



**Town Council
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2021**

The Town Council of Bedford, Virginia, held a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, October 12, 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 Michael Lockaby, Electric Department Director John Wagner, Director of Public Works D. W. Lawhorne, Clerk of Council Debra B. Anderson, and Recording Secretary Julia Peters

Mayor Black called the meeting to order and led all those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Black declared that the minutes of the Town's adjourned meeting of September 21, 2021; the called meeting of September 28, 2021; and the regularly scheduled meeting of September 28, 2021 were approved as presented.

REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Bart Warner did not have anything new to report.

APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL

Roger Layne, 899 Burks Hill Road, Bedford, VA

Mr. Layne addressed the Council and the attendees. He wanted to speak about the speed on Burks Hill Road. He knows there is construction going on, but people don't act like they know there is construction. This morning, he sat on his porch from 7:25 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., and 341 vehicles went down that road, just coming into town, not counting what vehicles are going out. One of the best things that was done was to put up the sign on the utility poles showing what the drivers' speed is. He understood there was also a camera installed, but it lasted about three weeks and now it is gone. He knows the work is not complete but he sees things that are not going to be good. This morning, he saw a driver jump into the middle lane and take off down the road and pass everyone else. The middle lane was supposed to be for turning only. Mr. Layne wanted to know how people were to get from one side of the street to the other side of the street on the sidewalk to walk to Liberty Lake Park and what would stop the traffic for the pedestrians. There is so much traffic, big and small trucks, tractor trailers, and cars. In the morning going to work, drivers are in a hurry to get onto the bypass and run 70 to 75 miles per hour. He would be afraid to death to walk there because no one pays any attention to the speed limit. Mr. Layne wanted to know what could be done. He invited all Council members to sit in his driveway and watch what goes on. He tried to get onto the bypass and was cut off by a lady who was running 70 miles per hour in a 50 mile zone. He doesn't see state troopers, county cops, or the town police stopping anybody. He has called the town police probably four times in the last six days. All the vehicles from Smith Mountain Lake, Moneta, Huddleston, and other smaller roads are piling onto Route 122 and he thinks a stop light or caution light is needed to slow down the traffic. The speed limits go from 55 to 45 to 35 on that stretch and it will be tough for people to get out of Liberty Lake Park. He sat in the middle lane and waited for 24 cars to pass before he could get into his driveway. He wanted to know what would be done about it. He thought something like what was at Goose Creek is needed with signs saying running over 45 miles per hour is a \$500 fine. He appreciated the Council allowing him to speak and once the construction was completed, he would see what is done.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Hartwick welcomed School Superintendent Dr. Bergin to the Council meeting and wanted Council to work with him in trying to get students to the right career path, whether college or trade school to get them ready for the jobs of tomorrow. He responded to Mr. Layne by saying he noted many safety concerns and thought they needed to look into what can be done to alleviate the problems or at least make things better. He thanked Mr. Layne for coming to the meeting and he wished more people would do so.

Mayor Black appreciated Mr. Layne's concerns and understands the road is very challenging near Liberty Lake Park. He has driven in that area himself and thinks some conversations with the police chief and the streets committee would help. People also need to be more responsible by being cautious and obeying the speed limit. Council will continue to work with staff to do the best they can and people need to slow down.

REPORT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Councilman Stanley reported that there was an Electric Committee meeting earlier that evening. A closed session was held to discuss real estate. There is federal legislation on the horizon that may require action from the Town. There will be more to come in the future.

Councilman Hartwick said there was a Property Committee meeting last week with most of the meeting held in closed session.

Councilman Shoen stated there was a Finance Committee meeting last Tuesday. Food truck licensing was discussed. There are 14 food trucks in Town that are licensed currently. If anyone knows of other trucks, they can contact staff, since it is an issue of collecting the food tax revenue from these businesses. A list of projects that were submitted to Mr. Warner last October were also discussed to get an update on their progress, such as sidewalks. The committee had requested from staff a report on the costs of running the Electric Department. This report would give Council a better understanding of its operational costs for budget purposes and they hope to get that information fairly soon.

REVISIONS TO AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Request to Close Street – Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting in Centertown

Mr. Jonathan Hayden is hosting the Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting in Centertown on Saturday, December 4, 2021, from 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The event will have live music, arts and craft vendors, food, and child activities. Mr. Hayden is requesting the following road closure:

South Bridge Street to be closed from 1:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. from the intersection of Washington Street to Main Street

Mr. Hayden will notify the Fire Department, Bedford County Fire and Rescue and Police Department of the street closing.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Town Council is requested to close the above street for the Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting in Centertown on Saturday, December 4, 2021, from 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Hailey moved, seconded by Mr. Johannessen to close South Bridge Street from the intersection of Washington Street to Main Street for the Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting in Centertown on Saturday, December 4, 2021, from 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote:

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 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

Update on Activities of the Central Virginia Planning District Commission (CVPDC)

Mayor Black welcomed Gary Christie, Executive Director of the CVPDC to the meeting. Mr. Christie thanked Council for the opportunity to tell them what has been happening at the CVPDC. He handed out the 2021 annual report of the CVPDC and noted that like everyone else, the CVPDC's world has changed due to Covid. They are just now getting back to in-person meetings but only in small gatherings and hope by next year they can have a big annual meeting if Covid is under control. The CVPDC has been in business for about 51 years and continues to be a place where local governments around Lynchburg and the surrounding counties come together to talk and build a relationship of trust so some multi-jurisdictional planning can be done and some projects can save money by doing them together. There will be a regional housing study done in 2022. Over the past 18 months, housing prices have gone up and first-time homebuyers and working families are finding it harder and harder to buy a house. The supply of houses in our region is surprisingly low. Hopefully, the study will give some guidance as to how to spend \$1.5 million that the Virginia Housing Corporation is giving them to create new housing starts. It will be leverage money for the business community and some non-profits to leverage

their money to make housing possible. He was not sure whether it would go into low-income or working family houses, but the housing study should help CVPDC determine this and help guide counties and localities with their comprehensive planning as they think about their housing needs. They continue to work with the Town of Bedford on the Hilltop CVPDC project. They also do comprehensive planning on the economic development state which is a five-year process that will begin again in 2022. It helps to keep the many players in economic development coordinated with common visions and will include agriculture in this year's planning process. The focus will be advanced manufacturing which is a priority of the region to continue to support. The CVPDC recently put in \$134,000 to the Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) Career and Technical Education Academy as a match for some GO Virginia monies so they could hire a couple of staff members. They put in \$150,000 two summers ago for the Central Virginia Training Center on a comprehensive plan on how that property could be redeveloped in Amherst County for reuse. They have submitted a grant application to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for brownfields assessment of small projects in multiple localities. They continue to be a transportation planner for the region and completed the intersection study last summer of the Independence and Longwood intersection here in Bedford and will be starting a similar study in Bedford County at Forest Road and Ashwood Manor, Forest Road and Venture Drive, and Thomas Jefferson Road and Burnbridge Road. They continue to work with Lynchburg's transit provider and write grants for localities for Smart Scale and transportation alternative grants. During the pandemic, not many projects for ridesharing or vanpool services have been done but that will loosen up and they will be marketing for this in 2022. They will be updating the blueways and greenways plans and they just finished a long-range transportation plan for the region which is done every five years. They work in environmental areas as well, working with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Chesapeake Bay/James River in vision planning. They run a landfill in Rustburg, with 200,000 tons of solid waste for four jurisdictions. A gas energy project is being proposed there, which will be taken to the County for approval. The landfill continues to be a low-cost operation for the past 13 years. A hazard mitigation plan was completed which plans for natural disasters, and qualifies the community for certain grants that can anticipate what a disaster might do and make some repairs, replacements, or demolitions in advance of a disaster. The CVPDC also works with the communications board. There is new dispatch furniture in Bedford County's communication center and about \$178,000 worth of new equipment going in, and Campbell County will be added to the system in 2021. The pandemic has made the employment process very difficult with 700 people in the region dropping out of the labor pool and 1,400 people applying for unemployment. The quit-rate has increased and retirements have increased as well. The workforce board has 35 members with seven members from Bedford County and they manage a grant of about \$1.25 million and do planning to help the players in workforce education work together and in coordination. They help businesses in finding and training workers. Mrs. Traci Blido is now the director of the Workforce Board and they are pleased to have her. He answered questions from the Council members.

In response to a question by Mr. Stanley, Mr. Christie said a master plan for repurposing the Training Center will be released in 2022 and recommends a mixed-use purpose for both business and residential. The Department of Behavioral Health of the State of Virginia owns the property and they will be marketing the site.

Mayor Black thanked the CVPDC for the work done on the Hilltop Community Development grant. It was a very successful process and looks forward to seeing more.

Councilman Hailey thanked Mr. Christie for his presentation and Mr. Warner concurred.

Councilman Hartwick also thanked Mr. Christie and wished him well in his future retirement.

Introduction – Dr. Marc Bergin, Superintendent of Bedford County Public Schools

Dr. Bergin introduced himself to the Council members and appreciated the opportunity to speak to them. He gave a brief summary of his personal and educational background, noting he has 30 years of experience in education. He wants to build real relationships with Town and County citizens and school principals and looks forward to community engagements regarding college and career readiness. He believes a person's zip code should not determine the access to higher, more challenging coursework, including CTE coursework, and both college and career readiness is important. He would like to see all students graduate with a diploma with at least one career/technical certification and at least one Advanced Placement (AP) class. Many jobs are attainable right out of high school with the right certification background. Over the next several months he will be engaging with the community to develop a new strategic plan. There will be lots of opportunities for individuals and local community organizations to offer input on the strategic plan and he will follow the direction of the community. As the process unfolds, he will also get input from the Town Council and Board of Supervisors to ensure the strategic plan meets the desires of the community. He will engage regularly with the Superintendent's Advisory Council which is made up of students, teachers, administrators, and parents in all the high school zones. Dr. Bergin feels that Bedford schools are excellent schools and they have fine reputations. He answered questions from the Council members.

Councilman Hailey welcomed Dr. Bergin to Bedford and hoped he could lead the schools in a new direction.

Councilman Stanley liked Dr. Bergin's comment of "equal" schools and felt the vocational system has been good for years but can always use improvement and appreciated him coming to the meeting.

Councilman Hartwick wants the students to be prepared and able to work right out of high school or go to college, whatever he/she wants to do. Dr. Bergin agreed, saying the conversation must actually begin while the students are in middle school. Dr. Bergin also noted he will have five supervisors of curriculum and instruction in the School Central Office, with one supervisor dedicated to CTE and workforce development. He would like to see the business community partner to help educate students in the types of jobs they could do and give the students an opportunity to job-share so they can see what the job involves. As students learn those skills, he would like to see internships available, and the employers will benefit as well.

Mayor Black said he appreciated Dr. Bergin being at the meeting and Council wants to do the best they can for the kids in the community and provide them the quality education they deserve.

Mayor Black looked forward to seeing Dr. Bergin's plans and what is next for the Bedford County schools.

ADJOURNMENT

7:40 p.m.

Tim Black, Mayor

Debra Anderson, Clerk of the Council