

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Work Session
March 10, 2020**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a Work Session on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 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
Ron Holt, Councilmember
Chuck Presley, Councilmember
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember
Anglis Trigg, Jr., Vice-Mayor

ALSO PRESENT

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator
Rachel Looney, Administrative Asst.
2 Members of Public

ABSENT

Jimmy Jones, Councilmember

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Harris opened the Work Session at 6:30 p.m.

2020/2021 Budget

Mr. Watson stated there was not many changes from last time. He stated that he had added \$15k into the budget for a July 4th event and the minimum wage bill had been sent to the governor for the following increases on January 1, 2021 it would increase to \$9.50 then to \$10.50, \$11.50 and eventually to \$15. He opened it up for any other discussion/changes and stated with the minimum wage change it would be around \$38k and would affect the summer grass, pool and Fincastle. He stated that the mowing crew was kept through the winter this year to finish up some things but he would not be able to do that next year.

Mr. Presley asked if he had a 2 year estimate.

Mr. Watson stated it would affect all employees. He stated in 2023 it would be \$12 and in 2025 it would be \$13.50.

Mr. Holt stated that there should be a regional breakdown.

Mr. Watson stated that by January 1, 2027 it would be required to pay the state/federal minimum wage and that he thought they would look at it regionally.

Mr. Presley talked about the potential gas tax and collective bargaining.

Mr. Watson stated that we were exempt and we did not pay state taxes. He stated that they could pass a resolution for collective bargaining.

Mr. Holt stated that he did not mind paying more to those who had been here a while but he was not sure paying someone \$15/hr who was using a weed eater.

Mayor Harris stated that he had heard there would be a 6% increase in sales tax in Northern VA.

Mr. Watson stated that they could do an annual increase over the next 4-5 years to adjust for this increase. He stated that he would work on a long term formula to see the cost.

Mr. Bailey stated that it would raise other costs based on the liability.

Mr. Watson stated that it would raise Workers Comp, Retirement, Insurance, LEOs, etc. based on a percentage of salary.

Mr. Bailey agreed that they should work on a 5-6 year plan.

Mr. Watson stated that he waited because he did not think it would go through.

Mr. Holt stated that if they do it regionally then it should not be that bad.

Mr. Bailey agreed that regionally would help us more than by county.

Mr. Watson stated that SB7 stated that it would go up to \$15 and by January 1, 2027 there would be no more increases.

Agenda

Mr. Watson stated that there were 2 members appointed to the Sanitary Board and his term was set to expire in April. He stated that the Sanitary Board, Inc. allowed the Sanitary Board to operate in VA and they needed a representative on that one as well. He stated that they only met once a year. He stated at one time Lonnie Yates and Trigg were on the County PSA and Danko was on the Sanitary Board. He asked if council had someone in mind or if they wanted him to find someone.

Mr. Holt suggested that it be Mr. Watson since he would know more about it and was already on the Sanitary Board.

Mr. Watson stated that he was fine with that and their meetings were one time a year. He stated that the next thing on the agenda was the rezoning of a mobile home park to go to Joint Public Hearing. He stated that it was currently zoned R2. He stated that he had received a request for a donation to the GHS Model General Assembly by Lee Brown for \$1k to help with transportation to attend in Richmond on April 1-4.

Mr. Holt asked if this was a first time request.

Mr. Watson stated yes.

Mayor Harris said that each student would have to pay \$400 and suggested that they donate since it was their first request.

Mr. Trigg suggested that they be careful because others would be coming in asking for donations in the entire amount.

Mayor Harris asked if all of council was in agreement to donate the \$1k.

All of council was in agreement.

Mr. Watson stated that the next thing on the agenda was the additional day off request for April 10th, the 2nd Reading of the Building Code Ordinance and the nonjudicial sale of 20 tax delinquent properties. He stated that once they were sold that the Town may be interested in a few of the properties. He stated the next couple of things on the agenda was 114 Meredith and 111 Montrose Street which were both unsafe structures.

Mayor Harris asked if a local auctioneer would be doing them.

Mr. Freedman stated that they could retain an auctioneer.

Mr. Watson stated that the fees may end up more than the property. He stated that a Joint Public Hearing was also being scheduled for the Sign Ordinance.

Mr. Freedman stated that if they did not sale then they would stay delinquent with a cost attached to the top.

Mr. Holt stated that he would like to talk about field improvements to the Little League fields. He stated that a new field was not realistic right now but they could improve the situation by installing lighting. He stated that he had worked with various folks but ran into a brick wall. He suggested if they went out to bid it would be to get a cost and he talked to some organizations who were willing to help but they needed to know a cost.

Mr. Bailey asked if it would cost us anything by going to bid.

Mr. Watson stated that it would be a minimal cost for staff to contact 2-3 companies for quotes. He stated that there may be a company on State Contract and we would not have to go through procurement.

Mr. Holt asked that it be added to the agenda for a vote under New Business and Reports.

Mr. Bailey asked if the political signs was under a vote to go to Public Hearing.

Mayor Harris stated that it was on the agenda.

ADJOURN

Mayor Harris adjourned the Work Session at 7:15 p.m.

Don Harris, Mayor

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk