



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Monday, May 18, 2020

7:30 PM

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

Work Session

[20-1701](#)

Resolution for Continuity of Government

Mayor DiRocco opened the work session by reading aloud the Resolution for Continuity of Government. Council approved via voice vote.

1. Regular Business

Attendance

Council Member Linda Colbert, Council Member Pasha Majdi, Council Member Douglas Noble, Council Member Nisha Patel, Council Member Steve Potter, Council Member Howard J. Springsteen, Mayor Laurie DiRocco.

Mercury Peyton, Town Manager; Jim Morris, Chief of Police; Marion Serfass, Finance Director; Steve Briglia, Town Attorney; Cindy Petkac, Planning and Zoning Director.

Town Manager Mercury Payton noted three items on the agenda for consideration; Item 1. Fairfax County Public Schools Update on Louise Archer Elementary School Renovation Plans, Item 2. FY 2020-21 Budget Work Session #4, Item 3. COVID-19 Update and CARES Act Funding.

A. [20-1677](#)

Fairfax County Public Schools Update on Louise Archer Elementary School Renovation Plans

John McGranahan, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP., Attorney for Fairfax County Public School System, provided an update on plans for renovation of Louise Archer Elementary School. Louise Archer, located at 324 Nutley Street NW, currently utilizes both trailers and modular classrooms to accommodate current student enrollment and program requirements. The trailers are allowed by Town Council, per Section 18-152.2 of the Town Code. The modular classrooms are allowed through a conditional use permit.

Approvals for both the trailers and modular classrooms are set to expire Summer 2020 and FCPS is actively applying for renewals of both to allow them to operate during the renovation process. As all classrooms are in use today, total facility usage (including modular classrooms and trailers) will be necessary during renovation. Planning and design is currently underway with permitting expected to be completed by 2021. Construction is expected to occur between 2022 and 2025. After the school is renovated, the trailers and modular classrooms will be removed. Mayor DiRocco reminded representatives that the site is historical and recommended consultation with Historic Vienna, Inc. as the project moves forward.

Sunny Sarna with Fairfax County Public Schools provided a brief review of the modular classroom usage at Louise Archer Elementary School, noting that a usage permit was approved for ten years in 2005. A five-year extension was granted in 2015, with Council requesting an update on the planned project at the time of expiration. He is here tonight to discuss an additional five-year modular classroom extension. Council Member Springsteen indicated that he appreciated the update and would not oppose the request. In response to inquiry from Council Member Noble, Mr. Sarna confirmed that once renovation is complete, modular units and trailers would be removed. He further noted that additional trailers may be requested during renovation. Council Member Patel requested information on the educational process during renovation and was assured that the school will remain open during that time and education would not suffer as a result. He noted that as each classroom was completed, it would be made available for use. Council Member Patel conceded that these units are necessary but urged that extensions be limited to a designated time period to allow for progress assessment. Council Member Noble reminded Council that their scope was limited to approval of trailers and that permitting was received jointly by the Town and the County. The CUP allows for modular extension up to five years and trailer extension up to two years. Council Member Majdi noted that the timeline for trailer extension began in August 2011 and was last approved in December of 2018.

Town Attorney Steve Briglia provided a review of the educational trailer usage and noted specifically that an ordinance passed in 2005 allowed for more frequent updates on trailer usage to provide more transparency.

B. [20-1678](#)

FY 2020-21 Budget Work Session #4

Marion Serfas, Director of Finance, presented a revised budget for Council consideration. Due to continued COVID-19 pandemic closers and the resulting economic effects, Council requested further adjustment to the FY 2020-21 operating budget. Two budget scenarios (9/30/2020 and 12/32/20 return to normal business) were presented. Following a Public Hearing and recommendations by Council, an additional \$245,000 was removed from the general fund. A 9/30/20 reopening would reduce revenue by a projected \$1.6M, a reduction of 5.9% from the original proposed budget in the general fund. A 12/30/20 reopening would further reduce general fund revenue by 3.5% or a total of 9.4%. Director Serfass pointed out that the HEROS act, if approved, would potentially provide some support for revenue.

