

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
WORK SESSION MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2016 - 5:30 PM
ARTHUR CAMPBELL ROOM - MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A Work Session meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Monday, November 7, 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 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
John Dew, Dir. Of Construction/Public Services
Kevin Costello, Dir. of Tourism & ED
Floyd Bailey, IT Department
Kevin Worley, Director of Parks & Recreation
Jennifer Montgomery, Main Street Director

Visitors:

Martha Keys, Rich Macbeth, Patrick Bidros and
others

The Council discussed the following:

- 1. New Business - Discussion of placement of sign for Watauga Elementary School, a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School.**

Mayor Lowe reported that Watauga Elementary School was awarded the 2016 National Blue Ribbon School Award. Mayor Lowe stated the County is going to purchase signs and the Town has been asked to place the signs at the entrance to town. Consensus of Council is for

Mr. Kelly, Town Manager to work with the Washington County Superintendent of Schools to determine the best location for the signs.

2. Discussion of meeting with District III relative to increased bus service in Abingdon and Washington County.

Bob Howard, Council Member reported that District Three maybe interested in extending service further into the County and also adding a second route in the Town of Abingdon. District Three has added routes in other communities and it doubled the number of riders.

At this time, Mayor Lowe recognized and welcomed Patrick Bidros, a student at Dobyns-Bennett High School.

3. Consideration of proposed purchase of properties; 3.54 acres, more or less, laying and being in the Madison Magisterial District, Old South Way and Watauga Road area, being a portion consisting of 2.20 acres, more or less, of Tax Map No. 127-A-18, currently owned by John R. and Nina C. White; and being a portion consisting of 1.34 acres, more or less, of Tax Map No. 127-A-10, currently owned by Cornelia H. Counts.

Kevin Worley, Director of Parks and Recreation stated this project started in 2005 when VDOT awarded the Town revenue sharing funds to improve the Watauga Trailhead portion of the Virginia Creeper Trail. Mr. Worley noted that VDOT has been gracious in allowing the funds to be extended over the years. Appraisals have been completed by an approved VDOT appraiser and have been accepted. The Town of Abingdon will make two additional payments to the property owners, one in FY 2017-2018 and the other in FY 2018-2019. The land value for the White property was \$100,000 and the VDOT appraisal was 30,815. The land value for the Counts property was \$85,000 and the VDOT appraisal was \$21,015.

Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney stated that the legal department recommends the Council authorize the Town Manager to acquire the properties, as to improve the Virginia Creeper Trail parking and restroom facilities located at the Watauga Trailhead.

4. Consideration and recommendation of proposals submitted for banking services for the town's General Fund and Sewer Fund accounts.

Chuck Banner, Director of Finance reported that RFP's were issued for banking services on September 1st and hand delivered to the banks in town. Mr. Banner confirmed that the RFP was for banking services for the Town for both the general and sewer fund accounts for a 5-year term with five additional one year renewals. Mr. Banner reported that a committee consisting of the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager and Mr. Banner had reviewed the proposals and interviewed the top three banks. Mr. Banner stated that it was the committee's unanimous recommendation to award the bid to First Bank & Trust due to their qualifications, cost of services, innovative banking technology, and the quality of their services.

5. Authorization of Chuck Banner, Director of Finance to move the sewer fund deposit account.

Chuck Banner, Treasurer/Dir. of Finance stated that while reviewing records the auditor found that the town is being charged service fees on the sewer fund deposit account currently held by Bank of America. The auditor recommended moving the account to another bank. Mr. Banner recommended that Council authorize him to include this account with the accounts that will be moved to First Bank and Trust.

6. Consideration of a Resolution of the Council of the Town of Abingdon for Authorization to Pick up the Employees Contributions, through payroll deduction, to VRS for Past Service Credit as provided for under § 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager has some questions about how the process of payroll deduction works and suggested the Town get more information from Virginia Retirement System before approving the resolution.

7. Consideration a Resolution of the Council of the Town of Abingdon Endorsing the town's 2016 Virginia Smart Scale Project Applications.

John Dew, Director of Public Services and Construction stated the resolution will act as a supporting document for the application that was submitted to VDOT in September. Mr. Dew stated that Smart Scale is the current program VDOT has to allocate funds to road projects, and use to be called HB 2. This resolution includes four projects in Abingdon: French Moore Blvd. Extension/Cook Street, W Main/ Route 19, W Main/Jonesboro Road and widening of E Main Street from Hillman Highway to Empire Drive.

