

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Work Session
January 22, 2019**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a Work Session on Tuesday, January 22, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT

Don Harris, Mayor
Anglis Trigg, Jr., Vice-Mayor
Chuck Presley, Councilmember
Jimmy Jones, Councilmember
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember
Ron Holt, Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator
Lesley Catron, Town Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Harris opened the Work Session at 5:34 p.m.

Brownfield Grant

Mr. Watson stated that staff had applied for the Brownfield Grant to determine if there were any problems with Bluefield Iron and Metal. He stated that a Phase I had been done which was a background history check and a Phase II which would do a grid and soil sample. He stated that he hoped we would get the money which would be a 50-50 match. He stated that it had been cleaned up some and staff had walked through it with the landfill people.

Mr. Presley asked what the purpose was in acquiring it.

Mr. Watson stated jobs.

Mr. Presley asked what it could be developed into.

Mr. Watson stated that it had a 3 Phase power... gas, fiber and electricity. He stated that Virginia Steel used them at one time and we could use it as an incentive. He stated that it had been turned over to the IDA. He stated that right now they were just trying to get it cleaned up and painted when it got warmer. He stated that the building needed work but was a good building with electricity and they may be able to use it one day for recycling.

Mayor Harris asked him to discuss the 2 pieces of property across the road.

Mr. Watson stated that it came with the church and house beside of it that was located across the street. He stated that another church could possibly go in and maintain it. He stated that he had a town employee who may be interested in getting it. He stated it would be something the IDA would have to work with him on and that the employee had been with the Town for over 20 years.

Mr. Presley asked if the IDA were to dissolve what would happen with the properties they owned.

Mr. Watson stated that it was established in the Town Code but he would think they would have to will it to someone.

Mr. Freedman stated that there was probably something in the State Code.

Mr. Presley asked if we were the originator would it not come back to the Town.

Mr. Freedman stated that was a good question but he did not know the answer.

Mr. Watson stated that Council was the only ones who could get rid of the IDA. He stated that the Town of Pocahontas had a water bond but if the town faulted then it would be the county's responsibility.

Mr. Freedman stated that this was the reason why people got title insurance on big money properties and that we had title insurance on the Bank of Graham and Bluefield Iron and Metal properties.

Mr. Watson stated that we were working with the City of Bluefield on the Regional Brownfield Grant and were going to be the lead applicant. He asked Mrs. Roberts what the sites were that they had looked at on our side that he thought they were Bluefield Iron and Metal, Art Riley's building, place near Thistle Foundry and Charlie Tosh's place.

Mrs. Roberts stated that the partners would have a voice in identifying those sites.

Mr. Watson stated that was correct and we would not know if we got the grant until October.

Mr. Presley stated that where Bill Dudley lived was connected to Thistle Foundry.

Mr. Watson stated that Scott Stevenson owned it but he entered into a partnership with someone to do something there.

Mr. Presley asked about the Keebler Building.

Mr. Watson stated that was Art Riley's Building.

Mrs. Roberts stated that it was included on the list as well and she had sent a list of everything but they may not include all of them in the application.

Mr. Watson stated that we advertised for an engineering firm on the project and went through the procurement. He stated that this was a federal grant.

Radio Grant

Mr. Watson stated that the Radio Grant for the schools was still short on money. He stated that he was still short about \$8k. He stated that they wanted to make it so that the officers could communicate directly with the schools.

Mr. Holt stated that from the time someone called to the time it got to the office to dispatch to the time it got to a police officer was several minutes. He stated that most shooting incidents were less than 5 minutes.

Mr. Watson stated that he wished everyone would get excited for it and that one issue was the original system had to be added onto. He stated that he was still working on it.

High Street

Mr. Watson stated that there was one piece of property they went around because it was too expensive to purchase. He stated that he had talked to the engineer and there were 5-6 houses that they would have to go around. He stated that it was a short construction period and we had Revenue Sharing Money that would pay for half of it.

Legislative Trip

Mr. Watson stated that Mrs. Roberts had talked to Ruth Blankenship and Josh Cline and they had mentioned having a Joint Meeting with the Town and Regional Delegates and other locals. He stated that they would have a private dinner with 20 people and that there was one delegate who was willing to put money towards it and would get something together in the next 2 weeks.

Downtown Movies, Field Fest

Mr. Watson stated that staff wanted to make changes to the movies downtown. He stated that Dairy Queen stayed open for it and they had them about every other Saturday night. He stated that they would like to consider doing them at different places such as the Rec Park, Bowen Field and the pool. He stated that it would take away from the downtown on a Saturday night.

Mr. Watson stated that the committee was considering moving Field Fest to a Saturday night from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. He stated that they felt like it was starting to dwindle.

Mayor Harris stated that they should consider the movies and that a large majority walked downtown for them and asked if we could shuttle to the other locations.

Mr. Watson stated that they could use the Rec Bus to shuttle. He stated that they also wanted to do a safety program with the kids.

Mr. Trigg stated that his concerns were the foot traffic, older people and keeping an eye on the kids.

Mr. Watson stated that the one at the Rec Park would be a drive-in.

Mr. Holt stated that we were providing the entertainment and it was up to the parent/guardian to watch the children.

Mr. Freedman stated that they could require children be accompanied by an adult.

Mayor Harris stated that they normally had 1-2 police officers because it was amazing what young people could get into. He stated that they had a problem with them crawling on the Veteran's Memorial.

Mr. Freedman stated that there could be an argument if they knew there was a problem and did not address it.

Mr. Trigg asked if there were a lot of complaints about it.

Mr. Watson stated that it was tough and he had considered taking the event and making it smaller on purpose.

Mr. Trigg asked if there were any studies from other localities of how they did theirs and how they handled it.

Mr. Watson stated that what you would run into would be that each place was different. He stated that they could probably put that event in a different location and get a different response.

Mr. Trigg stated that he could see some downfalls if it were moved to the park.

Mayor Harris stated that the officers knew who the trouble makers were and they could give some warnings before banning them from coming.

Mr. Bailey asked if there was any lighting at night.

Mr. Watson stated a few at the baseball field and basketball parking lot.

Mr. Bailey stated that it might be an issue if you had 50-60 people at the movies with no lighting.

Mr. Freedman stated that it may be a liability for transporting children from one location to another and that we would be responsible.

Mr. Trigg suggested they think twice.

Mr. Watson suggested picking a different location.

Mr. Presley suggested doing one for the adults like the Sandlot.

Mr. Trigg stated that when he was there, that there was a lot of old people down there and he did not think a lot them would go out to the park.

Mr. Watson asked what the consensus was.

Mr. Holt stated that people had to control their kids.

Mr. Presley stated that they could try it and if it did not work then move it back.

Property Maintenance

Mr. Watson stated that he could put a lien on a piece of property if there was trash in the yard, holes in the roof, etc. He stated that he had 7 rental properties last year with problems and the rest were inherited, someone owned, etc. He stated that if he thought having a Rental Policy would fix the problems then he would be on board but he did not think it would fix it. He stated that if it were something like peeling paint that he did not think we could win if it were taken to court (ex. Austin Eclipse Building).

Mr. Jones congratulated them on the work done at the Austin Eclipse Building and the Bank of Graham Building. He stated that they needed to work on the crow's downtown.

Mr. Trigg stated the crows were over at the Graham Manor and leaving crow poop everywhere.

Mayor Harris stated that he had been here for 55 years and that this was the first time he had ever seen this.

Mr. Watson stated that he knew there was a lot of concern over property maintenance and that staff would start being proactive and had been more proactive over the past few months.

GHS Football Team Recognition

Mr. Watson suggested having the football team come in and presenting them with a resolution. He stated that they would be presenting the PIC Award to Melroy Brown at the next meeting.

Mr. Trigg asked about the Public Comments Resolution. He stated that when they were at Bluefield College that they had a bell they would ring at 3 minutes and when the bell was rung then they got to their conclusion.

Mr. Bailey stated that no matter if it were good or bad that they had to shut them off.

Mr. Holt stated that they had to be consistent.

Mr. Freedman asked if they wanted him to address it to only those who spoke under Public Comments and that he imagined the rules would be enforced to someone who was cussing or badgering the council.

Mr. Watson stated that the Transportation Board had a countdown clock on the main screen and when time was up, it was over. He asked if they wanted to leave it at 3 minutes or leave some flexibility.

Mayor Harris stated that they could announce it to the citizens that those wishing to comment limit it to 3 minutes.

Mr. Freedman stated that in lieu of a resolution to just announce it to the citizens to limit their comments.

Mr. Holt stated that he liked the resolution.

Mr. Bailey stated that it needed to state the protocol so people would know.

Mayor Harris stated that staff could prepare a written statement and hand it out as they came in.

Work Session Retreat

Mr. Watson stated that he would like to do a Work Session Retreat to discuss projects, etc.

Mr. Trigg suggested going to Bluefield College on a Saturday morning.

Mr. Watson asked them to come up with some ideas as to what they would like to see happen so it would give staff direction and also to give a 1, 2, 5, 10 year direction as for future goals.

Mr. Trigg suggested they have it away from the Council Chambers where they could get to know each other. He stated that he had a problem with filming the Work Sessions.

Mr. Holt stated that it was initially brought up and that he voted against videoing the Work Sessions. He suggested that they re-vote about not recording them.

Mr. Trigg stated that when he first got on Council that he had to step in between some people at times.

Mayor Harris stated that 3 of council had gone up and looked on East River Mountain and said it did not look that bad. He stated that the man who came in at the last meeting came into his store and told him that he saw Public Works there working on it and that he stopped and thanked them.

Scheduling Joint Public Hearings

Mr. Watson stated that they needed to schedule Joint Public Hearings for the E-1 and R-3 during the meeting. He stated that they also needed to revise the Town's Ordinance for unsafe buildings, Planning Commission Ordinance and the Cemetery Commission Ordinance.

Mayor Harris asked council to put their cell phones on mute while they were in session.

ADJOURN

Mayor Harris adjourned the Work Session at 7:09 p.m.

Don Harris, Mayor

Lesley Catron, Town Clerk