarily on-site communication would be the most effective. The refuse crew would continue to clean up the site every morning and once on the weekends as they do now. After additional comments from Council and staff, it was requested that the item be put on the March 17th agenda for a final decision by Council.

The Town Manager reminded Council that this Friday is Employee Appreciation Day and they are invited to have lunch with our employees in the lobby of the Municipal Building at 12 Noon.

Vice Mayor Hare requested that the review of the December 2014 financial report be postponed until the next meeting.

The Mayor commented on the great job that our employees did during the recent snow event.

Review of December 2014 financial report was postponed until the March 17, 2015 meeting

Comments from Council Members: Vice Mayor Hare also commented on the recent snow event and the job that was done by our employees. He then asked if there is anything we can do as Council and staff to encourage citizens to not park their vehicles along the street during a snow event. The Town Manager commented that it has been discussed to put out more information to encourage citizens to park on one side of the street or off of the street. This is particularly important along some of the narrow streets in Town. Another issue that we did receive complaints on is clearing sidewalks. We do have an ordinance on clearing sidewalks whether a commercial business, residence or a public facility. Most people do not clean their sidewalks and it became an issue for people to walk. We need to further educate everyone on this as well.

The Town Manager also commented on the parking lot of the War Memorial. A decision was made to have the contractor go another day before clearing the lot; however, if the Senior Center would have been needed in case of an emergency, there was no way to get to it. In the future, as part of Public Works operating routine, they will keep an emergency accessibility route at the War Memorial open along the outside parameter of the lot.

Vice Mayor Hare asked about an update regarding the issues with tax sales in Roanoke County. The Town Manager responded that Barry Thompson met with the Town Attorney and strategized what the Town's interests and goals are to present to the County. We have reached out to the Treasurer, Kevin Hutchins, to schedule a meeting to discuss the matter. Mr. Thompson commented that he would follow up with Mr. Hutchins.

Council Member Adams made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting; the motion was seconded by Council Member Weeks and carried by the following vote, with all members voting: Vote 4-0; Yeas (4) – Adams, Weeks, Hare, Grose; Nays (0) – None; Absent (1) - Nance. The regular meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Regular meeting adjourned

The work session was continued to hear requests for funding presentations from the Vinton Volunteer First Aid Crew and the Vinton Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Philpott commented that they have requested \$17,000 for the upcoming fiscal year. Some of the current needs are stretcher mounts for two of their ambulances at \$1,000 including installation for each unit.

They continue to provide training for members to acquire and retain certifications as required by the Virginia Department of EMS. This past weekend, they had classes here for their members and others in the Valley and they awarded more than 450 continuing education hours during

that weekend period. They are striving to have at least two more of the members obtain ALS certification which they try to help with those costs.

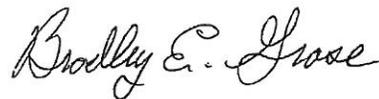
They anticipate the purchase of two new personal computers and hope to bring their uniforms up to date. The present cost for a working uniform (not a dress uniform) with the safety equipment needed is around \$800 per member. They also need to replace some portable radios and batteries and their defibrillator battery charger. A new charger is \$7,500; however, they were able to find a remanufactured one with the same warranty for \$4,800.00. New batteries are \$300 each. Mr. Philpott also commented that Roanoke County is now supplying oxygen for cover the Career Staff and Volunteer Crew, which has been a substantial savings.

The next presentation was by Richard Oakes, Chief of the Volunteer Fire Department, Chief Oakes commented that this year's request is for \$19,000. He then shared that the cost of turn-out fire structure gear is \$2,000 per person and they try to budget \$7,700 for replacement gear. They budget \$4,000 for travel and training some of which is out of town. They attend the Virginia Fire and Rescue Chiefs Conference every year in Virginia Beach which offers a lot of good classes for the leadership level in the department.

They have been requesting funds to get a new thermal entry camera for the past two years and it has been ordered at a cost of \$12,500. Other budgeted items are \$2,500 for station uniforms for new members along with \$4,400 to the Chief for contract pay. In closing, Chief Oakes expressed thanks for all that Council has done to support the volunteers over the years. He also commented that he recently took a class on recruitment and retention and he has some good ideas and will continue to try and recruit new members.

The work session was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

APPROVED:



Bradley E. Grose, Mayor

ATTEST:


Susan N. Johnson, Town Clerk