8. Discussion of corrections to September 6, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Greg Kelly, Town Manger stated a memo was included in the packet and changes were made based on the video review by Town Clerk, Cecile Rosenbaum.

9. Town Attorney Report

Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney reported she has been working to provide over 12,000 documents for discovery, collecting delinquent taxes and FOIA requests.

10. Review of remaining items on the Regular Agenda for November 7, 2016:

John Dew, Director Public Services and Construction reported the Town sent out RFP's for transportation engineering services for the proposed 40 acre Multiple-Use Sports Complex development located on the east side Route 75 (Cummings Street) with direct access to Green Spring Road and North of I-81. A review committee scored the six (6) proposals received and interviewed three (3) of the firms. The vetting committee recommends Davenport Consulting, who specializes in traffic study impact analysis, is located in South Chesterfield, VA and submitted a proposal for \$68,500.

Mrs. Patterson inquired about work being done by town employees at 448 Green Spring Road, property owned by Marathon Realty. She reviewed the Right-of-Entry document and the contract between the Town and Marathon Realty and didn't see anything that would require the Town to remove debris and board up the windows and doors. Mr. Kelly explained that the town will ultimately own the property, however, Marathon Realty purchased the necessary properties for rights of way needed for the Green Spring Road project. The town is obligated from a liability stand point to make sure all the properties that it exercises control over are safe. Mr. Kelly confirmed that the tenants of the home had evacuated the property and left a blighted situation. Mr. Kelly noted that this was the third property in town in the last 2 weeks that had to be boarded up and large amounts of trash be removed by town crews.

11. Update on Partnership with VHCC

Bob Howard, Council Member reported that he and Jennifer Montgomery, Main Street Director met with Virginia Highlands Community College to discuss possible joint partnerships. Discussion took place about a discount program for VHCC students, facility and staff, flags, connecting to the urban pathway from the Muster Grounds to the College, and joint use of facilities. Consensus of Council is to move forward with both the discount and flag projects.

12. Discussion of any town ordinance update issues.

Matthew Johnson, Director of Planning had nothing new to report. Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney hopes that time will allow her to look at the sign ordinance soon.

13. Update on Virginia Highlands Airport overlay /Appalachian Power upgrade project.

Mayor Lowe reported she had attended the SCC hearings in Abingdon. The hearings in Richmond were canceled, while waiting for the FAA to make a determination.

14. Discussion on surplus trolley placed on Black's Fort Lane for a resting station.

Rick Humphreys, Vice Mayor stated he had suggested using an old trolley as a resting station along the Urban Path.

15. Economic Development.

Mayor Lowe and Rick Humphreys reported a meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2016 to discuss economic development.

16. Report on the auction and/or sale of town owned properties.

Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney reported she and Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager met with Interstate Realty and Richards Property. Both companies reported that the market is down, the properties may not bring what they are worth and suggested listing them at a later time. Consensus of Council is to keep the properties and wait for the market to get stronger.

17. Reports on the following town owned properties:

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

Matthew Johnson, Director of Planning had nothing new to report.

18. Urban Path Project.

John Dew, Director of Public Services and Construction reported the consultant is reviewing and revising the plan. Once the plans are revised they will be sent to VDOT for approval and advertising can begin.

19. Maintenance of Exit 17 Ramp

John Dew, Director of Public Services and Construction reported VDOT has been taking care of the trash at Exit 17. Consensus of Council is to see if a split rail fence, similar to the fence at the Muster Grounds would be acceptable.

20. Tourism Zones.

Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism and Economic Development hopes to have a scenario of how tourism zones will work at the mid-month work session.

21. Employee Handbook.

Cecile Rosenbaum, Assistant Town Manager stated she has a draft copy of the employee handbook that should be ready for Council to review at the December Work Session Meeting.

22. Council Member Reports

- Mayor Lowe reported the mid-month work session would be November 16, 2016. Council will meet with Council Appointees to discuss evaluations.
- Mr. Craig reported a concert/dinner fundraiser at the Abingdon Community Center November 12.

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


Cathy C. Lowe, Mayor


Tonya Triplett, Deputy Town Clerk