

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

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

The Luray Town Council met in regular session on Monday, September 9, 2014 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
Pam Flasch
Jerry Schiro
Leroy Lancaster
Joey Sours
John Meaney

Also Present:

Charlie Hoke, Town Manager
Mary Broyles, Clerk-Treasurer
~~Danielle Babb, Deputy Clerk Treasurer~~
Ligon Webb, Town Planner
Bill Fisher, Luray Downtown Initiative
Liz Lewis, Luray Downtown Initiative
Junior Roy, Luray Police Department
John Robbins, Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce
Jeff McMillan, Page News and Courier
Jason Spidler, Town Attorney
Powell Markowitz, Luray Page County Airport Authority
Luray High School – Student Council Association Members

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 Schiro led everyone in reciting the United States Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Councilman Vickers motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, motion seconded by Councilman Sours with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney.

Approved 6-0

Consent Agenda

- A) Minutes of Regular Council Meeting – 8-11-14
- B) Minutes of the Council Work Session – 8-26-14

C) Accounts payable checks totaling \$176,860.80

GENERAL CITIZEN COMMENTS

Delores Lackovitch and Shelby Hader- Daughter of the American Revolution

Ms. Delores Lackovitch and Shelby Hader, members of the DAR, came before Council to ask for the Proclamation of Constitution Week from September 17th through the 23rd. Ms. Lackovitch quoted the Preamble of the United States Constitution and spoke about the Constitution's founders and their ideals about government. She spoke about the documents purpose for leading our government, guaranteeing our rights, and providing due process of the law. The Proclamation of Constitution week commemorates the adoption of the U.S. Constitution and is recognized annually in our communities and schools.

Motion: Councilman Lancaster motioned to approve the Proclamation of Constitution Week 2014, motion seconded by Councilman Vickers with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

Luray High School Student Council Association

LHS SCA spokesman, Liam Barrett, came before Council members to request permission regarding the annual homecoming activities. Mr. Barrett requested permission for the annual Homecoming Parade to be held on October 8th and it will follow the usual route from Bulldog Field to Luray High School.

Motion: Councilman Vickers motioned to approve the SCA's request regarding their annual homecoming activities, motion seconded by Councilwoman Flasch with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

PUBLIC HEARINGS & PRESENTATIONS

Budget Ordinance and Resolution

Mayor Presgraves opened the Public Hearing for the Budget Ordinance and Resolution authorizing the issuance of a \$327,000 General Obligation Bond. With no citizens present to speak on this issue, the public hearing was closed. Mr. Hoke added that the bond is for the purchase of the property located at 36 West Main Street.

Motion: Councilman Sours motioned to approve the Budget Ordinance and Resolution authorizing the issuance of \$327,000, motion seconded by Councilman Schiro with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Sours, Meaney. NAY: Lancaster. **Approved 5-1**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

PLANNING AND ZONING

Town Planner, Ligon Webb, stated the Planning Commission has three items of importance coming up; 1) a rezoning request from Angela and Steven Griffith, 2) review proposed changes/revisions to the Town's Floodplain Ordinance, and 3) review final edits/changes to the Town's sign ordinance. Mr. Webb also discussed the plans for VDOT Revenue Sharing for the intersection of West Main Street and Memorial Drive. Mr. Webb stated that he has been in discussions with Valley Engineering (Page Memorial Hospital's contract engineer), to

put together as plan/sketch to submit alongside the application for the Revenue Sharing Funds which is due October 31, 2014.

TOWN AFFILIATED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Luray Downtown Initiative

Mr. Bill Fisher went over unfinished business for LDI and stated that Mr. Malone could not be present this evening but has provided a financial report for members. Mr. Fisher provided a power point presentation to Council members. He began by discussing unfinished business items that included; the Market Collective, Art-Filled Summer Camp, bridge project support, inbound-outbound signs, Artisans Trail, Page Theater, Mudtoberfest, and grant opportunities. Mr. Fisher noted that the Market Collective is going well and that there is a greater demand than there are spaces available. He added that the Art-Filled Summer Camp netted \$2,600 in revenues for LDI and hosted about twelve participants. Mr. Fisher noted that the Page Theater Fundraiser did not meet the Kick-Starter Program goals, but was able to raise about \$7,000 in donations for the theater. Ms. Liz Lewis noted that another crowd funding program may be utilized to continue work on this project. Mr. Fisher also discussed the Business Plan Grant, Downtown Investment Grant, and Financial Feasibility Grant applications and updates. Mr. Fisher reviewed the budget for LDI and the anticipated revenues and expenditures. He noted that 152 participants are currently registered for Mudtoberfest and LDI hopes to raise about \$7,100 from this event.

Mr. Fisher then provided a power point presentation explaining the “Luray Love Bridge” idea. He stated that he is not asking for action on this concept this evening but would like council’s consent to discuss the idea with a larger audience. Mr. Fisher said that so far he presented this to both the LDI Board and to Mr. John Shaffer (Luray Caverns). The basic idea is that lovers lock inscribed padlocks onto a structure and throw keys into water to symbolize lasting love. Mr. Fisher provided history on love bridges worldwide and noted that there are none in Virginia. Mr. Fisher discussed that the structure should be independent of the Main Street Bridge and be moveable. He also noted that there should be an entrapment system for keys and be environmentally friendly. Mr. Fisher discussed the tourism aspect of the idea which would support local wedding venues and also bring visitors to downtown. He also discussed the cost and maintenance aspect of the project. Mr. Fisher stated that he wanted to inform the Town Council of this idea and ask for council’s consideration. He is also requesting authorization from the Town Council to speak about this to other organizations.

Mayor Presgraves stated that his initial impression of the subject was questionable but the more he discussed the idea with Mr. Fisher the more he saw the potential of the concept. He said that the financial risk seems low but the rewards could be great. Councilman Sours said that he has visited a Love Bridge structure in Milan, Italy and found it very interesting. Councilman Vickers stated that he likes LDI’s presentation of this idea and likes the concept of the structure being moveable. Councilman Schiro stated that part of the Bridge Replacement Project will be an environmental and historic review. Mr. Schiro cautioned against jumping into the idea too quickly, since likely these reviews will dictate the preservation of the character of the bridge. He stated that he has no issue with it, so long as it is not a permanent part of the actual structure. Mr. Fisher suggested the Ruffner Plaza as an alternate location. Councilwoman Flasch suggested a “wishing well” structure to house the keys from the locks. Council members and Mr. Fisher continued to discuss the concept and raised questions/comments. Mayor Presgraves said that there are many aspects that still require a great deal of thought but that he likes the process. Councilman Vickers agreed that he is excited to see what details are to come.

Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce

Director, John Robbins, said that he likes the “Love Bridge” idea and especially its uniqueness to the state of Virginia. Mr. Robbins stated that in October he will be making a presentation to the Virginia Motorcoach

Association to try to stimulate bus tours to visit downtown Luray. He noted that these tours typically carry about 50 visitors who spend approximately \$150 per day/per person. Mr. Robbins noted a potential interest in property on Wallace Avenue for a prospective business. Mr. Robbins said that while this individual is in the very early stages of looking at property to locate a manufacturing firm, he is hopeful for this opportunity. Mr. Robbins said that while there is no commitment from the interested party, he has referred them to the County's EDA for further assistance. Mr. Robbins reported spotty and sluggish tourism for the state as a whole throughout the summer months. He did note that a large increase was seen in July with 2,870 walk-in visitors, up 28% from last year. Also, August saw 2,528 visitors to the chamber; nearly the same number as last year. Overall, Mr. Robbins feels these numbers, combined with lower gas prices will lead to a successful fall season for the Visitors Center. Mr. Robbins also noted that a great deal of work has gone into the website over the last few months. He noted that "unique visits" to the website are 31% higher than last year. Also, 28% of web traffic is coming from mobile devices. Mr. Robbins discussed other chamber promotions such as web search advancements, advertising in the D.C. area, and the monthly Business After Hours event. He noted that the Triathlon may inconvenience a few residents during the event, but overall he has seen only good feedback. Mr. Robbins said that attendees were very impressed with the event and complimented the coordinators. The chamber also continues work on Mudtoberfest, cabin forums, monthly training sessions, and the annual banquet. Mr. Robbins stated that the annual banquet is tentatively scheduled for November 6th but a location has not yet been chosen.

Luray Page County Airport Authority

Mr. Powell Markowitz discussed the Road Relocation Grant which is a part of the Airport's Capital Improvement Program. He explained that the FAA and State decide annually which project they will fund. This year's project will be to design the relocation of Airport Road. Mr. Markowitz explained that the transfer of property and recognition of the authority as the sponsor of the airport are still in the hands of the FAA. He said that the FAA has all of the necessary documents and have passed through the state level and moved on. Officials are uncertain of how long this process will take, as the transfer of property is not commonplace. Mr. Markowitz requested the authorization of the grant and noted that the authority will continue to manage the grant. He explained that the funding will be \$360,000 federal, \$32,000 state, and \$8,000 local; he noted that the local share is within the authority's budget and will not require a cash commitment from the town or county. He added that fuel sales are improving and he hopes they will surpass the anticipated revenues. Mr. Markowitz said that hangar rentals continue and there are anywhere between 1-3 spaces vacant depending on demand. He also noted that the authority will be converting from a calendar accounting year to a fiscal year. Councilman Schiro asked if once approved by the FAA that the Authority will be the sponsor of these grants. Mr. Markowitz confirmed that this is the case, but noted that the town and county still have 50/50 financial responsibility.

Motion: Councilman Schiro motioned to authorize the Town Manager to sign the sponsorship of the Airport Road Relocation Grant as discussed, motion seconded by Councilwoman Flasch with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

ACTION ITEMS

Tax Code Changes

Town Manager, Charlie Hoke presented information on tax code changes pertaining to Personal Property Tax. Town Attorney, Jason Spittler, provided a copy of the change in ordinance format. At the last work session, members discussed Section 78-2 that staff would like to see amended for a once annually personal property tax billing. Mr. Hoke said that the town sends out about 1,800 personal property tax bills in October for the December due date and the change would eliminate this billing. The revenue generated from the second billing is about

\$23,000 with most bill amounts being less than cost of postage. Mr. Hoke said that staff is requesting to eliminate this billing and have the total tax due in June annually.

Motion: Councilman Sours motioned to approve the tax code change for Personal Property to section 78-2 of the Town Code to an annualized basis, motion seconded by Councilman Meaney with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

Finance Proposal Blue Ridge Bank

Staff sent out a request for proposal to the local banks and to Rural Development for a General Obligation Bond in accordance with the Virginia Finance Act. Mr. Hoke noted that Blue Ridge Bank, Pioneer Bank, and USDA all responded with Blue Ridge Bank well below other rates. Mr. Hoke said that an interest only rate of 2.55% quarterly for a term of ten years would impact the town's budget by \$2,084 annually. Mr. Hoke said that this has been discussed with staff and bond counsel, with Blue Ridge Bank as the preferred option. Councilman Sours said that he likes to think of this as paying \$2,084 annually to have full use of the Greenway and the public parking lot/alleyway which he feels is a very good deal. Mr. Hoke said that it is his understanding that after the bridge project is complete the property will be positioned for re-sale.

Motion: Councilwoman Flasch motioned to accept the Finance Proposal (option #2) from Blue Ridge Bank for the purchase of 36 West Main Street, motion seconded by Councilman Schiro with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

Reappointment Town Treasurer

Mayor Presgraves stated that Treasurer, Mary Broyles, is up for reappointment this term and has been given a satisfactory evaluation by the Town Manager. Mayor Presgraves suggested reappointing Ms. Broyles for another term.

Motion: Councilman Lancaster motioned to reappoint the Town Treasurer for another term as discussed, motion seconded by Councilman Schiro with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Flasch, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 6-0**

TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Town Attorney, Jason Spitler, said he had nothing further this evening.

ADJOURN

With no further business, Mayor Presgraves adjourned the regular session of the Luray Town Council at approximately 8:20pm.

Barry Presgraves
Mayor

Danielle Babb
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer