



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Monday, September 21, 2020

7:30 PM

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

Work Session

A. [20-1881](#) Resolution for Continuity of Government

Mayor Colbert opened the Town Council Work Session by reading the Continuity of Government Resolution into the record. Council voted unanimously in favor of the resolution.

1. Regular Business

Attendance:

Mayor Linda Colbert; Council Members Howard Springsteen, Ray Brill, Chuck Anderson, Ed Somers, Nisha Patel (via ZOOM) and Steve Potter (via ZOOM). Staff: Mercury Payton, Town Manager; Marion Serfass, Director of Finance; Mike Gallagher, Director of Public Works; Shelley Kozlowski, Deputy Clerk; Natalie Monkou, Economic Dev. Manager; Cindy Petkac, Director of Planning and Zoning; Leslie Herman, Director of Parks and Recreation.

A. [20-1857](#) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Through 2036

Town Manager Mercury Payton explained that the work session will provide a review of capital projects forecast through 2036, with concentration on 2022, 2024 and 2026. He introduced Director of Finance Marion Serfass to provide details for all planned projects as well as a summary of cash flow and debt balances. Director Serfass began her remarks by emphasizing that the material under discussion is a planning document; items may be pushed forward or eliminated as financial conditions warrant.

The 2021 CIP begins with projects expected to be funded starting in 2022 through a bond issuance. Council Member Somers inquired whether the current low interest rates would allow for borrowing additional monies for unplanned projects and/or expenses. Director Serfass responded that this has not been done in the past because the AAA bond rating provides a premium which serves as an extra cushion. However, taking advantage of the current interest rates would allow for consolidating and refinancing of older debt carrying higher interest rates.

Reviewing assumptions for the Debt Model, Director Serfass emphasized that meals tax serves as the primary source of revenue to support capital projects. The impact of COVID-19 necessitated adjustments to counter the meals tax loss. A portion of the 2020 bond premium will be used to supplement that shortfall. With recovery to 2019 levels not expected until 2023 there are no plans to increase the 3% meals tax. Discussion of the money set aside for parking garage projects, Director Serfass remarked that the bond referendum for the library project is on the November ballot. Should that fail the Town must have a signed contract by June 2023 to receive the matching NVT grant (\$2.3M) to fund a proposed garage at Church St. and Lawyers

Rd.

Referencing water and sewer projects, Director Serfass explained that reserve monies will be set aside for undergrounding power lines beginning in 2028 through 2034.

Council Member Springsteen expressed concern regarding forecasted expense exceeding revenue through 2030. Town Manager Payton reminded Council that the Capital Projects fund has a current balance of \$6 M. Additionally, the CIP is planned through 2036 to avoid large peaks and valleys and to allow for periodic adjustments by pushing projects out further as necessary.

Mike Gallagher, Director of Public Works, responded to various questions from Mayor Colbert and Council regarding planned street and sidewalk projects. Council Member Somers inquired about prioritization of Council vrs public petition projects. The process for petition projects includes an initial review and discussion by Council. Generally, these requests require supplemental funding so they will then be worked into the CIP. These projects are prioritized along with Departmental requests during the CIP discussion.

Responding to Council Member Potter, Director Serfass and Town Manager Payton noted that the \$4 M set aside for Property Acquisition has been allocated to the purchase of the Faith Baptist Church property. Given the time required to determine property use, monies for the development will most likely not appear as a line until the 2028 or 2030 CIP.

Reviewing specific projects planned for the 2022 bond, Director Gallagher was complemented for his aggressive work toward securing outside funding. Many of the projects listed are based upon granting of these funds. The difference between the 2022 project list and that for 2024 and 2026 reflects, in part, the timing for outside funding applications and awards. Council Member Somers expressed dismay that, of all the projects listed, the issue of traffic control at the W&OD Trail and Church St. was not more highly prioritized. There was general agreement that this intersection as well as those at Mill St. and Park St. should receive immediate attention. Director Gallagher reminded Council that the 2020 bond contains \$215,000+ of Multi Modal project funding; this project is to receive first priority.

Additional discussion involved clarification on what appeared to be duplicate line items. Director Serfass stressed that she and Director Gallagher will be reviewing the project list for redundancy. An updated document will be sent to Council for further review and feedback prior to the vote on October 26, 2020. The approved document will be adjusted over the year and brought back before Council again in 2021 before going out for Bond. Town Manager Payton pointed out that Council can provide feedback for this specific document until October 12, 2020. Director Serfass agreed to provide Council with a separate document categorizing projects as critical vrs. "nice to have".

Council Member Anderson emphasized the importance of seeking outside funding sources and applauded Director Gallagher's initiative. He reiterated the potential for funding the "nice to have" projects through proffers, whenever possible.

Finance recommends that Council review the updated CIP projects list and multi-year CIP budget. A request for approval of the CIP will be on the October 5 Council agenda.

B. [20-1884](#)

Robinson Sidewalk Discussion

Mayor Colbert called for a recess at 9:12 PM. Council reconvened at 9:20 PM, at

which time Mayor Colbert extended the Work Session until 10:00 PM.

Introducing the next item for discussion, the Maud Robinson Sidewalk Trust, Mayor Colbert called attention to the draft proposal as a starting point for Council to create a final sidewalk installation selection process. Director Gallagher reviewed the prior steps taken to identify specific streets where sidewalk installation was appropriate, pointing out the stumbling blocks encountered.

Council Members proposed various ideas for improved methodology, specifically positive marketing through a Village Voice article (soliciting interested candidates), a direct letter campaign, and one on one contact. Additionally, engaging the public through an episode of "On Deck with Mercury" and posting signs on streets under consideration for the project, were deemed to be a valuable means to build positive energy around the project.

Director Gallagher confirmed that available funds will allow for the addition of 22 new sidewalks. The first step will involve identifying, of the 79 potential sidewalks, the 22 that are the best candidates for funding, with consideration given to those streets with no sidewalks on either side.

Research design generated discussion regarding non-respondents, with the consensus that effort must be taken to reach every property owner on any selected site however, as with accepted research methods, a well-developed design methodology will elicit the most responses. Council Member Anderson noted that responses of indifference regarding the project should also be collected as this is not the same as a nonresponse.

Council agreed to the following process:

An initial pilot project to include a sample of ten properties drawn from the list of 22;

A letter sent to ascertain thoughts, concerns, etc. from each of the ten property owner;

Non-respondents will be contacted in person by PAC and Council Members;

Specific concerns to be followed up in person by a staff member.

With a clear majority of property owners, the project will move forward, if not, the identified sidewalk will be put back onto the list of 22 properties for later consideration. The timeline will be set for one month; publication of the Village Voice article will initiate the study, followed immediately by the letter to property owners. A total of three weeks will be allowed for letter follow-up and door-to-door contact of non-respondents.

Town Staff recommends that a process is established that can be used by Town Staff to install sidewalk, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the process that the Town Council chooses.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Work Session adjourned at 10:28 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.