Mayor DiRocco thanked the entire Finance department for their continued efforts and reminded Council that the budget is a plan. She further requested that Finance create an additional scenario reflecting a March 31, 2021 reopening. Director Serfass indicated such a plan would likely result in an estimated additional \$1M loss. Council Member Springsteen agreed with the creation of this additional scenario and suggested a fifth scenario reflecting a back to normal (pre-COVID 19) reopening by end of fiscal year 2020-2021.

In response to Council Member Patel's question regarding potential cuts, Director Serfass explained that Staff identified \$318,000 possible cuts. Only \$142,000 were needed to close the revenue gap. She pointed out that should re-opening be delayed until March 31, 2021 \$1M in additional cuts would need to be identified with many coming from services. Town Manager Payton reiterated that should these deeper cuts be necessitated, approval; would be required from Council. Council Member Potter noted that conversations with other business leaders projected a potential 15-18-month recession. Director Serfass responded that, while her contemporaries do predict a recession, most are not as pessimistic.

Responding to Council Members Springsteen and Colbert, Town Manager Payton stressed that while the presented budget does not reflect cuts to services, everything is on the table. Mayor DiRocco reminded Council that the Town does have significant reserves and this is exactly the type of situation where these monies can be utilized. Town Manager Payton stressed that it has become paramount to adjust the operating budget based upon the current situation because it will need to be replicated in the coming years. Council Member Majdi indicated support for the previous comments and stressed that he would like to see a list of potential additional cuts now, specifically by next work session. Director Serfass reminded Council that a budget must be adopted as of June 15, 2020. Mayor DiRocco stressed that before a vote she would like budget projections for a March 31, 2021 and June 30, 2021 return to normal business. She further explained that, while these additional projections would not necessarily be presented for consideration of adoption, they would prove invaluable in shaping the final proposed budget for the coming year.

Council Member Noble noted that any budget has two sides for consideration, the budget itself and the spending plan for the budget. No matter which scenario is adopted, both sides must be taken into consideration. He stressed that cuts should be prioritized relative to the budget but noted that these cuts become part of the spending plan. He urged Council to be cautious when considering cutting personnel. Council Member Noble, referencing the potential shortfall in the debt service fund, requested that Staff provide a two scenario payment document. He recommended information cover a three-year period demonstrating payment coverage relative to meals tax revenue, perspective use of reserves and perspective use of bond premiums. This information will be critical to communicating the complexity of the decisions made by Council.

Director Serfass reiterated that Council has the latitude to select any number for revenue; the budget can be adjusted to meet that number. Decisions regarding cuts are not required tonight, but a budget must be presented for adoption. Mayor DiRocco assured that a budget would be adopted, and that Council would monitor it monthly. She stressed that the budget can be adjusted downward as the environment demands and the additional scenarios would provide information as necessitated. Council Member Springsteen recommended that Council approve the budget as presented but adjust as necessary over the fiscal year. Council Member Majdi agreed with Mayor DiRocco. In response to a Council Member Patel, Director Serfass agreed to review overtime expenses to determine if any cuts can be made. Town Manager Payton interjected that as overtime cuts are made, these will need to be clarified and well communicated, as some may directly affect residents, i.e. reduction of leaf collection or snow removal.

Town Manager Payton clarified that additional budget scenarios will be emailed to Council by Friday, May 22, 2020. Further budget discussions will be added to the agenda for the June 8, 2020 work session, with final approval scheduled for June 15, 2020. Director Serfass recommended advertisement of the budget as presented but with a footnote stating the numbers are not static and will continue to be adjusted based upon the economic environment. Council Member Noble urged a budget breakdown reflective of absolute essential services, essential but not critical services, and nonessential services, while Mayor DiRocco reiterated that consideration be given to use of reserves.

