

**TOWN OF ABINGDON  
WORK SESSION MEETING  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2016 – 5:30 PM  
ARTHUR CAMPBELL ROOM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A Work Session meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Monday, October 3, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Arthur Campbell Room of the Municipal Building.

**Welcome by Mayor Lowe**

**A. ROLL CALL**

Members of Council Present:

Mrs. Cathy C. Lowe  
Mr. Richard E. Humphreys  
Mr. Robert M. Howard  
Mrs. M. Cindy Patterson  
Mr. J. Wayne Craig

Administrative/Town Staff:

Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager  
Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant. Town Manager/Town Clerk  
Tonya Triplett, Deputy Clerk  
Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney  
Matthew Johnson, Director of Planning  
Chuck Banner, Director of Finance  
John Dew, Dir. Of Construction/Public Services  
Kevin Costello, Dir. of Tourism & ED  
Floyd Bailey, IT Department  
Jennifer Montgomery, Main Street Director

Visitors:

Martha Keys, Rich Macbeth, Stephen Jett, Edison  
Jennings and others

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The Council discussed the following:

**1. Update on Watauga Creeper Trail Project**

Greg Kelly, Town Manager reported the Virginia Creeper Trail restroom and parking project near Watauga is moving forward and VDOT is in the process of finalizing the purchase of property. Mr. Kelly stated acquiring the property requires a public hearing and he is hopeful it will be on the November agenda. The RFP's will be sent out and construction should begin in the spring.

**2. Consideration for sponsorship for Abingdon High School Choral Boosters**

David Maloney, President of Abingdon High School Choral Boosters stated the American Kodaly Educators hosts a conference each year for the most exceptional choir students and Abingdon High School has traditionally participated. The group worked concession stands at the Bristol race, the Battle of Bristol and also Rhythm and Roots. They also have planned a 5-K for December 3 at Glenrochie Country Club. Mayor Lowe explained that

Council hasn't supported travel for other organizations, but suggested the group create a flyer that could be distributed asking for donations and flyers for the events they have planned that could be shared on Wolf Whistle. Mrs. Patterson, Council Member stated she has had good experiences with silent auctions and is willing to donate a two night stay at her bed & breakfast for an auction item. Mr. Humphreys inquired about expenses and revenues for the 5-K. Mr. Maloney reported expenses of \$650 and a profit around \$2,100. Mr. Humphreys specified he would support an offset of expenses of \$650 for the 5-K race.

3. **Consideration of grant to the Levitt AMP Grant Support Letter for Thursday Jams**  
Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism and Economic Development informed Council of a grant opportunity to offset the cost of music events. Levitt Pavilions is offering a \$25,000 matching grant to encourage small communities to host music events. Mr. Costello requested a letter of support, that will be used as in-kind for the grant, to utilize the Abingdon Farmers Market Pavilion for summer music events.

4. **Historical Society Lease**

Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney reported a copy of the five (5) year lease for the Historical Society of Washington County was included in the packet and is basically the same as before, expect it is non-renewable. Martha Keys reported that the Historical Society Board and William King Museum had a meeting and toured the building. At its September meeting the Historical Society Board voted to decline the offer to move to William King Museum.

Closed session was moved to the last item on the agenda.

5. **Discussion of potential Partnership with VHCC**

Bob Howard, Council Member reported he had attended a Chamber breakfast and the speaker was Dr. Couch, President of Virginia Highlands Community College. Mr. Howard suggested the town work in partnership with the college to connect and encourage over 2,000 students to shop and dine downtown Abingdon, possibly with discount cards. Mr. Howard agreed to work with Jennifer Montgomery, Main Street Director and someone from VHCC to determine the best partnership. The project may also later include Emory & Henry students.

6. **Economic Development**

Mayor Lowe and Mr. Humphreys reported that Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism and Economic Development has a lot on his shoulders with both duties and suggested Council look at adding additional resources. Mr. Kelly, Town Manager reported he and Mr. Costello has been working on creating a new department that would include tourism, economic development and community outreach, which would recruit new business and work with existing businesses on growth and expansion. Mr. Kelly suggested identifying the role of the EDA, their duties and to work on a strategic plan. Consensus of Council is to seek guidance from Washington County on the EDA operating on their own and to have Mr. Kelly, Town Manager, Mrs. Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager, Mr. Costello, Director of Tourism and Economic Development, Mr. Banner, Director of Finance and Kenny Shuman, Chair of EDA to create a conceptual strategic plan that could be reviewed by Council at the November 7, 2016 work session.

7. **Consideration of sponsorship for American Energy Society Local Energy – America's Power Summit planned for December 5-6, 2016 at Emory & Henry**

### **College**

Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager reported sponsorship would get the town's logo on the stage, the event would be recorded and broadcast on CSPAN. Attendance is expected to be 100-200 with most driving in for the summit. Consensus of Council it to forgo the request of sponsorship for American Energy Society.

#### **8. Report on the auction and/or sale of town owned properties:**

- Harmony Hills Lane, Lot # 5 parcel # 086 – 12-5
- Tech park property

Greg Kelly, Town Manager reported no new developments on the Harmony Hills property. Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney contacted both Richards and Interstate Realty. Interstate Realty is willing to look at the property and submit a proposal. Richards has not returned her call.

#### **9. Report and update on the meeting to discuss Virginia Highlands Airport overlay /Appalachian Power**

Cathy C. Lowe, Mayor reported she attended a meeting at which Appalachian Power reported the proposed tower would not be higher than the steeple at the Emmanuel Baptist Church and that if the proposed lines were to go down it could take up to two months to repair. Appalachian Power will hold a public hearing on October 17, 2016 at 4:00pm and 7:00pm at the Washington County Government Center Building. A hearing is also scheduled for October 26 in the Commission Courtroom in Richmond, VA.

#### **10. Reports on the following town owned properties:**

- Breckinridge Cabin
- Retirement
- Fields-Penn
- The Meadows

Matthew Johnson, Director of Planning stated he has no new developments on town owned properties.

#### **11. Urban Path Project**

John Dew, Director of Public Services and Construction reported he moved the Urban Path route to Park Street near Holston Mountain Artisans after he was not able to acquire two easements from property owners. Mr. Dew is hopeful the project will move forward and can be put out to bid soon.

Mr. Humphrey stated he would like to take one of the old trolleys that has been declared as surplus property, epoxy the shell, replace the plastic windows with plexiglass, stabilize it, and use it as a rest station on town owned property on Blacks' Fort Lane. Mr. Humphreys stated an iPad and a barn hydrant could also be installed.

#### **12. Maintenance of Exit 17 Ramp**

John Dew, Director of Public Services and Construction reported that VDOT staff have committed to trash pickup near interstate exits. Council suggested a split rail fence be installed at Exit 17. Mr. Dew will check to see if VDOT will approve a split rail fence.

#### **13. Tourism Zones**

Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism and Economic Development reported on the development of tourism zones and presented possible incentives for downtown businesses as well as businesses locating near interstate exits. Mr. Costello asked Council to review

the materials and to provide feedback. Mr. Kelly stated he would like to see what the return on investment could be. Mr. Costello stated he would like to create a scenario that would show how the process would work.

**14. Employee Handbook**

Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager reported the employee handbook is still in progress. Stacy Reichler, Director of Human Resources has provided a draft copy for Mr. Kelly and Mrs. Rosenbaum’s review.

**15. Cindy Patterson, inquired about changes to the October 2015 minutes.**

Mr. Kelly reported that a portion of the actual motion was not recorded and that legal counsel had reviewed the video and suggested the change be made.

Mrs. Patterson inquired about changes she would like to request to the September minutes and the timeframe in which the agenda and packet are available to Council. Mr. Humphreys stated that Robert’s Rules states the minutes are a record of what happened and to capture action items of the meeting and not discussion.

**16. Closed Session – Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the Council will convene in a closed session for the purpose of discussion of acquisition or disposition of property.**

**On motion of Mr. Humphreys, seconded by Mr. Howard, the Council went into Closed Session Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, section 2.2-3711(A)(3), for the purpose of discussion of acquisition or disposition of property.**

**The roll call vote was as follows:**

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| <b>Mr. Craig</b>      | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mrs. Patterson</b> | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mr. Howard</b>     | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mr. Humphreys</b>  | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mayor Lowe</b>     | <b>Aye</b> |

**On motion of Mr. Humphreys, seconded by Mr. Howard, the Council reconvened in regular session.**

**The roll call vote was as follows:**

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| <b>Mr. Craig</b>      | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mrs. Patterson</b> | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mr. Howard</b>     | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mr. Humphreys</b>  | <b>Aye</b> |
| <b>Mayor Lowe</b>     | <b>Aye</b> |

**The Deputy Clerk, Tonya Triplett, read the following certification to be adopted by the Council members:**

*WHEREAS, the Council of the Town of Abingdon, Virginia has convened in a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and*

*WHEREAS, Sec. 2.2-3712(D) of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, requires a certification by the Town Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law; and*

*NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Council of the Town of Abingdon, Virginia hereby certifies that to the best of each member’s knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from an open meeting requirement by Virginia law were discussed in closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Town Council.*

**The certification was as follows:**

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Mr. Craig</b>      | <b>I so certify</b> |
| <b>Mrs. Patterson</b> | <b>I so certify</b> |
| <b>Mr. Howard</b>     | <b>I so certify</b> |
| <b>Mr. Humphreys</b>  | <b>I so certify</b> |
| <b>Mayor Lowe</b>     | <b>I so certify</b> |

Mayor Lowe declared a 5-minute recess for Council and Town staff to reconvene in the Council Chambers for the regular 7:30 meeting.

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Cathy C. Lowe, Mayor

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Tonya Triplett, Deputy Town Clerk