WORK SESSION OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF
THE TOWN OF LURAY, VIRGINIA

Tuesday, January 27th, 2026

The Luray Town Council met in a work session on Tuesday, January 27th, 2026 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:
Ron Vickers
Jerry Dofflemyer
Ryan Dean
Jason Pettit
Joseph Sours
Chuck Butler

Also Present:
Bryan Chrisman, Town Manager
Danielle Babb, Treasurer
Danielle Alger, Assistant Treasurer
Chief of Police, Carl "Bow" Cook, Luray Police Department
Brooke Newman, Planning and Zoning Coordinator
Phil Thompson, Valley Regional Transit

(This meeting was made public via the Town's Facebook page.)

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.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called with all members present.

UPDATES & DISCUSSION ITEMS

VRT Final Proposal

Phil Thompson with Valley Regional Transit gave an update regarding the final report and proposal for local public transit options. Some of the high points from his presentation included a list of stakeholders, committee member input, additional stakeholder input, public transportation needs and issues and surveys. Mr. Thompson stated the feasibility study is complete. He added that it is a tremendous community project. Mr. Thompson stated that 803 surveys were filled out and returned. He added this is a very robust response rate, representing over three percent of the county residents. Mr. Thompson added that well over half of the participants in the survey either have trouble meeting their own transportation needs, or members of their household struggle to get the transportation they require. Among the responses on the survey, medical or dental appointments were among the activities that were limited due to a lack of access to transportation. Shopping, working, and social activities were also ranked high on the survey.

Mr. Thompson stated that eighty-two thousand dollars is needed annually for this project and has potential funding partners. He added that many organizations are contributing. Mr. Thompson stated if approved, the next steps are to apply. He added they have a support letter from the County. If approved funding will be available July 1st and they could launch in the beginning of 2027. Mr. Thompson stated that what is needed from the Council is support and that does not mean a funding commitment at this time. He added that he just needed support for the operation and thanked everyone for allowing him to give an update.

Mayor Lillard thanked Mr. Thompson for the update and inquired about needing evidence for a local match. Mr. Thompson stated that the county would enjoy other contributions but that a local match is not necessary. Mayor Lillard also inquired if they were getting support from Valley Health. Mr. Thompson stated they were committed to help. Councilman Vickers inquired about the ride cost of fifty cents per day and if it was a one-way fee or round trip, and, if it was handicap accessible. Mr. Thompson stated you pay the charge each time you get on and yes, it is handicap accessible. Councilman Pettit stated that he's aware Mr. Thompson can't disclose the counties agreement/proposal but is still concerned about the funding. Mr. Pettit feels that Town residents will be paying double and believes this should be soley county funded. Mr. Thompson reiterated that he is not requesting the Town to commit to funding. Councilman Butler inquired if rides would be available outside of the county. Mr. Thompson stated not at this time. Mr. Thompson said Luray would be the circulator route and respectfully if the Town could contribute something that would be wonderful but that is not why he is here. He reiterated that he was here for support. Councilman Dofflemyer gave his support and believes the Town will benefit the most from this. Councilman Sours thanked Mr. Thompson and appreciated his presentation but doesn't believe there is an efficient number.

Possible Firearms Ordinance

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council review a possible Firearms Ordinance that would prohibit firearms inside Town buildings.

A draft Ordinance from Mr. Botkins is included in tonight's packet.

Mr. Chrisman stated that a lot of localities have instituted combined deadly weapons prohibition inside portions of their public buildings such as meeting spaces and employee offices. Mr. Chrisman stated this is something for Council to consider and will appear on a future agenda. Mr. Chrisman said the Town will advertise for adoption if we need to but may not need to hold a public hearing.

Councilman Dean inquired if they have a concealed weapon, can they still bring it? Mr. Chrisman stated yes. Councilman Pettit stated that sometimes emotions can get heated and is completely fine with for the Council Room being no firearms. Mr. Pettit said he is fine with a concealed carry permit. Councilman Pettit said that we are getting too restricted and doesn't believe that every time the law changes that it will completely prevent anything from happening. Councilman Butler stated he is a strong advocate for the second amendment. Mr. Butler added that this would be an added tool to protect staff. Mr. Butler stated concern for staff if someone were to get upset about a water bill and bring a gun into the front office. Mayor Lillard clarified that this is in regards to Town buildings, not open spaces. Mr. Chrisman emphasized that we are just looking at the buildings themselves. Councilman Butler stated that it should be all town buildings used for government purposes. Mayor Lillard inquired if there has ever been an issue with safety in the front office. Treasurer, Danielle Babb, stated that she agreed with Councilman Butler that an ordinance will not prevent, but will go a long way toward showing Council's concern for protecting staff. She added there have been times when customers have gotten angry and aggressive along with times when the police department had to be called to deescalate the situation. Chief Bow Cook added that there was an incident recently where a citizen was arrested in the front lobby.

15 Campbell Street Update

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council receive an update for the 15 Campbell Street project.

Included in tonight's packet are several site plans for the project, including an Optional Site Plan that shows the requested water line routing.

Mr. Chrisman stated the regional commission is putting together a draft agreement. He also stated there will be an alternate routing of the water line and meets the requests that we made. He added that HUB will be discussing things with adjacent properties. Mr. Chrisman stated this will be on the February 9th agenda.

DHCD has provided the paperwork, and both HUB and the Town are completing their reviews.

Mr. Botkins is formatting the various agreement and loan documents on behalf of the Town for HUB and DHCD to review.

The Town will need to approve acceptance of the grant/loan funds and the terms of the projects, including the financial/lending documents. The Council will need to vote to approve these items, and provide authorization for the Mayor, Town Manager, and Town Attorney to sign them.

The Town will need to amend it's budget for the receipt and disbursement of these funds in both the current FY26 budget cycle, and in the upcoming FY27 budget cycle.

The Town Treasurer will be establishing the accounts needed to manage incoming grant funds, outgoing loan amounts, and incoming loan payments (principal and interest held separately)

Christmas Wreaths and US250/VA250

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council discuss the preferred disposition of the former Christmas wreath decorations.

Mr. Chrisman stated that all the new wreaths are in and no we do not have suitable storage for the old ones. Mr. Chrisman stated a few options for the old wreaths would be a sealed bid, donate to local organizations or for use of fundraisers. He said some of these organizations can include LDI, School Boosters, Church, and/or Civic Organizations. Mr. Chrisman stated that he would love to hear of any ideas that Council may have for the old wreaths.

Mr. Chrisman inquired if Council would be interested in doing anything for the VA250 as far as a celebration for this event. Mr. Chrisman said if Council is interested in ordering a special flag for this event to let him know as soon as possible. He mentioned that it does not need to be the full route of town, and that it could just be in the downtown portion.

Councilman Butler inquired if Mr. Chrisman had heard anything from the County about a special banner. Mr. Chrisman stated that it's not advisable for a banner because they can't be put on the streetlight poles. Councilman Pettit suggested the Luray Downtown Initiative purchase these flags as an LDI project. Councilman Pettit added that LDI could auction them off at the end of the year as a fundraiser. Councilman Pettit also stated that it would be one less thing in the Town's budget. Councilman Dofflemyer would like to see them throughout the entire town.

Proposed Sign Ordinance Amendments & ADU's

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council review and discuss the proposed modifications to the Sign Ordinance proposed by town staff and the Town Attorney.

Mr. Chrisman stated there are lots of scenarios on ADU's and wants to get on Council's radar.

The Planning Commission is already reviewing these proposed changes and will hold a Public Hearing at their February regular meeting. The Council will be scheduled to hold a Public Hearing at the regular March meeting.
The primary Sign Ordinance changes include:

- Shortening and consolidating the current Ordinance significantly
- Providing for more and larger sign options, especially businesses
- Allowing more incidental signs to be allowed without a permit
- Making the Ordinance easier to understand and implement

Councilman Pettit wanted to share something on the Sign Ordinance. He stated that was the whole reason he ran for Council five years ago. Councilman Pettit stated the policy is a lot smaller than before. His concerns were that projection signs are no longer mentioned, instead they're listed as a wall sign. Another concern was if a building is on property line, will businesses still be able to do that? Councilman Pettit also mentioned ground signs and the max height being six feet. Councilman Pettit stated that when he read this, it includes the pole, etc. Mr. Chrisman stated if there is a conflicting spot, he will have Town Attorney, Jason Botkins, change it. He added the plan was that fifty percent be the max height. Councilman Pettit also voiced concerns with how the ordinance is written. Councilman Pettit added that he doesn't want the ordinance to be too constricting. Councilman Pettit also mentioned the illumination in the ordinance. Councilman Pettit stated when he ran Baby Moons that the streetlights were brighter than his sign. Councilman Pettit added that as long as the sign is not glaring or brighter than the streetlights that it should be allowed.

Alternative Energy Ordinance Amendment- Chapter 517

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council review and discuss a possible change to Chapter 517.

A copy of the current Ordinance chapter is included for Council's review.

Mr. Chrisman stated a question came up regarding the large scale solar systems and Council may want to remove them from the Ordinance. He added the small-scale solar installations, and the requirements would remain as-is.

Mr. Chrisman stated this can be a change that can be adopted with a Public Hearing.

FY27 Budget Schedule & Goals

Town Manager, Bryan Chrisman, requested Council review a proposed FY27 budget schedule that is included in tonight's packet.

Mr. Chrisman stated that version one is a more optimistic calendar. Mr. Chrisman also stated his request from Council is to be thinking of expenditures, revenues, and special projects. He added to let him know if there were certain things that Council would like to make a priority.

Reassessment Information Update

Town Treasurer, Danielle Babb, stated that most of you know we've been waiting for the reassessment values. She stated the County informed taxpayers they were being mailed out. Ms. Babb stated that Commissioner Smith from the Commissioner's office is trying to get specific data for our town. Ms. Babb stated that on average it sounds like there will be a forty percent increase. Ms. Babb also included sample tax implications in her weekly report. Ms. Babb stated that as soon as she has more data, she will get this information out.

Councilman Sours stated that as soon as we can get this information out to taxpayers the better. Mr. Chrisman stated that it's a two-part process. Mr. Chrisman added that town residents pay town and county taxes, however, our piece of real estate is pretty small compared to the county. Ms. Babb added that the Commissioners office cannot change the assessment for you. Ms. Babb reiterated that also, along with mentioning a number for residents to call on the County's website.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Mayor Lillard reminded everyone of the Local Elected Official's Breakfast on February 10th from 7:30am-9am. Mayor Lillard also reminded Council Members of the upcoming Council Retreat that is being held at Zora Jane's on January 31st from 8am-2pm. Mayor Lillard reminded everyone to submit their economic interest statements by February 2nd. Treasurer, Danielle Babb, reminded of the deadline & penalty for late filing.

Councilman Dofflemyer congratulated the Mayor and Town Manager on their interview with the Page Valley News.

ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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Stephanie Lillard
Mayor

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Danielle N. Alger
Deputy Town Clerk