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A work session of the Council of the Town of Bedford, Virginia, was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m., August 25, 2015.

Members present: Mayor Robert T Wandrei; Councilman Tim Black; Councilman Robert D. Carson; Councilman Stacey L. Hailey; Vice Mayor Steve C. Rush; Councilman Beckham A. Stanley; and Councilman James A. Vest

Members absent: None

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

Mayor Wandrei opened the meeting.

Town Manager Kolakowski presented a proposed resolution for Council to consider regarding the project being done by the Bedford Regional Water Authority (BRWA) to provide alternative water supplies for the Town as was called for in the agreement creating the Authority. The BRWA has requested that the resolution be adopted in order to expedite their financing of the treatment plant and other improvements.

Mr. Brian Key, Executive Director of the Authority, gave a status update of the project: the Authority is in the process of finalizing the financing plan; the construction is going through the design/build process; the design is nearly finished; the permits are almost all in place; and the last step is to get the financing in place. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held the Tuesday after Labor Day. The construction is beginning a week or two after the groundbreaking. Mr. Key said the time frame is on price and on schedule: water lines being complete by December 2016 and the treatment plant will be a few months behind that.

Discussion ensued regarding technical issues and the industries.

The Town Manager reported that at the previous meeting the idea of constructing a dog park within the Town was brought up. At that point, Council requested that staff look into it a little bit further. Mr. Warner, Assistant Town Manager, contacted neighbors in the area.

Mr. Warner stated he focused his efforts on the adjacent properties next to Greenwood Park and identified thirty-one potential respondents there. Mr. Warner explained that on three separate occasions since the last meeting he tried to obtain feedback: knocked on each door and spoke to five residents, none of which expressed an opinion about a dog park, but all five said that the Town has responsibilities to the existing recreational facilities that need attention; followed that up where he left letters on doors asking people to call him back and received no response to that; and last week repeated that effort of leaving letters on doors and did hear from one resident who said they were in favor of a dog park and a phone message from an anonymous resident who said they were opposed.

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Town Manager Kolakowski stated this has gone far beyond just what staff is doing. He said there have been a lot of discussions by Council people on this particular issue and this should be handled in a more orderly fashion where we look at the issue, look at what is being proposed and where it is being proposed. Mr. Kolakowski suggested that Council adopt a schedule, a program, a manner of addressing this that will resolve it in a manner that is not going to create a bitter situation.

The Mayor asked what the Town Manager is proposing.

The Town Manager said he is proposing that we sit down as a committee or as a group, and discuss the issue and look at exactly what is being proposed and the best way to approach it – look at it on the merits and the different issues involved with it and then make a decision.

Councilman Stanley gave a brief overview of the project. Mr. Stanley said there was a survey done of Town residents in which seventy-five percent of Town residents indicated they support this project and in that survey Greenwood was listed as the location. Mr. Stanley said that while there may be other sites that fit this, the Town has the opportunity with this park to utilize private dollars, at no expense to the taxpayer, to enhance the lives of Bedford citizens, particularly dog owners. He suggested that at the next Council meeting, the veterinarians should speak, and after Council has all the facts this should be adopted.

Vice Mayor Rush suggested that the issue about Greenwood Park be put on the regular meeting's agenda; have a discussion about where the dog park should be, and then turn it over to the staff.

Councilman Carson stated he had been to Greenwood Park since this started, and saw that the playground equipment is unsafe. Mr. Carson said that as long as the playground is unsafe he would not vote for a dog park at Greenwood. Councilman Carson said he did not have anything against the dog park, but the playground is dangerous and needs to be focused on first.

Councilman Stanley began to speak to Councilman Carson's comments. Mayor Wandrei asked him to speak after the rest of Council had spoken.

Councilman Black said he agrees with Councilman Carson. He went by Greenwood Park and was shocked at the condition of the playground. Mr. Black said he thinks the playground and the dog park are two different issues. Councilman Black said he would like to see the staff prepare a response with different options. He stated that if the Town is going to do a dog park it should be planned for and Council should understand all of the issues, such as liability, future maintenance, and how Council can take this idea and turn it into an economic development tool. Councilman Black said is in favor pursuing the idea of a dog park.

Councilman Hailey stated he agreed with Councilman Black. Mr. Hailey said mowing, electricity, and water would cost taxpayers.

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Councilman Vest said he is in favor of a dog park and the concept of looking at Liberty Lake Park is a good one. Mr. Vest said he would prefer that staff give a couple of renditions of both places so that Council could make a decision.

Councilman Stanley said he agreed with all of the Council members. He said that the Rotary Club is doing a cleanup of Greenwood Park with twenty-two volunteers on September 19 - painting over the graffiti on the jungle gym – the chains on the swing set are being replaced – moving old fence posts – and encouraged Council to come and help. He spoke about the private donors helping to fund the project.

Mayor Wandrei, speaking to Councilman Stanley, said he thought people would be more receptive if he presented a proposal and not go ahead and start soliciting funds or if he did not start web pages and lobbying Council members. The Mayor said he thought Council members should receive the courtesy of knowing what the proposed plan is that Mr. Stanley's group is looking forward to bring in. The Mayor said he has no problem with a dog park per se, but among other things, Council should look at other alternatives and also consider putting it out in the County, as there is more land in the County such as Falling Creek Park.

Councilman Carson said it is wonderful that these people are so generous with what they are trying to do, but they need to be flexible.

Councilman Vest said an email was received suggested that Bedford's parks be made handicap accessible for the children.

Town Manager Kolakowski said that could be part of the process when Council talks about the visioning process.

The Town Manager said that selling "naming rights" for the Farmer's Market to a company or individual is a way to raise some funds for the operation of the market and to encourage business involvement in the community. Mr. Kolakowski said there have been some informal proposals discussed and a more formal proposal could be prepared for consideration by Council.

Mayor Wandrei instructed the Town Manager to come forward with a proposal.

Town Manager Kolakowski stated that Council had previously discussed the ideas and the process for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. He said that part of that process is seeking out public input as to priorities for the community and in particular for the use of any funds which are gained by a grant application. He said that Councilman Vest has suggested that Council start discussing a visioning process for the Town. The Town Manager stated that developing priorities for the Town in conjunction with public input would help in the development of a good grant application, developing policies, and budgeting priorities. Mr. Kolakowski asked Council to start thinking about what type of retreat they would like to have.

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Discussion ensued regarding topics for a retreat: getting information from business owners and talking about the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Wandrei said it would be a benefit to meet with the committee that was formed to look into alternative uses for the “Old Yellow” building at Bedford Middle School. The Town Manager said it may be possible to have the committee at the next work session.

Town Manager Kolakowski explained how the “Adopt a Spot” program works: groups, individuals, and companies adopt a spot in exchange for being able to post a sign that says “Adopt a Spot” by the name of the group, individual, or company; they agree to pick up litter or maintain certain areas, certain streets, several times a year. There is one sign in Town. Mr. Kolakowski said at different times requests have been received for people to do things in parks. He said this is a way to encourage involvement in the community. The Town Manager said there should be regulations for this program and indicated Council had been given copies of an example of regulations. He suggested that Council consider adopting similar regulations for this and a proposal will be presented at the next meeting.

The Town Manager said he was approached by a person employed by the National Forest encouraging the Town to become a Tree City. He said there are certain regulations and the only thing Council would need to do is adopt an ordinance and designate a group to oversee and to encourage the proper care, planting and maintaining trees throughout the community. Mr. Kolakowski said the Town already spends far more than the required amount on tree maintenance because the Town has a tree trimming crew, does replacement of trees, and maintains trees on public property. He said there is no financial commitment for the Town.

The Mayor said it would be advisable to discuss this matter with the Master Gardeners as he thought they did a survey of the trees in Town several years ago. Councilman Vest said that the Keep Bedford Beautiful Commission should be included in this too.

Bart Warner, Assistant Town Manager, said that Director of Finance Jammes was on vacation.

Mr. Warner brought to Council’s attention the following: the auditors were onsite August 10th through August 18th and they will continue their analysis with a report of their findings in October; all rollovers and re-appropriations have been entered into the Financial Management System – the budget amendments are reported in the July 2015 financial report; finance is currently in discussions about re-bidding the Merchants Services contract – the winner of the previous bid is offering a fixed rate for over the counter credit card services at \$4.95 for a \$300 cap charge and staff is working to determine the fairest course of action for the Town’s customers at this point, which may potentially involve a re-bid of that program.

Mr. Warner reported that AMP Ohio has reviewed all of the Town’s outstanding Electric Debt Service and has submitted the bonds that have been identified for possible refunding to their Financial Advisor. AMP Ohio has requested them to complete a number run that

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would show the results. Once AMP Ohio gets that analysis back they will meet with the Town to talk about the best options for that debt financing.

Members of Council asked various questions regarding the financial reports and discussion ensued.

Mayor Wandrei suggested that the Finance Committee have a meeting preceding the next Council meeting. Councilman Vest said he would not be in attendance at the next meeting. Councilman Vest said he could meet next week on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday.

Councilman Vest said he would like to know the amount of money that Council has to operate the Town and in other words what is the amount in the checkbook. Mr. Vest said he would like to see that figure each month. The Town Manager said that the amount in the checkbook is \$2,605,000 in the Carter Bank general checking. Mr. Kolakowski said that operating money is different than unrestricted reserve.

Councilman Stanley thanked Council for coming to a consensus that it does want a dog park in this Town.

Mayor Wandrei said he did not think that a consensus was reached. The Mayor said Council asked for more information and will pick it up at the next session.

Mayor Wandrei adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.