

**A SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF
THE TOWN OF LURAY, VIRGINIA**

Tuesday, March 25th, 2025

The Luray Town Council met in Special Session on Tuesday, March 25th, at 5:30 p.m. in the Luray Town Council Chambers located at 45 East Main Street, Luray, Virginia, at which time there were present the following:

Presiding: Mayor Stephanie Lillard

Council Present:

Jerry Dofflemyer
Alex White
Jason Pettit
Joseph Sours
Chuck Butler

Council Absent:

Ron Vickers

Also Present:

Bryan Chrisman, Town Manager
Michael Coffelt, Assistant Town Manager
Danielle Babb, Clerk Treasurer
Danielle Alger, Deputy Clerk Treasurer
Chief Bow Cook, Luray Police Department
Brooke Fox, Planning and Zoning
Jen Jenkins, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Town Attorney, Jason Botkins, Litten & Sipe (Phone)
Dr. Kim Blosser, Laurel Ridge Community College

(This meeting was made public via the Town's Facebook page. Public comments were accepted prior to the meeting via e-mail to bchrisman@townofluray.com).

A quorum being present, Mayor Lillard declared the Council to be in session for the transaction of business. All present stood for a moment of silence. Mayor Lillard led everyone in the United States Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was then called with all Council members present except Councilman Vickers.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

LRCC Funding Request

Council is requested to review and discuss a funding request from Laurel Ridge Community College regarding the Town's monetary contribution to their efforts.

A copy of the Request Letter is included for Council review.

Prior to the new campus building, the Town contributed about \$8,500 annually to LFCC to support our community members accessing higher education opportunities.

When the college campus building was being constructed, the Town elected to provide \$80,000 a year for five (5) years as its commitment to improving educational capabilities for our community and the surrounding area.

Most recently, after the five (5) year commitment was satisfied, the Town returned to its previous financial support figure as requested each year by the College.

The most recent request is to return to the larger annual commitment as a way of making a greater impact for local and area students who wish to participate in the LRCC programs that are available. Such funding would also allow for additional programs to be offered locally, and possibly even additional adult education programs such as those offered by the LRCC Workforce Solutions division.

Councilman White stated that he would like to see adult education expansion at this site. He added that Luray is lucky to have this beautiful campus and supports what the school is doing. Councilman Butler inquired where the nine thousand dollars came from. President, Dr. Kim Blosser, stated that when the college was established, there was locality funding. She added that the localities paid site work, and the state paid the funding for the building. She added at the time it was being built there were no students, so the amount was based on population. Dr. Blosser stated that the surrounding counties pay as well (including Winchester, Page, etc.) Councilman Butler inquired if other "towns" are contributing or only counties. Dr. Blosser explained that Luray is the only town, and she is uncertain how that was derived at. She added their budget is small at \$364,000 and that a portion of the budget goes towards funding local scholarships. Dr. Blosser stated that a minimal amount is used for college operations.

Councilman White stated that many communities would love to have a campus like we have and one thing he doesn't want to see is lowering the funding. He added that it's a worthy investment. Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, stated that he would see what the County was planning on funding and will let Council know. Mayor Lillard stated that we do have a placeholder of \$9,000 in the FY26 draft budget. Councilman Sours thanked Dr. Blosser for coming. Dr. Blosser in return thanked Council for their support and stated they wouldn't be where they were if it weren't for the Town. She added that our past contributions made a big difference in obtaining a nice building.

Balanced FY26 Draft Budget

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council review and discuss a balanced FY26 budget draft.

As additional data on revenues and expenditure becomes available, we will modify this draft accordingly and re-submit to the Council for its future consideration.

Significant numbers and types of Capital Improvement Projects were removed to be able to balance this draft. It is hoped that with further budgeting prioritization by Department Heads and staff, that Council will consider adding some of these back into the budget for FY26.

We will be recommending handling up to four (4) sewer projects via financing:

- Sludge Processing
- UV Light Replacement
- Sewer Main Lining – Phase 2
- Sewer Main Camera Work – Phase 3

Some highlights of the current draft include:

Currently, no projected increases for Real Estate or Personal Property taxes

Water, Sewer, and Trash rates are currently being evaluated

The current Town Fee Schedule is currently being evaluated

Inclusion of a 2% Cost-Of-Living for all full-time and full-time/part-time staff

Mr. Chrisman thanked Treasurer, Danielle Babb, for working late nights and long days to help get this draft ready for Council by the April 1st deadline. He added that Ms. Babb will be available for any questions that Council may have. Prior to ARPA we were narrowing the gap but were able to get some big-ticket items accomplished with the funding. Mr. Chrisman provided Council Members with an updated budget calendar and Ms. Babb provided an updated summary sheet for each member.

Councilman Sours inquired about the bank franchise tax. Ms. Babb stated that this year's status of bank revenue is anticipated to be slightly more than budgeted. Councilman Dofflemyer inquired about the ARPA funding. Ms. Babb stated those funds are likely to be expended by June 30th as the remaining project wraps up. Mr. Chrisman stated that the fee schedule was included in Council's packet and is being reviewed by staff. Mr. Chrisman concluded with stating that May 12th will be the Budget Advertisement, Review, and Approval.

Councilman Pettit thanked Mr. Chrisman and Ms. Babb for their hard work on getting the draft budget for tonight's meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

CDBG Loan Request

Town Treasurer, Danielle Babb requested Council discuss and take action on an application for the CDBG Loan Pool Funds.

The application request is from Thomas and Sonya Wilkins for Appalachian Trail Outfitters LLC. The Wilkins purchased the business from the previous owners in January 2025 and intend to expand and improve the store's retail efforts.

The application and supporting documents have been reviewed and approved by the Luray Downtown Initiative Board of Directors. The documents have also been examined by the Loan Pool Committee's financial advisors. Town Staff has reviewed the application and retained advice on the loan's collateral from the Town Attorney.

The application packet was provided for Council's review at tonight's meeting.

Councilman Butler reminded Council that the collateral they are putting up is in Warren County and not in Page. Ms. Babb stated that Town Attorney, Jason Botkins, has prepared a title examination on the property. Councilman Dofflemyer stated that he is concerned about the high amount of the loan (\$25,000). Ms. Babb stated that we have only had two requests for this funding over the past several years. She reminded that these funds are restricted for loan purposes only. Ms. Babb reminded Council that several previous loans have been for this same amount. Councilman Dofflemyer stated that he will vote for the loan request but is still concerned about the amount. Mayor Lillard inquired if they have to provide receipts for what they use the funds for. Ms. Babb stated they do not. She said the applicant wants to expand their inventory offerings. Councilman White inquired about the remaining funds. Ms. Babb responded that after approval, there should be approximately \$30,000 remaining in funds. She also stated that the other loan is consistently paying itself back and they have been great loan participants.

Motion: Councilman Sours motioned that the Loan Request be approved, as presented. Councilman Butler seconded the motion with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Dofflemyer, White, Pettit, Sours, Butler. **Approved 5-0**

Habitat for Humanity Request

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council discuss and take action on a request from the local Habitat for Humanity Group.

In early March, the Mayor received a request from Jeremy McCoy, President for the local Habitat group. They are preparing to start construction for the final Habitat duplex laid out at 22 and 24 Hilltop Lane. A total of three (3) duplexes were planned, and so far, they have built and sold two (2) of them.

They are requesting that the Council consider reducing the Facility Fees owed in order to make building and selling the units more affordable. The Facility Fees owed will be \$9,260 per unit for a total of \$18,520. A

service application with a refundable fee of \$150 will be required for each unit. There is a Zoning Permit fee for each unit (\$50) that could be waived if Council desires.

