

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

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2016

The Luray Town Council met in regular session on Monday, April 11, 2016 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
Chief Carl "Bow" Cook, Luray Police Department
Gina Hilliard, Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce
Jeff McMillan, Luray Downtown Initiative
Sara Levinson, LDI and Small Business Administration
Nancy Shifflett, Luray Downtown Initiative
Stephanie Lillard, Page County EDA
Cathie Miranda- Luray Page County Farmers Market
Meredith Houff- Page County Library Association
Margaret Stevenson, Hawksbill Greenway Foundation

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.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Councilman Schiro motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, motion seconded by Councilman Sours 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 – 03-14-2016
- B) Financial Report for the Month Ended March 31, 2016
- C) Accounts payable checks totaling \$ 124,837.29

GENERAL CITIZEN COMMENT

Durwood Frye, 32 Hilltop Lane

Mr. Frye spoke to Council in complaint of the disrupted flow of water since the building of Habitat for Humanity homes. He said that the ponding of water in this area has increased and is causing a mosquito problem. Mr. Frye asked that the town considering spraying for the problem.

Mr. Frye also addressed his concern regarding a fire hydrant being located too far from his home. He questioned the proper distance between hydrants and ask that Council consider installing one closer to his residence. Mr. Frye also raised a question about manufactured homes in the town.

Councilman Lancaster responded to Mr. Frye's complaint about the mosquito problem and said that the town uses a method for its ponds and the same could help Mr. Frye's issue. Mr. Webb, Town Planner, said that he would meet with Mr. Frye to discuss the manufactured home issue. Council also discussed the location of a fire hydrant in relation to Mr. Frye's home.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Planning and Zoning

Town Planner, Ligon Webb, apologized for his lack of a written report and thanked Mr. Chrisman and Mr. Hoke for filling in while he was out of town. Mr. Webb said that the commission has five public hearings scheduled for Wednesday night's meeting. The first is a rezoning for Mr. Baughan (LPA of Luray) and Special Use Permit request to construct Apartment Townhomes on Cave/Zerkel Streets. Another public hearing will be held for Mr. Erik Fox regarding a rezoning on Collins Avenue. A request will also be heard from Mr. Bob Borgie regarding a special use permit to operate a Bed and Breakfast on Blue Ridge Avenue. Lastly, Mr. Webb said a hearing will be held for a proposed Ordinance Amendment for Mixed-Use Zoning within a B1 Zoning District.

TOWN AFFILIATED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

LURAY DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE

Jeff McMillan, Luray Downtown Initiative

Jeff McMillan said that he has provided copies of LDI's budget for the evening's meeting and distributed copies to Council members. He noted the recent Main Street Progressive held on Saturday night and said that while it did not receive the response he had hoped, downtown restaurants did see a good turnout. He said that this will be a quarterly event sponsored by LDI. Mr. McMillan said that LDI has been working on its four methods of management; revitalization, business development, tourism, and support/communication. He said that Ms. Sara Levinson has been instrumental in this process. Mr. McMillan noted good news from Richmond; LDI has become nationally recognized and is fully accredited through the National Main Street program.

Mr. McMillan discussed plans for the Chicken Chow Down event in May, which will accompany the Festival of Spring activities. The activities include three events; one at the Burner Barn at the Caverns, another at Dubliner's Pub, and the final event at the American Legion building. The events will be advertised in the newspaper this week. Also, the billboards entering Luray on Highway 211 have been updated. LDI's newsletter has become a successful communication tool and includes upcoming events. LDI is partnering for the upcoming film premier of the triathlon movie and the event will be held at Luray High School. Mr. McMillan updated members on the Brown's building façade improvements. Councilman Schiro questioned the grant requirements associated with the town's reimbursement for these expenditures. Ms. Levinson said that she has been working with the Town Manager, Mr. Hoke, and has been submitting receipt documentation for the grant funds. Ms. Levinson said that she has also been working with DHCD to ensure guidelines are met. Mr. Hoke updated Council members on the extent of the repairs and improvements.

Mr. McMillan also discussed the two year goal for free downtown Wi-Fi, and has submitted a \$10,000 request from Page County's TOT funds to begin the project. He added that the project would require initial contributions for infrastructure from the county, town, and LDI. The concept would also involve monthly maintenance cost sharing between downtown business owners. Lastly, Mr. McMillan discussed the publication of a Luray Directory and noted business sponsorships.

LURAY PAGE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Gina Hilliard, President

Ms. Gina Hilliard highlighted several happenings at the Chamber and noted the addition of a new part time employee. Ms. Kelly Zitzer was hired as a part time associate and will assist with weekend visitor center hours. Ms. Hilliard also said that local businesses are encouraged to provide their brochures to the Chamber office so that they will be available as tourism season begins. Ms. Hilliard also announced the award of \$25,000 in grant funds from VTC for advertising. She noted increased visitation to local businesses and advised that she along with Ms. Priscilla Montcalm have been visiting both members and non-members in an effort to increase personal contact. She explained that these visits can assist with questions regarding social media and also recruit new members.

Statistics for the month of March included 5 new members, 194 Visitor Guide downloads, 681 bulk mailings, 32 volunteer hours, 162 local calls, 215 local walk ins, 97 tourist calls, 725 tourist walk ins, and unique web hits totaled 5,569. Ms. Hilliard added that social media statistics continue to increase as well.

Recent events hosted by the chamber include a business networking breakfast, job fair and non-profit expo, business after hours, and a cabin capital open forum. Upcoming events include a breakfast seminar, a ribbon cutting ceremony, community yard sale, and business after hours at River Hill Stables and Distillery.

Ms. Hilliard also provided a power point presentation regarding the Blue Ridge Mountain Mudurance. This is a 5K Mud Trail Challenge race that is held sponsored by the chamber. In the past the race has been held at Bear Mountain Zip Lines and this year Ms. Hilliard is requesting that the event be held at the R.H. Dean Recreation Park. Ms. Hilliard explained the approximate course location and obstacles. Ms. Hilliard showed the areas that would be affected by the obstacles, which would be areas at the back of the property. She emphasized that the fit trail would not be disturbed. Also, there are no requirements from town employees for event labor. Ms. Hilliard explained that a contractor prepares for the event and also repairs all damages to the property. Council members questioned the total area disturbed by the event and requested a course map. Councilman Vickers expressed concern that this is another event that may require staff time, despite no cost to the town. Mayor

Presgraves suggested a site visit by council members. Councilman Dofflemyer agreed that he is in favor of the event but would like to look at the site. Ms. Hilliard said that Mr. Gary Drum is going to map out the 3.1 miles and review the course with her. Councilman Schiro said that he is not as concerned with staff time or cost, but rather with disturbing the park. Ms. Hilliard said that she is hoping to advertise the event by May 1st if the location is approved. Mayor Presgraves instructed Ms. Hilliard to find a time for everyone to get together and go over the site.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

PAGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Stephanie Lillard, Page County Economic Development Update

Ms. Lillard spoke to Council members to provide an update on economic development activity within the county. She noted that an offer has been made on the Wallace Building and has been accepted. Ms. Lillard said that interest in the property still exists but funding has been delayed for the purchase. Despite this, there are other offers on the building if this should fall through. Another development is the Tactical Walls company that has purchased the old Genie plant in Shenandoah. A ribbon cutting for this new business will be held soon. Ms. Lillard said another business prospect is developing as well that will affect a property just outside of Luray town limits. A hotel feasibility study will be conducted and the selection has been narrowed to two consultants. The feasibility study will be funded by county tourism revenues. Upcoming meetings include a Valley Workforce regional meeting, a hub-zone business meeting, and various networking efforts. Ms. Lillard also discussed upcoming plans for a partnership with local growers and buyers. This is an effort to promote local produce and meats to restaurants and stores within our own community.

Ms. Lillard discussed her changing role with Page County. She explained that last fall her role transitioned from Economic Development and Tourism to also working with the Department of Building and Zoning. Statistics for building and zoning were 299 permits issued from January through March 2016. Total inspections completed for this period were 1800, which is a good indicator of activity in the community.

The Artisans Trail efforts have been delayed slightly in an attempt to gain more participants. The launch date has been moved to August/September 2016. Ms. Lillard discussed the regional goal of adopting a tourism zone. This is yet another designation, but would allow the extension of local incentive programs. Approval from the state is not required for a tourism zone. Ms. Lillard would recommend that all three towns consider this designation, as well as the county.

LURAY DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE

Sara Levinson, Vision Luray Strategic Plan

Ms. Levinson thanked members for allowing herself and Ms. Shifflett to update council on the Vision Luray Strategic Plan. She recalled that when the committee was formed last spring there were not as many business openings and the absence of ribbon cutting events. Ms. Levinson said that the current environment is very different in terms of improved growth. The Vision Luray group includes both Councilman Schiro and Town Manager Hoke. The goal of this group was to generate ideas for a plan and to gain ideas from a community meeting. She noted that upon creation of the committee things began happening just out of communication between its members. One such example is the grant application to improve the Brown's building façade. An outline of the committee's plan and goals met was included in council's informational packet. Ms. Levinson said the goal of the presentation is to bring these issues back to the table and gain additional input and begin the closeout of the planning discussion.

DRAFT BUDGET REVISIONS UPDATE

Town Manager, Charlie Hoke, briefed members on the draft balanced budget. Two changes were made in the town's revenues. One of those changes was the reassessment of real estate which lowered the town's real estate revenue. Water billings have also decreased, which will be reviewed at the council work session. The reassessments did not change significantly enough to require a tax rate change and water and sewer rates will also remain unchanged for the budget year. More information will be available at the work session and Mr. Hoke plans to recommend advertisement of the draft budget at this time.

Mr. Hoke noted that Ms. Meredith Houff is in attendance this evening and informed her that the library contribution will remain unchanged. The contribution portion of the budget was unchanged from the previous year.

Employee Incentive Program

Councilman Vickers requested to introduce the idea of an employee incentive plan. He suggested that employees be rewarded for their efforts in the form of a gift card, once annually, at the recommendation of their immediate supervisor. The employee would be rewarded for going above and beyond their scope of work and nominations would be submitted to the town manager/council for a monthly award selection. Councilman Vickers suggested a small budget for the year and felt this was a good measure to improve employee morale. Council members said that further details could be considered and Mr. Hoke is to obtain information from Page County on their incentive program. Councilman Lancaster suggested rewards be associated with savings to the town. Councilman Vickers was instructed to work with the Town Manager on this concept.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ ADJOURN

Councilman Schiro announced that he was informed this evening of the Town's receipt of the Governor's Environmental Excellence Award that was presented for the Hawksbill Greenway.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

Barry Presgraves
Mayor

Danielle Babb
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer