

MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.

PRESENT: Mayor Orndorff and Vice Mayor Terndrup and Council Members Bishop, Hall, Le Vine, Maddox, Newman, Plitt, and Vena.

STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Spitzer, Asst. Town Manager McKinley, Director of Finance Mullins, Economic Development & Marketing Manager Bixler, Planning & Zoning Administrator Pearson, and Clerk of Council Keller.

Mayor Orndorff called the Work Session to order and reviewed the agenda.

Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

Lana Le Vine thanked the Town and especially **Economic Development and Marketing Manager Bixler** for the successful Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup Festival.

Action Item:

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 6, 2017, Town Council Work Session were approved as presented.

Discussion Items:

1. Council Vision Statement

Mayor Orndorff said that at the March Retreat, Council crafted a Vision Statement and Priorities for the Town. This document serves as a macro-level representation of what Council envisions for the future of Strasburg.

Town Manager Spitzer said the Vision Statement came from what the presenter, **Tyler St. Clair**, had written down from the retreat. It was thought the section on “Good Governance” was not an actual part of the vision and would be discussed further at the next retreat.

Council Member Le Vine said he wasn’t thrilled with the first two paragraphs and he gave an alternative with copies given to all of Council. He said that even if we don’t adopt his words, he thinks it should be gender neutral and “forefathers” should be replaced with “forebearers”.

It is hoped to adopt this at the next Council meeting so that goals can be set at the April 18 retreat. **Mayor Orndorff** asked if **Vice Mayor Terndrup** and **Council Member Bishop** should meet to review this new version and **Council Member Bishop** said it all said the same thing, but **Council Member Le Vine’s** version has more words. **Council Member Le Vine** said it is now written in his style and he feels it is more eloquent and would make him want to come to Strasburg. The different versions will be included in the Council packet and voted on at the meeting.

2. *USDA Letter of Support*

Town Manager Spitzer said the letter is a draft letter sent from USDA. USDA would like for Council to send some sort of a letter in support of this funding which is being considered from elimination in the federal budget.

Council Member Le Vine said this is an important letter as we would not have been able to do the projects that we have done without this funding. He would like to have all Council Members sign it and also he added a sentence that would make it more personal.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said the wastewater treatment plant was mandated by the Chesapeake Bay Act and now they want to take the funding away and he would like to have this added in the letter.

Council Member Maddox said there are some grammatical errors that need to be corrected and **Town Manager Spitzer** said these would be taken care of before the final letter was sent.

It was decided that comments should be sent to **Town Manager Spitzer** and all will sign it. This will be sent back out in the Council packet. **Council Member Bishop** said she will only sign if the unfunded mandates are mentioned. **Vice Mayor Terndrup** agreed and he wants to have this sent to the subcommittee and **Council Member Bishop** suggested sending it to **President Trump**.

3. *Sidewalk on Mowery Family Properties Property (Pleasant View Drive)*

Mayor Orndorff said when the Town accepted Pleasant View Drive, the developer had constructed the sidewalk on the Mowery's property and never recorded the easement. This has been referred to Council from committee.

Town Manager Spitzer said once the streets were completed to VDOT's standards, the town took the streets into the town. The Town accepted the streets and there was not a deed recorded on the sidewalk because the builder and the property owner could not come to an agreement. The town and Mr. Moe Ritenour, representing the owners, came to an agreement of \$2,300 to leave the sidewalk and the town would pay for the Boundary Line Adjustment. The cost to this would be \$500 - \$1,000.

Council Member Newman wanted to know what is being done now to prevent this in the future. **Asst. Town Manager McKinley** said staff will need to make sure it doesn't happen.

Council Member Newman said he thinks plats showing the structures, corners, etc. should be included in all plats. This doesn't cost much and he thinks it should be required.

Council Member Vena asked if this is required by Shenandoah County and it is not. **Council Member Vena** asked if this would put a burden on the citizens in Strasburg. **Council Member Newman** said only a description is given now and he discussed how this isn't good.

Town Manager Spitzer said the plat showed the right of way, but **Asst. Town Manager McKinley** said he did not verify this. **Vice Mayor Terndrup** said then that we are paying because others are not doing their job. He doesn't think it should cost the taxpayers money. **Town Manager Spitzer** said this wouldn't have cost the town if we had not taken the street into our system.

P&Z Administrator Pearson said **Asst. Town Manager McKinley** normally looks just at infrastructure and not the other aspects. We now have the land records and can watch for this more carefully.

Mayor Orndorff asked if the suggestion from **Council Member Newman** had been written into the ordinance, would it have helped and **P&Z Administrator Pearson** said this would have to be discussed with **Town Attorney Miller** as he doesn't know how we would enforce it.

Council Member Newman asked how he would go about putting a sidewalk in front of his house. How can he do it? **Asst. Town Manager McKinley** said if it is in front of his house and he is going to maintain, then he can just build it. If it is dedicated to the town, a survey would have to be done. **Council Member Newman** said the picture would be worth a thousand words.

Town Manager Spitzer will check with **Town Attorney Miller** to see if such an ordinance is even feasible.

Council Member Le Vine said the metes and bounds are not always right. The drawing would show if the metes and bounds are correct and would be helpful. **Council Member Plitt** gave an example from her property.

Council Member Le Vine said the Mowery property is now the town's problem. He thought we should proceed with this.

Council Member Hall said, in the past, he has gone to court over things like this. Contractors still do what they want and he didn't get any support from the town.

A public hearing will be held at the first May Work Session and then a vote taken on it at the May Council Meeting.

4. Cedar Creek Lease

Mayor Orndorff said the Town has drafted a MOU for Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation's continued use of space at the Gateway to Shenandoah Visitor Center. The town now has the lead in the lease with the Bernstein Family Foundation. This is the memorandum of understanding with CCBF for cost sharing, etc.

Economic Development and Marketing Manager Bixler said we have worked out the lease with the Bernstein's and staff has met with CCBF on how to structure this. She said the way it had previously been done was administratively challenging and so it was decided

to just charge them a flat fee of \$1,650. The lease was drawn up by **Town Attorney Miller**.

Town Manager Spitzer said we will be responsible for putting the building on our insurance and CCBF would have to cover the memorabilia. CCBF will keep the money from entrance fees to the museum and items sold which they have in the gift shop. This MOU will require the person living in the apartment to vacate so there will not be any income from this. The town can use this space for other purposes.

Council Member Newman asked about the lease on the building/apartment and **Town Manager Spitzer** said in the past some of the tenants have been troublesome and it is felt it would be better not to have this added liability.

Council Member Le Vine asked how much this will cost the town. The Town will receive \$1,650 per month from CCBF, but how much will it actually cost. **Town Manager Spitzer** said the bills are split 50/50. **ED&M Manager Bixler** said the additional staff person will be approximately \$5,000 per year. She said it would be about an additional \$1,800 per year for the town.

Council Member Le Vine asked about paragraph 10 and said it sounds like CCBF has veto rights. He thinks we should have the final say or it should go to arbitration. **ED&M Manager Bixler** agreed with this and said maybe it should be switched. Paragraph 11 was questioned and it was thought this should all be the Town and not CCBF. **Council Member Le Vine** questioned what happens if the alarm system supplied by the town fails and CCBF loses artifacts due to the failure. This will be asked of **Town Attorney Miller**.

These items will be addressed and a clean copy will be presented at the next Council meeting.

5. FY2017-18 Budget

An overview of the proposed budget was given by **Town Manager Spitzer** and **Director of Finance Mullins**.

Council Member Newman asked about the increases in water and sewer and **Town Manager Spitzer** said the increases follow the debt payment. He said at the beginning of the project, Council decreased the amount being paid by citizens by 10 percent and we are now trying to catch up.

A discussion was held on the trash rates and the increase. **Vice Mayor Terndrup** wanted to know why the rates were going up as gas prices are going down. The town pays the tipping fees. The fee is based on a three year average.

Vice Mayor Terndrup asked about the amount of money the county gives towards the Visitor Center and the County does not give any money.

Mayor Orndorff said he feel the citizens of Strasburg are charged for their tipping fees

when other county residents are not charged for using the dumpsters and it is not fair to the towns.

Discussion was held on various aspects of the budget and why Strasburg has a “flat” budget. Economic Development was discussed especially in relation to Shenandoah County. Various points of view were given on the revenue as opposed to the expenses.

A discussion on the Funding of Capital Projects was held. Staff will run the figures of a tax increase to help fund projects.

Organization Donations: It was noted the Strasburg Museum is requesting \$3,000 over last year. They are doing about \$8,000 in one-time maintenance projects and so **Town Manager Spitzer** said they request less again next year. Staff is asking for guidance on this.

Council Member Vena said she questions this especially when the budget is flat. She thinks some of our projects should be completed first before giving more money.

Council Member Plitt feels the Library, Museum, Rescue Squad, and Fire Department are part of our town and what people like about the town. She thinks it should remain.

Mayor Orndorff said he doesn't think the Rescue Squad and the Fire Department should be considered donations. We are now giving less in donations than we did a few years ago.

Town Manager Spitzer said some of the \$35,000 donation to the Fire Department goes to paying for utilities.

Council Member Newman would like to see an accounting of the costs of what they are using the money for at the museum. He wants to know if they will be asking for \$18,000 each year. He would like a representative to come in and tell what the money is being used for.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said the library has one part-time paid employee. The rest is volunteer staff. The museum is also a completely volunteer organization. He could see having the \$15,000 yearly donation and a \$3,000 one-time donation. He thinks this is a small price to pay for literacy and cultural awareness.

Council Member Bishop agreed with **Council Member Vena** in that she has never been one for donations. We are giving tax money away for them to fix something up and not to citizens who might need help with water bills. Everything adds up.

Council Member Newman thinks both organizations do great things for the community and he disagrees in not wanting to give the donations. He just wants somebody to come and talk to Council about what is going on.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said the State proposed a 7% increase for state troopers and asked if this would cause a drain on our officers and **Town Manager Spitzer** said our officers are paid above the amount being proposed by the State.

Closed Meeting:

Vice Mayor Terndrup moved that the Strasburg Town Council enter into closed meetings pursuant to Code of Virginia 2.2-3711(A)(29) for discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offertory, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. The subject of the closed meeting is to discuss the terms and scope of the bids for the demolition of the Brill Building and Taxi Stand and pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) for discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, discipline, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The subject of the closed meeting is the review of key personnel. Council Member Newman offered the second to the motion. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously and Council adjourned to a closed meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Reconvened at 9:18 p.m.

“The Council of the Town of Strasburg hereby certifies by Roll Call vote that to the best of each member’s knowledge (1)only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies and (2)only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Council of the Town of Strasburg.”

Each member should respond “I so certify” by Roll Call vote.

**Council Member Bishop
Council Member Hall
Council Member Le Vine
Council Member Maddox
Council Member Newman
Council Member Plitt
Council Member Terndrup
Council Member Vena
Mayor Orndorff**

Council Member Maddox moved for the Town Manager to negotiate with Key Construction on the demolition of the Brill Building and Taxi Stand; second by Council Member Bishop. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Newman moved to accept the resignation of Town Manager Spitzer;

second by Council Member Bishop. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Being no further business, the work session adjourned at 9:20 p.m.