

**TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
**Teleconference via GoToMeeting**  
**Wednesday, December 15, 2021**  
**3:31pm**

Mayor Paulin, Vice Mayor Sitoula and Councilwoman Grumbine met in work session via teleconference on Wednesday, December 15, 2021. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Ryan Hicks and Town Clerk Andrea Brady.

Draft Legislation: Waiver of Commercial Permit Fees – Council agreed to move forward with the Ordinance. It will be on the January Town meeting agenda for introduction.

Draft Legislation: Council Salary Increase – This legislation would increase the salaries of Mayor and Council for the next election year. The reason for this legislation is that the Town has fallen behind in comparison to other municipalities salaries. The Council agreed to move forward with the Charter amendment. Town Clerk Brady will make sure to meet all advertisement requirements before placing the legislation on a future Town meeting agenda.

Holiday Closures – Charles County Government is giving their employees additional days for the upcoming holidays. These dates would be the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Employees currently have the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup>. Vice Mayor Sitoula asked if there would be a serious impact to services. Town Manager Hicks explained that Public Works would come in to pick up trash on all the additional days allowing them to have half days off and making sure that services are not affected. Town Manager Hicks plans to speak with the Super Intendent of Public Works to see what he suggests on the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup>. Council agreed to allow the additional days. The additional dates will be listed on the Town's website, Facebook page, Town sign, and posted on the front door of the Town Hall. An email blast will be sent out to all residents who have signed up for the newsletter email list.

ARP Funds – Town Manager Hicks had a follow up conversation with Marilyn Steele in reference to RXBSA's grocery store project. Ms. Steele is under the impression that the Town will be giving them \$375,000 per a grant, then they will lease the land back to the Town and the Town would handle all development of the parking lot. The Council stated that the Town will only be providing funding via a grant. The Town will not be leasing the land back or developing the property. Vice Mayor Sitoula stated there is no guarantee for even the funding until further guidance is received from legal counsel on the budget amendment for the proposed \$375,000 grant. Town Manager Hicks stated future meetings will likely need to be held with Ms. Steele. Mayor Paulin stated that the Town will be giving RXBSA \$375,000 and will gladly do letters of support, but the Town will not be developing the parking area. Town Manager Hicks will reach out to Ms. Steele to provide clarification on things moving forward and will notify Council of any upcoming discussions. Town Manager Hicks is waiting to hear from legal counsel on the required budget amendment.

January Town Meeting Agenda – The Council requested to add the Ordinance for waiver of permit fees.

Roundtable:

Mayor – None

Vice Mayor – Vice Mayor Sitoula suggest further discussion of in person meetings. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested starting the meetings in January. Town Clerk Brady asked for consideration of the distance employees have to travel when meetings are started in the winter with the potential of inclement weather. Council said they will take weather forecasts under consideration during winter meetings, and they plan to look into the possibility of hybrid meetings in case of inclement weather. Hybrid meetings would also allow residents who are not comfortable attending in person to still attend virtually. Vice Mayor Sitoula thanked the Town staff and wished them Happy Holidays.

Councilwoman – Councilwoman Grumbine spoke about a light that was installed in Charles Place that helped to minimize the foot traffic coming through their neighborhood, and she asked if there was a possibility to add additional streetlights in areas near the Rail Trail. Town Manager Hicks would have to speak with SMECO and speak with the County since some of those areas would be County property. Often when you light a path people are more inclined to use it in the evenings, which may not help if the goal is to minimize foot traffic. Mayor Paulin also suggested speaking to Cpl. Alpert about the issue with foot traffic in certain areas. Council will discuss this topic further at the next work session.

Town Manager – Town Manager Hicks requested Councilwoman Grumbine to set up an Apple ID so he can set up her iPad for future meetings. Town Manager Hicks reported the RFP for the Henderson property is ready, but he will be holding off on it until after the holidays to make sure everyone who needs to review it is able to do so. Town Manager Hicks spoke about the AT&T tower lease. To hand it over to Utility Services, he would have to provide something to AT&T stating the Town would be terminating their lease and they will need to direct all lease questions to Utility Services. Town Manager Hicks currently manages that account, and he is concerned that turning it over to Utility Services may cause AT&T to remove their equipment from the tower. Mayor Paulin agreed with Town Manager Hicks, he would not want to see AT&T leave. Council agreed.

Town Clerk – None

Mayor Paulin adjourned the work session at 3:52pm.

  
Andrea Brady, Town Clerk