

**A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF THE TOWN OF LURAY, PAGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2015

The Luray Town Council met in regular session on Monday, April 13, 2015 at 7:00 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: Ronald Vickers
Jerry Dofflemyer
Jerry Schiro
Leroy Lancaster
Joseph Sours
John Meaney

Also Present:

Charlie Hoke, Town Manager
Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager
~~Mary Broyles, Clerk Treasurer~~
Danielle Babb, Deputy Clerk Treasurer
Ligon Webb, Town Planner
Carl "Bow" Cook, Luray Police Department
Jeff McMillan, Page News and Courier
Nancy Shifflett, Luray Downtown Initiative
Luray Downtown Initiative Board Members
John Robbins, Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce
Jason Spitler, Town Attorney
Floyd Maxey, 15 Moyer Avenue
Barbie Stombock and Gail Kyle, Opportunity Luray
Leslie Currle, LDI Board Member
Eleanor Ames, LDI Board Member

A quorum being present, Mayor Barry Presgraves declared the Council to be in session for the transaction of business. All present stood for a moment of silence. Councilman Lancaster led everyone in reciting the United States Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called with no members absent. Mayor Presgraves welcomed the newly appointed member of the Council, Mr. Jerry Dofflemyer. Councilman Dofflemyer advised fellow members that he was honored to be appointed to the Council and thanked them for their vote of confidence.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Councilman Schiro motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, motion seconded by Councilman Lancaster with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Dofflemyer, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

Consent Agenda

- A) Minutes of Regular Council Meeting – 3-9-2015
- B) Minutes of Council Work Session – 3-24-2015
- C) Financial Report – Month Ending March 31, 2015
- D) Accounts payable checks totaling \$ 171,657.24.

PUBLIC HEARING

Enterprise Zone Ordinance

Town Planner, Ligon Webb, presented the Public Hearing for the Virginia Enterprise Zone. He explained that a local ordinance must be drafted and adopted in order to utilize the Enterprise Zone benefits. The specific area was established as an enterprise zone on January 1, 2015 and a map has been established. The zone is reviewed annually and can be extended as needed. Mr. Webb provided members with a copy of the Luray Enterprise Zone Ordinance and noted the State offered incentives under Section 411.4. He also reviewed Section 411.5 Qualification for Local Incentives; those incentives are the Capital Investment Grant, BPOL/Local Sales Tax/Meals/Lodging Tax Refund grant, Business Development Loan Program, Commercial Rehabilitation Real Estate Tax Exemption, and various others.

Mr. Webb noted one change to the ordinance under section 411.5 d. 3. to state *“The property must be in commercial or industrial use, or mixed use with a minimum of 30% of the usable floor space devoted to commercial, office, or industrial use”*. Councilman Lancaster raised question about section 411.4. Mr. Webb explained that these are State Incentives and are more restrictive in eligibility and that local incentives are broader in scope. Councilman Schiro expressed that the change in language presented this evening for Section 411.5 is fairly significant in nature and questioned if it would present a problem for tonight’s public hearing. Mr. Webb said that the change in language was properly represented on the town’s website and all other advertisements. Mr. Webb said this was a typographical error on his part and doesn’t feel it is significant to the overall document. Councilman Vickers asked if the other localities were on track with the adoption of the ordinance. Mr. Webb said that the county and remaining towns will also be adopting a local ordinance. Mayor Presgraves said that he is concerned about proceeding with the public hearing due to the revision presented this evening. Mr. Webb maintained that this was not significant language to hold up the public hearing and in his experience it is fairly customary to make a minor change. Councilman Vickers said that he feels the change makes the regulations less restrictive rather than more restrictive. Mayor Presgraves suggested that Council request the Town Attorney’s advice on the amendment and questioned why Ms. Lillard, Page County Economic Development, was not present this evening. Mayor Presgraves said that he does not have any issue with the context, but wants the public to be aware of the change in language.

Mayor Presgraves opened the Public Hearing for Citizen Comment.

Leslie Currle, LDI Board Member

Ms. Currle said that her only comment is that the change proposed is in favor of the community and public. She says she sees no issue with the change since it makes the incentive less restrictive.

With No further comments from the public, the hearing was then closed.

Tax Rate Hearing

Town Manager, Charlie Hoke, said that the advertisement for the tax rate hearing is in member packets and this is the public hearing for the proposed tax rate increase. Mr. Hoke stated that there would be no action from the Council at tonight's meeting.

Mayor Presgraves then opened the public hearing for citizen comment.

Floyd Maxey, 15 Moyer Avenue

Mr. Maxey said that he feels the Council has likely made their decision on the proposed tax increase and feels this is a formality. However, Mr. Maxey would like to still note that the business climate in Luray is not improving with further business and restaurant closures. He suggested other business type activities that may be interested in operating in Luray. Mr. Maxey expressed concern that rising tax structures may eliminate Luray from new business's consideration. He recalled that the newspaper quoted the reason for the increase being due to the lack of growth in revenues and rising expenses. He expressed concern that this cycle of increasing taxes may cause residents and businesses to leave town entirely. Mr. Maxey said that this is the time to cut expenses and recognized that this is the towns third year of increases.

John Robbins, Director of Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce

Mr. John Robbins said that the Chamber Board has not yet had a chance to discuss the proposed increase and hasn't made a formal opinion. However, Mr. Robbins felt that the timing of the proposed increase is of great concern to him due to the upcoming closure of the Main Street Bridge. He noted the impact that this will cause the downtown merchants, and said that this combined with a tax increase could be too severe for some of these businesses.

Mayor Presgraves then closed the public hearing.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

PARKS AND RECREATION

Mayor Presgraves noted a busy weekend for the Parks Department with the Opening Day for Luray Little League and the Youth Trout Derby. He said that the events saw good attendance and were greatly enjoyed by the children of the community.

PLANNING AND ZONING

Town Planner, Ligon Webb, reported that the town's Revenue Sharing Application will likely be approved in the full amount. Also, he said that the Collins Avenue/People Inc. housing project is moving forward. He said that the developer has submitted full engineering plans and that Assistant Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, is currently reviewing these. Mr. Webb reported that progress continues on The Laurence building and that Ms. Kramer is currently working on some parking issues.

TOWN AFFILIATED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

LURAY DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE

Nancy Shifflett, Luray Downtown Initiative

Ms. Nancy Shifflett, LDI Board Member, stated that Council is aware of LDI's reorganization plans and feels that LDI has never received this much assistance from Virginia Main Street and Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center. Ms. Shifflett said that LDI has made plans to visit the localities of Harrisonburg, Culpeper, and Ashland at the suggestion of Alex Berry of Virginia Main Street. LDI will hold its Revitalization meeting in May and issues will be discussed, work committees identified, collaborative efforts with other organizations explored, work plan and steps clarified, and more. The key priorities for the coming year will include; the bridge project, collaborators, specific incentives, and the downtown revitalization plan. Ms. Shifflett also discussed LDI's Economic Revitalization activities and initiative plans include town hall meetings, a pitch package for new businesses, supporting the Enterprise Zone, and training Market Collective vendors in merchandising and business development. Ms. Shifflett said that SBDC Retail & Restaurant Consultant, Marc Wilson, will be delivering seminars throughout Virginia and specifically will provide a seminar in Luray. LDI is also pursuing the Building Entrepreneurial Economies program and Virginia Main Street grants. Ms. Shifflett also discussed objectives of the Design Committee and Promotions Committee. She noted that one of the promotion activities will be to install new billboard covers on the two signs located on Highway 211. Other promotions include downtown brochures, developing a press kit, community events, and a Buy Luray program. A major fundraising event is planned for September 26th with sponsorships and donations being secured for the event. Ms. Shifflett said that the board also plans to search, interview, and hire an Executive Director and other appropriate staff who can support board activities.

Ms. Shifflett then reviewed the proposed LDI Budget for 2015-2016. She said that LDI is requesting \$30,000 in funding from the Town of Luray as part of its overall \$101,000 dollars in budgeted revenues. She noted that the expenditures include line items for fundraising, the Market Collective, Billboard signs, Mini-grant programs, holiday events, promotions, and Downtown Revitalization. She stressed that all of these expenditures directly benefit the town. Other expenditures include LDI's operating expenses, accounting fees, and Executive Director Salary.

Councilman Sours asked for clarification on the fundraiser planned for September. Ms. Eleanor Ames, Board Member, explained the sponsorships and ticket sales and that the event is proposed to net \$20,000 in profit. Councilman Vickers said that he would like to recognize that LDI has seen a large increase in support and volunteers. He said that he is pleased that LDI and the town are working collectively. Ms. Shifflett also asked if members had reviewed the Todd Barman report and encouraged them to do so.

LURAY PAGE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

John Robbins, Chamber Director

Director John Robbins said that the Chamber was pleased to host the Secretary of Commerce, Maurice Jones, last week. Mr. Jones also presented the grant award of \$25,000 dollars from the Virginia Tourism Corporation to the Chamber. He said that the visit also served as a listening tour and created dialogue on how to increase tourism and economic development in general. Mr. Robbins said the Chamber and EDA are working on efforts to entice businesses moving outside the "beltway" to our area.

On April 8th a Community Job Fair was held at Luray High School and saw 18 employer participants. Mr. Robbins noted that students and adults were able to participate. He added that the feedback from the event was very positive and plans are being made for next year's event.