Previously (May 2008), the Council provided water and sewer connections to the duplex site, waived the overall Subdivision fee and Site Plan Review fee, and allowed Habitat to defer the water and sewer Facility Fees and utility service application fees until they went to closing with the new owner of each unit. Then the new owner rolled those fees into their home financing package and paid the Town at the point they established residency and utilities at each unit.

The Town Attorney confirmed that the Town cannot waive the Facility Fees, but if the Council is inclined to do so, it could structure the required total fees as a monetary donation to Habitat that would be paid back to the Town in order to satisfy the required fees owned for the duplex (two units).

Councilman Sours inquired how many units this was for. Mr. Chrisman stated this is for the two units (one duplex) that have not been built. Councilman Dofflemeyer inquired about the water pressure. Mr. Chrisman stated there were no issues in this area and it wouldn't be a high demand. Councilman White stated that he is very supportive of this.

Motion: Councilman Butler motioned that a Facility Fee Deferment be approved as previously granted to Habitat. Motion seconded by Councilman White with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Dofflemeyer, White, Pettit, Sours, Butler. **Approved 5-0**

~RECESS~

CLOSED MEETING

Discussion of the Potential Acquisition of Real Property & Consultation with Legal Counsel

Town Council is requested to go into Closed Meeting for the purpose of discussing or considering the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the Town's bargaining position or negotiating strategy as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia. The subject matter concerns the property identified as Tax Map 42A10-A-4 located at 750 West Main Street. Also, consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by the Town Attorney, as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) of the state code. The subject matter is legal advice concerning local taxes, and legal advice related to operational processes at Lake Arrowhead.

Motion: Councilman Pettit motioned to convene and go into Closed meeting for the purpose of discussing or considering the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the Town's bargaining position or negotiating strategy as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia. The subject matter concerns the property identified as Tax Map 42A10-A44 located at 750 West Main Street. Also, consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by the Town Attorney, as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) of the state code. The subject matter is legal advice concerning local taxes, and legal advice related to operational processes at Lake Arrowhead. Councilman Sours seconded the motion with the following members voting: YEA: Council Members Dofflemeyer, White, Pettit, Sours, Butler. **Approved 5-0**

~Closed Meeting~

Motion: Councilman Pettit motioned to adjourn the Closed meeting and reconvene in open session. Motion seconded by Councilman Sours with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Dofflemyer, White, Pettit, Sours, Butler, **Approved 5-0**

Certification: Mayor Lillard asked members of Council to certify that to the best of their knowledge only matters covered under Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia and Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) of the Code of Virginia were heard, discussed, or considered during the closed session. Motion: Councilman Pettit motioned to certify the closed session; Councilman Sours seconded the motion with the following members voting YEA: Mayor Lillard, Council Members Dofflemyer, White, Pettit, Sours, Butler. **Approved 5-0**

FURTHER ACTION BY COUNCIL

Advertisement Authorization

Mayor Lillard requested Council take action on a potential admissions tax discussed during the Closed Meeting.

Motion: Councilman White motioned to authorize the advertisement to hold a Public Hearing on April 14th, 2025. Councilman Dofflemyer seconded the motion with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Dofflemyer, White, Pettit, Sours, Butler. **Approved 5-0**

Lake Operations

Mayor Lillard requested Council take action on Lake Operations that were discussed during the Closed Meeting.

Motion: Councilman Butler motioned to **not** have Swimming and Beach Operations for this year (2025). Councilman Pettit seconded the motion with the vote as follows: YEA: Councilman Dofflemyer, White, Pettit. NAY: Sours, Butler. **Approved 3-2**

COUNCIL COMMENTS

No further comments this evening.

MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Lillard reminded Council of the next meeting to be held on April 14th at 7:00 pm. Mayor Lillard also reminded members that the opening day for Luray Little League will be on April 4th at 5:30 pm along with the Note Burning. Mayor Lillard stated that she would be attending the Arbor Day Celebration on April 19th at Eugene Park and welcomed everyone to attend.

ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Stephanie Lillard
Mayor

Danielle Alger
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer