

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, from the April 25, 2006, regular meeting was held at the Bedford Welcome Center 8:30 a.m., May 5, 2006.

Members present: Mayor E. Thomas Messier; Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilman Jeffrey B. Hubbard; Councilman Thomas M. Padgett; Councilman C. G. Stanley, Jr.; Vice Mayor W. D. Tharp; and Councilman Robert T. Wandrei.

Members absent: None.

Staff present: City Manager Charles P. Kolakowski; City Attorney W. W. Berry, IV; and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher.

Mayor Messier opened the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was for discussion of the proposed FY 2006-07 City budget.

The following department heads reviewed various items in the budgets for each of their departments and spoke on the following topics:

Debbie Roberts, Treasurer, phase out of the Personal Property Tax Relief Act, increasing deposits for electric service, return check charges

Valerie Wilson, Commissioner of the Revenue, general reassessment of real estate (overall increase is projected at 20%)

Barbara Parker, Director of Human Resources, employee health insurance

James Ervin – Information Technology, wireless network

Randy Nixon, Director of Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries, Poplar Park tree maintenance, skate park, marketing, records privacy issue

Linda Exley, Main Street Director, activities of the Main Street organization

Todd Stone, Acting Fire Chief, ladder truck replacement – discussion ensued regarding the specifications of the truck.

Council took a break from 10:15 a.m. until 10:30 a.m.

The following departments heads spoke following the break:

Nanci Drake, Director of Tourism, reviewed upcoming events in the Bedford area and the fees general by rental of the conference room at the Welcome Center

Milton Graham, Chief of Police, area drug problem, gangs, weapons, reaccreditation, officer safety, recommendations for new Chief of Police as he will be retiring August 1, 2006

Bart Warner, Director of Planning & Community Development, completion of GIS project

Gene Ratzlaff, Electric Utility Director, 20% increase in electric rates, replacement of bucket truck – discussion of elimination of lights at the new electric building

Clarke W. Gibson, Director of Public Works, Stoney Creek spillway upgrade, recommended the City's participation in the Route 460 West Joint Economic Water & Sewer Project preliminary engineering report, Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, VDOT Revenue Sharing Project

The Mayor declared a recess for lunch at 12:00 noon.

The meeting was reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Rosie Jordan, Director of Finance, reviewed the following: budget requests received from the National D-Day Memorial, \$25,000; Wharton Gardens \$10,000; and the Roanoke River Basin Authority, \$1,000. Ms. Jordan stated the proposed budget includes the following: 2% cost of living increase, 2% merit increase, \$20 per month per employee increase in City's contribution to the employees' health care coverage cost

Members of Council discussed items in the proposed budget.

It was the consensus of Council to advertise the proposed real estate tax rate at \$.83.

Council discussed the possibility of the City and County sharing the cost of building a parking deck behind the Bedford County Court House. It was suggested that the City/County Relations Committee meet regarding this issue.

Councilman Wandrei suggested that the parking fine system be changed to include an increasing fine for habitual offenders.

It was the consensus of Council that the electric rates be increased by 20% across the board, effective July 1, 2006.

Discussion ensued regarding problems with the dumpsters behind the Municipal Building.

It was the consensus of Council to including funding in the proposed budget for a 100 ft. medium duty ladder truck for the Fire Department with the understanding that the Fire Department will make the first payment.

Ms. Jordan stated she would confer with Fire Chief Stone regarding the ladder truck during the break.

Council took a break from 2:45 p.m. until 2:55 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding a request by Longwood Industries for a two-year real estate tax (deferral) abatement due to financial difficulties. After two years Longwood Industries would set with a repayment schedule.

The City Attorney stated he was not aware of any authority the City has for tax deferral. Mr. Berry stated he will research the matter and report to Council.

It was the consensus of Council to include funding in the proposed budget for Outside Agencies as follows:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>proposed funding</u>	
• The ARC of Central Virginia	0	
• Bedford American Red Cross		\$
17,500		
• Bedford Area Family YMCA-Bldg	5,000	
• Bedford Chamber of Commerce	10,000	
• Bedford City/County Museum	*27,500	
*(contingent upon the lease being signed)		
• Bedford Ride Program	15,000	
• Bedford Habitat for Humanity	*3,000	
*(preference to be given to a City of Bedford resident)		
• Bedford Life Saving & First Aid Crew	22,000	
• Blue Ridge Legal Services, Inc.	0	
• CASA of Central Virginia	5,000	
• Central VA Agency on Aging	9,000	
• Central VA Community Services	10,000	
• D-Day Memorial Foundation	*20,000	
*(for debt reduction only)		
• Lynchburg Area Center For Independent Living	0	
• Wharton Gardens	*7,500	
*(for the Garden)		
• Roanoke River Basin	0	

Councilman Hubbard abstained from the consensus for funding of the Wharton Gardens.

Ms. Jordan reviewed the information she received from Fire Chief Stone regarding the differences in a heavy-duty ladder truck and a medium duty ladder truck. The cost of a medium duty 100 ft ladder truck would be \$620,000.

It was the consensus of Council to include in the proposed budget funds in the amount of \$620,000 for a medium duty 100 ft. ladder truck.

It was the consensus of Council to include in the proposed budget a \$20 per month per employee increase in the City's contribution to the employees' health care coverage cost.

Mayor Messier adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

