

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 7:30 p.m., August 22, 2006.

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

Members absent: Vice Mayor W. D. Tharp

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 and led all present in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Messier declared that the minutes of a regular Council meeting held on July 25, 2006, were approved as distributed.

City Manager Kolakowski reported that Labor Day, September 4, 2006, will be a City holiday.

Public Works Director Clarke Gibson stated that Gold Road has been closed due to the failure of an eighty-four inch diameter corrugated metal pipe that carries Johns Creek. The pipe has been inspected and found to have misaligned joints and is very corroded. On August 7 Mr. Gibson learned that water was backing up on the east side of Gold Road (eight or nine inches.) Upon inspection of the situation, it was found that the fill slopes had failed and the end of the pipe had collapsed and was obstructed by soil and trees. The Orange Street substation, the Public Works Shop, and several residences in the area were in danger of being flooded. Mr. Gibson stated he then called the City Manager and recommended that Gold Road be closed.

Mr. Gibson stated that cost estimates for road repair and culvert replacement will be presented at the next Council meeting.

Ms. Debbie A. Roberts, City Treasurer, presented the following report on uncollected taxes:

REAL ESTATE TAX STATUS AS OF AUGUST 14, 2006

TAX YEAR	ASSESSMENT	UNCOLLECTED	COLLECTED
2001-02	\$2,133,856.13	\$16,352.08	99.23%
2002-03	\$2,431,601.88	\$ 6,408.32	99.74%

REAL ESTATE TAX STATUS Continued

TAX YEAR	ASSESSMENT	UNCOLLECTED	COLLECTED
2003-04	\$2,472,345.48	\$ 2,071.64	99.92%
2004-05	\$2,570,143.53	\$14,382.64	99.44%
2005-06	\$2,637,443.45	\$20,655.30	99.22%

PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX STATUS AS OF AUGUST 14, 2006

2001	\$1,375,971.71	\$ 9,401.31	99.32%
2002	\$1,151,874.88	\$10,377.95	99.10%
2003	\$1,180,153.74	\$11,561.76	99.02%
2004	\$1,105,540.92	\$10,400.18	99.06%
2005	\$1,146,757.56	\$18,381.57	
Less Winn Dixie Bankruptcy		\$11,412.30	98.40%

Mayor Messier asked if there is any legal recourse for collecting back taxes.

The City Treasurer stated that sale of property is a method of collection of back taxes.

The City Manager stated that he has asked the City Attorney to look into processes for collecting back taxes.

The City Attorney and City Treasurer indicated that there are several properties to be sold.

Ms. Roberts reported that the City has an attorney in Norfolk handling the Winn-Dixie matter.

Mayor Messier stated that no one would disagree that the Bedford City/County Museum is a definite asset and excellent tourist attraction and this is attested to the fact of the annual donations that the City has made to the Museum and also the joint purchase with the County back in the '70's of the building for the Museum. The Mayor stated that he takes exception to some of the comments that have appeared in the new media that there is a secret agenda that the City has concerning the Museum lease and that the City has an axe to grind as far as the contract is concerned.

The Mayor continued by stating the following: that Council made it quite clear, when the original amended agreement came before Council asking for the City and the County to share in the renovation and the repairs, the City had no problem with it. That request did not come from the County or the City, it came from the Museum Board itself. Council did not object to doing that; however, because the City does not enjoy the rapid growth that the County enjoys, Council must be prudent stewards of the City funds, it was felt that the City should have a representation on the Board. It made sense at that time, not only to Council, but it made sense to the Board of Supervisors. However, that has changed as far as the Board of Supervisors is concerned at the present time. The City has enjoyed an excellent cooperative relationship with the Board of Supervisors for over twenty years, and the Mayor is concerned with some of the comments that have been made that that relationship is deteriorating.

The Mayor asked the City Manager to set up a meeting of the City/County Relations Committee as soon as possible to discuss this concern and any other matters that need immediate attention.

The Mayor stated he has heard that one of the concerns of putting representation on the Museum Board (to be a steward of City funds) has been that the City would probably appoint a Council member; however, it does not mean that Council would appoint anyone from Council to serve on that Board.

Mayor Messier offered two simple solutions to the problem: go back to the agreement that existed with the Museum Board from the '70's when the building was purchased or for the City to sell its share in the building to the Museum Board, which would remove any problems.

It was the consensus of Council for the City Manager to set up a meeting of the City/County Relations Committee as soon as possible to discuss this concern and any other matters that need immediate attention and to table agenda item "Approval of Lease Agreement with Bedford/City County Museum."

Mayor Messier adjourned the meeting at 7:43 p.m.