

BERRYVILLE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
MINUTES
March 3, 2021

A meeting of the Berryville Town Council Budget and Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center located at 101 Chalmers Court in Berryville, Virginia.

Attendance: Members of the Committee present: Recorder Erecka Gibson, Chair; Donna McDonald

Staff present: Keith Dalton, Town Manager; Cynthia Poulin, Finance Clerk; Paul Culp, Town Clerk; Chief Neal White, Berryville Police Department

Other Town Council member present: Mayor Jay Arnold

Press present: none

1. Call to Order

Recorder Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. McDonald moved to approve the agenda. The motion passed by consensus.

3. Unfinished Business

None.

4. New Business

Discussion of FY2022 Budget

Mr. Dalton directed the committee's attention to a spreadsheet outlining the Town's five-year capital improvements program and began describing items of particular interest. He explained the need for routine computer replacement; large line items for water and waste water management; server replacement; mobile data terminals and new sidearms for police officers; replacement of police radios from reserves because of new technology requirements; and an upgrade to the police interview room.

Mr. Dalton explained the need for a new one-ton dump truck in FY2022 and again in 2025, explaining that such vehicles are the mainstay for the Department of Public Works. He said three-quarter-ton

trucks would be needed in 2022 and 2023 and a half-ton truck in 2024. He said VDOT would provide partial reimbursement on the trucks as well as on a new snowplow and salt spreader and the new mini-hoe recommended for 2024 as a means of helping Public Works perform digging operations more precisely and with less disruption, saving money in the long term. He said the VDOT partial reimbursement would apply to the mini-hoe and also to the new regular backhoe the Town would eventually need. He noted that a new mower would also be needed in 2023.

Mr. Dalton said the Town Council should consider discussing its goals and work toward greater clarity regarding funding for wayfaring signs.

Mr. Dalton said the Town's holiday decorations had become badly worn and ought to be replaced in FY2022 rather than in FY2023 as planned.

Mr. Dalton explained the rationale for security improvements for the water, sewer, and Public Works facilities. He noted the need for upgrading of the water treatment plant and for expenditures on engineering in 2025 and 2026. He explained the need for water distribution system upgrades, providing extensive detail on water line replacement for Josephine Street. He said a water line on Bel Voi Drive would require replacement and that improvements would be necessary for the water distribution system, the water collection system, and the treatment plant membrane, as well as repairs to the water treatment plant backwash lagoon.

Mr. Dalton then noted the need for expenditures on stormwater management on Dorsey Street and at Jackson Pond, the paving of sidewalks on East and West Fairfax Streets, and the reconstruction of permeate pumps at the water treatment plant. He said the Town must also budget for its share of the cost of sidewalk work on Mosby Boulevard, with a grant covering the remainder.

Recorder Gibson and Mr. Dalton discussed Town-maintained streets and how to allow for them in the capital improvements program.

Mr. Dalton thanked Ms. Poulin for her diligence in helping prepare the budget, also noting valuable work performed by Utilities Clerk Jodi Kern, Front Desk Clerk Karen Johnson, and former Treasurer Desiree Moreland.

Recorder Gibson and Mr. Dalton discussed the relationship between the capital improvements plan and Mr. Dalton's document on fund reserve specifics.

Mr. Dalton suggested adding an item to the general fund for annexation matters. Recorder Gibson concurred. They then discussed whether to have a reserve goal and a planned feeding of that fund.

The committee then proceeded to a discussion of the draft FY22 budget. Mr. Dalton noted the draft budget's provision for a 12.7 percent increase in real estate taxes, explaining that the increased revenue would help fund the hiring of a new police supervisor. He said Council must set a public hearing on the tax increase as soon as possible.

Mr. Dalton said staff was in the process of obtaining information on a utility tax of the type recently implemented by Stephens City.

Mr. Dalton said the Town could not be certain of the full return to normal of accustomed revenue sources after the present pandemic, noting that the Town's worker's compensation expenses would be increasing while the lodging tax and cigarette tax provided little help to the Town.

Mr. Dalton explained that interest on deposits had not performed as well as expected and that he had revised the figure in the budget accordingly. He said some savings would go to capital improvements.

Mr. Dalton said revenue from parking meters had declined because of non-enforcement during the pandemic.

Mr. Dalton said the PPTRA amount for the Town would be 70 percent this year but that this would likely be the last year it could be kept there.

