



**Town Council  
Regular Council Meeting Minutes  
June 8, 2021**

The Town Council of Bedford, Virginia, held a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Municipal Building at 215 East Main Street, Bedford, Virginia.

**Town Council members present:**

Mayor Tim Black, Councilman Stacey Hailey, Councilman Bruce Hartwick, Councilman Bruce Johannessen, Councilman Darren Shoen, and Councilman C. G. Stanley

**Town Council members absent:** Vice Mayor Steve Rush

**Town Staff present:**

Town Manager Bart Warner; Assistant Town Manager Sonia Jammes; Town Attorney William W. Berry, IV; Chief of Police Todd Foreman; Electric Department Director John Wagner; Clerk of Council Debra B. Anderson; and Recording Secretary Julia Peters

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Mayor Black opened the meeting and led all present in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Black declared that the minutes of the Town's regularly scheduled meeting of May 25, 2021 were approved as presented.

## **REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER**

Town Manager Bart Warner reported:

- He thanked the community for turning out for the parade event celebrating the graduates from all three high schools. Staff learned quite a bit about the parade and they will be

getting together to publish some guidance to the schools and parents so the event will run much smoother next time.

- Next Friday, June 18, is a state holiday for Juneteenth and Town offices will be closed.

#### **APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL**

None.

#### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Shoen asked that the tweaks made to the procurement procedure discussed at previous meetings be made available to Council at the next Town Council meeting.

Councilman Stacey wished Vice Mayor Rush a speedy recovery.

Councilman Hartwick wished Vice Mayor Rush a speedy recovery, thanked all the police officers and firefighters for what they do, thanked those serving in the military, and the Bedford Boys that fought on D-Day and those that made it back home for what they have done for the community and preserving our freedom.

#### **REPORT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

Councilman Hartwick said there was a property committee meeting earlier that day and they went over ideas for Liberty Lake Park. They are just bouncing ideas around at this point. They will be getting input from the community before moving forward with any plans.

#### **REVISIONS TO AGENDA**

None.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Appointment of Member – Planning Commission**

There is a vacancy currently on the Planning Commission with an unexpired term of March 31, 2025. Mr. Brock Malcolm expressed an interest in an appointment to fill the vacant seat on the Planning Commission. His “Application to Serve on Appointed Boards, Committees or Commissions” is included in Council members’ agenda packets.

### **ACTION REQUESTED:**

Town Council is requested to appoint Mr. Brock Malcolm to serve on the Planning Commission with said term to expire March 31, 2025.

Mr. Hartwick moved, seconded by Mr. Stanley, to appoint Mr. Brock Malcolm to serve on the Planning Commission with said term to expire March 31, 2025.

Voted upon and carried by a roll call vote. Roll call as follows:

Councilman Hailey	aye
Councilman Hartwick	aye
Councilman Johannessen	aye
Councilman Shoen	aye
Councilman Stanley	aye
Mayor Black	aye

The motion carried with six members voting aye.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Discussion – Forks Intersection Improvements**

Mr. Warner said that about a year ago, an in-depth study was done in corporation with VDOT and the Central Virginia Planning Commission. The study generated a variety of recommendations related to improving the flow of traffic in the intersection of the Forks, which is Longwood Avenue Extension, Forest Road, Independence, and Route 122 North. One of the options was the construction of a roundabout. There were several other items, including the construction of a turn lane in the existing geometry. If the Town has an interest in pursuing the roundabout as a major project, it would be possible to transmit that desire to VDOT and they may be able to get it into their long-term six year plan. The discussion is a very preliminary step in determining whether Council is interested in pursuing this option.

## **Todd Daniels – VDOT Administrator, Salem District, Bedford Residency**

Mr. Daniel said there are several ways to get projects into VDOT's six-year plan. One avenue is with SMARTSCALE. Back in 2013, the General Assembly tried to find ways to get away from the long-term six-year plan. The problem was that projects would sit for years without any action. The funding priority was not there, not enough money was available to get down to all the particular projects. Over the years since 2013, bills have been enacted and they got to what today is called SMARTSCALE: the System Management and Allocation of Resources for Transportation, Safety, Congestion, Accessibility, Land Use, Economic Development, and Environment. It began as an annual process but now it is a biannual process. In the even years, an entity can make an application. If Council chooses to do so, they must pass a Resolution supporting the project. Town staff will work with VDOT and the district planning staff to make sure the project meets all the criteria needed and the application is as strong as possible. Outside of SMARTSCALE, there are other ways to get projects funded such as revenue sharing but for the Forks intersection, probably the best avenue is SMARTSCALE. There are two funding streams within SMARTSCALE; district grant funds that must remain within the district and high-priority or statewide funds. The statewide funds can go to any worthy projects within the whole state. The Town cannot apply for the statewide funds but the Central Virginia Planning Commission can apply. Applications are taken in even years and in odd years, the six-year plan is adopted and includes the most recent draft of SMARTSCALE projects. Then the process starts all over again. The next round begins August 1, 2022, and the Town Council would need to be ready to pass a resolution supporting the project, giving enough time for the application to be submitted in August 2022. There is a scoring process to make the application procedure more transparent and fair. Each project is scored relative to the competition, so what scores high in one round could become less of a competitor in a future round. It depends on how many applications are submitted and what those projects scope of work are. The cost benefit ratio is what ultimately matters and the projects are ranked with funds granted from the top down until the money runs out.

Councilman Shoen asked how the roundabout was chosen as a good fit for the intersection. Mr. Daniel said VDOT promotes innovative intersections and he used the Lowes construction in Bedford on Route 460 as an example. Signal lights are not always the best answer. To reduce congestion and improve efficiency and safety, roundabouts are used.

Councilman Stanley noted this intersection was probably the biggest in Town and wanted to know how a right turn lane would come into play. Mr. Daniel responded by saying VDOT was not promoting one solution for all intersections and a right turn lane is an alternative. Mr. Stanley said roundabouts are confusing and people do not know when to stop or go and with early morning bus traffic through the area he is not sure from his perspective if that is the right place for a roundabout. Mr. Daniel said VDOT does look at safety and looks at the benefits of all the options, including turn lanes and signals.

Councilman Hailey wanted verification that if the project was approved by the Town Council, the funding would be completely through VDOT. Mr. Daniel said that if the Town applied through the SMARTSCALE, it would be 100% funded by the state and not require Town funds.

The Town's costs would be involved in the staff time to develop the application and maybe some potential consultant or development fees; but the construction costs, right-of-way costs, and preliminary engineering costs, once the project is approved, would be funded through the SMARTSCALE program. Mr. Hailey asked how the businesses around the intersection would be affected by this roundabout. Mr. Daniel could not address how their entrances would tie-in because it would depend on how far away they are from the final location of the roundabout.

Councilman Hartwick said many citizens find roundabouts expensive and inconvenient. He asked if an accident occurred in the roundabout, would there be a way for traffic to move around the accident. He also asked if a right turn lane could be constructed instead. Mr. Daniel said it would depend on the Town's decision as far as the right turn lane and as far as traffic moving through an accident, it would depend on several factors. Roundabouts of this size would have a travel area and a truck apron giving potential room for vehicles to get through.

Councilman Johannessen noted roundabouts slow traffic down naturally and the crashes are usually less severe. Mr. Daniel affirmed roundabouts have many safety features and statistics show they reduce crash severity. In a 2013 document produced by a consultant engineer, studies identified as much as a 65% reduction in injury crashes compared to a traffic signal and up to an 80% reduction in injury crashes compared to a two-way stop.

Mayor Black clarified with Mr. Daniel that the August 1, 2022 application timeframe was to meet the 2022 deadline so applications could be scored through the winter, a draft plan produced, have a comment period and public hearing. Mayor Black asked if the Town would then be committed to the project once they passed a resolution. Mr. Daniel said the project would need to be passed and adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) as part of the six-year plan, then the project cannot be cancelled. The CTB is the only body that has the authority to change the plan once they have adopted it in the given year. Mr. Daniel said there is a lot of work that needs to be done before the application submission on August 1, 2022.

Mr. Warner said that one year is not a lot of time for staff so if Council is interested, he would like to know by this upcoming August so the process can begin and an application prepared for August of 2022. He also said he would email Council members the traffic study previously completed so they could review it.

Mayor Black asked about the timeline for the McGhee Street project. Mr. Warner responded that the project is planned to begin in September 2023. Mr. Daniel answered clarifying questions regarding the additional areas in Town once reversion is completed and the annual payments for streets.

Mayor Black read Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(a) (1) of the Code of Virginia 1950, as amended, to discuss personnel matters.

Councilman Hailey moved, seconded by Councilman Hartwick to enter into Closed Session.

Voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote:

Councilman Hartwick	aye
Councilman Johannessen	aye
Councilman Shoen	aye
Councilman Stanley	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Mayor Black	aye

The motion carried with six members voting aye.

Council adjourned into Closed Session at 7:52 p.m.

Non-Council members present: none.

Council reconvened into Open Session at 8:10 p.m.

The Recording Secretary read aloud the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the Town of Bedford hereby certifies that (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Council.

On a motion by Councilman Hailey, seconded by Councilman Hartwick, voted upon and carried by a roll call vote, Council adopted the resolution. Roll call vote follows:

Councilman Johannessen	aye
Councilman Shoen	aye
Councilman Stanley	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Councilman Hartwick	aye
Mayor Black	aye

The motion carried with six members voting aye.

Mr. Warner said that in the adopted budget there is a fund established for things that need to be done. One project is the roof at the hydro plant which is specifically mentioned. The other project identified is the need to construct a pole barn to store raw materials. There are two bids out related to the roof and the pole barn. He is not sure the projects would be appropriated because of costs and what can be done under the current level of funding which is \$40,000. They hope to put in \$40,000 each year for the next five years to address several issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

8:12 p.m.

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Tim Black, Mayor

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Debra Anderson, Clerk of the Council