

May 16, 2012

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, from the May 8, 2012, meeting was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m., May 16, 2012.

Members present: Mayor W. D. Tharp; Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilman Guy E. Murray, Jr.; Councilman Steve C. Rush; Councilman C. G. Stanley, Jr.; Councilman James A. Vest; and Vice Mayor 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 Tharp opened the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was for a work session on the budget for FY 2012-13.

City Manager Kolakowski said there is an issue with the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) passed on from the State that needs to be addressed. Mr. Kolakowski gave members of Council two different options for employee's pensions. He reviewed the two options. Discussion ensued

Council concurred with the increase of 1.4% for VRS, which is included in the proposed budget.

Jeff Weddle, Director of Public Services, reviewed the Electric Department budget. He gave members of Council a list of rate comparisons of the City's existing and proposed rates to APCO's current rates. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Weddle answered questions regarding items in the Electric Department budget, which included: traffic flaggers, meter reader, CIP budget.

Councilman Vest asked about this year's 4th of July fireworks.

Mr. Warner said the cost is \$14,000, Bedford County will not help pay for the fireworks, and there is a pledge of \$3,000 from someone to help defray that cost.

Councilman Stanley said he would like for the fireworks to continue as long as possible as it is a celebration of our country's freedom, and it brings the people in the community together.

Councilman Murray said he would encourage getting a sponsor for the fireworks.

The City Manager stated that the Wharton Garden's request is actually \$5,000, not \$12,000.

Councilman Vest said he had no problem with the funding for Outside Agencies.

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Councilman Rush said he would like to keep level funding for the Outside Agencies, the same as last year.

Councilman Rush asked about the funding in the budget for Amtrak. The City Manager said that the bus service has been self-sufficient this year.

Councilman Vest asked if there has been any interest in starting a taxi service in Bedford.

Mr. Warner said a couple of taxi licenses have been issued in the last two years.

City Manager Kolakowski said it is proposed to use a good level of prior year reserves in this year's budget. He said there were two reasons: 1) it is a responsible thing to do given that the City has some one-time capital projects this year; 2) looking to reversion next year, there will be a significantly reduced overall budget and the need for that higher level of reserves may not be there as it is now. Mr. Kolakowski said that hopefully next year's budget as a town will allow a little more leeway, a little more revenue, and a few less expenses than the City is facing this year.

The Mayor said he needed more information regarding using the reserve fund or a tax increase.

The City Manager said the Registrar's Department budget will need to be adjusted.

City Attorney Berry stated it has not been determined if extra elections will need to be held. Mr. Berry said the City may need to have special legislation to take care of that. He said a census of the area will be necessary.

The City Manager, upon a question by Councilman Rush, stated that a vehicle use policy will be presented at the next meeting.

Councilman Vest thanked the staff for a great job in putting the budget together.

Mr. Kolakowski said that a lot of CIP's have been deferred and at some point these projects will have to be done in the various departments and for the various facilities.

Director of Finance Jordan said Council will be provided with a list of budget adjustments.

The City Manager stated another area of concern is in the salary area, particularly with the people who were hired within the last three or four years during which time minimal or no increases in salary have been given. He said those employees came in at the lowest scale and have stayed there. Mr. Kolakowski said this affects all departments.

Mr. Kolakowski reported that the Commission on Local Government was in Bedford this week regarding the City's reversion to town status, and was very impressed with the area. He said the Commissioners were also very impressed with the National D-Day Memorial.

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The City Manager said the Commission's report is tentatively scheduled to be released on July 17 or soon thereafter.

Mayor Tharp commended the City Manager on his presentation to the Commission on Local Government. Mr. Kolakowski said it had truly been a team effort and the staff has been working on this project for a long time, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Warner, and Mr. Berry in particular, and also all of the department heads.

Mayor Tharp adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m. until May 22, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. for a budget work session.