Mr. Robbins discussed a recent meeting with Shenandoah Valley Partnership and efforts to bring business to Page County. He noted the upcoming Depot Museum Opening planned for May 27th. Tourist walk-ins for the month of March were only 750 but numbers are already picking up due to more favorable weather conditions. Mr. Robbins also said that more visitors are requesting discount coupons and plans are underway to survey business owner interest.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Opportunity Luray

Ms. Barbie Stombock, Opportunity Luray, stated that she is the owner of the former H&H building, is the owner/operator of Virginia Gift Shop, and resides in east Luray. Ms. Stombock explained that she is present this evening on behalf of a newly formed group called "Opportunity Luray". She presented a power point presentation on the "who and what" of the group. She explained that the group is made up of business owners, property owners, and residents. The objective of the group is to brainstorm ways to promote and enhance business in Luray, to share information and resources, and to support each other. She said that in January the group first met and surveyed its priorities. In February the group met to split into groups, prioritize concerns, and brainstorm a name for the group. In March the group invited Ms. Lillard, Page County Economic Development Director, to provide a presentation on the Enterprise Zone Designation. They also voted on the group's name and considered a mission statement. In April the group refined its mission statement, narrowed its priorities and action plan, and worked toward a cohesive presentation for tonight's meeting. Opportunity Luray's mission statement is "to help develop, foster and promote a consensus and business-oriented vision for the Town of Luray through partnerships with business owners, elected officials and community members". Ms. Stombock discussed the four main areas of concern/priority from the group; vacant buildings, partnering with Government and others, amenities/activities, and signage/promotion. She emphasized that it is not enough to merely identify the priorities but it is critical to develop an action plan and move forward. The group also believes there is value in developing a five year strategic plan and is proposing that the Council establish a steering committee to develop a comprehensive plan. Ms. Stombock stressed that we should acknowledge the challenges but focus on the positives. She said that there are businesses that are thriving, some of which are downtown.

Mayor Presgraves said that in his experience the number one complaint received is the lack of operating hours of downtown merchants. He said that many visitors ask why shops are not open. Ms. Stombock acknowledged that this is a concern of the group as well and that often stores change hours seasonally or for special events. Councilman Meaney asked for clarification on the group's role and said he was unclear as to what the group is providing. Ms. Stombock stated that the group's role will evolve as the town moves forward with LDI and revitalization efforts. She noted that their power is in participation and in partnering as business owners. Councilman Schiro said that he sees the role as a support group and is very pleased with the presentation this evening. He noted that the presentation was extremely positive. Councilman Vickers inquired about how the merchants feel about the Enterprise Zone. Ms. Stombock said that she personally has no objections to it and has had good experiences in receiving assistance from the Town and LDI when needed. However, there does seem to be a lack of knowledge among business owners in knowing who to go to and what is available.

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Planning Commission Appointment

Town Manager, Charlie Hoke, said that the Planning Commission has a vacancy with the appointment being by Mayor Presgraves. Mayor Presgraves has contacted William “Bill” Fisher and he has indicated that he is willing to serve if appointed by the Council.

Motion: Councilman Lancaster motioned to approve the appointment of William Fisher to the Luray Planning Commission, motion seconded by Councilman Schiro with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Dofflemyer, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

Enterprise Zone Ordinance

Mayor Presgraves asked Mr. Webb if he would like to take action on this with the consultation of the Town Attorney being present. Mr. Webb clarified Councilman Schiro’s question about the rehabilitation of apartment buildings and members discussed section 411.5 of the ordinance. Mr. Webb stated the amended language to section 411.5 d. 3. and Town Attorney, Jason Spitler, said that he has no opposition to this change.

Motion: Councilman Schiro motioned to approve the Enterprise Zone Ordinance subject to the amendment as discussed, motion seconded by Councilman Sours with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Dofflemyer, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

Refinance of Ball Field Debt

Assistant Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, presented information on the refinance of the Ball Field Debt with Blue Ridge Bank. In the packets was included a proposal letter from Blue Ridge Bank. The current note matures in March 2016. Blue Ridge Bank has offered to provide the same terms and interest rate for the refinance. The offer should be locked in prior to the end of the current fiscal year and Council is requested to take action on this at tonight’s meeting.

Motion: Councilman Schiro motioned to approve the refinance of the Ball Field Note as proposed by Blue Ridge Bank, motion seconded by Councilman Sours with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Dofflemyer, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

TOWN ATTORNEY’S REPORT

Town Attorney, Jason Spitler, said that he had only a few minor items for the evening’s meeting. He reminded that as Councilman Dofflemyer is recently appointed and that there are differences in voting responsibilities for appointed members versus elected members. He stated that Mr. Dofflemyer’s term will expire on January 1, 2019 (formerly June 30th, 2018 prior to the election change to November), subject to special election in November 2015.

Mr. William Fisher’s term on the Planning Commission will expire January 1, 2017. Mr. Spitler said that he will need to prepare the formal ordinance of appointment. He requested a motion to give the Mayor and Council Clerk authority to endorse the standard appointment ordinance once drafted. He said that the normal procedure would be to do this at the next regular meeting, however there is a Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday and this would allow Mr. Fisher to take seat at the Wednesday night meeting.

Motion: Councilman Vickers motioned to approve the Ordinance enacting Mr. William Fisher’s appointment to the Luray Planning Commission, motion seconded by Councilman Lancaster with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Dofflemyer, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Presgraves said that he thinks Council may need more time to look at the budget before the work session meeting. Members agreed to meet in a special session on Tuesday, April 21st at 5:30pm.

Councilman Vickers said that he provided all members with information regarding the Airport Authority and hopes the questions/answers can be included on the town’s website to provide the public with more information.

With no further business, Mayor Presgraves adjourned the regular session of the Luray Town Council at approximately 8:45pm.

Barry Presgraves
Mayor

Danielle Babb
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer