



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Saturday, March 16, 2024

9:00 AM

Vienna Police Department Community Room,
215 Center St. South

1. Regular Business

Council Present: Council Member Sondra Allen; Council Member Roy Baldwin; Council Member Ray Brill; Council Member Jessica Ramakis; Council Member Howard Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert.

Absent: Council Member Chuck Anderson

Staff Present: Mercury Peyton, Town Manager; Melanie Clark, Town Clerk; Leslie Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation; Brad Baer, Director, Public Works; Michelle Crabtree, Director, Human Resources; David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning; Marion Serfass, Director Finance; Michelle Pagano-Dierkes, Deputy Director, Finance; Karen Thayer, Manager, Communications and Marketing; Tony Mull, Director, Information Technology.

A. [24-4305](#)

Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Work Session #2

Mayor Colbert opened the Special Budget Conference Session at 9:00 AM calling on Mercury Payton, Town Manager, to provide an overview of the proposed FY 2024-25 budget.

The proposed balanced budget reflects increases over the prior year in the Town's four operating funds: general, water and sewer, debt service, and storm water and includes items previously identified as priorities by Council. Among the proposed assumptions is that the tax rate will remain the same at \$.195. The average resident will see an \$135 annual increase in taxes; water and sewer will increase 10%, while health insurance will remain steady. Three items were added to the budget for this fiscal year:

- New paid child care and family leave \$0*
- IT support with Police \$75,000*
- Police night shift differential \$50,000*

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.

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

Michele Crabtree, Director, Human Resources

- Proposed 4% salary increase (3% cost of living plus 1% merit) – bonuses of \$1,000 and \$500 awarded for exceptional service;*
- Approximately 60% of employees (excluding Directors and Deputies) receive bonus;*
- Proposed 5.5% salary increase for Police;*

- Results of class and compensation study resulted in an increase for many starting salaries; All employees are above minimum wage metric and living wage for the position;
- Unacceptable turnover rate at 16.8% Turnover rarely directly due to compensation;
- Budget increase request for updating job descriptions.

Marion Serfass, Director, Finance

- Reorganized department through increased automation; Moving some financial services to the Cloud which will open up greater automation to include credit card payments and streamlining of business license process; Moving toward email billing;
- State sales tax formula based on state code – equal to a percent of school age children;
- Single family home builds are down reflecting slight decrease in revenues;
- Permit fees have increased as home values increase;
- Residential real estate taxes provide 43% of departmental budget;
- Commercial real estate taxes continue to shrink as an overall portion of the whole;
- Sales tax provides 8-9% of departmental budget;
- Town proved relatively recession resistant during COVID, suggests that Town may not be heavily influenced by current shifts in economy; Greatest impact results from real estate taxes, CPI and interest rates.

Legal Services

- Requested increase to fund continued implementation of new procedures to screen and provide access to police body cam footage and in cruiser video footage.

Jim Morris, Chief, Police

- Salaries make up 97% of overall budget;
- Shift differential critical initiative;
- Wellness program in place;
- Due to utility cost increases for building use, may wish to consider solar (building is solar ready);
- Public safety is the most important job of Town administration and Police Department; Police represent active participant in solution to mental health issues throughout community.

Break 12:00 PM; Reconvene 12:10 PM

Tony Mull, Director, Information Technology

- Slight increase in budget request due to internet upgrades;
- Request that IT create line item for training Town staff on common IT issues.

Karen Thayer, Manager, Public Information

- No significant changes to budget request;
- Facebook and Twitter followers trending significantly upward;
- Department understaffed for growing public information push; Urge use of alternate sources (contract services; internships, etc.) for stop gap staffing until carryover funds are available; Carryover funds have been assigned based upon initiative prioritization; Reprioritization would require Council vote.

David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning

- Extensive list of Code Create pinned items; Suggest selecting one or two to address this fiscal year.

Break 2:45 PM; Reconvene 2:50 PM

Brad Baer, Director, Public Works

- *Proposed budget of \$9.3 M represents slight decrease over last fiscal year;*
- *Light synchronization represents a major priority; Sidewalk installation will continue with final Maud Robinson sidewalks moving to design phase;*
- *Working on Multi Modal and Bike Share service;*
- *Road maintenance performs under a condition based maintenance program but factor in issues resulting from outside issues such as utility repair; Town invests \$1.2 in road paving – would require \$1.7 investment to raise to green;*
- *Wholesale water costs have increased 10%; Vehicle replacement costs have increased;*
- *Drainage issues categorized as major priority; No systematic process for identifying drainage problems – rely on resident reporting.*

Town Manager Payton noted that there are no further budget sessions on the schedule.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Mayor Colbert concluded the special budget session at 4:50 PM.