

**WORK SESSION OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF
THE TOWN OF LURAY, VIRGINIA**

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

The Luray Town Council met in a work session on Tuesday, April 27, 2021, at 5:30 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 Jerry Dofflemyer

Council Present:

Ron Vickers
Stephanie Lillard
Jerry Schiro
Jason Pettit
Joseph Sours
Ligon Webb

Also Present:

Steve Burke, Town Manager
Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager
Mary Broyles, Clerk- Treasurer
Danielle Babb, Deputy Clerk- Assistant Treasurer
Chief of Police, Carl “Bow” Cook, Luray Police Department
Jennifer Jenkins, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation

(This meeting was made public via the Town’s Facebook page.)

A quorum being present, Mayor Dofflemyer declared the Council to be in session for the transaction of business. All present stood for a moment of silence. Councilman Sours led everyone in the United States Pledge of Allegiance.

CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Dofflemyer read aloud the *Ordinance for the Continuity in the Government of Luray*.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called with called with all members present.

UPDATES & DISCUSSION ITEMS

15 Minute Parking Space – 20 West Main Street

Mr. Burke presented the request from Jay Dedman on behalf his business located at 20 West Main Street. Mr. Dedman is requesting a dedicated 15 minute parking space in front of his business. Staff has evaluated the request and believe this can be accommodated. Mr. Burke said this will be an action item on the May 10th Agenda.

Councilman Webb complemented the restoration efforts for 20 West Main Street. The owners have now incorporated a ground level coffee shop and short term rental on the second level.

Code Amendment- Section 517- Sustainable Energy Systems

Steve Burke, Town Manager, requested the Council discuss a Code Amendment to Appendix A- Zoning, Article V- Supplementary Regulation, Section 517- Sustainable Energy Systems. The Code Section would establish regulations for the installation of sustainable energy systems within Town limits. Mr. Burke advised that the Planning Commission has unanimously approved the amendment at their recent meeting on April 14th.

Councilman Schiro suggested that “accessory installations” be permissible by special use permit to allow the Council’s review process. Councilman Webb raised question regarding section 517.2 C- “Traffic Impact Study”. Mr. Burke explained that the traffic study would apply to any impacts caused by installation or deconstruction. Councilwoman Lillard suggested a language change regarding Other Sustainable Energy Systems by Special Use Permit. Town Manager, Steve Burke, noted that the public hearing will not take place until the June regular meeting and changes can be made or modified.

Code Amendment- Article III- Parks Conduct

Mr. Burke presented discussion on a Code Amendment to Article III –Conduct Within and Use of parks to provide guidance on activities within the Town’s Parks. Section 98-33 Protection and Preservation of Property. Section 98-33 would include language for “*No damage or removal of park property, including plants, animals, or natural materials. No person shall disturb vegetation or animals. NO person shall cut trees or landscaping for firewood. NO person shall release or plant any organism into a park. No person shall dig or excavate soil within a park, unless otherwise authorized by the Parks & Recreation Superintendent. Metal detecting with the purpose of excavation would also be prohibited unless otherwise approved by town Council*”. Section 98-41 – Archery and Pneumatic Guns would be established as “*restricted unless approved by the Parks Superintendent*”.

Superintendent, Jen Jenkins, said that there have been an increasing number of requests for metal detecting. She said it is extremely important not to have folks digging random holes for aesthetic

reasons, but also for turf management and safety. Superintendent Jenkins also explained the vandalism problem that continues to take place in parks facilities and the costliness of repairs.

Councilman Pettit noted Section 98-37 of the Code as it applies to loudspeakers and sound equipment. He suggested modifying the language to allow for a provision for Town sponsored events.

Plant Tour Schedule

Town Manager, Steve Burke, will be coordinating tours of the Water and Wastewater facilities for Council members. Council members preferred a Tuesday evening at 5pm.

Town 150th Anniversary

Mr. Burke advised Council members that this year marks the 150th Anniversary of the Town's Incorporation. While the Town was founded in 1812, it was not incorporated until 1871. Mr. Burke proposed coordinating the celebration as a part of the Town's planned events for the July 4th festivities.

General Fund Discussion (Police, Public Works, & Parks and Recreation)

Town Manager, Steve Burke, said the Council had requested to discuss the General Fund Portion of the recommended FY 2021-2022 Budget, specifically Public Works, Police, and Parks and Recreation. Chief Cook and Superintendent Jenkins are in attendance this evening to discuss any questions from Council. Superintendent of Public Works, Lynn Mathews, had planned to attend but is responding to a road closure issue this evening.

Chief Cook advised Council of challenges facing his department regarding officer retention. He felt that it is difficult to attract new officers due to more competitive salaries in other jurisdictions. In addition, he noted that many other jurisdictions offer take home vehicles for officers. Town Manager, Steve Burke, noted that once the details of the American Rescue Plan are quantified we hope to be able to purchase additional vehicles. Chief Cook said that the department would need to establish a policy on take home vehicles. Councilman Schiro suggested the development of a comprehensive plan for recruitment and retention of officers. Council members discussed an increase in entry level salaries and subsequently for senior level officers. Councilman Schiro questioned if the anticipated American Rescue Funds could be included in the budget. Mr. Burke said that Town Attorney, Jason Botkins, advised to proceed with the budget as presented, since guidelines on the funds will not likely be available until mid-August. Chief Cook discussed employee retention and losing officers to other agencies. Councilman Pettit recognized that there are issues with folks who compare salaries only. He noted that other localities have a higher tax base to support these higher salaries. Councilman Pettit stressed that it is important to recruit local individuals with roots in the community who are more likely to stay. Mr. Pettit felt it was more important to focus first on salaries rather than take home vehicles. Chief Cook continued his request for take home vehicles and discussed the cost of purchasing the needed vehicles and the associated up fit costs.

Jen Jenkins, Superintendent of Parks, discussed capital improvements for her budget. She noted the inclusion of shelter roof repairs, tennis court resurfacing, replacement/repair of wood structures, and the Imagination Station rebuild. Councilman Schiro asked if the playground funding could perhaps be included in the American Rescue Plan funding. Councilman Vickers discussed the costs of continued repairs to the tennis courts and preferred estimates on new courts. Ms. Jenkins explained the cost estimates for one, two, and three court facilities. Council and staff also discussed the line item for a seasonal ranger position to work on weekends only.

Councilman Webb addressed Chief Cook and the salaries issue for entry level personnel. Mr. Webb said he would like to see this worked into the current budget cycle if possible. Chief Cook noted that increasing entry level positions will cause salary compression, so additional levels will need to be addressed also. Mr. Burke said that this topic can be incorporated into an agenda action item. Councilman Webb asked about the department's participation in the Regional Drug Task Force. Chief Cook provided a brief description of how the task force works and the benefit to the Town. A more in-depth discussion may be a topic for a future work session.

Chief Cook advised members that he has sent out letters regarding donations for the new K-9.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Dofflemyer noted the upcoming Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Valley Care Management and a new business opening on Friday. He informed members of the invitation for the Chamber Annual Banquet and asked that everyone contact Mary to obtain tickets. Lastly, Mayor Dofflemyer read aloud a letter of thanks from Kathy Slye regarding her late husband David Slye and the Town's acts of kindness to her family.

ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Jerry Dofflemyer
Mayor

Danielle P. Babb
Deputy Town Clerk