Mr. Dalton said the law enforcement grant was still in good condition.

Recorder Gibson discussed water/sewer availability fees as a source of revenue and when income from Hermitage Phase V would begin.

Mr. Dalton said the new budget reflects more realism than the previous one with regard to revenue from treatment fees.

Recorder Gibson and Mr. Dalton discussed the costs associated with local elections.

Recorder Gibson and Mr. Dalton discussed Town-County economic development costs and the economic development reserve.

Mayor Arnold and Mr. Dalton discussed the plan to hire a deputy town manager. Mayor Arnold recommended adding the position midway through the fiscal year in order to achieve adequate preparation and desirable cost savings. Recorder Gibson recommended waiting until circumstances are more stable.

Mr. Dalton said the organization could expect considerable near-term change and that it must engage in capacity-building and become less reliant on him for institutional memory. He said a deputy town manager would be of vital importance.

Recorder Gibson concurred and asked Mr. Dalton to bear the matter in mind as a possibility when preparing the budget, with particular consideration given to the effects of tax rates.

Mr. Dalton said revenue is flat but that the Town must provide salary adjustments in order to retain personnel.

Mayor Arnold recommended communicating to the public the fact that the Town's needs exceed its income and that this must be addressed but that a new position will not be created immediately.

Mr. Dalton said the stormwater reserve fund will be significantly drained by necessary projects. He noted that the Town has long made a practice of incurring minimal debt, but said debt for work on the treatment plant would be necessary. He said that this and the deputy town manager position would require further discussion.

Recorder Gibson recommended building a reserve fund to reduce the need for borrowing. Mr. Dalton concurred.

Mr. Dalton said the Town's fiscal condition is good but that the Town needs more revenue in order to achieve its aims.

Ms. McDonald and Mr. Dalton discussed police staffing and pay.

Mr. Dalton said he had added to the budget a line item for employee recognition. He said it is important to recognize the performance of Town personnel, especially their activities during the pandemic. The committee agreed that this would be worthwhile.

5. Other

None.

6. Closed Session

None.

7. Adjourn

Recorder Gibson invited a motion to adjourn. Ms. McDonald so moved, with the meeting adjourning by consensus at 11:14 a.m.

MINUTES
BERRYVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
Regular Meeting
March 9, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Attendance being limited by pandemic restrictions, the meeting was livestreamed on the Town's YouTube channel.

Town Council: Present—Harry Lee Arnold, Jr., Mayor; Erecka L. Gibson, Recorder; Donna McDonald; Grant Mazzarino; Kara Rodriguez. Participating by telephone—Diane Harrison

Staff: Present--Keith Dalton, Town Manager; Christy Dunkle, Community Development Director; Chief Neal White, Berryville Police Department; Paul Culp, Town Clerk

Press: Mickey Powell, *The Winchester Star*.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Arnold called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Dalton explained that Ms. Harrison would be participating remotely and that the Council would need to authorize this.

Recorder Gibson moved that the Council of the Town of Berryville approve remote participation via telephone by Council member Diane Harrison at this meeting because of illness. The **motion** passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. Closed Session

Recorder Gibson made the **attached** motion for the Council to enter closed session. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote, and the Council entered closed session at 3:32 p.m.

3. Convene Open Session

Recorder Gibson read the **attached** motion and resolution certifying the closed session, with the motion passing by unanimous roll-call vote.

The Council returned to open session at 7:07 p.m. Mayor Arnold noted the non-standard seating arrangement of Council members because of social-distancing protocols during the coronavirus pandemic.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

5. Approval of Agenda

Recorder Gibson moved to approve the agenda. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. Presentations/Awards/Recognitions

None.

7. Public Hearings

None.

8. Discussion of Public Hearing Items

None.

9. Citizens' Forum

Berryville resident Barbara Lake asked the Council to reduce the speed limit on Battletown Drive, citing multiple examples of pedestrians endangered by automobile traffic.

10. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda comprised the minutes of the February 9 Town Council regular meeting, the February 22 meeting of the Community Development Committee, and the February 23 meeting of the Streets and Utilities Committee.

Recorder Gibson moved to adopt the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

11. Unfinished Business

Ms. Dunkle noted that the Town had applied for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant in September of 2019 for completion of the sidewalk section on the north side of Mosby Boulevard from Hancock Court to McNeil Drive. She said the Commonwealth Transportation Board had approved the grant request in June 2020, in the amount of \$149,213 with the Town's 20 percent match totaling \$29,843. She said those figures had been updated to \$154,191 and \$30,838, respectively, and that the Virginia Department of Transportation had requested from the Town Council a resolution for blanket project funding commitment and signature authority, with the latter residing in the Town Manager.

Ms. McDonald moved that the Council of the Town of Berryville adopt the **attached** resolution in order to commit to the local project share and signature authority of the Town Manager. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The clerk read the resolution aloud.

Mr. Dalton explained that the proposed FY2022 budget provided a line item of \$25,000 for the Mosby Boulevard project in order to provide a cushion beyond the aforementioned \$30,838, with the capital improvements schedule providing for an additional \$10,000 in FY2023.

12. New Business

Fiscal Year 2022 Virginia Commission for the Arts Sub-grantee

Ms. Dunkle said the Town had been applying for and receiving funds from the VCA since 2021, with the exception of 2019, and that the intent of the Creative Communities Partnership Grant is to encourage local governments to support the arts. She said the Community Development Committee had instituted an application process that had resulted in applications from the Clarke County Historical Association (CCHA), Skyline Quilters/Northern Shenandoah Valley Quilt Show, the Main Street Chamber Orchestra, Barns of Rose Hill, and the Blue Ridge Studio for the Performing Arts.

Ms. Dunkle said CCHA had been removed from consideration because it is not a stand-alone arts organization, and that the Community Development Committee in its February 22 meeting had reviewed applications and recommended the award of \$1,000 to Skyline Quilters/Northern Shenandoah Valley Quilt Show, \$1,000 to Blue Ridge Studio, and \$7,000 to Barns of Rose Hill.

Ms. Rodriguez said she is a dues-paying member of Blue Ridge Studio and therefore would abstain from voting.

Recorder Gibson moved that the Council of the Town of Berryville direct staff to apply for the Virginia Commission for the Arts' Creative Communities Partnership Grant and, if awarded, fund the following sub-recipients in the following amounts:

\$1,000 to Skyline Quilters/Northern Shenandoah Valley Quilt Show.

\$1,000 to the Blue Ridge Studio for the Performing Arts.

\$7,000 to the Barns of Rose Hill.

Ms. Rodriguez abstaining, the motion passed by an otherwise unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Dunkle said she would follow up with the grantees regarding reporting requirements and correct logo use.

Berryville Main Street

Mr. Dalton said the Town had received a letter from Berryville Main Street announcing the demise of that organization's relationship with Virginia Main Street and that the Council had asked him to draft a letter of reply, copies of which he provided to the Council as the Town's expression of concern about the extent of BMS's continued participation in community events. After brief discussion, the Council decided that Mr. Dalton should send the letter over his own signature.

Ms. Rodriguez moved that the Council of the Town of Berryville authorize the Town Manager to send the letter, as drafted, to Berryville Main Street President Kim Ragland. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

13. Council Member Reports

Mayor Arnold, Recorder Gibson, Ms. McDonald, and Mr. Mazzarino had nothing to add.

Ms. Harrison congratulated Ms. Dunkle on twenty years of service to the Town.

Ms. Rodriguez commended Ward 4 resident Violah Lee for preparing Filipino cuisine and sharing the proceeds with community organizations.

14. Staff Reports

Public Works

Nothing was added to the written report.

Public Utilities

Nothing was added to the written report.

Police

Mr. Dalton directed the Council's attention to the mutual aid agreement between the Clarke County Sheriff's Office and the Berryville Police Department. He said such an agreement had been signed in 1995 and that modifications were necessary because of changes in code language. He explained that the agreement enhanced the safety of officers and deputies as well as that of the populace.

Recorder Gibson moved that the Council of the Town of Berryville approve the attached Mutual Aid Agreement between the Town of Berryville and the County of Clarke and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Chief White noted that his monthly reports would now include additional information specific to incidents involving the use of force.

Community Development

Ms. Dunkle updated the Council on the meeting schedules of the various appointive bodies associated with planning and community development, and on construction in the Shenandoah Crossing and Fellowship Square subdivisions and in Hermitage Phase V.

Ms. Dunkle then directed the Council's attention to the report in the agenda packet in which she had explained the need to increase by \$93,496 the bond amounts for erosion and sediment control in the construction of the Hermitage subdivision, with the bond to be held by the Town totaling \$305,264.38.

Ms. Rodriguez moved that the Council of the Town of Berryville approve updated erosion and sediment control bonds for the Hermitage V subdivision in the amount of \$305,264.38. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Administration and Finance

Nothing was added to the written report.

Town Manager

Livery Stable / 23 Main Street

Mr. Dalton said he was still working with an engineer for an evaluation of the property and recommendations for structural changes. He said the matter could be discussed in committee after that information is available. He said the Town has already budgeted for stabilization of the structure, which an engineer had recommended be carried out at about this time. He said the building's sewer lateral would require replacement and that the HVAC unit should also be considered for replacement.

Ms. Rodriguez asked about the installation of a restroom, as previously discussed. Mr. Dalton said he had discussed this with the engineer, who indicated that installation of one might be feasible.

Blight Abatement

Mr. Dalton said he had talked to all of the owners of properties previously discussed, after sending informal letters inviting this. He said most of them recognize the nature of the problem and that the

buildings in question should be demolished, and that 227 Josephine Street already had been. He said he would send new notices with suggestions and see whether the owners suggest viable plans, and that if they do not, the Town will involve the Planning Commission and proceed via the channels provided by regulations.

15. Committee Updates

Budget and Finance

Recorder Gibson noted that the entire Council would convene in a budget work session at 3:00 the following afternoon.

Community Development

Ms. Rodriguez said the committee would not need to meet again until April.

Personnel

Mayor Arnold said the committee would meet in April. Mr. Dalton said openings on appointive bodies would be announced on the Town website.

Public Safety

Ms. McDonald said the committee would meet on March 23 at 2:00 p.m.

Streets and Utilities

Ms. Harrison said the committee would not need to meet until April.

16. Other

No further business came before the Council.

17. Adjourn

The Council adjourned by consensus on a motion by Ms. Rodriguez at 7:44 p.m.

Erecka L. Gibson, Recorder

Paul Culp, Town Clerk

BERRYVILLE TOWN COUNCIL SIGN-UP SHEET

Citizens' Forum

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

6:30 p.m.

Name: _____ **Town of Berryville Resident?**

<u>Barbara Lake</u>	<u>Yes</u>	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No
_____	Yes	No

BERRYVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
MOTION TO APPROVE REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN A TOWN
COUNCIL
MEETING BY A TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER

Date: March 9, 2021

Motion By: *Gibson*

I move that the Council of the Town of Berryville approve remote participation via telephone by Council member Diane Harrison at this meeting because of illness.

VOTE:

Aye: *Unanimous voice vote*

Nay:

Abstain:

Absent:

ATTEST:


Erecka Gibson, Recorder

Motion to Enter Closed Session

I move that the Council of the Town of Berryville enter closed session in accordance with §2.2-3711-A-7 of the Code of Virginia for consultation with legal counsel and in accordance with §2.2-3711-A-1 of the Code of Virginia to discuss personnel matters related to a specific employee.

DATE: March 9, 2021

MOTION:

Gibson

VOTE:

Aye:

Unanimous voice vote

Nay:

Absent/Abstain:

ATTEST: _____

Erecka Gibson, Recorder

TOWN COUNCIL
MOTION
CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION

DATE: March 9, 2021

MOTION BY: Gibson

SECOND BY:

I move that the Council of the Town of Berryville adopt the following resolution certifying it has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act:

Resolution

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Council.

VOTE:

Aye: Unanimous roll-call vote

Nay:

Absent/Abstain:

ATTEST: _____
Erecka Gibson, Recorder



TOWN OF BERRYVILLE

101 Chalmers Court, Suite A

Berryville, VA 22611

RESOLUTION

FOR BLANKET PROJECT FUNDING COMMITMENT

AND FOR BLANKET SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, the Town of Berryville administers transportation projects under agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Berryville desires to provide clear commitment for funding these transportation projects and clear signature authority for signing the Project Administration Agreements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Berryville, Virginia, that:

1. the Town of Berryville hereby commits to fund its local share of preliminary engineering, right-of-way, and construction (as applicable) of the project(s) under agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation in accordance with the project financial document(s).
2. the Town Manager is authorized to execute all agreements and/or addendums for any approved projects with the Virginia Department of Transportation.
3. in the absence of the Town Manager, the Mayor is authorized to execute all agreements and/or addendums for any approved projects with the Virginia Department of Transportation.
4. such actions and authorizations are also in accordance with the Town of Berryville Council Resolution.

Adopted this 9th day of March, 2021.

Harry Lee Arnold, Jr. Mayor

ATTEST: _____

Paul Culp, Town Clerk

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 2021, by and between the BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF CLARKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA, acting for and on behalf of the County of Clarke, Virginia (herein "County"); and the COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BERRYVILLE, VIRGINIA, acting for and on behalf of the Town of Berryville, Virginia, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia (herein "Town").

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the Town, as an incorporated town, is an integral part of the County of Clarke, Virginia, and as such is subject to the Jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office of Clarke County, Virginia, and,

WHEREAS, the Town has a duly constituted police force; and

WHEREAS periodically a Deputy Sheriff of Clarke County Virginia, requests assistance of the Berryville Town Police in the response to a call in Clarke County, Virginia, outside the territorial limits of the Town; and

WHEREAS §15.2-1737 of the Code of Virginia 1950, as amended, provides that the governing body of any county and town whose boundaries are contiguous may enter into mutual aid agreements for the mutual protection, defense, and maintenance of peace and good order; and

WHEREAS §15.2-1726 of the Code of Virginia 1950, as amended, provides that the governing body of any county and town may enter into reciprocal agreement for cooperation in the furnishing of police services; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of parties hereto to cooperate one with the other in the furnishing of their police services for their mutual protection, defense and the maintenance of peace and good order.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises the mutual promises and obligations hereinafter set forth and the mutual benefits to accrue to the parties, hereby and pursuant to §15.2-1736 and §15.2-1726 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. The Town agrees to authorize, furnish and make available members of its Police Department, their equipment and materials, to respond to calls for law-enforcement assistance in Clarke County, Virginia, outside the territorial limits of the Town as requested by the Sheriff and / or Deputy Sheriffs of Clarke County, Virginia, provided
 - a. There is an in-progress incident involving a crime against a person and based on the totality of the circumstances, additional law enforcement resources outside of those available to the assigned Deputy Sheriff would be necessary for the maintenance of peace and good order as well as the safety of citizens and the responding Deputy Sheriff, or
 - b. A determination is made by a Deputy Sheriff on the scene of an incident that additional assistance is needed, and the Sheriff's Office has no additional manpower to assist.
2. The County hereby reaffirms the responsibility of the Clarke County Sheriff's Office to furnish and make available members of its Office for assistance in addition to and not in lieu of any responsibilities within the Town of Berryville, Virginia, currently required by the law of the Clarke County Sheriff's Office.

3. When acting pursuant hereto, all policemen, deputy sheriffs, law enforcement officials and agents of the cooperating departments shall have the same powers, rights, benefits, privileges, and immunities in both jurisdictions, respectively, including the authority to make arrests in the two jurisdictions.
4. The County does further agree to indemnify and save harmless the Town on any liability which may accrue as a result of the acts of the members of the Berryville Town Police Department furnishing law enforcement services and / or assistance to the Clarke County Sheriff's Office pursuant to this agreement.
5. Nothing contained herein "shall in any way operate as an indemnification by the Town for the police services currently provided by the County through its Sheriff's Office by virtue of the Town's existence as an integral part of the County of Clarke, Virginia.
6. This agreement may be reviewed and / or terminated by either the Council of the Town of Berryville, Virginia, or the Board of Supervisors of Clarke County upon thirty (30) days written notice.
7. This agreement shall expire five (5) years from the date of execution.

WITNESS THE FOLLOWING SIGNATURE AND SEALS:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF CLARKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

By _____ Seal
Chairman

TOWN OF BERRYVILLE, VIRGINIA

By _____ Seal
Mayor

MINUTES
BERRYVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
Work Session
March 10, 2021
3:00 p.m.

Town Council: Present--Harry Lee Arnold, Jr., Mayor; Erecka L. Gibson, Recorder; Donna Marie McDonald; Diane Harrison; Grant Mazzarino; Kara Rodriguez

Staff: Present—Christy Dunkle, Community Development Director; Paul Culp, Town Clerk; Cynthia Poulin, Finance Clerk. Participating by telephone—Keith Dalton, Town Manager

Press: Mickey Powell, *The Winchester Star*

1. Call to Order

Mayor Arnold called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Arnold invited a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. McDonald moved to approve the agenda. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

4. New Business

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

Mr. Dalton began by going over the five-year capital improvement program spreadsheet that had been distributed to the Council, taking questions from Council members as he discussed capital improvements including completion of the Mosby Boulevard sidewalk, purchase of new police radios, purchase of vehicles and heavy equipment for the Department of Public Works, deployment of wayfinding signs, security improvements for the water and sewer plants, water distribution system upgrades, payment for improvements to the water storage tank, water meter replacement, sewage collection system upgrades, repair of the water treatment plant backwash lagoon, stormwater management projects on Jackson Drive and Dorsey Street, the rebuilding of water treatment plant permeate pumps, and the completion of sidewalks on Fairfax Street.

Mr. Dalton, Ms. Harrison, and Ms. Rodriguez briefly discussed stormwater drainage problems in various areas.

There was a discussion of the Mosby Boulevard project, and Ms. Dunkle described the Transportation Alternatives Program grant cycle.

Mr. Dalton said an extensive water treatment plant upgrade would be necessary in 2026 and that borrowing would be necessary. He suggested that the Town might want to coordinate matters requiring debt in such a way that borrowing for multiple projects could occur at the same time.

The discussion then turned to the Fiscal Year 2022 proposed budget, which Mr. Dalton said was based on a proposed increase in the real estate tax of 2.259 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

Recorder Gibson noted that this would be a return to the 2019 rate, taxes having been reduced in 2020 in order to maintain revenue neutrality. She noted that the rate has been more or less flat overall since 2016.

In response to a question from Ms. Harrison, Mr. Dalton said the revenue from real estate taxes should increase by \$141,000 if the proposed increase is implemented.

A discussion determined that whether the proposed tax rates would be sufficient depends on what the Council decides the Town must accomplish. He noted that the Council had indicated a desire to add a supervisory-level officer to the Police Department, which would involve a salary and benefits package of approximately \$77,000. He said the career development program for police officers would cost \$16,000 to \$17,000.

Mr. Dalton said the stormwater reserve had been drawn down considerably and that further drainage improvements sought by residents would require fresh revenue.

Ms. Harrison noted that the Town had hoped for some time to add an assistant town manager to the staff. Mr. Dalton said the Town needs very much to engage in capacity building in its staffing and governance, to assure continuity, and enhance institutional memory. He said growth in the Town would help its tax base over time but that the near-term personnel needs are pressing.

Ms. Harrison noted that the Council had previously discussed the possibility of hiring a deputy town manager midway through the fiscal year so as to avoid incurring an entire year's expense at the outset, but said she disliked putting the matter off continually.

Ms. Rodriguez asked what the equalized tax rate would be in the coming fiscal year. Mr. Dalton said there had been no new assessment and that the proposed rate would constitute a tax increase.

Mr. Dalton said revenue from water/sewer availability fees goes into capital reserves and that new connections were occurring at a faster rate than the 25 per year that had been factored into the budget process.

Ms. Rodriguez asked whether the budget included funds given to the County for payment of the economic development director's salary. Mr. Dalton said it did. They discussed the possibility of using funds from the economic development reserve for wayfinding signs.

Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Dalton discussed whether to continue paying for social media archiving services. Mayor Arnold said such services would be necessary if the Police Department acquires its own Facebook page. He alluded to problems that had arisen in the past and had required the assistance of the archiving service. Mr. Dalton said the Town must be certain of its ability to fulfill requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act when social media accounts are involved. He asked the clerk for his opinion as FOIA officer, and Mr. Culp said he believed the Town would be regretful if it experienced a self-inflicted FOIA crisis in an effort to save \$2,400.

Mr. Dalton said he would prefer maximum cooperation with the County in social media matters. He and Ms. McDonald discussed the County's methods, and Mr. Dalton praised the County's professionalism in its communication with the public and said accuracy and appropriate control of the message are essential.

Mr. Dalton and Ms. Harrison briefly discussed the fire programs fund and also the increase in the budget for professional services. Mr. Dalton said he would like to issue a request for proposal for legal services because the Town attorney sometimes is unavailable or the Town has specialized needs outside the Town attorney's expertise.

Mr. Dalton and Ms. Harrison discussed annexation area professional services. Mr. Dalton said legal costs, survey costs, and engineering costs were possible. He said expansion of the business park is important for the future of the Town.

Ms. Harrison, Recorder Gibson, and Mr. Dalton discussed the timetable for police equipment replacement.

Ms. McDonald recommended not diverting stormwater to Walnut Street until more is known about where it might go from there. The other members briefly discussed the matter.

Mr. Dalton directed the Council's attention to a document on reserve fund specifics and asked them to consider adopting it. He said it would be valuable to the public as an aid to understanding the process of planning, saving, and allocating funds.

Mayor Arnold suggested hiring a new deputy town manager in January as discussed, and the possibility of adding another penny to the real estate tax, which would bring it to 21 cents per \$100

of assessed value instead of the proposed 20 cents. He said there is never a good time for an increase but the present time is somewhat convenient.

Ms. Harrison concurred on the importance of hiring a deputy town manager.

Recorder Gibson recommended addressing current short-staffing and normalizing operations before introducing complications that might ensue from the addition of a new position.

Ms. Rodriguez recommended funding the position for a January hire and using the interim period for thorough planning.

There was a discussion of how to distribute the new position across various funds instead of allowing taxpayers to bear the entire burden.

Mr. Dalton said the public hearing on the new tax rate must be set in the April 13 meeting of the Council. There was a discussion of whether the notice of public hearing should advertise a rate of 21 cents rather than 20 cents, with Council having the option of setting the rate at 20 cents if that seemed desirable.

Mr. Mazzarino said the advertisement of a 21-cent rate might tempt the Council to accept that rate and overcommit the Town to projects and expenditures. He recommended discussion of which matters the Town could defer until later and of where it could try to do less.

Ms. Rodriguez said headlines would plant the idea of a tax increase in the public mind regardless of which option the Council might choose.

Recorder Gibson noted that the Town will be entering year three of a five-year water/sewer rate increase.

Mayor Arnold asked for a poll of the members, which showed the Council to be evenly divided between those favoring the 20-cent rate and those favoring the 21-cent rate. His tiebreaker vote was for the 20-cent rate.

5. Other

No other business came before Council.

6. Closed Session

There was no closed session.

7. Adjourn

Mayor Arnold requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Rodriguez moved to adjourn. The motion passed by consensus at 5:16 p.m.

Erecka L. Gibson, Recorder

Paul Culp, Town Clerk

BERRYVILLE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
MINUTES
March 23, 2021

A meeting of the Berryville Town Council Public Safety Committee was held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. in the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, located at 101 Chalmers Court in Berryville, Virginia.

Attendance:

Members of the Committee: Chair Donna McDonald; Grant Mazzarino (participating via telephone)

Staff: Christy Dunkle, Community Development Director; Paul Culp, Town Clerk; Chief Neal White, Berryville Police Department

Media: none

1. Call to Order

Ms. McDonald called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. McDonald invited a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Mazzarino so moved, with the motion passing by consensus.

3. Unfinished Business

Refuse Update

Ms. Dunkle said most of the necessary stickers had now been affixed to the new refuse containers but that the recycling containers presented a more complicated task because of the large number of new containers ordered by residents.

Ms. McDonald said pickup times under the new contract were not as predictable as before, that they tended to occur very early or very late, but that this was not a major concern.

Mr. Mazzarino said he had received no comment from residents regarding refuse disposal.

4. New Business

Police Report

Chief White said the department was busy but not facing any pressing problems beyond the norm. He said that a comparison of year-to-date figures over the last two years showed that reportable incidents are down by 8 percent, noting that the pandemic might be a factor. He said assaults are down by 35 percent and that narcotics have also declined, while larceny, disorderly conduct, and destruction of property have increased.

Chief White explained the department's use of new insignia on cars and uniform patches in keeping with the Town's recently implemented branding and marketing effort. A discussion established that new vehicle insignia would be applied only in the case of new vehicles, as the cost of stripping the old insignia from current vehicles and applying the new would be prohibitive in terms of both money and time. The committee concurred with this reasoning.

Chief White said the department continued to hope for the hiring of an additional officer as provided by the draft FY2022 budget.

5. Other

No other business came before the committee.

6. Closed Session

None.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Mazzarino, which passed by consensus.