

REGULAR WORK SESSION OF THE FARMVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON FEBRUARY 7, 2024

At the regular work session of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 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 Vincent, presiding, and Council members Sallie Amos, A.D. “Chuckie” Reid, Dan Dwyer, Tommy Pairet, Adam Yoelin, Donald Hunter and John Hardy.

Staff present were Town Manager Scott Davis, Fire Chief Daniel Clark, Finance Director Julie Moore, Town Attorney Gary Elder, Community Development Director and IT Support Ashley Atkins-Austin, Sergeant B.H. Paulette, Deputy Clerk Jacqueline Vaughan, and Clerk of Council Mary McKay.

Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll noting all Council members were present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest made.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Julie Moore reported for December 2023, that the revenue to budget is approximately 50%, due to receiving the funding for the ABM project. As this amount has been reported as revenue, a request for a budget amendment will be made at the February 14, 2024, Regular Council meeting. Excluding this amount, the revenue is slightly below as business licenses and other taxes lag behind. The water and sewer funds are below the budgeted amounts as ARPA money is budgeted but the revenue isn’t recorded until the end of the year. The transportation fund is below budget due to some buses being budgeted and those reimbursements were only recently received either at the end of January or the beginning of February. There is an increase in revenue compared to the prior year due to the recorded ABM revenue.

Expenses are well below 50% of the budget but the Finance Department and the Library are over budget as Ms. Moore mentioned at the January 2024 meeting. She commented that these two areas will not be over budget at year’s end. The expenses compared to prior year are below

that but again there are a few departments that are over budget when compared to prior year; the Finance Department with the OpenGov software purchase, the Recreation Department with the installation of the Splash Pad, and ARPA money is being spent from the Water Fund that wasn't spent last year.

Ms. Moore also reported that another resolution will be brought forward at the February Council meeting asking permission to write off some old taxes, specifically \$10.09 in real estate taxes that are over 20 years old and \$543.23 in personal property taxes that are five years old.

Mayor Vincent expressed appreciation to Ms. Moore for her informative reports.

FINANCIAL REVIEW PRESENTATION BY DAVENPORT & COMPANY

Town Manager Davis introduced Davenport and Company representatives Ted Cole and Ben Wilson who had been asked to provide some insight into the town's financial status. He also mentioned wanting to accomplish being rated by agencies, so Davenport and Company worked up a mock review to share with the Council.

Mr. Cole shared a PowerPoint presentation with Council members and provided information on peer comparatives to show perspective on the Town's financial performance and credit profile. Highlights from the presentation included a review of the following:

Peer Groups

- 1 - City and Town Groups - to provide perspective on how Farmville compares to other similar local governments as it relates to population and general fund budget
- 2 - University Towns/Cities – to have an institutional presence from a college or university when comparing tax bases, other economic factors that a large student population or a tax-exempt entity can skew
- 3 - Other Rated Towns – to see how highly rated towns/cities rank geographically to Peer Group #1

Mr. Cole provided a credit rating overview using Moody's methodology: Economy 30%, Financial Performance 30%, Institutional Framework 10%, and Leverage 30%. An overview of Moody's new methodology was also described including information on an updated rating scorecard, revised notching factors, and other considerations. A weighted score of about 2.72, using the town's most recent data, places the town in the Aa category, where the rating could be on the data-driven part of the rating process.

Ben Wilson provided an overview of the finances, debt, and how the Town looks related to these items. Revenues have exceeded expenditures for the past five years, which is good. The fund balance has grown over the past five years because, again, the revenues have exceeded the expenditures. In the last two years, if you take out the transfers, the revenues still would have exceeded the expenditures, which shows the Town is in good shape. Looking at the fund balance and mainly focusing on the unassigned fund balance, it has grown over the past five years from \$688k to \$3.9M. The Town has a fund balance policy, which states 10% of the general fund balance must be maintained in unassigned fund balance, and the Town has exceeded that policy.

