

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Work Session  
January 9, 2018**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a Work Session on Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

**TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT**

Don Harris, Mayor  
Lee Riffe, Vice-Mayor  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Jimmy Jones, Councilmember  
Ron Holt, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Mike Watson, Town Manager  
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney  
Kris Williams, Zoning Administrator  
Kim Hernandez, Executive Assistant  
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator  
3 Members of Public

**PLANNING COMMISSION PRESENT**

Jarried McFarland  
Barry Perdue  
Don Whitt

**ABSENT**

Shane Gunter, Chief of Police  
Lesley Catron, Town Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Harris opened the Work Session at 6:33 p.m.

**Bluefield College Request**

Mr. Watson stated that he was approached by Bluefield College who was looking to build onto their science building. He stated that they had received grants, loans, etc. in order to help with this \$2.2 million project. He stated that they had started the application process with the VA Tobacco Commission and that the VRA offered loans to local government/organizations. He stated that they asked that it be done thru the Town or the IDA and that the building itself would be collateral.

Mrs. Roberts stated that they wanted to make the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the existing science building for a masters for nursing. She stated that over a year ago they applied thru the VA Tobacco Commission and had already raised \$1.1 million on their own. She stated that the executor of the Tobacco Commission had changed the way things were done so they had to reevaluate. She stated that that 3<sup>rd</sup> floor would also be used for a Nurse Practioner's program and to offer residency.

Mr. Watson stated that they already offered a Bachelor's in Nursing.

Mrs. Roberts stated that there was a demand for it and with a mixture of the loan and grant money they could have it. She stated that the loan would be in the amount of \$825k for 20 years at 2.92% but they had to give it to a municipality or an IDA. She stated that Swope Construction would build onto it and that they should close the loan by the end of January 2019.

Mr. Presley asked if it would be a liability on the Town.

Mr. Watson stated that they would issue the loan to the Town of Bluefield and we would write a check to them. He stated that if it defaulted then the building was up for collateral and that there were no other loans on this property.

Mrs. Roberts stated that it specified that a conduit issuer would not be held responsible for repayment.

Mr. Presley asked if Mr. Freedman had looked at it.

Mr. Freedman stated that he had a little but would look into it more.

Mr. Presley stated that he was for it if it was legit.

Mr. Riffe stated that this would open the door for others to use the Town as a conduit issuer.

Mr. Watson stated that the Town applied for a T21 grant for the Sanders House to make it handicap accessible, etc.

Mr. Holt stated that Bluefield College had a tremendous impact on the community and he would like to see them grow.

Mr. Watson stated that Virginia Tech had a medical school and that everyone who applied this past time was not accepted. He stated that they would work with Bluefield College and would almost be guaranteed acceptance to the Virginia Tech Medical School.

Mayor Harris stated that this would open up the possibility for those not accepted and was a win-win.

## **Budget/Agenda**

Mr. Watson stated that he was working on the budget and hoped to send it out soon. He stated that it included the changes from last year and the budget was tight as always.

## ***Audit Report***

Mr. Watson stated that the auditors would be at the meeting to discuss the audit report. He stated that the Town was in a good financial position.

## ***IDA Member Reappointments***

Mr. Watson stated that there was a vote for 2 members of the IDA who were up for reappointment. He stated that the IDA consisted of 6 members and was a tool used thru the legislation to allow conduits (as they had talked about earlier) or loans with lower interest rates.

## ***Bluefield Manufacturers Roundtable***

Mr. Watson stated that Mrs. Roberts would be giving an update on the Bluefield Manufacturing Roundtable. He stated that it was an organization funded thru the state and they were looking to have a meeting.

## ***Resolution Supporting House Bill 222***

Mr. Watson stated that the SB 222 would exempt income tax for communities hit by the decline in the coal industry and it looked to have a good shot at passing.

## ***Regional Recreation Authority***

Mr. Watson stated that Dan McMillion would be the mediator for the upcoming meeting.

## ***Route 720 Speed Limit***

Mr. Watson stated that he had an engineering group who did a speed study from the overpass to 460 and the average speed was 45 mph. He stated that their conclusion was that the speed limit would be ok if raised to 45 mph.

## ***2018 Recycling Schedule***

Mr. Watson stated that a copy of the 2018 Recycling Schedule was in council's packet.

***COI Forms***

Mr. Watson stated that the COI Forms were due by January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Holt asked if the new budget allocated the anticipated raises from last year.

Mr. Watson stated yes. He stated that he was also looking at putting money into savings for the water project and would be meeting with a firm that done rate structures. He stated that the Town had 2,100 meters and would be putting in drive by meters. He stated that the current meters did not pick up if they were dripping. He stated that if they went to an annual fee increase that in 10 years those meters would be paid for. He stated that currently there was \$30k in the water savings and that would not buy a new pump.

Mr. Presley asked if they would break even.

Mr. Watson stated not right now.

Mr. Presley asked if anything had been put out concerning the new water project.

Mr. Watson stated that it would be in the upcoming newsletter. He stated that it would be sent to council to look at before going out. He stated that other things he was working on was clearing up the High Street Project and that staff had been working on frozen and busted water pipes.

Mr. Riffe asked if they were close on the High Street Project.

Mr. Watson stated that they had 1 property they would finish in the spring, 1 that was being condemned and 1 that was almost complete. He stated that they were about 6 months off before starting and having to bid out.

**ADJOURN**

Mayor Harris adjourned the Work Session at 6:56 p.m.

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Don Harris, Mayor

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Lesley Catron, Town Clerk