

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL WORK SESSION OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE  
AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEES HELD IN THE COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM  
ON MONDAY, JUNE 27, 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 (electronically), 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, Assistant Town Engineer Billy Anderson, Investigator Darren Umberger, Lieutenant Tommy Lester, Candice Johnson

Persons absent: None

The following topics were discussed at the Work Session:

1. Town Manager Freeman noted that Councilwoman Atkins desired to attend the meeting virtually from her vehicle due to a family member's medical condition that required her to provide care for such family member. He stated this required a motion and approval by the Committee. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Mayor Taylor to permit Councilwoman Atkins to virtually attend the Council Work Session meeting. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was any discussion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition, by roll call vote: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None. Councilwoman Atkins then joined the meeting virtually.
2. Town Manager Freeman stated that the next agenda item is a presentation regarding the update of Old Stage Crossing. He advised that the Engineering Department was asked to evaluate the condition of Old Stage Crossing before the Town considers taking over maintenance. Town Manager Freeman noted that Assistant Town Engineer Billy Anderson attended the meeting to provide the Committee with an update regarding this matter. Assistant Town Engineer Anderson presented a brief overview of the history of Old Stage Crossing. He noted that the documentation states that each homeowner within Old Stage Crossing should be a member of the Old Stage Crossing Owners Association, Incorporated. Assistant Town Engineer Anderson advised that he has not been able to locate documentation stating that there is an Old Stage Crossing Owners Association, Incorporated. He noted that from his understanding, the only fees that are being paid by homeowners is for mowing. Town Manager Freeman advised that more research should be conducted regarding this matter. Assistant Town Engineer Anderson noted the problems with the stormwater drainage system, and he revised the water and sewer systems and the street. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if Staff is aware of a bank account for the homeowner fees and who manages it. Town Manager Freeman noted that Staff is not aware of a bank account and is under the impression that the homeowners collect money only to pay for mowing services. He stated that he will have Staff will check on this matter. Town Manager Freeman commented that the water system, sewer system and street are acceptable. He stated that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) approved of the project, as well. A brief discussion continued regarding Old Stage Crossing. The Committee asked Assistant Town Engineer Anderson to obtain construction estimates and meet again with the Committee.
3. Town Manager Freeman presented a request from the Department of Museums to conduct the Take a Break from the Interstate Road Market Sale event. Town Manager Freeman stated that this event has been held annually and will be a three day event. He

noted that the department has requested that the yard sale regulations be relaxed to conduct this event. A motion was made by Mayor Taylor and seconded by Councilman Bloomfield to approve the request for the Department of Museums to conduct the Take a Break from the Interstate Road Market Sale event. Town Manager Freeman 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, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None.

4. Town Manager Freeman stated that the next agenda item is the continued discussion regarding the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget. He noted that he included some attachments in the Work Session package for the Committee members' review in case there were any questions or comments. Town Manager Freeman advised that no significant changes have been made since the last reading of the budget at the previous Town Council meeting. He stated that one change made to the budget that he wished to address with the Committee is additional funding for a part time animal control attendant. Town Manager Freeman noted that a letter was received from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regarding the Sewer Infiltration and Inflow Project that is included in the budget, indicating that the Town will be granted 75 percent forgiveness of the project amount, and only 25 percent will be a loan amount. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about an additional Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the employees since it was discussed at the previous Budget and Finance meeting. Town Manager Freeman advised that Councilwoman Atkins made a request to increase the Cost of Living Adjustment for employees from the proposed amount of three percent to five percent. He commented that he believes the results from the Town's compensation and classification study should be received before a decision is made to increase that amount. A brief discussion was held regarding the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and it was the consensus of the majority of the Committee members to not increase the Cost of Living Adjustment. The Committee continued to discuss the Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget.
5. Town Manager Freeman advised that the next the agenda item is the update regarding the Member Service Agreement for the New River Regional Water Authority (NRRWA). He stated that an updated version of the Member Service Agreement is included in the Work Session package, along with the resolution that will be considered at the following Town Council meeting. Town Manager Freeman discussed the responsibilities of the membership with the NRRWA. He advised that the adjustment being made to the agreement now makes the Town of Wytheville responsible for 80 percent of the capital cost of the NRRWA plant expansion.
6. Town Manager Freeman advised that the next agenda item is to review the request from Mr. Peter Patel to extend the Lodging Establishment Grant for Tru by Hilton, Wytheville. He advised that Tru is the only hotel in the Non-Enterprise Zone Lodging Establishment Grant Program and is nearing the end of the program. Town Manager Freeman noted that Mr. Patel is requesting an extension due to low sales stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. He advised that he would not suggest making any modifications or adjustments to the grant program. A brief discussion was held regarding the grant program, and it was the consensus of the Committee to deny the extension request. Town Manager Freeman noted that he would notify Mr. Patel.
7. Mayor Taylor stated that she represented the Town of Wytheville at the 5K run for Chautauqua, and placed third in her class.

8. Mayor Taylor inquired if Town Manager Freeman has sent a letter to Dr. Deel regarding the property located near the Wythe County Community Hospital. Town Manager Freeman stated that he has not yet sent a letter to Mr. Deel, but he will send it.
9. Councilman Gillman inquired if Staff has looked into a water leak located at the corner of Spring Street and Church Street. Town Manager Freeman stated that he will check on this matter. Councilman Gillman stated that this leak has been occurring for almost a month.
10. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she inquired regarding the Wytheville and Redevelopment and Housing Authority not having a resident member on their board. She noted that she has checked on this matter and was told that there are no individuals interested in the position at this time.
11. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that Planning Director Woods has given her an update regarding the noise complaint regarding Riley Construction. She stated that a letter was sent to Mr. Riley and Amcor regarding the noise complaint. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton noted that Staff received a phone call from Amcor stating that they were not aware of the situation, and mufflers will be installed on their equipment, along with seeking another facility. She stated that, hopefully, the issue with noise complaints will be resolved soon. A brief discussion was held regarding the Special Exception Permits for this property.

Councilwoman Holly Atkins joined the Council Work Session Meeting in person. (5:35 p.m.)

12. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton updated the Committee regarding the former Fox building on First Street. She stated that Building Official Spraker received a complaint regarding the property. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that a Notice of Violation was sent to the owners of the property and there were individuals who Staff believes may have been living on the property illegally and were asked to leave. She noted that the owner met with Building Official Spraker and was in agreement with the action taken by staff. Town Manager Freeman stated that this has been an ongoing issue for a considerable amount of time.
13. Town Manager Freeman advised the Committee that a Town Treasurer's Report has been included in their Work Session package, along with the minutes from the June 13, 2022, meeting and a July meeting Calendar.
14. Town Manager Freeman stated that the next agenda item is further discussion regarding the Council Rules of Procedure. He inquired if any of the Committee members had any comments, questions or information they wanted to include regarding the Council Rules of Procedure. Mayor Taylor stated that she had turned in some questions and concerns regarding the Rules of Procedure but has spoken with Town Clerk Corvin about them. Councilwoman Atkins noted that one of her concerns is having an individual right to speak. She stated that she does not want her rights to speak being taken away from her as a person and as a citizen. Councilwoman Atkins commented that, for instance, she had sent an email to thank Town employees, and then she received an email from Mayor Taylor regarding Council members needing to work as a team and a body. Mayor Taylor read her email into the record as follows:

*That was a nice message, but just like the other one which was about a year ago when I sent it. Remember us talking about you are part of a team. You can highlight yourself, but we are a team. There is a way to do it, when I talk to a group, I always say Town Council. I don't say, "I'm here to welcome you to Town." I say, "On behalf of Town Council". I wish*

*you would have sent out a message from all of us. Then I gave an example of how you could highlight yourself. Myself and Council really appreciate, etc.*

Mayor Taylor stated that she did not think her email was rude towards Councilwoman Atkins, but just wanted to remind her that the Council must act as one body. Discussion continued regarding this matter and the Council Rules of Procedure.

It was a consensus of the Committee to recess the Work Session meeting until after the regular Town Council Meeting. (5:46 p.m.)

The Work Session meeting was reconvened after the regular Town Council meeting. (7:27 p.m.)

15. A brief discussion continued regarding the Council Rules of Procedure. Councilwoman Atkins stated, again, that she was concerned that her rights were going to be taken away as a person. Town Attorney Clayton advised that the rights of every individual are included in the Council Rules of Procedure, and that Councilwoman Atkins' right to email is not being taken away. Councilman Bloomfield stated that he felt as if he had a right to add information to Councilwoman Atkins' email. He noted that he does not feel like she personally had the right to address Human Resources and have them send an email to all Staff members on her behalf. Councilman Bloomfield advised that the Council does not have the individual right to use Town resources on their own behalf, and that Council is a collective group. Town Manager Freeman stated that he believes her message was nice, but all members are equal, and if another member did not want that email sent out, Staff is put in a difficult situation. He explained that a matter like this should be brought to a Work Session meeting for all members to agree on. Councilwoman Atkins asked that her email be entered into the record as follows:

*Hello!!! Just wanted to thank everyone for keeping the town running on these HOT and very LONG days/evenings/nights/midnights. I am thankful for all the hard work, commitment and dedication you ALL do for the town/community. I am sure there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes that makes the town run great and as a WHOLE. Thank you is not enough but I really appreciate what ALL YOU do. Have a great day.*

*Holly*

Councilwoman Atkins inquired about the Public Works Department assisting the Millwald Theatre with moving their movie projector into the Farmers' Market building. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Farmers' Market building belongs to the Town, and the Farmers' Market Board approved the use of the building for the Millwald Theatre to store their movie projector. He advised that he was asked to grant permission for the use of the building, and the Public Works staff assisted with moving the projector into the building safely after he granted permission. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about who asked for the projector to be stored in the building. Town Manager Freeman stated that Councilman Bloomfield asked. Councilwoman Atkins stated in reference to her email, she may not have approved Councilman Bloomfield asking Town staff to assist with this matter. Councilman Bloomfield advised that he did not ask about this matter as a Council member, he asked as the Chairman of the Millwald Theatre Board. He noted that the Town has been partners with this project, so it did not seem out of order to ask. Councilwoman Atkins noted that she had once called inquiring about painting lines on the pavement at the Wythe County Technology Center, and that she was not calling as a Council member, but she was calling as an employee where she worked. Town Manager Freeman stated that they were under the impression that the Public Works staff was only going to open up the building. He noted that once the projector arrived, it was larger and more cumbersome than they had originally thought, so Public Works staff helped move the projector into the

building. Councilwoman Atkins stated that since she has been a Council member and served for two years, she has not asked for any special favors. A brief discussion was held regarding utilizing Town resources. Town Clerk Corvin advised the Committee Members that all questions and comments regarding the Council Rules of Procedure need to be given to her by Friday, July 8, 2022.

16. Councilman Bloomfield inquired about the Position Information Form and when Staff will be completing them. He stated that Staff members should be compensated extra for completing the form after work hours, and he requested Town Staff to check on this matter.
17. Councilman Bloomfield commented that he would like to start having short visits with Departments so that Council can hear their concerns. A brief discussion was held on the former Employee Personnel Committee and Employee Comment boxes.

There being no further business, the Work Session was adjourned. (8:09 p.m.)

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T. Brian Freeman, Town Manager

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Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk

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