

REGULAR WORK SESSION OF THE FARMVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON NOVEMBER 1, 2023

At the regular work session of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at 6:00 PM, in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia, there were present Mayor Brian R. Vincent, presiding, and Council members Sallie Amos, Daniel Dwyer, Tommy Pairet, Adam Yoelin, Donald Hunter, and John Hardy.

Staff present were Town Manager C. Scott Davis, Chief of Police Andy Ellington, Town Attorney Gary Elder, Finance Director Julie Moore, Interim Community Development Director and IT Support Ashley Atkins-Austin, Deputy Clerk Jacqueline Vaughan, and Clerk Mary McKay.

Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll, noting Council members A.D. Reid and Tommy Pairet as absent; however, Mr. Pairet entered the meeting at 6:08 PM.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Hunter to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mrs. Amos, and with all in favor stating “aye”, the motion passed.

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest made.

GREEN FRONT FURNITURE UPDATE

Den Cralle, President of Green Front Furniture, was present to address the Council to report on the company’s restructure and implementation of an all-digital system. A review of their building improvements was provided:

- *Green Front Leather* (Building 7) formerly the old rug clearance center connected to Charley’s Waterfront Café. The interior has been opened up by installing windows for a view of the Appomattox River.
- *Green Front Work and Play* (Building 12) formerly the old Bone Yard clearance center located behind the old Accessories building. Office furniture is located on the top level with gaming tables and bar items on the bottom level.
- *Kids Furniture Gallery* (Building 5-second floor) formerly located in Building 8.
- *Headquarters offices, Customer Service and Delivery* (Warehouse Distribution Facility on Plank Road) Renovations include being built out for the future with hopes of placing a studio for better photography for the new website or social media items.

- *Green Front Modern* (Building 15) formerly the old Baldwin's building. The building front will change with new awnings installed and a hand-painted sign.

Mr. Cralle mentioned the promotion of Farmville through Green Front's advertising and their ongoing efforts to give back to the community through St. Jude Children's Research Hospital fundraising, and Southside SPCA endeavors. It was mentioned that an electric car charger at the Charley's Waterfront Cafe parking lot could be useful to the area.

ABM PRESENTATION

Chrissy Sherriff and Whit Blake were present to provide a presentation on the results from the comprehensive technical audit conducted for the Town's Infrastructure Modernization Project. A detailed review of the proposed upgrades was provided. Throughout the presentation, all Council members present asked questions about the information being provided and discussion was held.

- **Water Meter Upgrades with AMI Solution** – A comparison was made of the Master Meter and Badger Meter solutions with the latter system being recommended. It was noted there is a local dealer based out of Richmond, Virginia. The quantity of remote shut offs may be changed. ABM will handle the turn-key installations and address all inquiries from the Town's customers. Town employees will be trained to install and remove any equipment. Mr. Blake reported the project implementation will be on a four-month schedule, utilizing four to five crews with mechanics and project managers. All field vehicles will be identified as ABM vehicles and mailers will go out with a phone number listed for any questions to be fielded through ABM personnel. To ensure there are no interruptions in billing, new software will be integrated with the existing billing system. The downtime for an average water meter installation was estimated to be 15-30 minutes. Door hangers will be utilized for notification of upcoming weekly installations. Each account address will be visited before an installation takes place, so the customer is made aware of the service interruption or if a rescheduled visit is needed. Large customer accounts will be scheduled with many having a bypass process allowing no interruption in service.
- **Parking Meter Solutions** - Ms. Sherriff reviewed the proposed parking meter solution that would have both card and coin capabilities. Multi-space pay stations would be available as well with end users having the opportunity to use a parking app from a smartphone. The parking rate would need to be raised from \$0.25 for 30 minutes to \$1.00 per hour with increases being made every five years. By upgrading the meters to use card and app

technology, an increase of \$1.00 per hour is needed, or the Town will lose money for the upgrade. Any convenience fees would be passed onto the consumer. Parking meter rates were discussed. The parking meters will not have the capability of taking a photo and issuing a summons for a violation.

- EV Charging Station Solution – Two electric vehicle charging stations at each location, the Plaza and Farmers Market Lots, will each have four charge points. *No Parking for Regular Vehicles* signs will need to be placed with a fine to be implemented. Revenue projections were reviewed. Rebate applications can be submitted for the EV charging stations after installations are complete. ABM will model a combo charging station with one fast charge included as a follow-up.

- Solar Solutions – Site locations were discussed with two funding options provided:

Option 1 - Power Purchase Agreement & Cash Purchase

Bus Facility, Fire Station, Sports Arena Complex (roof-mounted installation)

Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants (ground-mounted installation)

Option 2 - Power Purchase Agreement Only – *recommended*

Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants (ground-mounted installation)

It was noted that the Bus Facility, Fire Station, and Sports Arena Complex would need roof-mounted installations and not be feasible due to the schedule of roof replacement. Discussion continued concerning the declining efficiency of the solar panels and the options for the three locations with proposed roof-mounted installations. Solar panel maintenance would be included in a power purchase agreement. ABM will follow up concerning utilizing the approximate 15 acres which the Town owns near the Sports Arena Complex.

- Building Energy Savings Solution – A review of the upgrades for each building was made. (Bus Facility, Public Works, Fire Department, Probation and Parole, South Street Conference Center, Sports Arena Complex, Town Hall, Train Station, and Wastewater Treatment Plant)

The presentation concluded with a review of the revenue and savings to be realized between the town solutions and energy conservation measures along with the environmental impacts of the project. A copy of the presentation slides was requested by Council member Hardy.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Julie Moore reported on the September 2023 charts and reports provided to Council members. Revenue should be approximately 25% of what is budgeted at this point in the fiscal year, but it is not. Revenue such as business licenses and real estate taxes are collected once a year whereas the budget assumes that revenue is received every month. Revenue compared to prior year is slightly down basically in the General Fund and some of that is due to taxes. There is a one-to-two-month delay in sales tax and some utility tax revenue received from the state; what is received in September is for July or August. In the previous year, money was transferred over from the Sewer Fund and so far this fiscal year, this transfer has not been needed. Some grant money to be received, such as the law enforcement and fire department funds, have not yet been received.

In summary, the total expenses are up. Total expenses compared to the budget are not 25%. Department heads are actively monitoring their respective department budgets. Expenses were up compared to prior year due to the OpenGov software purchased by the Finance Department, the splash pad equipment purchased by the Recreation Department, the \$350,000 contribution to the Industrial Development Authority that wasn't made last year, and the bond payment being made in September this year and last year in October.

Ms. Moore reported that Council members will receive another resolution in their packets for next week's meeting to transfer budgeted funds from last fiscal year to this fiscal year. This transfer was not included in the resolution provided to Council last month because the amount did not show up on the Open Purchase Order Report as payments had already been made. Ms. Moore also reported that Council members will receive the fiscal audit report for review before the presentation is made by the auditor at the November 8, 2023 Regular Council Meeting.

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING DECALS

The Town Manager reported on the two questions for follow up from the September 13, 2023 Regular Council Meeting: the possibility of not charging for residential parking decals in the areas currently marked in town for permit parking only and permits being provided town-wide for residents.

Ms. Moore provided a report on the proposed costs with Dr. Davis responding that it is not feasible to make all town residents get a parking decal. The reason the permit parking began was due to college students parking to be closer to campus instead of paying for campus parking.

Discussion was held on providing each household two permits plus two guest permits at no charge and mail the decals with their water bill, which would make it easier to obtain permits. Comments were provided by Town Manager Davis on the need to physically obtain decals from the Town Hall for residence verification. There was consensus by Council members that the parking decal issue be left as it is with a friendly reminder to residents when it's time to renew their parking decals.

PHONE-IN TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS

The quality of the phone-in technology used for meetings was brought up at the August 9, 2023 Regular Council Meeting. The Town Manager was asked to explore options for additional discussion at a Work Session. Phone call-ins began due to the covid pandemic. Council members were provided with a listing of formats used by other localities to receive public comment. The Town Manager clarified that the town clerk reached out to other clerks through a ListServ request and received some responses but not from all localities.

A discussion was held with each Council member offering input.

It was generally accepted to eliminate the use of the phone in technology. Public comments at Regular Council meetings may be made through in-person remarks, written postal or email correspondence received, and messages given to the Clerk to be read at the meetings.

REVENUE SHARING FOR SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS

The Town Manager provided brief comments concerning potential projects. In order to receive any tax revenue from a solar energy project stemming from someone's business venture, a locality must have a revenue share ordinance in place. A public hearing is scheduled for November 8, 2023.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

No report was offered.

COMMENTS BY MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mr. Dwyer reported on a constituent's request for a possible additional pedestrian crossing on Griffin Boulevard near Edmunds Street. An inquiry was also made about whether recycling bins could be utilized for town residents. A brief discussion was held. The Town Manager advised he would look into both matters and report back with some information.

Mr. Yoelin mentioned the possible addition of a ramp at Crute Stage to make it more accessible.

There being no other business and on a motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, with all in favor stating “aye”, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

Mary H. McKay, Clerk of Council