C. [20-1699](#)

COVID-19 Update and cares Act Funding

Due to the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), states of emergency were declared at the State, Federal and local levels in mid-March, 2020. Town Manager Payton provided an update of the Town's response, noting his outreach to and involvement with numerous agencies and jurisdictions for information sharing. Immediate and abundant involvement placed the Town of Vienna ahead of the curve in many areas of response. He further reviewed plans for a phased reopening of Town Hall. Mayor DiRocco stressed the need for regional cooperation in order to reduce confusion. Chief Morris provided an update on the Emergency Management Team noting that testing is available.

Director Serfass outlined the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities Act (CARES Act) which provided support directly to State, Local and Tribal governments to address the COVID-19 pandemic. As a recipient of direct funding, Fairfax County passed a proportionate amount (\$2.886 million) to the Town of Vienna. Based upon the parameters for expenditure of funds, staff proposes the following breakdown:

- 14% Consulting, Communications & Legal Services*
- 19% COVID 19 Leave & Payroll*
- 20% Cleaning Supplies & Building Reopening*
- 47% Economic Support to Businesses & Residents*

Select funding requests were presented for Council consideration, including a prisoner transport vehicle, support to Vienna residents to prevent eviction or foreclosure, and support for recovery of small businesses. Natalie Monkou, Manager of Economic Development, presented a request for \$1.6M to satisfy the last request. Mayor DiRocco thanked staff for the work on behalf of Town businesses. Council Member Patel questioned the allocation of monies, especially that earmarked for small businesses, at the expense of residents. Following back and forth amongst Council and staff, Town Manager Payton reiterated that the monies are available to help the community. The proposal for expenditure was developed based upon recent community feedback, however, should Council wish to change the allocation, staff will comply.

Additional discussion involved opportunities to expedite business reopening under the existing guidelines, such as approval of an emergency ordinance to allow serving of alcohol outdoors. Director Petkac emphasized the role of Planning and Zoning as assisting business transition to Phase 1 reopening in the easiest way possible. Council Member Potter pointed out that all effort should center around making Town businesses more solid whether through services or direct dollars. He questioned the presented timeline for business assistance plan roll out noting a six to eight-week development process may be too long. Many small businesses may not be able to withstand the time lag. He stressed that the focus of this effort should be what do they need, how fast can we get it to them, what are we allowed to do and finally how can we provide the maximum effort to keep them solvent? The effort must include some assistance for business interruptions that will allow for access to capital they need to survive.

Council Member Noble pointed out that \$1.6M is a small figure when used for business assistance. He urged development of clear criteria for application, including a solid business plan for recovery, and suggested the program be ready to go by June 30, 2020.

Mayor DiRocco emphasized that businesses who wish to expand outside should be

supported in every way possible. Dependent on a Phase 1 (May 29) reopening, Director Petkac was directed to have a 60-day ordinance ready for Council vote at the June 1, 2020 meeting. A temporary event for outside commercial operations permit can be granted to cover weekend (May 29-31) activities, requiring a signature by the Town Manager. Restaurants would be required to obtain a temporary expedited liquor license from ABC.

Maggie Kain, Director of Human Resources provided a summary of the proposal for staff hazard pay. Council Member Patel questioned this use for CARE funds and cautioned against immediate expenditure urging conservative use over a period of time. Director Serfass noted that the entire line will be appropriated on June 1, 2020 but that monies can be carried over into July. She has requested a breakdown from department heads on planned expenditures by quarter. Mayor DiRocco reiterated that the monies will only be used as intended. Council Member Patel replied that while she is sympathetic to the plight of small business, her concern rests with the residents of Vienna. Council Member Noble reminded Council to be mindful of the effect on local businesses suggesting that Council is laying the groundwork today so that Vienna is strongly positioned comparative to other jurisdictions.

2. Meeting Adjournment

The work session adjourned at 10:40 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.