

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Work Session
November 12, 2019**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a Work Session on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT

Don Harris, Mayor
Ron Holt, Councilmember
Chuck Presley, Councilmember
Anglis Trigg, Jr., Vice-Mayor
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember
Jimmy Jones, Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator
Rachel Looney, Administrative Asst.
2 Members of Public

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Harris opened the Work Session at 6:30 p.m.

Nationwide Opioid Litigation-Class Action Settlement Proceeding

Mr. Freedman stated that he was bringing this back before council and asked if they wanted to stay in the proceedings then they did not have to do anything but if they wanted to opt out then he would need a Roll Call Vote during the meeting to allow Mr. Watson to sign to opt out.

Mr. Presley asked if anything had changed.

Mr. Freedman stated not that he was aware of that they would mail us a change.

Mr. Watson stated that we could ride it out and maybe win or pull out.

Mr. Trigg suggested letting Mr. Freedman take care of it.

Mr. Freedman stated that the consensus was to ride it out, not opt out or withdraw.

Mr. Watson asked if they needed to vote.

Mr. Freedman stated that no action was needed unless council wanted to make a motion during the meeting.

Resolution: Charter Amendments (Sections 5, 8, 9 and 10)

Mr. Freedman stated that the changes would be the mayor's vote, adding a member, where permitted by law, allowing councilmembers present and voting at a lawfully held meeting to adopt a resolution or ordinance. He stated that there were 2 exhibits attached (an affidavit and Exhibit B which outlined the changes showing the strikeouts in green and the additions in red). He stated that there was some language change regarding ordinances and resolutions and acting by motion. He stated that he and Mr. Watson had discussed it and due to the time restraints wanted to bring something back to council. He stated that they did not have a recommendation but if council was good with the resolution and ready to present it to the General Assembly.

Mayor Harris asked if they needed to vote tonight.

Mr. Freedman stated that it was up to council but he could come back with another resolution.

Mayor Harris suggested they give it some time.

Mr. Holt stated that he had looked over it and was comfortable with it.

Mr. Jones stated that it did not make a whole lot of difference to him.

Mr. Freedman stated that it would require 4 to adopt the resolution.

Mr. Trigg stated that he was a traditional guy and they should leave it alone.

Mr. Bailey stated that he supported most everything in it and agreed they should proceed with a vote.

Mr. Presley agreed.

Mr. Jones stated that he would go either way.

Mayor Harris stated that he was opposed to the mayor not having a vote and over the years they have never had any problems.

Mr. Holt stated that they had 2 tied votes.

Mayor Harris stated that it worked out fine.

Mr. Holt stated that it did not go anywhere.

Mayor Harris stated that it had been this way for many years and it was not broken to be fixed. He stated that when he was first on council that council appointed a mayor but after being in office a short term the residents did not like that council appointed a mayor and that he only had a 2 year term. He stated that by being downtown he was “hammered” more but he knew it would be that way when he ran for mayor. He stated contrary to what they thought, the mayor’s job was not easy, that he represented the Town of Bluefield on many occasions and being self-employed he could go on the spur of the moment. He stated that he felt he had done a good job and since he had been there Town Hall and the new Fire Department had both been built. He stated that he and council have always worked together but he believed the mayor should have a vote.

Mr. Presley stated that they were not wanting to go back to the 2 year term and that the mayor would still have a vote in the case of a tie.

Mr. Holt stated that the 4 year term and a voice was not in debate. He stated that they were trying to get away from tie votes and by adding a seat it would accomplish that. He stated that Tazewell and Richlands both had 6 council and a mayor who was a tie breaker vote.

Mr. Presley stated that they were not taking away from being the mayor but what was better for the future.

Mayor Harris stated in the last 2-3 weeks, he had been invited to both Richlands and Tazewell for an affair and both of their mayors said they would rather have a vote. He stated that mayors should have a vote.

Mr. Trigg stated that it had been working good and together and gave an example of the name change and how it did not work. He suggested they leave it alone and just make it better. He stated that they had been talking about cats for the last 20+years and instead of rewriting it to let the communities work on it.

Mayor Harris asked if council wanted to vote on it tonight or give it more thought.

Mr. Presley agreed to vote.

Mr. Holt agreed to vote.

Mayor Harris stated that they would vote on it tonight.

Agenda

Mr. Watson stated that the Tree Lighting was Saturday, there would be an update on the Block Grant initial \$3k for more planning on the downtown and an update on Fincastle.

Fincastle Update

Mr. Bailey stated that the committee met and last week a new server (EZ Link POS System) was installed at Fincastle.

Mr. Watson stated that it would be working the 3rd week of January.

Mr. Bailey stated that the first year we would trade off 2 rounds of golf per day then re-evaluate it afterwards. He stated that there was no upfront cost.

Mr. Watson stated that it was a \$10k savings.

Mr. Bailey stated that it would help with quotes for the events, etc. He stated after the 2nd year it would be a monthly subscription of a 15% fee plus monthly.

Mr. Watson stated that they gave us \$10k in equipment and would cost us \$1k month but we were giving them 8 rounds of golf as a trade for software and upfront equipment cost. He stated that they were making up \$22k in cost for the first year and it would cost \$1k month if we started paying after it was determined what was made from golf. He stated that it was a 15% registration fee for golf.

Mr. Bailey stated that it sounded too good to be true but Mr. Watson and Mr. O' Neal talked to them. He stated that we were back in the VA and WV Golf Association and in the first month we made \$40k without memberships from events, etc. He stated that people were wanting to know membership rates and that most paid by December 31st. He stated that Mr. O' Neal was working on some membership rates for the next meeting but he had multiple people asking what our rates were before going to another course.

Mr. Holt stated that Fincastle hosted the PVA and they had 150 people to attend. He stated that there was good remarks from the elected officials, etc. He stated that they had the right people in the right places.

Mr. Trigg stated that Linda had gone there for an event with 150 people as well and that everything was excellent and that Mr. O' Neal and his wife were walking around checking on things and knew what they were doing. He stated that the food was excellent and it was set up as a buffet in the small room to open up the main area which worked out great. He stated that he had listened to some bragging about Fincastle and how the greens were better and were well pleased.

Mr. Bailey stated that Anthony was doing an amazing job and that all the water systems had been winterized. He stated that he had heard one negative complaint on the food but felt the person just wanted to be negative.

Mr. Trigg encouraged everyone to go up there and eat.

Mr. Bailey stated that they needed to be a little busier so they could get a taste of it before it was advertised open to the public in January.

Mayor Harris stated that a couple had told him their food was cold when it was served.

Mr. Bailey stated that the food during the Community Foundation was not the warmest but it was their first major event and it was hard to keep 200 plated dishes warm.

Mr. Trigg stated that he liked Mr. O' Neal walking around asking if everything was ok.

Mr. Holt stated that Jessima was top notch.

Mayor Harris stated that his wife spoke highly of her.

Mr. Holt asked if the committee was going to talk about membership rates.

Mr. Bailey stated he thought that was something council wanted to be involved in and it would be brought back at the next meeting.

Mayor Harris asked staff to get with Anthony and have him give an assessment of what needed to be done on the golf course itself since the Shott Foundation would pay for the actual golf course. He asked if they were going to get a budget.

Mr. Watson stated that it was on the last 3-4 pages of the one they received in their packet. He stated that it also included all checks written and the revenue and expense reports and their cash account.

Mr. Presley asked about the roof.

Mr. Watson stated that he had received one quote but he should have 3 more in the next couple weeks. He stated that it was a different type of roof and they were looking to replace all with a flat rubber or pvc roof. He continued with the agenda.

He stated that there was a resolution for Frizzell to approve the contract for \$1,387,700 for plant upgrades, wells and generator not for North College or the meters. He stated that in order to begin this was needed and that VDH had approved the additional loan money. He stated that there was also a vote to go to Public Hearing for the Bond Issuance which was required to let the public know. He stated that he had a donation request for the Band Boosters for a trip that cost \$1k/person. He stated that they did not ask for a specific amount.

Mr. Trigg stated that he thought they had put a freeze on donation requests.

Mr. Watson stated that he had been putting them in the council's packet for a vote. He stated that they had been making them earn it and the band was participating in the parade and we gave a \$500 donation to any band who participated.

Mr. Bailey asked what he recommended.

Mr. Watson stated that they were already given that. He stated that he had another donation request for wrestling as well. He went over the Town Managers Report: fall leaf pickup still going on, the Annual Tree Lighting & Community Gathering would be held on November 16th at 6 p.m. in Jack Asbury Square, the Christmas Parade was scheduled for Saturday, December 14th at noon, the Employee Dinner was scheduled for Tuesday, December 17th at Fincastle at 6:30 p.m., the Volunteer Dinner was scheduled for Thursday, December 19th at Fincastle at 6:30 p.m. and this year's Legislative Trip would be held January 21-23.

Mr. Trigg asked about gifts.

Mr. Watson stated that we would not be taking gifts since they could not accept them.

Mr. Trigg stated that it would be nice to take them for the secretaries.

Mr. Watson stated that he would mention it to Tazewell County. He stated that the nuisance was on the agenda for discussion and that he would be meeting with the group on the 25th. It was agreed to remove it from the agenda until after the meeting.

Mr. Freedman suggested leaving it on and putting something on the record.

ADJOURN

Mayor Harris adjourned the Work Session at 6:56 p.m.

Don Harris, Mayor

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk