



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr. Town
Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes Town Council Conference Session

Saturday, March 11, 2023

9:00 AM

Charles A. Robinson Jr. Town Hall, 127
Center St. South

Budget Conference

1. Regular Business

Council Present: Council Member Chuck Anderson; Council Member Ray Brill Jr.; Council Member Nisha Patel; Council Member Steve Potter; Council Member Ed Somers; Council Member Howard J. Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert.

Staff Present: Mercury Peyton, Town Manager; Melanie Clark, Town Clerk; Shelley Kozlowski, Deputy Town Clerk; Leslie Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation; Christine Horner, Acting Director, Public Works; Michelle Crabtree, Director, Human Resources; David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning; Leslie Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation; Marion Serfass, Director Finance; Gwen Riddle, Finance Operations Manager, Finance; Christina Williams, Budget Manager, Finance; Karen Thayer, Manager, Communications and Marketing; Tony Mull, Director, Information Technology.

A. [23-3662](#)

Fiscal Year 2023-24 Proposed Budget Conference Session #1

Mayor Colbert called the Special Budget Conference Session to order at 9:00 AM recognizing Mercury Payton, Town Manager, to provide an overview of the proposed FY 2023-2024 budget.

The proposed \$50.1 million balanced budget reflects the Town's four operating funds: general, water and sewer, debt service, and storm water and includes items previously identified as priorities by Council. Each department was required to fund all programs and operational expenses as closely as possible to FY2022-23 original proposed budget amounts, excluding salaries and benefits. The proposed budget is based, in part, on recommendations from the staff Budget Committee and is approved by the Town Manager for submission to Town Council for consideration. Discussion is summarized as follows:

- *Staff directed to increase proposed tax rate reduction of .75% to a penny;*
- *Supported the proposed 10% increase in the water and sewer rates; Consider investigating cheaper alternatives for water purchases.*

General Fund Revenue

- *Real estate taxes equal approximately 43% of total 1.4 M General Fund Revenue;*
- *State sales tax formula based on state code – equal to a percent of school age children;*
- *Staff investigating safe ways to invest Town dollars;*
- *Some use of prior year reserves necessary to finish out 2022-2023.*

New Position Requests

David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning and Christine Horner, Acting Director, Public Works presented staffing requests. Council supported addition of both positions.

Departmental presentations included accomplishments followed by budgetary requests. The following includes a summary of the most significant questions and concerns:

Michelle Crabtree, Director, Human Resources

- *Proposed 5% salary increase (3% cost of living plus 2% merit) – bonuses of \$1,000 and \$500 awarded for exceptional service;*
- *Consider lower cost of living increase – increase merit, eliminate bonuses; Alternately consider 3% cost of living, no merit but retain bonuses;*
- *Consider changing term “merit” to “market adjustment”;*
- *Determine what cost of living increase will be sustainable over time;*
- *Compensation must be competitive with neighboring jurisdictions to retain employees; Vast majority of employees live outside of Town;*

Karen Thayer, Public Information Manager, and Tony Mull, Director, Information Technology

- *Space for new hires will be determined based upon results of Space Study;*
- *Consider airing additional public meetings; Request viewer numbers for Town programming;*

Marion Serfass, Director, Finance

- *Fiscal year 2022-2023 grant total equaled \$7 M;*
- *Consider adding a full time grant writer to increase this number;*
- *Request information illustrating financial offset from duplicate services provided by Fairfax County.*

Legal Services

- *Request information on competitive bid requirement for legal services;*

David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning

- *CUP violation monies not included in budget – currently lacking internal organization to track; Historically not tracked; Initiative to develop program to do so.*

Leslie Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation

- *Brief discussion of increasing fee for out of own participants; resident fees to remain steady.*

Jim Morris, Chief, Police

- *New police station project overage (\$18,000) largely due to delays in fire inspection of the fire panel; Consider approaching Fairfax County for partial reimbursement; Item to be paid – added to March 20, 2023 agenda for retroactive approval;*
- *Salaries make up 90% of overall Budget;*
- *Three open positions due to vacating County task forces to maintain strength in patrol division; Plan to bring back these affiliations and fill open positions;*
- *Consider filling two positions and releasing one for potential funding of newly approved positions in other departments;*
- *Public safety is the most important job of Town administration and Police Department – eliminating a position is not the answer for funding other Town departmental positions.*

Additional Item

One of Council's initiatives, protection and increase of town's tree canopy, was brought forth for discussion. Several Council members expressed the desire for additional funding for tree replacement and maintenance. While the proposed budget includes restored funding for tree replacement any additional funding will be considered at the close of the 2022-2023 budget cycle. Other Council Members, while in support of improving the tree canopy, stressed importance of prioritizing Town needs, such as street improvements.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Mayor Colbert concluded the special budget session at 4:00 PM.

THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6304, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.