

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, from the February 26, 2008, regular Council meeting was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m., March 11, 2008.

Members present: Mayor W. D. Tharp; Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilman Jeffrey B. Hubbard; Councilman C. G. Stanley, Jr.; Councilman James A. Vest; and Vice Mayor Robert T. Wandrei.

Members absent: Councilman Thomas M. Padgett

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

Mayor Tharp opened the meeting.

Mr. Ted Cole, Davenport & Company, gave an overview of potential borrowing. Mr. Cole reviewed a list of capital improvement projects under consideration to be a part of the potential funding. Mr. Cole explained the Request for Proposal to obtain funding would be sent to 12 to 15 banking institutions. Mr. Cole also reviewed the loans that potentially may be eligible for refinancing, one related to the Water & Sewer Fund and one related to the Solid Waste Fund.

Rosie Jordan, Director of Finance, gave a presentation on the status of the revenue funds, which included: tax revenues, sales tax, investment interest, and revenue sharing payments from Bedford County.

Ms Jordan reported that only one revenue sharing payment has been received from Bedford County and stated the agreement stipulates that the County is to pay the City within thirty days from collection.

Discussion ensued regarding the payment schedule.

City Manager Kolakowski stated that one of the items he would like to include in the proposed budget is funding for an outside auditor to check the funds that the City is receiving from the County for revenue sharing. The City Manager recommended that the City/County Relations Committee discuss this item. Mr. Kolakowski stated it is not that the City suspects that it is not being paid the proper amount, it is just that the City does not know as no one has independently verified the amount.

The City Manager suggested that the issue with the payment schedule be handled at the staff level, by requesting that payments be made as per the agreement.

Ms. Jordan continued her presentation on the status of the revenue funds: sale of cemetery plots, education revenues, sales of assets on EBay, refuse disposal charges, water and sewer fund, electric fund, sales of excess power, collection of utility bills.

Discussion ensued regarding the problems customers are having paying utility bills and possible solutions.

Mayor Tharp asked about plans to deal with an approximate \$700,000 shortfall in the budget (not counting the schools).

The City Manager stated the electric surcharge situation will be brought up at the next Council meeting, which would generate funds in this year's budget to offset some of the shortfall. Some of the shortfall may or may not be resolved as budget preparation continues.

Councilman Vest stated that he met with Mr. Philip Garbarini, President/CEO of Bedford Weaving, Inc., regarding the cost of electricity purchased from the City, and that Mr. Garbarini is requesting that Bedford Weaving be allowed to purchase electricity directly from Appalachian Power Company.

City Manager Kolakowski stated there are several properties owned by the City that could be sold:

- a parcel behind a building on South Bridge Street that the owner of the adjacent property is requesting to buy to maintain it – the City Manager stated the staff will update a previous price for the parcel and present this at the next Council meeting.
- the property on the corner of Orange Street and Independence Boulevard that was purchased by the City several years ago as a potential site for a public safety facility. Mr. Kolakowski stated there are no plans to move forward with that facility. After a brief discussion, the City Manager stated that he and the City Attorney would present options for selling the property at the next Council meeting.
- a lot on the corner of Gold Road and East Main Street adjacent to the Armory
- old City shops at the end of Plunkett Street – the City Manager stated that any sale of the property would have to be conditioned upon the condition of the site

Vice Mayor Wandrei asked about the City property on the corner of Park Street and Monroe Street. The Vice Mayor suggested that the staff look at having the trees cut at the Independence Street property and the Park Street property.

The City Manager stated the City Registrar has requested that an ordinance be prepared to allow the relocation of the Central Absentee Precinct from the Bedford Area Welcome Center to the City Municipal Building. Mr. Kolakowski stated that an ordinance will be drafted and this item will be on the agenda of the next regular Council.

The City Manager reported there is a matching grant available for state arts funds to encourage the arts in communities. Mr. Kolakowski stated that this is up to a \$5,000 grant and the application is due by April 1.

It was the consensus of Council for the application to be submitted.

City Manager Kolakowski spoke to Council about utilizing funds from a 1982 Economic Development Grant for improvements, energy efficiencies, and structural integrities of homes along an entrance corridor to the City.

The City Manager reported that the staff is looking to develop a program possibly to target vacant buildings that are a blight on certain neighborhoods which could be funded with some economic redevelopment funds that have been accruing for a number of years.

The City Manager spoke regarding a “community branding process” that would identify the City as being a separate entity and a desirable place to go but not in competition with Bedford County.

Mayor Tharp adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.