



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes Town Council Conference Session

Saturday, March 12, 2022

9:00 AM

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

1. Regular Business

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

Staff: Mercury Peyton, Town Manager; Melanie Clark, Town Clerk; Shelley Kozlowski, Deputy Town Clerk; Steve Briglia, Town Attorney; Leslie Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation; Mike Gallagher, Director, Public Works; Christine Horner, Deputy Director, Public Works; Michelle Crabtree, Director, Human Resources, Mike D'Orazio, Interim Director, Planning and Zoning; Leslie Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation; Marion Serfass, Director Finance; Michelle Pagano-Dierkes, Deputy Director, Finance; Karen Thayer, Manager, Communications and Marketing; Gwen Riddle, Manager, Finance Operations; Tony Mull, Director, Information Technology.

A. [22-2984](#)

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Budget Conference Session #1

Mayor Colbert opened the conference session by calling on Town Manager Mercury Payton to provide an overview of the proposed FY 2022-23 budget.

The proposed \$48.7 million balanced budget reflects the Town's four operating funds: general, water and sewer, debt service, and stormwater. This figure represents an increase of \$5,491,750, or 12.7 percent above the current fiscal year largely due to a return to pre-pandemic levels of activity.

Each department funded all programs and operational expenses as closely as possible to FY 2021-22 original proposed budget amounts, excluding salaries and benefits. Requests for new programs and additional expenditures are included as unfunded priorities. 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.

Comments are summarized as follows:

Reclassifying the Economic Development Manager and the Public Information Officer (PIO)

- Not necessary, Town will become top heavy;*
- Timing is wrong, need to be frugal;*
- Size of department shouldn't impact the title;*
- Director title will positively impact credibility;*
- Interact with public; title should reflect importance of position.*

Tax Rate

- Two-year real estate tax cut 1.25%, should strive for 1.5%;*

- Possible to lower the revenue stabilization fund to meet this request;
- Reassess unfunded priorities for potential savings;
- Reconsider giving Council salary increase;
- Base decision on proposed budget, not on politics;
- Salary increase should move forward for Boards and Commissions.

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

Human Resources, Risk Management

Mayor Colbert called on Michelle Crabtree, Director, Human Resources to provide a summary of her request. She noted that the most critical current issue facing her department is recruitment.

Comments are summarized as follows:

Health Insurance

- Cost savings through changing health plans should be approached with caution;
- Consideration of a national plan provider will potentially improve coverage and reduce costs;
- Must go out into the market every three years as, by year three any signing deals will have expired and costs will begin to increase.

Compensation

- Caution against growing bigger government; assess return on investment carefully;
- Every director's mission is to determine if they are expending expeditiously;
- Use of contractors can provide significant savings related to benefits, downtime, etc.;
- Council must challenge themselves to assess necessity of Staff requests.

General Fund Revenues; Tax Relief; Transfers and Reserves; Donations; Fire Department; Debt Service Fund; Revenues and Expenditures

Mayor Colbert recognized Marion Serfass, Director, Finance, Michelle Pagano-Dierkes, Deputy Director, Finance and Gwen Riddle, Operations Manager, Finance, to present budget information for General Fund Revenues, Tax Relief, Transfers and Reserves, Donations, Fire Department, Debt Service Fund and Revenues and Expenditures.

Comments are summarized as follows:

- Must assure that tax rate decreases are keeping pace with the increases in property valuations;
- Challenge Directors to be as fiscally conservative as possible;
- Carefully assess and eliminate redundancy;
- Assess effect of property tax loss due to demolition of buildings such as 444 and 380;
- Largest Departments asked to shoulder greatest burden of budget cuts – Public Works, Parks and Recreation; Police;
- Continue to assess onetime costs.

Information requests included the following:

- *Request inclusion of percent change for all departments in budget presentation.*
- *Request to discuss donations at separate conference session.*
- *Request to break out principal from interest in budget presentation.*

Information Technology

Mayor Colbert called on Tony Mull, Director Information Technology to provide an overview of the department accomplishments and budget request.

Comments are summarized as follows:

- *Two-step verification will be a near future requirement;*
- *Conference Sessions will be moved to the Police Station in the near future;*
- *Many one-time purchases and upgrades will be funded through ARPA, attached annual licensing fees will become part of annual budgetary request;*
- *Website is on a three-year revision/upgrade cycle; residents, staff will provide input into next revision.*

Public Information

Mayor Colbert recognized Karen Thayer, Manager, Communications and Marketing to provide an overview of the department accomplishments and budget request.

Comments are summarized as follows:

- *Cable channel is underutilized;*
- *Additional programming will increase costs; must consider value against need for fiscal conservatism;*
- *Infrastructure exists currently to support robust Cable Channel, lack content and staff;*
- *ZOOM is an IT function; expansion to additional meetings would require additional staff;*
- *Social media provides alternative to Cable and Website;*
- *Consider allocating funds to improve social media messaging.*

Information request included:

Request for viewership numbers, re: Town Council.

Planning and Zoning

Mayor Colbert called on Mike D'Orazio, Interim Director, Planning and Zoning to provide an overview of the department accomplishments and budget request.

Comments are summarized as follows:

- *Carefully assess budget request for consultants;*
- *Use of consultant as expertise issue, staff unable to fill information request;*
- *Use of consultant as time management issue, staff unable to address everything required without outside assistance.*

Parks and Recreation

Mayor Colbert called on Leslie Hermann, Director, Parks and Recreation, to provide

an overview of the department accomplishments and budget request.

- *Town judged by appearance; budget adequately for mowing and sidewalk clean-up;*
- *Improved public communication needed regarding tree donation program, maintenance and replacement program;*

Information requests included the following:

Request to schedule Conference Session on Parks Master Plan.

Request to evaluate use of e-flyers over paper flyers (\$11,000)

Public Works

Mayor Colbert called on Mike Gallagher, Director, Public Works and Christine Horner, Deputy Director, Public Works, to provide an overview of the department accomplishments and budget request.

Comments are summarized as follows:

- *Trees replaced following sidewalk installation;*
- *Sidewalk installed opposite new construction, sidewalk money from new construction is escrowed;*
- *Traffic light inspection increased to monthly, reflected in budget request;*
- *Remote signaling access upgrade request on Council agenda by Fall;*
- *Older trucks require greater repair expenditures;*
- *New truck delivery requires one year;*
- *Contracting waste disposal risky, future return to Town service would require extensive equipment purchases;*
- *No significant changes in either water or sewer budgets;*
- *Water meter replacement program has improved efficiency resulting in fewer call outs;*
- *Residents can purchase submeter to help offset sewer charges for sprinkler systems;*

Information requests included the following:

Request public outreach regarding new battery collection option.

Request to provide information on additional street sweeper.

Request additional information on leaf mulching program.

Request information on impact of increased fuel costs on Public Works.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Mayor Colbert concluded the conference session at 3:36 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.