

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
WORK SESSION MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017 – 5:30 PM
ARTHUR CAMPBELL ROOM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A Work Session meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Monday, March 6, 2017 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 Lowe
Mr. Richard E. Humphreys
Mr. Robert M. Howard
Mrs. M. Cindy Patterson
Mr. J. Wayne Craig

Administrative/Town Staff:

Greg Kelly, Town Manager
Cecile Rosenbaum, Asst. Town
Manager/Clerk
Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney
Chuck Banner, Treasurer
Kim Kingsley, Paralegal/Deputy Treasurer
Sean Taylor, Planning Dept.
John Dew, Dir. Of Construction/Public Services
Kevin Costello, Dir. of Tourism
Kevin Worley, Dir. Of Parks & Rec
Jon Phelps, IT Department
Tonya Triplett, Community Dev. Coordinator
Stacey Reichler, Dir. Of Human Resources
Jennifer Montgomery, Main Street Director

Visitors:

Sam Brown, Sam Rosenthal, Rich Macbeth
Doug Beatty, Warren Harris, Stephen Jett,
Nan Harman, Martha Keys, Sigrid Phillips,
Nancy Hart and others

The Council discussed the following:

C-1. Discussion regarding Warren Harris' request to have signature(s) removed from petitions presented to Council by Friends of Abingdon

Warren Harris presented information with regard to his request to have the signatures

“blacked out” as he felt it subjected him to identity theft or other crimes. After a lengthy discussion and review of the legal opinion of Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney, Council indicated they would vote on the matter during the Regular meeting.

At this time, Mayor Lowe asked that Council consider the agenda items for consideration of bids for employee health insurance and for the town’s liability insurance.

E – 1. Update on employee health insurance renewal

Sam Brown, Consultant, reported to Council that he had requested bids for the town’s employee health insurance through an RFP. Mr. Brown reported that Local Choice submitted the lowest rate, even though there was an increase of 8% in premium costs. Mr. Brown stated that he needed a decision by April 1st. Mr. Brown recommended that the Council remain with Local Choice as they presented the best offer. Council advised that they would make a motion during the regular meeting.

E – 4. Update on RFP for town’s liability insurance

Sam Rosenthal, Consultant, reported to Council that a RFP had been completed with regard to the Town’s liability insurance. He stated two companies, Virginia Municipal League, the Town’s current carrier, and Virginia Association of Counties Risk Management had responded. Discussion regarding the details of the coverage, including costs, were discussed. Mr. Rosenthal reported that VACORP had submitted a bid approximately \$70,000 less than VML’s current proposed renewal rate. Council advised that they would make a motion during the regular meeting.

C-2. Update on picnic shelter proposed for Fairview

Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney, advised Council that the Old Glade Antique Tractor Club had requested approval to be build a 30’ x 50’ wood/concrete event/picnic shelter and a small stack chimney on the property known as the “Fairview Historic Site”. Ms. Icenhour reported that this matter would need to be advertised for public hearing and will be on the April 3, 2017 Council regular agenda for consideration.

C-3. Update on Sound/Video costs projections for Arthur Campbell meeting room

Per Council’s request at the February meeting, Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager, presented to Council a memo from Floyd Bailey, Director of Information Technology detailing the costs associated with adding audio and video recording to the Arthur Campbell meeting room. After discussion, Council indicated that they would make a formal motion in the regular meeting to authorize Mr. Kelly, Town Manager, to move forward with installing both visual and audio up to \$5,000, and noted the funding will come from the Council’s contingency line.

D-1. Update on Heritage TV

Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager, reported that Floyd Bailey, Director of IT, stated that technology was in place for Heritage television to broadcast monthly council meetings.

D-2. Update on partnership with Virginia Highlands Community College

Councilman Howard stated that the banners had not been finalized at this time and would offer an update at the April meeting.

D-3. Update on Appalachian Power project involving the Virginia Highlands Airport

Mayor Lowe stated that House Bill 1760 passed and she is not aware of any decision at this time by the State Corporation Commission.

