

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL WORK SESSION OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE  
AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEES HELD IN THE COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM  
ON MONDAY, MAY 9, 2022, AT 4:00 P.M.**

Persons present: Mayor Beth A. Taylor, Vice-Mayor Cathy D. Pattison, Councilman Mark J. Bloomfield, Councilwoman Holly E. Atkins, Councilman Gary L. Gillman  
Town Manager T. Brian Freeman, Assistant Town Manager Elaine R. Holeyton, Town Clerk Sherry G. Corvin, Town Attorney Michelle Workman  
Clayton, Town Treasurer Michael G. Stephens, Millwald Theatre Executive  
Director Jeff Potts, Officer Chastity Russell

Persons absent: None

The following topics were discussed at the Work Session:

1. Millwald Theatre Executive Director Jeff Potts joined the meeting to discuss the vision for the Millwald Theatre. Mr. Potts commented that this is his fourth historic theatre that he has been a part of opening. He stated that he brings a different perspective to running these old theatre buildings, which is a business approach. Mr. Potts stated that his goal for the Millwald Theatre is to be active many nights during the week within this year or next year. He stated that within the coming weeks, their first priority is going to be building a team, and that full time positions have been announced. Mr. Potts commented that there will be a lot of opportunities for engagement once the theatre is up and running. He advised that many people have inquired of what they will be doing with the old theatre space. Mr. Potts commented that they are going to do a list of various things, until they figure out what this region will support. He stated that, primarily, they will be putting in technology that will make the theatre a concert venue. Mr. Potts noted that they will also be paying tribute to the history as a cinema and will show some classic movies, however, the theatre will not primarily be a movie cinema, but the main focus for the theatre will be concerts. He commented that they are working with a professional talent buyer to help find agents and artists who will take advantage of the interstate corridor. Mr. Potts advised that the theatre building should be completed by late July or early August, and he is hopeful that they will have a team built by then. He noted that, hopefully, in August or September, there will be a series of soft opening events at the theatre, and a goal is to have touring artists by October. Mayor Taylor inquired of Mr. Potts if there is a theatre trail that helps connect multiple theatres. Mr. Potts advised that there is a process called "block booking" where a venue would inquire of an artist they could not afford on their own, but if multiple shows were scheduled closer by then it is more affordable. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if ticket prices will vary according to the artist performing. Mr. Potts stated that is correct, and the goal is to have a balance. Discussion continued regarding the theatre. The Council thanked Mr. Potts for attending the meeting.
  
2. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she received a video and shared it with a couple of people regarding the matter with Mr. H.S. Ingo and the flooding on West Ridge Road. She inquired if Town Manager Freeman has checked on the matter. Town Manager Freeman stated that he has spoken with Engineering staff. He noted that Staff is going to look at how they can help the local residents, as well as the Town overall. Councilwoman Atkins noted that she did not know if the Town has received any other complaints on this matter. She commented that she has only received a complaint from Mr. Ingo, but he has been inquiring of this for about two years. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she has visited the area during a rain event. She inquired if someone would contact Mr. Ingo. Town Manager Freeman stated he will contact Mr. Ingo.

3. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if new employees are evaluated after six months and possibly offered a raise. Town Manager Freeman stated that it does happen, but he is going to check into this matter further to provide more information at a future meeting. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if a six month evaluation could effectively be part of a plan for new hires, and if someone could look into this matter. She noted that someone had reached out to her and possibly missed a raise because they were not given a six month evaluation as they were told they would. Town Manager Freeman stated that he will check on this matter.
4. Mayor Taylor commented that she wants the Town of Wytheville to be represented at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Memorial Day Ceremony in Dublin. She stated that she is going to contact them in regard to representing the Town at the ceremony.
5. Mayor Taylor stated that Council has received a couple of “Thank You” cards in response to previous activities, and she shared them with the Committee.
6. Mayor Taylor noted that the annual National Day of Prayer event was very nice. She stated it was live streamed on Facebook.
7. Mayor Taylor advised that some members of the Committee should meet in the future to discuss new flags in the downtown to replace the existing damaged ones. Councilwoman Atkins inquired regarding the COVID-19 flags that had been discussed in a previous meeting. Mayor Taylor stated that Town Manager Freeman and Assistant Town Manager Holeton had a Zoom meeting regarding the COVID-19 flags. A brief discussion continued regarding the flags, and Mayor Taylor advised that Assistant Town Manager Holeton would be contacted by those spearheading the COVID-19 flag project.
8. Councilman Bloomfield advised the Committee that Amber Fiorini would like to donate a bicycle repair station in remembrance of Mr. Ian Fiorini for the Crystal Springs Park. He inquired of Council if they would accept the donation of the bicycle repair station. Councilman Bloomfield stated that Town staff would most likely need to install the station. Councilwoman Atkins inquired of the guidelines regarding donations made to the Town. Councilman Bloomfield and Town Manager Freeman noted that those guidelines mainly pertained to donating art. Town Manager Freeman stated that the art donation guidelines need to be revisited and brought back to the Committee. A brief discussion continued regarding donations. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Councilman Gillman to accept the bicycle repair station for Crystal Springs Park. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she believes the guidelines need to be set before accepting the donation, even though she thinks the bicycle repair station is a great idea. Discussion continued regarding possible guidelines of general and art donations to the Town. A discussion was held regarding preparing a list of where donations, such as benches, are needed. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a desire for a plaque to be placed on the bicycle repair station in memory of Mr. Fiorini. Councilman Bloomfield stated that there would be a small plaque on the bicycle repair station. The motion was approved with the following voting results: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman. Against: Holly E. Atkins.
9. Town Manager Freeman presented a request from Downtown Wytheville, Incorporated and Wytheville Parks and Recreation to close various streets in the downtown area to hold a July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration and Street Festival on Monday, July 4, 2022, from 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Town Manager Freeman stated that Assistant Town Manager Holeton advised

that the Safety and Events Committee reviewed this request and would recommend that it be approved. A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison to approve the request of Downtown Wytheville, Incorporated and Wytheville Parks and Recreation to close various streets in the downtown area to hold a July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration and Street Festival on Monday, July 4, 2022, from 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. Councilwoman Atkins inquired regarding future repeat event applicants, and if they will be aware of the new requirement for an application to be submitted 60 days prior to the event. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that the Safety and Events committee is working on multiple changes including new applications, therefore, once Council approves the changes, the Committee will be reaching out to event organizers with an effective date that will comply with the new policy. The motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None.

10. Town Manager Freeman stated that the next agenda item is the discussion regarding the Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget. He noted that after the special meeting held on May 4, 2022, the Town received new information from Wythe County regarding the reassessments. Town Manager Freeman stated the County has removed the tax-exempt properties that were included in previous information given to the Committee. He noted the updated information from the County would now bring reassessment values down to an 18.6 percent increase, instead of the original 39 percent increase. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Town's reassessment advertisement will not need to be advertised 30 days ahead of the public hearing and, it will only need to be advertised 14 days ahead. He advised that the reason for this is because the State did not pass the budget by April 30, which allows for less time on the advertising. Town Manager Freeman commented that the Committee could use this extra time to decide upon the content they wish to publish in the advertisement. Town Manager Freeman stated that the advertisement will need to be completed and sent in by May 25, 2022. He noted that on June 13, 2022, two public hearings will be held. He stated that the first public hearing will be for the budget, and the second public hearing will be for the tax increase due to reassessments. Town Manager Freeman advised that he had a meeting with Assistant Town Manager Holeyton and Town Treasurer Stephens regarding the compensation study. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if the Town would lower an employee's pay if he/she is paid too much, or if the Town will raise their pay if not paid enough in result of what the compensation study determines. Town Manager Freeman stated that the study is not being conducted to solely show if the Town is paying employees too much or too little. He advised that the study is being conducted to also determine and identify the at-risk positions within the Town. Town Manager Freeman continued to discuss the Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget.

It was a consensus of the Committee to recess the Work Session meeting until after the regular Town Council Meeting. (5:45 p.m.)

The Work Session meeting was reconvened after the regular Town Council meeting. Councilman Gillman did not attend the reconvened meeting. (6:49 p.m.)

11. Town Manager Freeman stated that the next agenda item is the proposed name change to the Wytheville Industrial Development Authority (WIDA). He asked Town Attorney Clayton to present more information regarding this topic. Town Attorney Clayton stated that the WIDA was created in 1967, and that almost all localities have an IDA. She noted that through the years, there has been recognition that industrial development does not reflect what an IDA is, which is mostly economic. Town Attorney Clayton stated that other localities have changed from an industrial development authority to an economic

development authority. She noted that she and Town Clerk Corvin drafted an ordinance that does include the name change to the WIDA. Town Manager Freeman advised both industrial and economic are both covered under the same laws and that it is simply just a name change that is a more modern reflection of the same entity. Town Clerk Corvin stated that the ordinance would have to be adopted at a regular Town Council meeting. Town Attorney Clayton noted that the WIDA will meet on Wednesday, May 18, 2022, and she will let the WIDA members know that Council is interested in the name change. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if the members of WIDA are agreeable with the name change. Town Attorney Clayton noted that the name change is a topic at the next WIDA meeting, and she does not envision that the members would be opposed to the change.

12. Town Attorney Clayton stated that a Town resident was taken to court due to clutter that is being pushed over onto a neighbor's property and the Town right of way. She noted this has been a repeating issue for this resident, and that they have been given numerous chances to clean up their property. She commented that she and Detective Lonnie Anders met with the resident today, and the resident decided that they would plead guilty and accept charges in exchange for more time to clean up the property. She stated that if the resident does not clean up the property within 90 days, they will be obligated to pay \$1,000 to the Town. Town Attorney Clayton stated if this money is collected then the Town will use it to have the property cleaned. Mayor Taylor inquired if the Town needed to change its ordinance. Town Attorney Clayton stated that the Town has not yet passed the Clutter Ordinance, and she is looking into it. Councilwoman Atkins stated that there are many other houses in the same condition and inquired if the Town is looking into these. She commented that there have been a few houses she has personally seen, and the condition they are in has surprised her. Town Attorney Clayton stated that the Town normally operates under a complaint based system in regard to instances such as this one. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about who looks at these properties in a situation like this. Town Attorney Clayton stated that Building Official Tim Spraker looks at these properties.
13. Town Attorney Clayton stated that Staff has been working to enforce the Criminal Blight Ordinance. She noted that the owner of the OYO Hotel has installed 20 cameras around the property and wants to allow the Police Department to have access to them. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if the Police Department should have access to the cameras due to putting extra responsibility on the Town if a crime were to occur. Town Manager Freeman advised that it was just an offer that has been made, and he agrees with Councilwoman Atkins. He stated that the main idea is for the Town to give tips on ways to deter crime at the OYO Hotel. Town Manager Freeman stated that the owner of the hotel has begun using the tips that had been given to him. A brief discussion was held regarding the security at the OYO Hotel.
14. Town Manager Freeman advised that the next agenda item is the discussion regarding the Housing Incentive Grant Project. He inquired of Assistant Town Manager Holeton if she would provide information regarding the project. Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that the Housing Incentive Grant Project is going to reimburse building permit fees and connection fees to citizens building new homes in town. She noted the Housing Committee will set up the program and potentially start it by July 1, 2022. Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that, hopefully, the WIDA will work with Town staff on the project. She noted that the WIDA would be included in all the marketing and advertising regarding the project. Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that Building Official Spraker will be taking applications for the project since he is in contact with individuals who are interested in building homes in town. She commented that applications will actively be accepted for about one year, there will be target dates for when housing units need to be under construction and the Committee prefers for housing units to be completed by 2025.

Assistant Town Manager HOLETON advised that applicants need to have the structures in compliance with the target dates to receive reimbursement. Town Manager FREEMAN noted that the project is intended to be revenue neutral. Vice-Mayor PATTISON inquired if the WIDA will make the final decision if issues occur regarding reimbursement. Assistant Town Manager HOLETON advised that Building Official SPRAKER will oversee reimbursements, and, if there are issues, he will report to the Town Manager or Assistant Town Manager. Further discussion was held, and Assistant Town Manager HOLETON requested Town Clerk CORVIN to put this item back on the agenda for the next meeting to receive an official vote. Mayor TAYLOR stated that Staff has done a wonderful job working and putting this information together.

15. Town Manager Freeman stated that just before the Work Session meeting, Mr. Joseph Hand called inquiring if the Town could look into installing emergency sirens. He stated that Mr. Hand referred to the severe storms that had taken place the weekend before and advised the need for an alert system during similar situations. Town Manager Freeman noted that Mr. Hand is suggesting that Council strongly consider installing an emergency alert system such as the emergency sirens. Mayor Taylor noted that other citizens in the past have shared the same concern as Mr. Hand. Councilman Bloomfield inquired if the Town would be able to install sirens since emergency management is handled by the County and not the Town. Town Manager Freeman stated that this matter would need to be reviewed further.
16. Town Manager Freeman stated that Mr. Randy Martin sent an email regarding the Wytheville Housing and Redevelopment Authority requesting Town assistance to waive their permit fees and connections fees associated with new housing units on Calhoun Street. Assistant Town Manager HOLETON commented that these units may still be in the design phase and may benefit from the Housing Incentive Grant Project. Town Manager Freeman advised that the Town has assisted the Housing Authority in the past with the same requests. A motion was made by Mayor Taylor and seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison to approve the request of the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority to waive permit fees and water and sewer connection fees for the new housing units on Calhoun Street. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins. Against: None.
17. Councilman Bloomfield noted that some information is missing from the Building Permit Report. Town Manager Freeman stated that Town Staff will check on this matter.
18. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she inquired of Town Clerk Corvin to include more detailed information to the Work Session minutes from April 25, 2022, regarding the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Town Clerk Corvin stated that Councilwoman Atkins wanted the minutes to include the changes to the FOIA policy portion and why the policy has been changed. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she feels as if the minutes should state more information about the change because she had recently made a FOIA request and suddenly the policy is proposed to change. Town Manager Freeman stated that her request was not the reason for the change, but the main reason for the change is so the Town has a policy in place that is consistent and equal for everyone who makes a request. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she feels as if her request is the reason for the policy change, and that is why she would like for the minutes to be more detailed. Town Manager Freeman reiterated that her request was not the reason for the change. He commented that her request had not been the first to have been made by a sitting or a past Council member. Town Manager Freeman stated that some

requests can be problematic for Staff due to determining to charge or not. Town Clerk Corvin informed the Council that the Work Sessions have summary minutes of the meeting with the main highlights being placed in the minutes. She stated that she included the change in the policy in the minutes but did not directly quote Councilwoman Atkins regarding the request. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if there has been a large amount of FOIA requests made to the Town. Town Manager Freeman stated that there has been a large number of requests made, and Councilwoman Atkins and a previous Council member had large requests. Councilwoman Atkins stated that since she has made her request, the policy is now changing. Town Manager Freeman stated that her request was the second large request that had been made to the Town. He commented since two large requests have been made, this would indicate more large requests are to be expected in the future. Town Manager Freeman stated that the policy would now charge any person who made a request, instead of having Staff to choose who would have to pay and who would not have to pay for their request. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she told Staff from the beginning that she would pay for her request, and she did, in fact, pay for the copies she received. She noted that she was going to pay more for the copies than what she actually did. Town Manager Freeman and Town Clerk Corvin continued to reiterate that her request is not the reason for the policy change. Town Clerk Corvin stated that the only way she could amend the minutes is if all Committee members want to change the minutes. Councilwoman Atkins inquired why the policy was not changed after a previous Council member made their request. Town Manager Freeman stated that it was a plea from him to change the policy to protect Staff from making the decision to charge for FOIA requests. He stated that if everyone is treated the same then the outcome of who may be getting upset with Staff will be eliminated. Councilwoman Atkins reiterated to treat everyone the same. Town Attorney Clayton stated that this has been a statewide issue. Town Manager Freeman commented that he did not want to upset Councilwoman Atkins with the decision being made to change the policy. Councilwoman Atkins then inquired if someone could go to a department and ask for the information instead of making a FOIA request. Town Manager Freeman advised against doing that. He briefly discussed giving monthly updates to the Council regarding Town personnel. Town Clerk Corvin inquired if the Council wished to amend the minutes from the previous meeting. Mayor Taylor advised that the minutes should only be amended if there was discussion on the tape from the previous meeting that has not been included. Town Clerk Corvin reminded Councilwoman Atkins that the minutes are summary minutes and not verbatim minutes. She stated that Staff has been advised not to do verbatim minutes, and that anyone can have the recorded tape of the meetings. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if people would then be charged for the jump drive that contains the recording of the meetings. Town Clerk Corvin stated people could be charged for the actual cost of the jump drive.

19. Councilman Bloomfield inquired if there is a Special Exemption Permit for the old Alco building. Town Manager Freeman stated that Riley Construction does have a Special Exemption Permit for their business. Mayor Taylor stated that they are wanting to add new storage units to the property, but the existing permit is for the gas tank located outside the building that is visible from the interstate.
20. Councilman Bloomfield stated that Mr. Todd Wolford will be accepting an award on Wednesday, May 18, 2022, in Richmond for the number one downtown director in the country. Town Manager Freeman advised that the award should be recognized formally by a resolution or proclamation. Councilman Bloomfield stated that the Town will receive benefits from that award across the country and state. Town Clerk Corvin noted that she will prepare a resolution for Mr. Wolford.

21. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about the parking situation on Main Street. Town Manager Freeman inquired if this was in regard to policing Main Street. Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that she had brought an email regarding this matter to a previous Work Session. Councilman Bloomfield stated that it was for permanent parking, and it is becoming a bigger issue in town. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Town needs to give a notice stating the rules regarding parking, and these rules will be enforced. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if more parking could be opened on Main Street around Lisa's School of Performing Arts. Councilman Bloomfield stated that construction is blocking those spaces in that area of Main Street. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she did not know if there needed to be a certain number of spots open in front of that business, but she believes the blocked spaces need to be opened back up if possible. A brief discussion continued regarding the parking on Main Street, and Town Manager Freeman stated that he will check to see if any of the blocked parking spaces on Main Street can be opened.
22. Discussion was held regarding the façade work at the Allstate building on Main Street.
23. A brief discussion was held regarding some parking being blocked at the massage therapy business on Main Street. Town Manager Freeman noted that this business owner is cleaning out a building.

There being no further business, the Work Session was adjourned. (7:43 p.m.)

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T. Brian Freeman, Town Manager

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Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk