

# Town of Lovettsville

## Town Council Minutes of the April 25, 2016 Special Meeting

### Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Robert Zoldos II called the special meeting of the Lovettsville Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. on April 25, 2016 at the Lovettsville Town Hall, 6 East Pennsylvania Avenue, Lovettsville, VA.

### Council Members Present

- Mayor Robert Zoldos II
- Vice Mayor Senate (arrived at 7:33 p.m.)
- Council Member Kimberly Allar
- Council Member Rodney Gray (arrived at 8:30 pm.)
- Council Member James McIntyre
- Council Member Tiffany Carder
- Council Member Jennifer Jones

### Staff Present

- Town Manager Laszlo Palko
- Town Clerk Harriet West

Mayor Zoldos said there would be no closed session.

### Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Zoldos led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Comments from the Public

Mayor Zoldos called for comments from the public. Vice Mayor Senate read the rules for public comment.

**Nicholas Frederickson**, 25 Mills Court, said he is very opposed to a police department. He believes it will be too expensive and the Town does not have enough of a crime issue here to justify it at all. One of the reasons he picked this place to live is because there is no crime. There is not enough crime to justify it; what will happen is either the police officer will be sitting around doing nothing or harassing people over stupid stuff, like your registration sticker has expired or your grass is too long. He does not see a reason to have someone here for that purpose. He also has a moral objection to it; he doesn't like using violence against people. He does not like supporting a department which basically its only tool is violence. If you decide you don't want to do what the police officer says, even if you're not harming anybody else (if you've just broken what rules people put down on paper); he does not think you should be violently subjected to somebody else's opinion. That's basically where he stands – he does not support it.

### FY 2017 Budget Work Session

Town Manager Palko reviewed the following items the Council needs to consider in preparation for public hearing on the FY17 Budget which will be held on April 28, 2016:

- The not-to-exceed fees, which includes a 12% increase in the water/sewer rates for the Utility Fund.
- The not-to-exceed spending amounts.

Mr. Palko noted that the Town's fiscal policy can be updated at a later date since it is not part of the public hearing. He stated that his recommendation is that the Town earmark all economic development revenues from meals, cigarette, commercial and light industrial property, and business license revenue to the debt-retirement fund, new capital fund at 80%, and 3RM Fund at 20%. He explained that whatever is left after paying debt-retirement, 80% will be allocated to new capital and 20% to 3RM. If the Council decides to move forward with a police force/department, this would be included in the General Fund under the public safety program. He discussed the revenue diversification sections of the budget and reviewed the timelines for several of the options.

Manager Palko provided a summary of the information he obtained from Leesburg and Round Hill regarding personal property taxes. On average, Leesburg residents pay \$47 per vehicle and the state pays the town an additional \$49. Manager Palko noted that by not charging a personal property tax, the Town is foregoing state money. He responded to questions from the Council about the vehicle assessments and impact on staff. He reported that Round Hill residents pay an average of \$34.54; the lowest bill in Leesburg was \$0.51 and the highest bill was \$280. Manager Palko discussed how this new revenue option could impact the Town's timeline for capital projects. The Town Manager and Council estimated that this could generate approximately \$130,000/year and they discussed how to make it revenue neutral to residents by lowering the real estate tax.

Mayor Zoldos reminded the Council that they would be acting on the not-to-exceed budget at the meeting on April 28, 2016. He said he would summarize the budget options in the Friday email.

The Council continued discussing the new revenue options and the impact this would have on capital projects and staffing. Town Manager Palko summarized the recent police panel discussion:

- Pros: Better response time is the biggest benefit and providing a safe community.
- Cons: Cost of maintaining a police force and difficulty recruiting officers in a small town.
- It is better to have experienced officers.
- The Town will need additional data from the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to do a comparative analysis with other local jurisdictions.
- Infrastructure is important – vehicles, equipment, and facilities.
- The County staffing option is much more expensive than hiring a Town police officer.

Mayor Zoldos said the state police have increased patrols in Town. He noted that the Town may not need police now but the Council was asked by a number of citizens to look into this, so they have. He said the Council may need to be able to move on this in the future, if there becomes a major issue. The Town is one major crime away from people requiring that something be done and the County has been very clear that the numbers don't justify more police support. Manager Palko suggested establishing criteria for evaluating the County's support such as call volume, crime data, and response times.

Councilman Gray arrived at this point in the meeting and Mayor Zoldos gave him a brief update on the budget discussion.

Mayor Zoldos asked each Council Member for their input on the budget options:

Councilwoman Allar said she is in favor of staff support and capital projects. She is not in favor of police support now but they should plan for it in the future.

Councilwoman Carder said her priorities are economic development and East Broad Way 2A. She is also in favor of staff support and capital projects. She does not think the Town needs police at this time; it is very expensive and there are other things that need to happen first.

Vice Mayor Senate said he favors capital projects and staff support. He doesn't see the Town needing police for several years. He said if the County converts to a police force rather than a Sheriff's Office, then they will be able to operate everywhere. He would like to see the Town get other projects done. He said Broad Way is such an improvement and not completing it for 20 years is not acceptable.

Councilwoman Jones said she is for staff support and capital. She does not feel the Town needs police now; however, they should start setting aside funds for this over the next several years. They should keep things revenue neutral for now until they see where economic development goes.

Councilman McIntyre said he agrees with everyone else that now is not the time for police; they need additional hard data to determine when this will be needed. He supports capital improvements and staff support in FY2020 when it is closer to the time of starting these projects. He supports the trash fee and the personal property tax, which will bring in a state contribution.

Councilman Gray said he echoes everyone else's comments on the police. He is torn between capital and staff support. He supports the trash fee, but would also like to see monthly or bi-monthly billing for water/sewer service.

Manager Palko said his priorities are a new financial software system, minutes support, more hours for a full-time receptionist, the open.gov platform, and the staffing/compensation study.

Mayor Zoldos said the Council had been asked to look at the police and they have done that. By going through that process they have identified some additional options for police support and established some triggers that will help the Council re-evaluate this every few years. Mayor Zoldos asked the Town Manager to provide updated numbers for FTEs based on population for other localities. The Mayor noted that the Council is in agreement with the staff support and capital projects. He said he would prefer that N. Berlin Pike be placed above East Broad Way 2B, which already has a sidewalk.

Manager Palko responded to a question about increasing availability fees. He noted that increasing the fees could discourage further development and the Town's credit report indicated they are too dependent on water/sewer availability fees.

Hearing no further discussion on the budget, Mayor Zoldos provided an update on the Town Manager's role with economic development. He and the Town Manager are recommending that the money budgeted for the economic development coordinator's position be used for consultant support. There was no objection from the Council.

**Comments from the Mayor and Town Council**

Mayor Zoldos reported on the upcoming kindergarten tours.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Harriet West, Town Clerk

Date Approved: January 19, 2017

Attachments:  
None