

**TOWN OF ABINGDON  
COUNCIL MEETING  
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024 – 2:30 Pm  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

The meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 2:30 pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

**A. WELCOME – Mayor Pillion**

**B. ROLL CALL**

Members of Council Present:

Wayne Austin  
Donna Quetsch  
Derek Webb  
Vice Mayor Anderson  
Mayor Pillion

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (VIDEO 6:06 – 6:29)**

**On motion of Mrs. Quetsch, seconded by Vice Mayor Anderson, approved the agenda as presented.**

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

<b>Mr. Austin</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mrs. Quetsch</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mr. Webb</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Vice Mayor Anderson</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pillion</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**E. PUBLIC COMMENTS (VIDEO 6:31 – 9:45)**

- Eddie Copenhaver

**F. PROCLAMATIONS**

**G. PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Proposed right of way and permanent easement for private utilities for William King Museum of Art, a Virginia non-stock corporation, on Town owned property known as Academy Drive, located at or near 415 Academy Drive NW, consisting of 25 feet in length, 15 feet in width (7.5 feet on each side of the centerline), more or less, centered on coordinates 26.7100777, -81.9870557. **(VIDEO 9:45 – 12:49)**

Heagon Gill, Engineering Technician presented information including William King Museum of Art is requesting a permanent easement to install and maintain the required utilities as a future addition to the existing structure on Academy Drive. The Town's Street configuration makes it impossible to provide required stormwater runoff quantity and quality control without extensive excavation, the parcel straddles both sides of Academy Drive, therefore they are currently seeking an easement from the Town. Mr. Gill also added that the future addition of the structure will be reviewed for compliance with the stormwater management ordinance, Town's zoning ordinance and the Uniform Statewide Building Code, however without a positive motion by the Council for the easement, the addition will not be feasible.

Mayor Pillion opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, Mayor Pillion closed the public hearing.

2. Ordinance to repeal, amend, and reenact Chapter 66. Taxation – property tax exemption for Elderly and Handicapped homeowner and Qualified Veterans totally and permanently handicapped property owner. **(VIDEO 13:16 – 15:14)**

Town Manager Mike Cochran conveyed to Council this proposed amendment the amount of exemption as provided by the General Assembly amended Code of Virginia, Chapter 32 of Title 58.1 relating to exemption or deferral of taxes on property of certain elderly and handicapped person, which will align with Washington County's exemption or deferred taxes. Treasurer Tammy Baldwin compared last year's calculating \$2,422 with an additional thirteen new applications that will help with the residents that need assistance.

Mayor Pillion opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, Mayor Pillion closed the public hearing.

#### **H. RESOLUTIONS (VIDEO 12:49 – 13:15)**

1. Proposed right of way and permanent easement for private utilities for William King Museum of Art, a Virginia non-stock corporation, on Town owned property known as Academy Drive, located at or near 415 Academy Drive NW, consisting of 25 feet in length, 15 feet in width (7.5 feet on each side of the centerline), more or less, centered on coordinates 26.7100777, -81.9870557.

**On motion of Mr. Austin, seconded by Vice Mayor Anderson accepted the proposed right of way and permanent easement as presented.**

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

<b>Mr. Austin</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mrs. Quetsch</b>	<b>Aye</b>

Mr. Webb	Aye
Vice Mayor Anderson	Aye
Mayor Pillion	Aye

**I. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES (VIDEO 15:14 – 16:02)**

1. Ordinance to repeal, amend, and reenact Chapter 66. Taxation – property tax exemption for Elderly and Handicapped homeowner and Qualified Veterans totally and permanently handicapped property owner.

**On motion of Mr. Austin, seconded by Mr. Webb, to repeal the existing Chapter 66 taxation portion as set forth on the agenda and amend the ordinance in compliance with what is contained in the Council packet, waiving the second reading.**

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Austin	Aye
Mrs. Quetsch	Aye
Mr. Webb	Aye
Vice Mayor Anderson	Aye
Mayor Pillion	Aye

**J. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES**

**K. CONSIDERATION OF BIDS**

**L. NEW BUSINESS (VIDEO 16:38 – 20:16)**

1. Consideration of allocation to Veterans Advisory Board from Council Contingency

Mayor Pillion conveyed the Veterans Advisory Board had some extra needs at the end of the year and we have extra money in our Council contingency.

**On motion of Mrs. Quetsch, seconded by Mr. Webb, contributed \$2,500 from Council contingency and move to the Veterans Advisory Board.**

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Austin	Aye
Mrs. Quetsch	Aye
Mr. Webb	Aye
Vice Mayor Anderson	Aye
Mayor Pillion	Aye

Mr. Austin highlighted previous discussions concerning the in-kind contributions made to the Veterans Memorial Park Foundation, noting his and Vice Mayor Anderson's involvement on the Board. Recognizing their needs, he was hopeful that the Council would contemplate making a donation from the contingency fund in the future.

