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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., November 24, 2015.

Members present: Mayor Robert T. Wandrei; Councilman Tim Black; Councilman Robert D. Carson; Councilman Stacey L. Hailey (arrived at 6:04 p.m.); 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 said that approximately a year ago a group of interested and very dedicated people from across the region got together in response to a letter from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) denying a train stop in the Town of Bedford. The people were bothered by the fact that DRPT indicated there was no need for a stop because there were only 6,000 people here. He said the group put together a set of facts that indicated there are more than 6,000 people impacted by this and that this would have a regional impact for businesses, for the communities, not just within the 9 square miles of the Town of Bedford or Bedford County, but even reaching out into Franklin County and the surrounding areas. Mr. Kolakowski explained how a follow up meeting with the DRPT came about and said the information the committee put together was presented at that meeting. The Town Manager said at that meeting the DRPT did not say yes or no to having a train stop in Bedford.

Town Manager Kolakowski explained that at this point the Town still has an opportunity to have a rail stop designated for the Town of Bedford. He said at this point in the process, the next step is beyond the Committee's expertise and ability to put together what is required such as: significant studies on economic impact, on ridership levels, on cost benefit analysis, and on engineering studies. This will be brought up to the elected officials and the governing bodies of Bedford County and Franklin County. He said they are looking to have Chambers of Commerce and potentially Region 2000 involved.

Mr. Ron Reeks, Wendel Company, Architects and Engineers, said that one of the specialties Wendel Company does is public transportation, including rail projects. Mr. Reeks introduce Mr. Chip Badger who works with Mr. Reeks out of the Richmond office. He said Mr. Badger is a former director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Mr. Reeks said that he and Mr. Badger met with the Bedford/Franklin Regional Rail Initiative group. Mr. Reeks said his company has just completed the Feasibility Study for Roanoke's platform/train station combination. He explained that Roanoke's station will most likely be delayed because of the platform issue. Mr. Reeks gave a power point presentation regarding Roanoke's Feasibility Study and said this is essentially what needs to happen in Bedford. He explained the application procedure to

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apply for IPROC funds and said the deadline is January 31, 2016. Mr. Reeks said the grant could be applied for and would be on hold while the study is ongoing, provided the results are completed by March 2016. Mr. Reeks stated a NEPA study is estimated to cost \$75,000.

Members of Council asked questions of Mr. Reeks during his presentation.

The Mayor asked Mr. Reeks if he was going to make a presentation to the Bedford County Board of Supervisors and the Franklin County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Reeks stated that he has not been asked to speak to either Board.

Mayor Wandrei said after presentations are made to the Franklin County and Bedford County Boards and the Boards decide if they are interested in the project, then the three governing bodies could get together and coordinate the application process.

Mr. Bob Camicia, Franklin County Supervisor, said he has been participating in the process and has updated the Board throughout the year. Mr. Camicia stated he felt each of the governing bodies should discuss how much money each body will provide.

The Mayor said he thought it would be a joint application with the three jurisdictions.

Mr. Camicia stated he thought the jurisdictions all support the project and finance it, but that the Town of Bedford should submit the application.

Mayor Wandrei said Bedford would be the lead in making the application and the Town needs to find out if the other two Boards are on board with this project, particularly coming up with the funds for it.

Mr. Camicia stated he thought the Franklin County Board could consider this on December 15. He said the Board needs to know that the Town of Bedford is behind this project and willing to do a substantial amount of the funding.

Mayor Wandrei said Town Council passed a resolution saying that it is in favor of the project and Council went forward and set aside land based upon the recommended location. The Mayor stated that fairly indicates how the Town of Bedford feels about the project. He said a decision to be made is where the funding is coming from. Mayor Wandrei directed the Town Manager to coordinate that with the County Administrators of both Franklin and Bedford and have Town Council take action on it at the first meeting in December.

Town Manager Kolakowski said the proposed budget schedule has been distributed to Council.

Councilman Vest said there is a budget packet that goes out that has a lot of information on the capital needs along with explanations of the needs.

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Sonia Jammes, Finance Director, said the Finance Committee has been given copies of the FY 2017 Operating Budget Manual that she put together for department heads. Ms. Jammes reviewed what is included in the manual. Ms. Jammes says her intent is to create a Capital Improvement Project Notebook five years out. She said the CIP Notebook will provide more reference material.

The Town Manager spoke about a change to the ordinance regarding exemption for certain rehabilitated or renovated real estate in the Town of Bedford. He said this would affect properties within the Enterprise Zone. Mr. Kolakowski noted the general current boundaries and proposed expansion of the Enterprise Zone.

The Mayor said that a map will be prepared of the Enterprise Zone as well as identifying individual parcels by tax number.

Councilman Rush explained how the process started.

Councilman Stanley expressed his concern that if Council passes the ordinance and has a revenue shortfall, Council would have to offset the shortfall with higher taxes on individuals and families.

Councilman Rush explained that the Town would not lose any money based on this as the tax would stay the same. He said any improvements would not be taxed for five years.

Councilman Black explained how the tax abatement would work.

The Town Manager and Mayor explained the purpose of having incentives for the Enterprise Zone.

Discussion ensued.

Town Manager Kolakowski reviewed updates made to the draft ordinance since it was distributed to Council initially.

The Mayor said the proposed ordinance must be posted to be considered at the December 15 meeting.

Further discussion ensued.

The Town Manager stated that this could be brought over to the Bedford County Board of Supervisors. He said the Town Attorney worked with the Bedford County Commissioner of the Revenue regarding this matter.

Mayor Wandrei explained that what Council is trying to accomplish is to increase property values at no expense to either the County or the Town.

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Councilman Vest spoke about the need for Council to discuss the visioning process at upcoming work sessions.

A brief discussion ensued regarding Planning Commission meetings and the Comprehensive Plan.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.