Mr. Cole continued by offering information on the Town's tax supported debt affordability. From the information provided, it was noted that the decline in existing debt service would provide for future debt affordability within existing resources.

**PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO PRESENTATION BY TREY PYLE, PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY
DEPUTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR**

Prince Edward County Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Trey Pyle was present to provide information on a proposed regional public safety radio system. A PowerPoint presentation was displayed. Mr. Pyle provided a summary of the proposed project to date.

The coverage issues with the current radio system were reviewed. A countywide UHF P25 Phase 2 Trunked radio system was identified as the best solution for the issues mentioned. The Motorola system was selected because of the infrastructure already in place.

The Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors agreed to a contract in December 2023, contingent on all the partners coming on board with the project. A verbal commitment to join was received from Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College, and now the Town of Farmville is being sought as the last partner for participation in the project.

Mr. Pyle advised of the tower locations for the proposed system with the main tower being located at Dominion Energy, the second site would be on Douglas Church Road, and the third site to be in Prospect near the convenience site on Highway 460 (Prince Edward Highway).

During the presentation, several Council members posed questions and brief discussions were held.

A description of the type of radio system proposed was provided by Mr. Pyle and the coverage was reviewed.

Prince Edward County Administrator Doug Stanley addressed the Council and provided a figure of \$6.3 million for the total project investment. Grant funding is being sought to reduce the overall cost. Prince Edward County's portion of the investment is at 77%, the Town of Farmville would be 20%, Longwood University 2%, and Hampden-Sydney College 1%.

Town Manager Davis clarified the Town's portion of 20% currently would be \$1.4 million. He and the Finance Director have figured the Town could potentially pay out of pocket for the town's portion by 2026. He also noted the equipment purchased approximately two years ago for the Police Department and Dispatch would be reprogrammed, and the Town's Fire Department would be helped significantly with the project's completion.

Fire Chief Daniel Clark reported on a traffic incident that happened earlier in the day in front of the Fire Station and the concerted efforts to get resources in with the current radio system.

Mayor Vincent reported there was a verbal consensus from Council members to move forward with the Town participating in the project.

PRESENTATION ON FY2024-2025 PROJECTED REVENUES

Town Manager Davis provided a PowerPoint presentation and highlights of the projected revenues. Department Directors were asked to submit their budgets by January 31, 2024. He and the Finance Director will meet with each Department Director next week to discuss each department's proposed budget. For the upcoming fiscal year, there is \$23.7 million being budgeted which is slightly down from the prior year's originally adopted budget due to several factors. A review was made of the significant shifts:

- Street maintenance fund – there is a projected VDOT funding increase of \$338,000 to what the Town receives based on our roadways and mileage.
- Water fund is down \$784,000 compared to the prior year because in 2024, we budgeted the ARPA funding for the water piece of \$1.6 million being spent in FY2024. All of the projects may not be complete, and the funding may need to be carried over to FY2025.
- During FY2024, we have started internally setting aside funds for future capital improvement projects and assets and recognizing these internally designated funds in FY2025 which offsets in the amount of \$887,000.
- The Sewer fund will show down compared to the prior year and is due to ARPA funding of \$376,000 being spent and so funds of \$184,000 are being set aside in the Capital

Improvement Plan. Instead of borrowing, funds will be kept and continue to earn interest on different investments, and then items can be paid for as will allow.

- Transportation fund is down \$397,000 compared to FY2024 due to two buses being budgeted and there is \$244,000 anticipated to be received from the state as reimbursement. There is also budgeted \$74,000 of prior year funds to be used to cover the difference in revenue expenses in the Transportation fund.
- The Airport fund will be down \$833,000 compared to the prior year because there aren't major projects for federal funding and only two smaller projects in FY2025.

Projected General Fund revenue versus the original, is slightly up from the prior year by \$136,394.82. Projected revenues were also reviewed.

Council member Pairet asked about possible grants towards the regional public safety radio project with the Town Manager reporting that the contract is through Prince Edward County who will be submitting grant applications to lower the overall cost of the project.

Mayor Vincent noted that without the per day ICA funding, the Town is still coming out ahead in regard to its revenue projections.

Council member Hunter asked for last year's budget figure and the projected figure for next year with the Town Manager reporting that currently \$23.7 million is being budgeted compared to the prior year adopted of \$25.2 million.

UPDATE ON PHASE I RIVERWALK PROJECT

The Town Manager reported on the cost of the original scope of the project for Phase I as \$1,074,670, and on receiving a TAP grant, the Town is required to pay a 20% match of \$214,934. VDOT has now moved into the design phase of the project and there are some changes to the cost estimates due to some additional hydraulic analysis because the trail is in a flood plain, some additional environmental and archaeological studies to be conducted due to the historic nature of the area and the waterway, additional utility line conflicts, and the need for the project to be Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant. With an additional \$408,603 funding needed for Phase I, the Town Manager reviewed choices with the Council:

- The Town pays the additional costs of \$408,603 out of pocket.
- The Town applies for an additional TAP grant for \$408,603, with another 20% match of \$81,721.

- The Town stops the project and cuts its losses at \$24,000, for work that has already been expended.

Projected overall costs of the project were mentioned. Council members were asked if they wish to continue with the project as a decision will be needed by next week. Mr. Hardy asked if a summary of the phases and costs for each could be sent for review.

DISCUSSION ON PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Town Manager Davis opened the discussion by referencing a goal area created by Council at last year's Council Retreat, specifically Community Development and Land Use, which was to preserve the charm, beauty, and history of Farmville while accommodating growth, encouraging diverse and affordable housing, and promoting an efficient and safe transportation system. A planned unit development (PUD) ordinance is a tool to accomplish this goal. If a PUD ordinance is adopted which would allow someone to create a master plan for a parcel of land, Council still gets to say whether they approve the proposed master plan. A breakdown was provided of the population by generations. It was mentioned that the Town should be building its communities for what other generations and that future also desire other than just for the people who live here now.

Mayor Vincent tried to steer the conversation around whether the Planned Unit Development Ordinance tool is something of interest to the Council. Discussion was held by all Council members present.

(Clerk's note: The minutes are being amended to reflect comments by Council member John Hardy, as requested at the March 13, 2024 Regular Council Meeting.)

Council member Hardy asked if a Planned Unit Development ordinance is the only tool to use, is it the best tool, can we see what other options there are or make some changes to the current zoning. Mr. Hardy also noted he would like for the current zoning to be looked at to make it a little easier to follow.

The Town Manager expressed his need to know if Council members are truly interested in considering a planned unit development ordinance so that the staff doesn't spend time getting feedback from Council and the Planning Commission if there is no interest. A suggestion was made also to have joint meetings with the Planning Commission to receive feedback.

Additional discussion was held, and Council appeared to be in agreement with moving forward with development of an ordinance and receiving feedback at joint meetings.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager advised a report would be provided at the February 14, 2024 Regular Meeting.

COMMENTS BY MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mr. Hardy spoke on the need for a new sousaphone by Prince Edward County School and offered his support by donating \$100 to the cause.

Mr. Hunter will provide an update at next week's meeting.

Mr. Yoelin asked what a sousaphone is and offered a \$100 donation to the cause. He also thanked everyone for their time.

Mrs. Amos asked if the North Street Press Club had reopened.

Mayor Vincent reported that he and the Clerk have started to work on a template to use for requesting Proclamations from the Mayor, and to recognize community members for their contributions to the community. The topic of changing the Regular Council meetings to the same time as the Work Sessions was brought forward for Council's consideration. All were in agreement to change the Regular Meetings to 6:00 PM, instead of the 7:00 PM timeframe, effective March 13, 2024. The mayor also noted that Mr. Reid is on the cover of the current Virginia Municipal League (VML) magazine as he serves as President of the organization.

There being no other business and on a motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, with all in favor stating "aye", the meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

Mary H. McKay, Clerk of Council