Vice Mayor Anderson urged the Council to consider a contribution from the contingency fund or perhaps a banner, given that the poles have been installed for the Memorial Day celebration. In response, Town Manager Mike Cochran stated that a draft Resolution or policy would be presented for discussion, either as part of the budget process or as a standalone resolution, outlining all relevant details. Further discussion followed.

**2. Consideration of "Abingdon Town Council Monthly Town Hall Meeting Request Form" (VIDEO 20:16 – 30:22)**

Mayor Pillion highlighted discussions from the previous month regarding the establishment of public meetings, providing citizens with an opportunity to engage with the Council on current issues. Mrs. Quetsch raised concerns about potential redundancy in the process, questioning the necessity of the topics given the Council's control over the agenda and the delay in addressing matters presented. She emphasized the importance of clarity regarding the purpose of the town hall meeting and suggested flexibility in their implementation.

Town Manager Mike Cochran explained that the intention behind the town hall meetings was to address issues as they arise, with the three-month rule serving as a guideline rather than a strict requirement. Mayor Pillion reiterated that the three-month rule was meant to ensure thorough discussion if deemed necessary by multiple Council members.

Mr. Austin expressed confusion over the inclusion of the three-month rule, which was not part of his original motion. Clerk Kim Kingsley clarified that the rule was included based on discussions with other clerks and to allow sufficient time for investigation of unfamiliar issues.

Ultimately, the Council agreed to delete the three-month rule from the form, acknowledging the need for ongoing adjustments and open communication with citizens. They expressed optimism about the potential of the meetings to enhance community engagement and decision-making.

Mayor Pillion suggested options for proceeding, including removing the three-month rule or approving the form with adjustments to be made as needed. Council members expressed willingness to adapt the process as it unfolds, with Mayor Pillion emphasizing the need for patience and flexibility.

**On motion of Mr. Austin, seconded by Mrs. Quetsch, approves the form as provided to us with the deletion of the three-month rule and gives consideration to that as we move along and see how things go.**

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

<b>Mr. Austin</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mrs. Quetsch</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mr. Webb</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Vice Mayor Anderson</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pillion</b>	<b>Aye</b>

Mayor Pillion expressed satisfaction with the constructive nature of the decision, emphasizing the importance of collaborative problem-solving to improve processes. She highlighted the Council's role in adapting and refining procedures as necessary, expressing enthusiasm for the journey ahead and the potential positive outcomes of their efforts and where it leads the Council.

**M. OLD BUSINESS**

**N. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM TOWN MANAGER  
(VIDEO 30:41- 31:55)**

Town Manager Mike Cochran advised the banner poles were operable, provide an update on the Main Street flooding, the sanitary sewer project on Whites Mill Road, and the roof on the Barter Theatre was 75% complete. He also reminded everyone of Earth Day and the Community Day of Service events this weekend.

**O. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS (VIDEO 31:55 – 38:37)**

Mr. Austin advised of the Memorial Day program at Veterans Memorial Park on May 27, 2024, at 11:00 am with tree dedications and a great program. He also stated that he had received phone calls regarding the traffic backed up past Cummings Street for buses unloading at The Barter Theatre. Town Manager Mike Cochran stated he reinforced the information with The Barter staff.

Vice Mayor Anderson attended the Arbor Day Tree Dedication at Abingdon Elementary School and was very pleased. He also noted that the Town of Abingdon has been a Tree City USA community for twenty-three years. He also thanked Kyle Pollard and the Recreation Staff for assisting the Girl Scout Troop 161 with a meeting place.

Mayor Pillion reminded everyone of the Washington County Day of Service this Saturday and provided details.

Mr. Webb reminded everyone of Earth Day on Saturday and the tree give-way on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**P. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES (VIDEO 38:37 – 40:50)**

1. Board of Building Code Appeals
  - Reappointment of Ed Fuqua, who is eligible to serve an additional term
2. Sustain Abingdon
  - Reappointment of Elizabeth Hill, who is eligible to serve an additional term
  - Reappointment of Tom McMullen, who is eligible to serve an additional term
  - Appointment to fill an expired position
3. Tree Commission
  - Reappointment of Greg Meade, who is eligible to serve an additional term

**On motion of Mrs. Quetsch, seconded by Mr. Webb, reappointed Ed Fuqua to the Board of Building Code Appeals; reappointed of Elizabeth Hill and Tom McMullen and appointed Grayson Toler to Sustain Abingdon; and reappointment of Greg Meade to serve an additional term on the Tree Commission.**

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

<b>Mr. Austin</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mrs. Quetsch</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mr. Webb</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Vice Mayor Anderson</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pillion</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Q. CLOSED SESSION**

**R. ADJOURNMENT**

  
Kimberly Kingsley, Clerk

  
Mayor Amanda Pillion