



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Monday, November 18, 2019

8:00 PM

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

Work Session

1. Regular Business

Councilmembers Present:

*Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco
Councilmember Linda J. Colbert
Councilmember Pasha M. Majdi
Councilmember Douglas E. Noble
Councilmember Nisha Patel, M.D.
Councilmember Steve Potter
Councilmember Howard J. Springsteen*

Staff Present:

*Melanie Clark, Town Clerk
Steven Briglia, Town Attorney
Lynne Coan, Manager, Communications and Marketing
Michael Gallagher, Director, Public Works
Amy Milliman, Dispatcher II
Jim Morris, Chief of Police
Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager*

Town Manager Mercury Payton opened the November 18, 2019 work session at 8:00pm. He introduced the newest member of the staff, Natalie Monkou, Director of Economic Development.

A. [19-1500](#)

Consent Agenda Possibilities

Mr. Payton introduced Town Attorney Steve Briglia to provide a legal overview for the use of a consent agenda. Attorney Briglia noted that, while consent agendas are an accepted process under Robert's Rules of Order, he recommends a few exceptions: Initial contract awards, contracts over a specified dollar amount, writing a contract with no RFP or IFP, etc. Mayor DiRocco identified changing code sections and policy changes, as well as memos of understanding, particularly with changes other than date. Attorney Briglia suggested that Managers and Directors could flag agenda items appropriate for the consent agenda. Council members supported the concept as a means for streamlining the meetings.

Mr. Payton agreed to prepare a consent agenda for currently scheduled meetings with existing agendas. Should Council wish discussion on any item, it can be pulled from the consent agenda at the dais.

B. [19-1485](#)

Discussion about the Town's Emergency Management efforts

Town Manager Payton recognized Jim Morris, Chief of Police to provide a brief

overview of the Town's system. Chief Morris introduced Amy Milliman, Dispatcher II and manager of intel and crime management, who presented an in-depth overview of the emergency management system including all the various systems brought to bear to safeguard the citizens of the community. She explained that the goal of emergency management is to prevent or mitigate the impacts of, prepare for, respond to, and recover from, a wide variety of disasters/unusual occurrences that could adversely affect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the Town of Vienna. The Town's system falls under the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan for all disasters or unusual occurrences, however smaller scale events and those limited to the Town of Vienna, are under the jurisdiction of and handled by the Town's own emergency management efforts.

Chief Morris noted that as part of the Strategic Plan the police department would like to initiate greater Town employee involvement. He reviewed the process for establishing an essential staff functions chart. The first step is to identify functions necessary to continue operations in the event of an emergency. From this staff positions critical to perform each essential function must be derived. Finally, identify the minimum number of individuals necessary to perform that function. With this in mind he emphasized that the system focuses on four concepts: prevention, such as traffic lights with battery backup, preparedness such as quarterly reviews and debriefs of events, response, and recovery whereby the town has the ability to call on the County and the County can call on the State.

Mr. Payton noted that the Town Hall staff have developed an emergency management protocol which includes three essential actions; organize, response and information flow. Events generate communication between Jim Morris, Police department, Mike Gallagher, Department of Public Works, Leslie Herman, Department of Parks and Recreation, Tony Mull, Department of Information Technology, Lynne Coan, Department of Public Information. Critically, the town speaks with one voice, Lynne Coan, Manager, Marketing and Communication.

C. [19-1488](#)

Councilmembers want to know...proposal for monthly survey in Vienna Voice Newsletter

Town Manager Payton introduced an initiative put forth by Councilmember Patel for council consideration. Councilmember Patel explained the objective of the initiative: how to engage citizens and initiate feedback prior to making decisions so that Council can avoid 20/20 hindsight. She outlined a "Councilmembers Want to Know" survey - a set of seven questions constituted by Council on current topics - be administered on a monthly basis in Vienna Voice newsletter surveys.

Councilmember Majdi noted that, the merits of the project notwithstanding, staff failed to provide any recommendations for how to actually accomplish this goal. He believes that before moving any further with this initiative, staff should be asked to reassess. He noted that the established process allows for introducing new initiatives by individual councilmembers at a work session, staff is then tasked with providing ways to accomplish this initiative, and finally Council determines, based upon the background information received from staff, whether to move forward or not. Lynne Coan, Manager of Marketing and Communications, responded that she fully supports the initiative as it is a vital component of the 2018 Strategic Plan, which identified effective engagement as making certain the everyone is heard and has an opportunity to be part of the process, if desired. She recommends the development of an engagement strategy that would incorporate a selective use of the variety of tools available for outreach.

Councilmembers Springsteen, Noble and Potter all pointed out that the initiative has merit as a means for reaching out to the community but suggested that further

discussion should be had regarding methodology. Councilmember Noble recommended more clearly defined goals, objectives and success measurements. Additionally, he noted specifically that methodology should tie public comment closely to issues under Council consideration to avoid citizens feeling their responses don't matter. Mayor DiRocco questioned whether there may be other mechanisms better suited for gathering citizen feedback. She also voiced concern over statistical validity.

Councilmember Patel recognized that the suggested process may need further refinement, but reiterated that her intent is to initiate greater public outreach and engagement. Critically, she pointed out that Council sits because of the will of the people and, as such, must remain mindful that they be responsive to the public.

Mr. Payton suggested that, based upon Council feedback in favor of greater public outreach and engagement, he would recommend Ms. Coan return in 30 days' time with information on how this initiative could be accomplished.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:40pm.

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