

Farmville Town Council Retreat
Friday, February 10, 2023, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 11, 2023, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Emergency Operations Center
Farmville Town Hall

Friday, February 10th

At the Farmville Town Council Retreat held on Friday, February 10, 2023, in the Emergency Operations Center of the Farmville Town Hall, located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia, there were present Mayor Brian Vincent, Vice-Mayor Chuckie Reid, and Council members John Hardy, Sallie Amos, Dan Dwyer, Tommy Pairet, and Adam Yoelin. Council member Donald Hunter was absent. Staff in attendance were Town Manager Scott Davis, Clerk of Council Mary McKay, and Deputy Clerk Jackie Vaughan. Berkley Group Executive Manager Kimball Payne served as retreat facilitator and Berkley Group Executive Manager Tim Hall also participated.

After gathering for lunch at 11:30 a.m., Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order at 11:55 a.m.

Mr. Payne welcomed everyone and reviewed suggested goals and ground rules for the retreat.

- Suggested goals for the retreat:
 - Work as a team and develop consensus
 - Review/refine the Town's Vision Statement and Values
 - Craft a Mission Statement
 - Identify Major Strategic Goal Areas
 - Identify objectives to advance the goals
 - Craft a work plan for the next 18 to 24 months
 - Understand constraints to progress and identify means to overcome them
 - Gain a better understanding of Council/Manager/staff roles and responsibilities
- Ground rules
 - Everyone participates
 - Engage
 - Be honest
 - Listen to each other
 - Respect different opinions
 - No idea is too outlandish
 - Seek to understand
 - Ask questions
 - Seek consensus (formal action at a future Council meeting)
 - Silence means consent – speak up if you disagree

- Use the parking lot for issues that may evade consensus or require more background
- Have fun
- We will take breaks when it seems appropriate

Council accepted the goals and ground rules by consensus.

Mr. Payne then shared with Council the common themes, issues mentioned by two or more members, that he heard during the pre-retreat interviews he conducted.

Common Themes

- Affordable housing
- The PUD Zoning Ordinance amendment
- Infrastructure – water/sewer, roads, sidewalks, bike paths
- Employee recruitment and retention; succession in Public Works
- Longwood University – SEED, housing
- County relations and the schools
- Integrating two new Council members into the team
- Council/Manager principles, roles, and responsibilities
- Council committees

To start off the conversation Council members were asked to respond to the following questions:

- *Tell us about yourself: Why do you serve on Council? What would you like to be remembered for? What is something that your fellow Council members don't know about you?*
- *What do you hope is accomplished today?*

Responses to the last question were captured on flip chart #1. (A transcription of the retreat's flip chart notes, with annotations for clarity, is included as an attachment.)

Retreat Goals

- Get to know each other
- Learn from each other
- [Set] Goals
- Collaborate
- [Start] Something new!
- [Move] Together in the same direction
- Work as "one"
- Integrate new members
- [Set a] Vision

Mr. Payne then asked Council to review the principles, roles, and responsibilities of the Council/Manager form of government as this had been raised during his pre-retreat interviews. He provided the following summary and asked if there were any questions.

Council/Manager Form of Local Government

Principles

- ❖ *The Council determines the vision for the community and adopts ordinances, and sets policy, among its other responsibilities, to achieve the vision.*
- ❖ *Council acts as a body, in public by majority vote; no single Council member has the sole authority to set or change policy or commit the locality's resources.*
- ❖ *Council hires a professional manager to serve as the chief administrative officer of the organization.*
- ❖ *The manager is apolitical, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the local government and operates under a code of ethics.*
- ❖ *The manager's specific responsibilities and authority are stipulated by state statute, local charter, and local code.*
- ❖ *The manager is responsible for personnel management of the organization and, except as may be limited by charter, hires, trains, disciplines, and terminates all employees of the local government.*
- ❖ *Except for positions appointed by and reporting directly to the governing body, Council has no role in personnel management beyond adopting organizational policies and procedures.*
- ❖ *Council directs staff through the manager; no Council member has the authority to give direction to staff.*
- ❖ *One of the manager's primary responsibilities is to keep the Council informed. Sharing information with Council is guided by the following principles:*
 - *Information is shared with all Council members equally and at the same time.*
 - *Responses to inquiries from individual Council members are shared with all Council members.*
 - *Council learns of bad news from the manager first.*
 - *There should be no surprises.*

A question was raised about oversight of the Police Department. Mr. Payne responded that this was the responsibility of the Town Manager and that Council's role was to hold the Manager responsible for Police Department operations similar to their expectations for other departments. He noted that there was a provision in the State Code (§9.1-601) for law-enforcement civilian oversight bodies but that the statute did not alter the council/manager relationship regarding the management of day-to-day operations.

Mr. Payne commented that, in his opinion, the most important of the council/manager principles was on communications, especially sharing information equally and at the same time with all Council members. One Council member pointed out that this was a primary reason for doing away with Council committees and Mr. Payne commended Council for that action.

Mr. Payne suggested that the next task for the retreat was to build the basic components of a strategic plan that could be used to communicate the Council's vision and goals for the Town. The adopted plan can serve as a guide to other planning efforts such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), the annual budget, and Town ordinances. Furthermore, although the plan should be reviewed and revised at least every two years after an election, it can help to provide continuity during the inevitable transitions of elected officials and staff. He said that the main components were a vision statement (what the town aspires to be), a mission statement (what the town does), and values or operating principles (how it goes about what it does). Once those are established, Council can identify strategic goal areas, with objectives and timelines, to guide future decision making and resource allocation.

Council then engaged in a lively conversation about the vision for and mission of the Town (flip charts # 2-4). Mr. Payne suggested that both the vision and mission statements should be something easily remembered and that could be included on Town correspondence and in marketing. He reviewed with Council the 2030 Vision Statement that the Town had been using and suggested that the components of the statement might serve better as strategic goal areas. That statement is:

2030 Vision Statement

- ❖ *A Beautiful and Historic Community in Central Virginia*
- ❖ *A Leader in Regional Economic Development*
- ❖ *A Crossroads for Recreation and Tourism Opportunities*
- ❖ *An Open Resourceful Government*
- ❖ *Guardians of Our Natural Resources*
- ❖ *A Partner in Progressive Transportation Solutions*

The Town Manager also shared with Council a mission statement developed for the Town employees. After further discussion and wordsmithing, Council reached agreement, by consensus, on the following vision and mission statements.

Vision: "A vibrant place to live, work and recreate."

Mission: “To provide efficient, effective, and equitable service, and encourage diverse growth in our charming community.”

Mr. Payne then led the Council on a review of the values that it had identified in its last retreat in 2020. He suggested that they could be clarified and made less redundant. (See the annotated notes, #1, captured from the electronic whiteboard, included as an attachment.) After discussion, the following values were agreed to by consensus.

Values

- *Honesty & Integrity*
- *Accountability*
- *Customer Focus – Positive, Friendly, and Courteous Town Workers*
- *Open, Honest, Transparent, Responsive, and Timely Communications*
- *Embracing Diversity – Open-minded, Unprejudiced, Inclusive, Respectful, and Seeking Common Ground*
- *Financial Responsibility, Sustainability, and Resiliency*
- *Asset Management and Maintenance*
- *Support and Development of Town Staff*

Mr. Payne then turned the floor over to Town Manager Davis who provided Council with a review of accomplishments since the 2020 retreat. He provided an annotated work plan from that retreat and noted which actions were completed, which were underway or ongoing, and which still needed attention. Mr. Payne took notes (flip charts #5 & #6) on items that were incomplete and asked Council and the Manager to set timelines for completion.

Action Items from the 2020 Retreat

Immediate or Near-term Action

- *Take a lead in conversations with Prince Edward and Cumberland Counties, and other stakeholders, to promote regional economic development. ✓*
- *Hire a Parks & Recreation Director when the revenue picture improves. ✓*
- *Hire a Finance Director when the revenue picture improves. ✓*
- *Identify triggers that would allow for the filling of these important positions. ✓*
- *Adopt a Procurement Policy and explore the opportunities for cooperative procurement with the counties and school system. ✓*
- *Develop policies and procedures of governance for Council adoption. Revise or incorporate the Code of Ethics. A draft will be prepared and provided to Council for review within 90 days: by June 1, 2023.*
- *Re-examine and define the purpose and function of Council committees. ✓*
- *Develop and adopt a revised employee policies and procedures manual if resources allow. ✓*

Mid-Range Goals

- *A study and the development of a plan for bike lanes. Not started – consider funding a study and development of a plan.*
- *Signage, especially wayfinding, improvements. Phase I is funded; fund phases II & III in FY 2025.*
- *Updating the Farmville website (a goal to fund in FY 2022, with planning in FY 2021). ✓*
- *Update the Town Charter (goal to take a revised charter to the 2022 session of the General Assembly). ✓ The Charter revision bill is before the 2023 General Assembly.*
- *Hire a Community Development Director. ✓ Need to hire a new one as the incumbent has taken a new position.*
- *Develop a Town Council orientation and onboarding process for new members. ✓*

Long-Term Goals

- *A new town public works shop.*
- *Examine debt capacity and develop a financial plan for the funding and timing of capital projects in the CIP. ✓*
- *Close the gap in the General Fund by reducing or eliminating the \$1.2 million transfer from the water and sewer funds; this will provide resources to address water and sewer infrastructure needs. Transfer has been reduced to about \$200,000 this fiscal year, compared to a budgeted amount of \$600,000, and will be eliminated in a future budget.*
- *Attain GFOA certifications for the annual budget and comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). Expected in the next review period.*
- *Address aging water and sewer infrastructure. Look for opportunities to upgrade at the same time as major transportation projects are underway. Consultant to be hired by May 1st and a plan developed by December 1, 2023.*
- *Develop an infrastructure maintenance and management plan. Asset management plan for buildings in development by ABM; due June 1, 2023.*
- *Consider the future of the airport, including a regional commission and economic development on adjacent land. Efforts are ongoing.*

Uncategorized Activities

- *Memorializing and communicating the values and operating principles of the town organization. ✓*
- *Adopting a mission statement for the town organization. Drafted at this retreat for adoption at a future Council meeting.*
- *The production of a Farmville tourism brochure. Ongoing with regional partners.*
- *Developing a communications plan. ✓ Work on crisis communications and succession plans.*
- *Joining the National Flood Insurance Program. ✓*

- *Utilizing the PEFYA “Field of Dreams” (a past donation from the Town) for travelling team tournaments.* **Delete from further consideration.**

Mr. Payne congratulated the Council and staff for their accomplishments.

Mr. Davis then provided a preview of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget, reviewing major drivers of revenues and expenditures (flip chart #8). On the revenue side, increases were expected in business personal property, meals, and lodging tax revenues. Interest income from reserve funds and the ARPA monies will provide additional resources. Another source of one-time funds are the proceeds from the sale of the golf course.

Expenditure drivers include capital equipment replacement, lease payments for police vehicles, street paving, and personnel costs related to benefits, position reclassifications, and pay increases. Spending down the ARPA funds is also anticipated.

Council members were asked for their preliminary thoughts regarding the budget (flip chart #7). Items mentioned were the need to expand the fire department building to accommodate paid staff, funding support for the rescue squad and downtown partnership, and sidewalk and ADA improvements. It was consensus of Council that there should be no tax or fee increases in the FY 2023-24 Budget.

The issue of using the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds by the December 2026 deadline came up during the discussion. Mr. Payne noted that there seemed to be some confusion on how much had already been spent or committed and how much remained to be utilized. Mr. Davis provided clarification (flip chart #9).

Of approximately \$8 million in ARPA funding, about \$4.5 million has been spent as follows: \$3 million for water/sewer infrastructure improvements, \$1 million for a new fire truck, \$0.6 million for the splash park, and \$0.1 million as an incentive.

Approximately \$3.5 million in ARPA funds remain to be utilized. Of that \$0.25 million will be used for consultant services and \$0.225 million will provide matching funds for the VDOT grant in support of Phase I of the Riverwalk Trail. Possible uses for the remaining funds include additional water & sewer capital improvements, roads, sidewalks, and parks.

Mr. Payne suggested that a spreadsheet/scorecard for the use of ARPA funds be prepared and shared with Council frequently.

With that discussion complete, the day’s work was done.

Mayor Vincent declared the retreat recessed for the day at 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 11th

After a light breakfast that started at 8:00 a.m., Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m. The attendance was the same as the previous day.

Mr. Payne briefly reviewed the previous day's work and asked if anyone had any thoughts to share. He asked if everyone was still comfortable with the vision and mission statements and received an affirmative response. Mr. Payne then previewed the day's work which would focus on identifying major strategic goal areas and action items within each area.

The first step was to identify major strategic goal areas. Mr. Payne had suggested several possibilities in the agenda that were projected onto the electronic white board. Council amended the list (annotated notes #2) with the following results.

Major Strategic Goal Areas

Economic Development & Tourism
Public Safety
Community Development & Land Use
Environmental Stewardship
Infrastructure
Government Performance
Recreation & Cultural Activities
Partner Relationships

Mr. Payne recommended that, over time, descriptors be included with each strategic goal area. These notes included some suggested language.

Council then addressed each strategic goal area identifying action items and timelines for completion. Mr. Payne pointed out that some desirable actions could possibly fall under more than one strategic goal area. The strategic goal areas are not meant to be silos but to provide a framework for actions to fulfill Farmville's vision.

Economic Development & Tourism (flip chart #10)

Possible descriptor: *Support business development and expansion that enhances the tax base and provides gainful employment while minimizing negative impacts. Tourism is an important component of economic development.*

Actions:

- Conduct a mobility study to address the potential, possible location of, and cost of an expanded system of trails and bikeways. Because of projects currently underway and resource limitations, 2028 was identified as the most likely time for action.
- Complete Phase II (FY 2025 CIP) and Phase III (FY 2027 CIP) of the Riverwalk Trail, depending on the receipt of TAP grant funding.

- Complete Phases II and III of the wayfinding signage project with the Farmville Downtown Partnership – **FY 2025 and subsequent depending on grant funding.**
- Airport – Contact the aeronautical programs at Liberty and Averett Universities to determine if there is any interest in owning, managing, or in some other way partnering with the Town on airport operations – **calendar year 2023.**

Partner Relationships (flip chart #11)

Possible descriptor: *Maintain open communications with major partners and seek collaborative approaches for community improvement.*

Council identified the following partners: Prince Edward and Cumberland Counties, Longwood University, Hampden Sydney College, the Farmville Downtown Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, and Centra Southside Community Hospital.

Actions:

- Continue efforts to establish a joint emergency communications center – proposal for consideration within **calendar year 2023.**
- The Mayor will initiate a joint meeting of the Town Council and the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors to take place in **Spring 2023.**
- Council will convene quarterly business roundtables with the first to be held by **June 1, 2023.**
- The Mayor will initiate an annual meeting with the leadership of Longwood University – first meeting in calendar year **2023.**

Community Development & Land Use (flip chart #12)

Suggested descriptor: *Through comprehensive planning and appropriate land use decisions preserve the charm, beauty, and history of Farmville while accommodating growth, encouraging diverse and affordable housing, and promoting an efficient and safe transportation system.*

Actions:

- Consider adding language to the Zoning Ordinance that would allow for Planned Unit Development (PUD) with appropriate conditions. Draft language to Council in **July 2023.**

Public Safety (flip chart #12)

Possible descriptor: *Protect life and property, plan for emergency management, mitigate risks, and respond to individual and community-wide crises.*

Actions:

- Joint emergency communications center – proposal to Council in calendar year **2023**.
- Expansion of the fire department building to accommodate paid staff – architectural study in **Fiscal Year 2024**.

Infrastructure (flip chart #13)

Possible descriptor: *Improve and maintain the Town's important capital assets that are critical to service delivery, safety, and quality of life.*

Actions:

- Take advantage of opportunities to improve accessibility and further comply with ADA requirements – **ongoing**.
- Develop an asset management plan – the first component addressing buildings will be complete in **June 2023**.
- Complete the study of water and sewer infrastructure needs – **December 2023**. Consider designating ARPA funds for improvements.
- Revisit the study of a new Public Works building – **August 2023**.
- Plan for restroom facilities at the splash park – in an **out year of the CIP**, with inclusion as other projects are completed and funding becomes available.

Recreation and Cultural Activities (flip chart #14)

Possible descriptor: *Take actions to further develop and promote Farmville as the regional hub for recreation and cultural activities.*

Actions:

- Promote partnerships, with the County and with the YMCA.
- Renovation of the skatepark – **FY 2024 CIP**
- Develop a bicycle pump track – **FY 2025 CIP**
- Address the activities gap for teens – report from the Parks & Recreation Director by **January 2024**.

Environmental Stewardship (flip chart #15)

Possible descriptor: *As guardians of natural resources, act to promote sustainability and resiliency.*

Actions:

- Complete the study of Town Buildings being conducted by ABM – implement energy saving measures – study complete in **120 days** with implementation in subsequent years.
- Support the efforts of the “Branch Out in Farmville” program to increase the tree canopy and further beautify the Town - **ongoing**.

Government Performance (flip chart #15)

Possible descriptor: *Continually work to improve organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in service delivery through the adoption and revision of appropriate policies, procedures, and practices; adapt and implement best practices.*

Actions:

- Draft Rules of Procedure for Council’s consideration – **by June 1, 2023**.
- Review the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with a focus on crisis communications and leadership succession – **by December 1, 2023**.

With that the retreat concluded.

Mr. Payne thanked all in attendance for their engagement and for the opportunity to be of service to the Town. He said that he would write up notes for the retreat and share them with the Town Manager for review. Once finalized, the notes could be used as the Town deemed appropriate. The Mayor and Council members thanked Mr. Payne and Mr. Hall for their assistance.

Mayor Vincent declared the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.