D-4. Consideration of Letter of Agreement between Abingdon Main Street and Virginia Main Street

Greg Kelly, Town Manager, advised Council that a meeting was recently held with Jennifer Montgomery and Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager. Mr. Kelly noted that several modifications needed to be made to the agreement with the town and Abingdon Main Street, before the agreement letter with Abingdon Main Street and Virginia Main Street could be finalized. Mr. Kelly noted that the agreements would be presented for consideration at the April Council meeting.

D-5. Update on information provided to Council relative to West Main Street near Brown Dental Associates

Councilman Humphreys reported that he, Councilman Craig and John Dew, Director of Public Services and Constructed visited the subject area to review his concerns about the entrance to Brown Dental. Councilman Humphreys reported that Councilman Craig and John Dew, both traffic engineers, felt that the lanes were properly marked and that he respected their opinion that the lanes were properly marked. No further action was required on this matter and Mayor Lowe noted that it could be removed from Old Business.

E-2. Discussion of replacement of signal light at the intersection of Valley Street and Russell Road

Greg Kelly, Town Manager, reported that he had recent calls from citizens stating that the traffic was flowing better at the intersection of Valley Street and Russell Road without the signal in place. John Dew, Director of Public Works/Construction, recommended that a traffic study be conducted at several other areas in the Town that may be more appropriate for the signal light.

Council agreed to Mr. Dew's recommendation, which he stated would take approximately one year to complete.

E-3. Update on town ordinances

Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney, reported that she had been working on several ordinances. Councilman Humphreys questioned whether business license applications had been sent to the Airbnb businesses located within the Town limits. Mrs. Icenhour responded that those had been mailed and it was her understanding that a few have obtained the proper license. Mrs. Icenhour further stated that it appears that it will be the end of March before state legislation regulating Airbnb's will be passed. Councilman Humphreys asked if Airbnb would be collecting the lodging tax and reporting it to the Town. Mrs. Icenhour stated that the collection of lodging tax would be handled by the Town in the same manner it is for hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts.

E-5. Reports on the Town owned properties

Councilman Humphreys stated that he would like to be notified when the building department does inspections on Town owned properties. Greg Kelly, Town Manager, stated that he would advise the building department of the request.

E-6. Update on mission statements relative to boards and commissions

Council discussed presented mission statements. Mayor Lowe advised Council that several boards would be meeting in the near future to review and adopt their statements. Ms. Patterson requested that the approved statements presented in the Council packet be placed on the Town's website.

E-7. Report on activities of Community Development Coordinator

Tonya Triplett, Community Development Coordinator, updated Council as to meetings with local business owners and events she had attended. Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager, advised Council that Mrs. Triplett had been contacted by an individual inquiring as to whether the Town would be interested in the Old Exxon station on Main Street. Discussion ensued and it was decided that the Town would have no interest in the purchase of said property.

F-1. Update on the tennis court air dome at the Coomes Center

Mayor Lowe stated that the matter has been reviewed and Council will address it in the regular meeting.

F-2. Update on Urban Pathway Project

John Dew, Director of Public Services/Construction, advised Council that the project was

moving forward and after meetings with the design engineer, he hoped to have bids ready to go out in the next few weeks. Mr. Dew stated he would have an update at the May meeting.

F-3. Update on VDOT upkeep of exit ramps

John Dew, Director of Public Services/Construction, stated that he has had no complaints of additional trash/debris on the exit ramps but would continue to monitor.

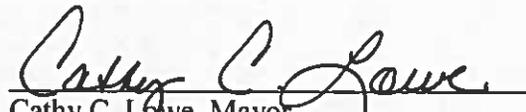
F-4. Update on split rail fence at Exit 17

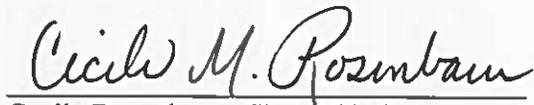
John Dew, Director of Public Services/Construction, presented images of split rail fencing for Council's consideration. Councilman Humphreys suggested that Mr. Dew contact the members of Veteran's Park Commission for information regarding the company that supplied the railing at the park.

F-5. Update on Tourism Zone project

Mayor Lowe stated because of lack of time, the matter will be discussed during the regular council meeting.

Mayor Lowe declared a 5-minute recess for Council to reconvene in Chambers for the regular meeting.


Cathy C. Lowe, Mayor


Cecile Rosenbaum, Town Clerk