



Town of Vienna

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Work Session

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

Monday, April 16, 2018

7:30 PM

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

Budget Work Session

1. Regular Business

Present:

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco
Council Member Tara L. Bloch
Council Member Linda J. Colbert
Council Member Pasha M. Majdi
Council Member Douglas E. Noble
Council Member Carey J. Sienicki
Council Member Howard J. Springsteen

Staff present:

Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager
Lynne DeWilde, Public Information – Communications & Marketing Manager
Michael Gallagher, Director of Public Works
Amy-Jo Hendrix, Recreation Program Supervisor
Leslie Herman, Director of Parks and Recreation
Jim Morris, Police Chief
Tony Mull, Director of Information Technology
Michelle Pagano-Dierkes, Deputy Director of Finance
Cindy Petkac, Director of Planning and Zoning
Marion Serfass, Director of Finance
Carol S. Waters, Legislative, Deputy Town Clerk

A. [18-828](#) Budget Work Session to Discuss General Fund Unmet Needs

Attachments: [Unmet Needs Listing - FY 18-19 Work Session Consensus](#)

Mr. Payton started the third budget work session about 7:31 p.m. and noted that Michael Gallagher had more Department of Public Work's (DPW) unmet needs to present. Mr. Gallagher began with the need for a transportation planner/engineer. As he stated, the Town's traffic needs are increasing, bigger developments are proposed that will have an impact on traffic, and DPW does not currently have a staff member specifically equipped to work on that. While the engineers on staff have a working knowledge of some major points of traffic engineering, Mr. Gallagher proposed that the Town would benefit from an experienced traffic engineer/planner who could assist both DPW and DPZ (the Department of Planning and Zoning). He further proposed that this position would help manage the many VDOT granted transportation projects and would help acquire grants. Mr. Gallagher pointed out that the time of a staff member working on VDOT granted projects could be reimbursed by those projects, so, potentially half the cost of that staff position could be reimbursed through Capital Improvement Projects. When asked whether or not a portion higher than 50% of the salary could be reimbursed,

Mr. Gallagher answered that it was possible, but 100% certainly could not be capitalized because some of the tasks would not be directly related to a specific project.

Upon Council Member consideration, it was suggested that such a position would require a person with significant experience, i.e. four to six years, plus traffic analysis experience. Planning and Zoning Director Cindy Petkac confirmed that a Planner position funded in the current year's budget was just filled in DPZ, and that today was that planner's first day of work. That Planner's "additional duties" include performing plan review and transportation and land use comments, so there is a transportation aspect to it. However, Ms. Petkac stated that during the hiring process only one resume was received that had some transportation planning experience, but that one did not have the experience that her department needed in planning, permits, and design review. So they did not find a candidate with both kinds of experience. Ms. Petkac added that the planner position requested by DPW would also be working closely with DPZ on everything from MAC re-zonings to the Charrette, or any kind of Maple Avenue transportation study or public improvement plan. In her prior position with the City of Fairfax, Ms. Petkac reported, they had a transportation planner position in Public Works who spent a lot of her time applying for grant money. There is a lot of money out there, Ms. Petkac stated, for projects that we are interested in doing and it is important to have someone focused on searching out grants. Mr. Payton reiterated that DPW's proposed transportation planner position would be more transportation oriented than the new planner in DPZ and there would be a lot of departmental overlap with regard to the transportation end of what this does and the planning and zoning functions.

Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the new transportation planner/engineer would also staff the Transportation Safety Commission. He said the planner/engineer would also contribute to other non-capital type needs like a Maple Avenue design charrette, transportation investigative reviews, or even doing some of our own parking studies and things like that.

DPW's second request was the addition of another worker who could fill-in for the Sanitation Division as well as for Streets and General Maintenance. Mr. Gallagher said he would like to have the flexibility to assign this position as needed in public works. Mr. Payton added that, depending on how some of the assignments were structured, this additional DPW employee could also help lighten the burden with the Parks and Recreation Department. A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Gallagher explained the need to replace faulty HVAC valves and thermostats. They have found the existing valves to be "of not great quality," and they do not open or close the way they are supposed to.

Leslie Herman reported that \$5,000 is being spent on jerry-rigging the holiday wreaths along Maple Avenue every year, in order to keep using them. Mrs. Herman stated that the wreaths stick out over the curb and they keep getting hit by passing trucks. Someone suggested the use of banners instead of wreaths. Banners could be used all year and be switched out for various seasons or events. A lot of conversation was generated about holiday decorations and how they could be used.

The Mayor reported that she, Ms. Serfass, and Mr. Payton had gone over all of the operating budget's unmet needs to sort out the ones which might have a consensus among Council Members, and the ones which might warrant additional discussion, and summarized them all in a color coded chart. Charted separately were the

capital unmet needs, \$5000 or greater, and proposed investment in capital improvements. There was a lengthy period of questions and discussion about all that. There was a lengthy Council Member conversation about cutting enough out of the budget to create a slight tax rate decrease. Upon request, the Finance Director provided the break-down of dollar figures generated by incremental real estate tax rate changes. She said that \$500,000.00 is generated by a one penny increase in the Town's real estate tax rate. Every tenth of a cent is \$50,000.00, Ms. Serfass stated. She further cited that 67% of the Town's residents have home values in the range of \$500,000.00 to \$800,000.00, and the average tax rate increase this past year was \$64.00 per household.

There was conversation about whether Town residents would rather have more and better Town services or pay an average of \$3.00 less in Town taxes per household. As this discussion continued, it was suggested that most residents seem to care greatly about traffic, getting their trash picked up, and getting their leaves and snow picked up. Citizen surveys have indicated that traffic & transportation is a major issue, and that services provided by the Department of Public Works are a strong positive aspect of living in Vienna. Council members commented that they would not want to compromise these services, but they would like to keep the real estate tax rate as low as possible.

Council went on to scrutinize individual line items in the proposed budget for next year. They asked how much Police Department, Public Works, and Parks & Recreation over-time pay the Town paid for events like Viva Vienna, Oktoberfest, and the Halloween Parade. They questioned whether some of the over-time costs should be shared with organizations outside of the Town government. The Mayor pointed out that such events give a lot of notoriety to our Town and help the local business community, the Rotary Club, and the community. Scouts do projects for the Town and the Rotary Club typically gives back \$10,000.00 every year. A Council Member noted that the Town Arborist had taken on additional duties, and that position was not asked for. Leslie Herman recounted that before the community center was built, there was not anyone doing the irrigation. Then Sam Lilly became the Urban Arborist so he is spending 60% of his time doing all the site inspections and that sort of thing, which Ms. Herman said he really needs to be doing 100% of the time because trees are being damaged during the middle construction phases. So the maintenance worker II would take on the duties that Sam used to do, before the Community Enhancement Commission secured the 20% tree canopy coverage requirement, so we would basically be gaining back that maintenance worker II as it used to be.

Mayor and Council eventually settled on keeping the real estate tax rate where it is, funding the plan permit review software for DPW and DPZ, the network infrastructure upgrade for IT (Information Technology Department), not funding new holiday wreaths, replacing faulty Town Hall HVAC valves and thermostats, investing in asphalt milling and overlay, etc. etc. (see adopted budget)

2. Meeting Adjournment

The Town Council budget work session of April 16, 2018 adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco

Signed / Dated: _____

Attest: _____
Deputy Town Clerk

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.