

**MINUTES OF A TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
TOWN OF LURAY, VIRGINIA**

***Thursday, March 16, 2017***

The Luray Town Council met in a work session on Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Luray Town Council Chambers located at 45 East Main Street, Luray, Virginia at which time there were present the following:

Presiding: Mayor Barry Presgraves

Council Present: Ron Vickers  
Jerry Dofflemyer  
Jerry Schiro  
Leroy Lancaster  
Joey Sours  
Leah Pence

Also Present:

Charlie Hoke, Town Manager  
Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager  
Mary Broyles, Treasurer  
Pat O'Brien  
Morgan Housden  
Ken Beyer  
Chief C.S. "Bow" Cook

Mayor Presgraves led members in the United States Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called with no members absent.

**UPDATES AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**FY 2017-2018 Budget Discussion**

Town Manager, Charlie Hoke, began by discussing the proposed increase in water and sewer rates. The proposal is for a 1% increase for both water and sewer as recommended by the Carl Brown rate study adopted by Council in 2013. The town did not increase water and sewer rates last fiscal year, but Mr. Hoke is recommending an increase in FY 2017-2018 based on usage data.

Mr. Hoke reviewed the budget synopsis for revenues and expenditures. Councilman Schiro questioned capital outlay items that had been eliminated. Members discussed the police vehicle capital expenses including the proposal for vehicle leases. Councilman Schiro encouraged these programs to efficiently manage the department's fleet. Chief Cook explained that he has implemented an assigned vehicle program to moderate usage. Members discussed capital outlay items in other departments and potentially using lease programs for other types of equipment. Mr. Hoke reviewed capital outlay expenses proposed for the Public Works Department. Councilman Schiro noted that some significant capital improvement items were cut in the Parks and Recreation Department also. Mr. Hoke reviewed the budget for Planning and Zoning and there was discussion on the salary for a combined position of

Town Planner/Economic Development Coordinator. Councilwoman Pence questioned additional budget considerations for the economic development portion. Councilman Sours said it is difficult to budget for expenses that the town has not incurred in the past, since this position is a new concept for the town. Mr. Hoke discussed a similar position with the City of Winchester and has obtained some budgetary figures.

Ms. Pence discussed LDI's budget and where the funds are being reinvested in downtown. Mr. Hoke said that LDI will be making a budget request presentation in the near future. Council members discussed other areas of economic development, such as the airport expenses and Lord Fairfax Community College.

Councilman Schiro expressed his concerns in reviewing the budget, and noted that the town is offsetting increasing operational expenses with the town's capital projects. The town is making up this difference by not replacing equipment and deferring necessary maintenance. Mr. Schiro emphasized that once all the major projects are done, there are still capital investments to be made. He noted that operational expenses have increased significantly. Ms. Pence agreed with Mr. Schiro and said that she has seen several issues from her visit to the Wastewater Plant. Councilwoman Pence recognized that the number of town events are irrelevant if the town's sewer infrastructure isn't functioning properly.

Mr. Hoke went on to review the budget for the water fund. Members discussed capital improvements for the water treatment plant in order to maintain necessary operations. Councilwoman Pence discussed the budgeted items for the water plant that included PALL modules and a spare pump. Mr. Hoke and Ms. Pence discussed these items as a preventative measure in order to keep the town's water pressure and supply at needed levels.

Mr. Hoke then presented the sewer fund expenditures for operations and capital outlay. Members discussed the request for a part-time maintenance position at the water/wastewater plant and the fulfillment of a current full time vacancy.

### Parks and Recreation Budget

Director of Parks and Recreation, Pat O'Brien, along with Morgan Housden, Assistant Director, presented information on the Parks and Recreation budget. Mr. O'Brien said that he understood there were some questions regarding his departmental budget requests and hopes to be able to clarify some items.

Mr. O'Brien said that after careful thought he has decided to make some slight changes to his budget requests. A power point presentation was provided for Council Members. The first item of discussion is the request for a full-time employee for the department. Mr. O'Brien formally requested to promote Greg Richards to full-time staff. Mr. O'Brien said that he believes the department has been short one full time staff member for the last four years. He noted the growing number of special events and the department's aging infrastructure.

Mr. O'Brien also discussed the overage in part time labor, and plans to ask the Treasurer to transfer funds from other line items within the department to cover the overage. He explained the overage in the part time budget due to full time staff being overwhelmed by weekend work. Councilman Schiro asked if the problem is with special events or with maintenance. Assistant Director, Morgan Housden, explained that part time staff are used during events to run activities, take care of trash, clean restrooms, etc. She said that volunteers are also utilized and it is difficult to only use full time staff members. Mr. O'Brien also discussed the part time staff limit of 29 hours per week. Councilwoman Pence asked which event is the most time consuming for his staff. Mr. O'Brien expressed that the

Festival of Spring is extremely time consuming, followed by the Triathlon, then likely July 4<sup>th</sup>, Halloween, and the Town's Christmas parade.

Councilman Dofflemeyer asked who primarily uses the ball fields at the recreation park. Mr. O'Brien said that there has been a decline in little league participation, but the trend has moved toward travel teams and tournaments. This has also caused a decline in the amount of financial contribution by little league and the ability to staff the concession stands. Mr. O'Brien discussed the option of splitting up the concession stand bid into more seasons in order to allow the little league an opportunity to run the stand during their season. Mr. O'Brien explained that the midget league football season is much shorter and the concession stand serves as the main fundraiser for their organization. Councilman Lancaster agreed that travel leagues have changed the traditional little league and soccer leagues. Members discussed the economic impact of these sports on local restaurants and hotels. Councilman Schiro said that we cannot compare dollar for dollar if these events are making money, but rather focus on marketing the town and developing an overall brand. He said it is important to realize that these events are the reason Luray is seeing an increase in transient occupancy and meals tax revenues. Mr. O'Brien also discussed the new half marathon event this fall, which will introduce new athletes to Luray.

Mr. O'Brien also discussed the utilization of inmate labor. He feels that his department differs from others regarding inmate labor due to the amount of children's activities going on during weekday hours. However, the department does intend to use more inmate labor where possible.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the primitive camping area at Lake Arrowhead. At the Council Meeting on May 24, 2016 camping was discussed and members approved that program. It is necessary that the Town meet health department regulations. Mr. O'Brien discussed the camping area and the fee of \$20 per site. Mr. O'Brien said that it will take approximately \$10,000 to upgrade the area to meet standards, but \$6,000 would be realized in revenues the first year. He expressed that the town certainly does not want to go into the camping business and that this is only to accommodate triathletes and marathon participants during these two events. Councilman Sours felt this would keep more dollars spent locally. Mr. O'Brien stressed that athletes favored camping at the lake. Mr. Chrisman explained that for the two events, the state code allows for a temporary camping permit that can be requested from the district health director. He noted that this may allow for fewer requirements on the town's part. Councilman Lancaster discussed local residents not being permitted to camp at the Lake and complaints that could be received. Councilman Sours suggested opening it up to the public a few times a year. Camping has been offered at the Lake for local scout groups for many years. Members discussed how to make the campground area less obvious and alternate road materials.

The next proposal was for AstroTurf at the Ruffner Plaza area. Mr. O'Brien said that he has removed this request, despite the labor involved in maintaining the bench seating area. The next item of the presentation addressed the potential replacements to the Imagination Station playground. He noted that many other localities had similar playgrounds which lasted only about ten years. Mr. O'Brien explained that due to proper maintenance over the years, the town has been about to extend the life of the equipment. He noted that the department is removing it from this year's CIP request, but would like for Council to consider funding this next year. Councilman Sours questioned how much a complete replacement would cost. Staff provided a design rendering with completely upgraded equipment that comes at an estimated cost of \$180,000 or above. Members discussed different types of materials, design, and changing trends in playgrounds.

Mr. O'Brien's report included plans to remove the Lake Arrowhead bathroom evaluation from this year's CIP and revisit next budget cycle.

Mr. O'Brien then discussed possible plans for a Phase 5 Greenway Extension. He proposed using the \$20,000 budgeted for the Lake Arrowhead Restroom evaluation for this request instead. The \$20,000 would help pay for designs and plans. He stressed that when people visit Luray their most requested site is the Hawksbill Greenway, this is also the most valued area for locals. Mr. O'Brien proposed challenging the Luray Hawksbill Greenway Foundation to fundraise to match the town's contribution of \$20,000. Mr. O'Brien felt this would show the citizens that the town is making a good faith effort to explore the possibility of a trail extension. Members discussed the movement from conceptual designs to engineered plans. Mr. Ken Beyer, Hawksbill Greenway Foundation, said that the Greenway acts as the town's goodwill ambassador. He noted the many compliments received on the trail. Councilwoman Pence stated that this is definitely something she would like to see the town pursue but also wants to see some more definite costs and grant opportunities. Mr. Chrisman said that the safe routes to school grant is very specific and connecting a multi-use recreational trail to a "safe routes to school" doesn't meet those criteria. However, connecting a recreational facility to a school, to the trail can meet those criteria. Mr. Chrisman discussed various funding sources and planning grant options. Mr. Ken Beyer said that the Council has the foundation's support. He said that no fundraisers have been held since 2016, and the organization has still received a large amount of contributions. Mr. Chrisman said that from a design perspective it is important to start with the design plans, feasibility, and cost estimates. Mr. Hoke said that it sounds like this is the direction council wants to take. Several years ago the Council discussed this and determined to put a hold on expansion. He said that staff needs the Council's direction on this.

Councilman Lancaster said that he is not opposed to this but is concerned over citizen complaints that the Greenway is not being well maintained. Mr. Hoke said that he felt the problem areas had been identified and were being resolved. Mr. O'Brien said that it is difficult to send an untrained part time staff member to maintain the Greenway. He added that the Greenway area is very high maintenance and extremely visible. He noted that while the part time staff is very good, it takes more involved labor to keep the trail manicured. Many part time staff return seasonally, but there is a lot of recurring training. Mr. Hoke said that as soon as staff is aware of a maintenance issue they are very prudent in correcting the issue.

Councilwoman Pence said that we need to determine the cost of Greenway expansion, if not it is entirely conceptual. Mayor Presgraves stressed that part time help is very valuable for seasonal operations. Members discussed utilizing volunteer labor and the difficulties in obtaining volunteers. Mr. Beyer said that Mr. Tyler Austin with Racey Engineering is familiar with the "safe routes" to school grant process and has done some preliminary research on the possible extension. Councilman Dofflemeyer inquired about staff retirements. Mr. O'Brien said that Dave Sours has indicated plans to retire next year and this will be a big loss for his department. Council and Staff discussed Mr. Sour's tremendous knowledge and that the position will be difficult to fill. Mr. O'Brien identified the primary need for staffing as maintenance and secondary would be event planning. Councilman Schiro asked how much reduction would be seen in the part time staffing if a full time employee is added. Mr. O'Brien indicated that one full time member would eliminate two part-time employees. Councilman Vickers said that he recognizes the need for another full time member. Councilman Schiro discussed the current year's budget and that actual expenses are at 90% at mid-year for part time labor. Mr. Schiro and Mr. Sours felt the need to revisit the proposed budget figures for parks and recreation labor. Members and Staff also discussed County TOT funds, future growth, and continued maintenance efforts. Members also discussed the focus on using more inmate labor.

Mr. Hoke said that he intends to look into a short term loan for some of the capital items that were dropped. He will also look into a USDA loan for infrastructure improvements at the wastewater plant and the collection system. Mr. Hoke said he will have this information available at the work session. Mayor Presgraves asked about Council's wishes on the Greenway expansion. Councilman Vickers

said that he is in favor of using the \$20,000 for the study. Members said they would like to know more about the actual costs of the next phase. Council agreed to move forward on obtaining additional information on the Greenway expansion.

**Motion:** Councilman Schiro motioned to include an additional full time employee with benefits for the Parks and Recreation Department in the FY2017-2018 draft budget and to include \$20,000 in the next draft budget under Parks and Recreation or Economic Development for the exploration of the feasibility of continuing the Greenway to the R.H. Dean Recreation Park, motion seconded by Councilwoman Pence with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Dofflemyer, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Pence. **Approved 6-0**

Adjourn

With no further business, Mayor Presgraves adjourned the work session of the Luray Town Council at approximately 7:46 p.m.

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Mayor, Barry Presgraves

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Deputy Clerk, Danielle Babb