



City of Buena Vista City Council Organizational & Regular Council Meeting

January 4, 2024, 6:00 PM
Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for an Organizational & Regular Council Meeting on Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Tyson Cooper

Danny Staton
Melvin Henson

Steve Webb
Ronald Cash

Michelle Poluikis

Members Absent: None

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER

Mayor Cooper called the organizational meeting to order and delivered the opening prayer.

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK OF COUNCIL

Councilman Henson moved to appoint Sarah Burch as Clerk of Council. The motion was seconded by Councilman Webb and carried by Council.

APPOINTMENT OF CITY MANAGER

Motion to appoint Jason Tyree as City Manager was made by Councilman Webb, seconded by Councilman Henson, and carried by Council.

APPOINTMENT OF CITY ATTORNEY

Councilman Webb made the motion to appoint Brian Kearney as City Attorney, seconded by Councilman Staton, and carried by Council.

ELECTION OF VICE-MAYOR

Election of Vice-Mayor was tabled until the empty Council seat has been filled.

DISCUSSION OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES & APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

Mayor Cooper noted that he would like to continue the Budget & Finance committee and asked for recommendations from the rest of Council as to what other committees they would like to have.

Councilman Henson stated that he feels that the Parks & Rec as well as the Public Works & Public Safety committees are both beneficial and would like to see those continue.

Mayor Cooper also mentioned that he would like to appoint citizen members to these committees as well.

The discussion was tabled until the next meeting after Mayor Cooper asked Council to think about where the City could use the focused attention from a Council committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the organizational meeting was adjourned.

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REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

ADG #1: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Webb moved to approve the agenda. Councilman Staton seconded the motion, and it was carried by Council.

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 16, 2023, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & THE DECEMBER 14, 2023, SPECIAL MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Henson, seconded by Councilman Staton, and carried by Council.

ADG #3: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS

No one spoke.

ADG #4: REPORTS

1. Mayor

Mayor Cooper presented a new public comment policy to Council and asked them to review it for discussion at the next meeting.

2. City Manager

Mr. Tyree noted some upcoming events and dates:

- Registration for the 2024 Gauntlet Business Program and Competition is now open. The program is now in its 10th year and the largest program of its kind in Virginia. The Gauntlet is a 10-week business development program and competition that connects entrepreneurs to business experts, mentors, and resources needed for success.
- Rockbridge CAN (Connect and Nourish) will be hosting three dinners in Buena Vista in 2024. The next dinner is scheduled for March 6th at 6:00 p.m. The goal of this program is to connect and nourish people in our area. The idea is to build community by bringing together diverse people to share free professional catered dinners and linking people to community resources and providing free transportation to the event.

Mr. Tyree recalled previous discussions of the Courtroom/Council Chambers remodel. He advised that we have received a quote from Bryson Adams, and he plans to present that at the next Council meeting for discussion and/or approval. He noted that the reason for this remodel was due to a request from Judge Tucker to have the courtroom “flipped” due to safety concerns as they (the Judges and staff) have to walk through a crowd of people that could potentially do

bodily harm.

Mr. Tyree then turned the floor over to Economic Development Director, Kristina Ramsey, to update Council on the Town Square project.

Miss Ramsey advised that there was an opening in the Timber Framers Guild schedule for April of this year, so they will begin work on the pavilion for Town Square then. She stated that there will be a need for volunteers and donations. She asked for everyone to spread the word to help get as many people involved as possible. She also noted that we will be providing meals for the workers every day that they are working, so we will need lots of help with this. Miss Ramsey said that the donations could be monetary or in-kind contributions.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees/Representatives

Councilman Henson thanked everyone involved for a successful Christmas parade and tree lighting. He also expressed some concern over waiting to appoint Council committees due to some park and rec decisions that need to be made soon.

ADG #5: CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

OLD BUSINESS

OB #1: SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO ABANDON CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY: 150 FEET IN THE 200 BLOCK OF POPLAR AVENUE

Tom Roberts opened the discussion by stating that there had been no changes to the text of the Ordinance, however, the staff report has been updated following the first reading and feedback from Council. He recapped the first reading, stating that this is an undeveloped block of Poplar Avenue. There are two lots that three houses will be built on along with the construction of a private street. The area of the lots will be the same, however, the frontage has been reduced. He noted that both parties (the developer and Mr. Eason Roberts) would like to purchase their half of the right-of-way. He addressed the concern over managing storm water runoff, advising that they are planning to tie into the City drain system and an engineer will be completing a study on this. It is likely that they will have to replace a portion of the pipe that crosses 3rd Street, and the pipe will need to be upgraded to a larger size. He noted that the developer has asked for approval of the request contingent on the engineer's scope of work being completed as he would like some assurance before paying for the engineering study.

Councilman Cash raised concerns about fire and EMS being able to get in and out of the private road. Mr. Roberts stated that the road will be constructed to meet VDOT standards. He did note that the road will be a travel way only with no on-street parking allowed and no turn-around at the end, so any vehicle, emergency or otherwise, would have to back out of the road. He also noted that since there will only be two of the houses serviced by this road, it shouldn't be a concern.

Councilman Cash also asked if there would be an HOA agreement in place. Mr. Roberts said that there will be, and he and Mr. Kearney will be working on that process.

This item will be carried over to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

NB #1: DISCUSS APPOINTMENT OF NEW CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Mayor Cooper recommended that we advertise the opening and ask those who are interested to submit an application along with a letter of interest by January 15th. Those individuals would be invited to the next meeting for an “interview”, then Council will make their decision.

NB #2: SCHEDULE CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREATS FOR 2024

Mayor Cooper stated that he would like to have four sessions this year and would like to pursue someone to help facilitate the conversations. The following dates were proposed and agreed upon by Council:

- February 17, 2024
- April 20, 2024
- July 20, 2024
- October 26, 2024

All retreats will be from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm; locations TBD.

NB #3: APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Councilman Webb moved to appoint the Council members as members of the Public Service Authority. Councilman Staton seconded the motion, and it was carried by Council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor