

MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 15, 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, Le Vine, Maddox, and Plitt. Absent: Council Members Newman and Vena

STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Pearson and Clerk of Council Keller.

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

Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

Action Items:

1. Approval of Minutes: May 1, 2017 Council Work Session

The minutes of the May 1, 2017, Council Work Session were approved as presented.

Presentation:

- ***Presentation by Shenandoah County Administrator Price and District 6 BOS Helsley on County funding***

Shenandoah County Administrator Price gave a presentation on the County services provided to Town citizens. **Dr. Helsley** assisted with facts and took part in the discussion. Council Members asked questions during the presentation.

Council Member Le Vine said a concern is that if the town were to become unincorporated, most of the same services would still be provided and that was correct. Town residents pay taxes to the county so what would they have taken away if they didn't have the county taxes. He specifically asked about the tipping fees.

Administrator Price said when the County decided to have a Tourism office, it was decided collectively with the towns and all agreed to give money. There was not an agreement, but it was done. The County wants the town to be a part of their programs. Shenandoah County is unique in that we have six individual towns. As far as tipping fees, there are extra services that are more convenient to the citizens. **Dr. Helsley** said on a regional basis, more could be done than doing so individually.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said Council represents town services and they are taxed for some services twice. He asked if the town citizens are being treated fairly. People in Basye benefit from the tourism dollars, but they do not have to pay extra taxes to get this benefit. The concerns aren't just with tourism, but also with tipping fees.

Mayor Orndorff said County residents take trash to the compactors or to the landfill and there aren't any extra tipping fees, but town residents are paying tipping fees on top of the collection fees. **Dr. Helsley** said the town requires all residents to pay the collection fee, but if this was an option, he would opt out. **Administrator Price** said they looked at the cost of the recycling and **Dr. Helsley** said the BOS does not agree on everything, but they would all agree to let Strasburg take over the landfill due to all the regulations that must be

followed.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said it is still two separate services. People pay for the service of having their trash picked up, but this is different than having their trash dumped into the landfill. He asked if all should share the burden of the landfill. **Administrator Price** said this was in the minutes many years ago.

Council Member Hall said if we could vote the town away today, he would and he would let the County take over the services. He thinks the town residents should pay an equal amount and then there should be a draw of an amount that would come back to the town. **Administrator Price** said there are different services that are provided by the county.

Mr. Thomas Price said the thoughts of **Council Member Hall** is making him think about investing dollars into the town. He added that he wants the benefit of County tourism.

Administrator Price said one of the biggest services of the County is the schools. They then still have to run the courts, the landfill, the health department, etc. and these are services the town does not provide.

Council Member Le Vine said he thinks there is an issue of communications. We all need to have an appreciation of what both the County and Town does. One benefit of being a town is the autonomy so we can make our local decisions. Police cost money and the town provides that. He said an argument might be that the County is stretched too thin and not offering the help needed to the Town. **Administrator Price** wanted to know what that was and he said it could be addressed by staff. **Administrator Price** said the towns and county work very well together. **Council Member Le Vine** said there are always complaints and we need a balance.

Debbie Pitcock said the Town and County need to stick together if they both benefit. **Administrator Price** said Strasburg received \$30,000 in lodging fees. The people stay and then leave.

Mayor Orndorff said he and **Dr. Helsley** will set up a joint meeting and added we might want to regularly meet with the BOS. He thinks **Administrator Price** wants to know if Council feels they are getting the best bang for their buck with the tourism dollars.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said the town is on the northern end of the County and we have invested a lot of money in our Visitor Center. The town's people are taking some of their money to pay for County tourism. At this point, our expenses have increased at our own center. If we divert our funds from the county, it isn't taking it away from the County, but just promoting our end more. The dollars would still be spent on tourism.

Administrator Price said maybe a different model needs to be looked at and this could be done on the staff level.

Council Member Plitt said we are the only tourism center in the County and we are contributing to the county, too.

Council Member Bishop said we do have the Visitor Center and she doesn't think we are talking about taking all the money away, but use some of the money for the Visitor Center.

Mayor Orndorff said **Administrator Price** has said she is willing to work with staff and other managers to change the model. We need a consensus vote on how the tourism money is spent.

Council Member Hall thinks this is a good chance for the County to work with our Visitor Center.

Vice Mayor Terndrup thinks we need to cover our expenses at the Visitor Center from the one percent given to the County.

Town Manager Pearson said it isn't an issue as we have the balanced budget. We would end up spending more money on tourism. He said there has been discussion on cooperative work between **Economic Development & Marketing Manager Bixler** and **Shenandoah County Tourism Director French** on how the money is spent.

New Business:

Council Member Bishop would like for Council to consider making a Bed and Breakfast a by-right use in the Community Commercial Use. **Town Manager Pearson** said this isn't allowed currently through the UDO. We are looking at doing this at a Council level and not have the applicant do this so that it wouldn't burden the new business. This would proceed through the Planning Commission and then come to Council. **All Council Members were in favor of doing this.**

Vice Mayor Terndrup presented his own chart that he feels makes sense as an explanation of the budget. This year 26% of our revenue was coming from grants. He then did charts on the funds expenses. 40% is being spent on capital projects. He discussed the idea of pushing off the purchase of public works vehicles an additional year so we could give a break to residents on utility bills.

Tourism funding is staying the same as was advertised in the budget. **Town Manager Pearson** said we may be able to look at some sort of a cooperative spending with the funds.

Being no further business, the Work Session adjourned at 8:39 p.m.