

An adjourned meeting from the April 22, 2008, regular meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m., May 13, 2008.

Members present: Mayor W. D. Tharp; Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilman Jeffrey B. Hubbard; Councilman C. G. Stanley, Jr.; Councilman Thomas M. Padgett; Councilman James A. Vest.

Members absent: Vice Mayor Robert T. Wandrei

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

Mayor Tharp reconvened the meeting and led all present in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The purpose of the meeting was for a work session on the proposed FY 2008-09 budget.

City Manager Kolakowski stated that what Council will see in the proposed budget is a budget that is trying to do minimal levels of improvement on the capital level, maintain the systems, and maintain the level of service provided now. The City Manager stated that it is becoming increasingly difficult because of continuing sharp increases in costs beyond the City's control, either contractual or in the area of energy, electric, gas, diesel. Those increases have sharply impacted the budget and the ability to have any flexibility in the budget.

The City Manager stated that most of the budgets within the City's control are remaining stable, level, even being reduced. It is proposed to reduce five more positions from the previous year. Mr. Kolakowski stated the City remains fairly strong with the revenue side and have actually had fairly steady growth - property taxes, sales tax, meals tax all remain on a slow growth, but are not keeping up pace with the expenditures, with a lot of the expenditures being outside of the City's direct control.

City Manager Kolakowski stated that the Governor is calling the legislature back into session on June 23 to try to address the transportation situation.

The City Manager stated the goal for the City must be to bring the expenditures outside of its control (the contractual expenditures) under control in some fashion either by transition to town status or by doing something with the contracts and the agreements as they are or changing the way the City operates in a fairly radical fashion. The City Manager stated those expenditures are really hurting the City and are starting to impact the operations of all the other departments.

The Mayor stated he received a letter from VDOT that said there will be a 44% reduction in the lane miles reimbursement.

The following department heads reviewed items in each of their budgets:

- Brad Creasy, Fire Chief, stated the department answered 915 calls last year (325 in the City), reaction time three minutes – average response time 7 minutes. The Chief reported that on February 20, 2008, there were severe wild land fires throughout the County (9 of the 21 fires reported that day were in the Bedford Fire Department's response area – 34 fire department members responded). The fires were contained with a limited amount of property loss. Chief Creasy stated the department purchased the much needed aerial device. The Chief reported that a Department of Fire Programs grant in the amount of \$435,000 allowed for a building at the training site on Orange Street.
- Valerie Wilson, Commissioner of the Revenue, asked that Council grant an increase in salaries in the Commissioner's office on July 1, 2008, as other City employees instead of December 1, which is the date that the State's salary increases go into effect -also asked Council to change the policy permanently.
- Debbie Roberts, City Treasurer, asked for the same consideration regarding salaries in the Treasurer's office and spoke regarding eliminating decals.
- Randi Herrick, City Registrar, requested that the following be included in her budget for training: Electoral Board - \$400 and Registrar - \$1000.
- Rosie Jordan, Finance Director, spoke regarding the increase in health insurance costs to the employees and the decrease in insurance benefits – some employees will see a decrease in take-home pay.
- Bart Warner, Planning & Community Development Director, spoke regarding funds in the budget for making the Municipal Building more secure for the Police Department and improving the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The staff is proposing an improvement to the front entrance of the building, namely the construction of an accessible access point. This is planned to be accomplished in conjunction with some grant funding opportunities with the Police Department.
- Jeff Weddle, Public Services Director, spoke regarding certain budget items in the Electric Department, Public Works, and the Water & Sewer Department. Mr. Weddle also spoke regarding the buildings and grounds budget, the highways, streets and bridges budget, reducing the number of employees, and requiring some employees to obtain CDL licenses.
- Linda Exley, Executive Director of Bedford Main Street, Inc., reported during the accreditation year just finished, there were sixteen new businesses and six businesses that went out. Ms. Exley stated that the biggest problem downtown is building owners that do not want to reduce the rent at all for new businesses. Ms. Exley reported that "Libertyfest" and "Blues and Barbeque" will not be held to relieve some of the City staff and that those events are not money makers. Ms. Exley stated that "Centerfest" will be held as planned as it raises approximately \$53,000. Ms. Exley stated that she appreciates her job but she uses her car, her gas, and her cell phone and probably ten extra hours per week to commit to her position.
- Randy Nixon, Recreation Department Director, stated he has applied for a Virginia Recreation Trails Program grant through the Department of Conservation

and Recreation (80% - 20% matching grant). The trail funds would help improve the Pioneer Trail. Mr. Nixon stated that the Bedford Rotary Club is doing work at Edmund Street Park: installed new roof on the restroom facilities, painted the basketball goals, planted shrubs around the sign, mulched the playground area, will put in a water fountain that was broken, and painting the building.

- Corey Crompton, Information Technology, stated the IT Department has had a busy year - projects completed: connection to the schools in the Liberty District to the City's fiber, enabling those schools to hook up to a much faster Internet; nearing completion of setting up a wireless hotspot in Centertown Park; have extended the City fiber along to a couple of different locations; and have increased and repaired the City's infrastructure.
- James Day, Chief of Police, spoke regarding the success of the bike patrol – nine of thirteen patrol officers are trained on bikes; last year group A crimes (those reportable to the FBI) decreased 17.6%. Chief Day reported on the following: removed 240 inoperable vehicles from the streets (most removed by the citizens); received recognition for traffic safety (have recently been notified that the City will receive a Governor's Award for traffic safety for the past year's program); the City was reaccredited this year, which was a major accomplishment. The Chief stated the Police Department plans to continue the Deer Management Program (11 accidents this year with deer). Chief Day stated that the City received a grant for the continuation of the bike patrol – the bike patrol helped with the Police Department's fuel consumption reducing consumption approximately 400 gallons per month. The Chief stated that three new police vehicles are included in the proposed budget. Chief Day reported that there is a fairly significant decrease in Blue Ridge Regional Jail costs – arrest figures are down slightly – and the City had a credit.

Mayor Tharp adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.