

**ROCKY MOUNT TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2012**

The Rocky Mount Town Council Town Hall meeting was held at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building located at 345 Donald Avenue, Rocky Mount, Virginia on October 23, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. with Council in attendance.

Mayor Steven C. Angle, Vice Mayor Gregory B. Walker and
Council Members Jerry W. Greer, Sr., Bobby M. Cundiff, P.
Ann Love, Robert L. Moyer and Billie W. Stockton

For the record, the following were present: All members of Town Council as noted, Town Manager C. James Ervin, Assistant Town Manager/Community Development Director Matthew C. Hankins, Finance Director Linda Woody, Fire Chief Charles Robertson, Chief of Police David Cundiff, Public Works Director Cecil R. Mason, Wastewater Department Superintendent Timothy Burton, Water Treatment Department Superintendent Robert Deitrich, and Town Clerk Patricia H. Keatts.

(Note: This being a Town Hall style meeting, no approval of agenda was conducted.)

TOWN HALL MEETING

The Town Manager gave a welcome to those in attendance by stating that each year the department heads talk about the behind-the-scenes and day-by-day operations of their departments.

A. Police Department (Chief of Police David Cundiff)

- Goals set forth and reached are:
 - o Have a K-9 program for both narcotics and explosives.
 - o Replaced and installed up-to-date equipment in police vehicles, such as video and recording.
 - o Each police officer is equipped with audio and video recorder button to their uniforms, which is utilized when the officer is out of range from the car video range, such as inside a structure). This equipment was made available through Virginia Municipal League (VML).
- Goals being pursued:
 - o Certified the police department as a Crime Prevention Department and a Community Policing Agency. This would also consist of the Town being a crime prevention neighborhood by end of the year.
 - o Up-to-date training in school prevention and shooting situation response.
 - o Training all K-9 dogs for school, and training for shooting situations.
 - o Developing and training the police department's SWAT team, even though currently working with Franklin County. The Town needs its own SWAT team.
 - o Acquired a polygraph examiner.

The Town Manager explained how the VML safety operations grant works, with each department needing to file as soon as possible for this grant because it is basically on a first-come, first-served basis. Last year, the Wastewater Department filed first and received the grant to assist with the replacement of their UV (ultra violet) equipment.

B. Finance Department (Finance Director Linda Woody)

- The Town currently has on-line on the Town's website:
 - o Budget (located under "Government & Departments").
 - o Financial statements (also under the same category as the Town's budget).
- New things taking place:
 - o Regarding real estate taxes reassessment, the taxes are lower than the previous four years' assessment.
 - o The new rate for Town taxes is 13 cents, but average tax is less than last year's. Franklin County's taxes are at 54 cents. The Town's tax tickets will be mailed in December with a February 28th due date. Franklin County is hoping to get everything done this week in order to mail out the second week in December.
- The Town decals will go on sale January 2nd and are usually due March 31st, but since this is on a Sunday, the decals will be due on Monday, April 1st. The Town decal color will be blue (this is last year Franklin County will be selling decals, with their decal color being green).
- Regarding business licenses, the rate will be \$10 if gross receipts are less than \$50,000.

C. Fire Department (Fire Chief Charles Robertson)

- The Rocky Mount Fire Department is an all volunteer organization.
- Sole intent is to provide fire suppression services and education services to the citizens of Rocky Mount, various organizations, and surrounding area.
- Currently, have 23 active members on roster.
 - o Membership consists of members with as many as 64 years of service, to as little as six months service, with an accumulative total of 414 years of service.
 - o Wide variety of age for the department, and believes Council will agree that this shows a great deal of dedication of all of the department's members.
- Regarding certification:
 - o Presently have 21 members that are certified Firefighter I (FFI), which is the basic state level of certification that must be acquired in order to become an active member, with a member of the department needing to pass this certification to obtain their FFI. FFI consists of 150 hours of classroom time and 34 hours of hazmat awareness training.
 - o Presently have 14 members with Firefighter II (FFII) certification. FFII consists of 85 more hours of classroom and hazmat operations training.
 - o Both FFI and FFII require a lot of specialized training.
 - o Presently have two "probationary" members that are in the process of completing FFI certification. A member has basically one year to pass FFI, which must be completed and passed before a "probationary" member can be promoted to a full service "active" member. The department works with the "probationary" member to make sure they are able to complete everything.

- Once the two “probationary” members gets certified, the department will be totally certified.
- There are several members that are trained EMTs, which helps the department assist the rescue squads when called upon to do so.
- Also have other trainings through V.D.F.P. each year, as well as monthly inner-department training that is used to sharpen skill levels.
- On average, the department answers a total of 350 calls per year. This year, the call volume seems to be trending towards an increase in calls.
- Very proud that the department’s average reaction time is four minutes and a response time of seven minutes for all calls. Their call response time is one of the best for a volunteer department. There is only one other volunteer fire department that is only a very few seconds ahead of them in their response time.
- The department covers 80 square miles in the County, and 6 square miles in-town.
- October is one of the busiest times for the department during the year as it is called upon by the area school system, as well as private organizations, to bring fire trucks and equipment to their locations as an education tool for their students and members. Also, there are several fire station tours a year to pre-schoolers and Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations. As Fire Chief, very proud that there are a lot of the department’s members that take the time to do this for the community.

The Town Manager stated that he gets reports from Franklin County Public Safety and the Rocky Mount Fire Department is at the top of response time.

D. Water Department (Robert Deitrich)

- The department has a competent and dedicated staff that operate the Water Plant 365 days a year.
- The department now has four of its six operators with the highest level of operator certification attainable in the state of Virginia. Definitely working towards making this six of six.
- Rocky Mount gets its drinking water from the Blackwater River. The Town’s treatment facility is designed to produce up to two million gallons of drinking water per day. To make clean, safe drinking water, chemicals are applied to the river water that causes microscopic particles to clump together and sink to the bottom of two settling basins where they are then flushed to waste ponds. Particles that might not settled are filtered out by two sand filters. Once filtered, the water is chlorinated for disinfection. Fluoride is then applied for dental health, then soda ash and phosphate to prevent corrosion of the water user’s pipes.
- The Town has six storage tanks and two pump stations to maintain adequate water pressure and a two-day emergency supply of water. Currently looking at storage tank maintenance contract and working with the Assistant Town Manager to get a request for proposal in order to try to keep the costs down in maintaining the tanks and to receive competitive bids. A couple of the tanks are reaching their age of limitation.

- The water plant can make drinking water that meets or exceeds state and federal regulations. Some operational changes have been made over the last three years that have earned the water plant and Town consecutive Silver Awards for filtration and clarification from the Virginia Department of Health. These awards are for operating above minimum operational standards on a routine basis.
- Routine testing of the water at the plant and throughout the water system takes place throughout the year for bacteria, various chemicals and metals. Operational testing is done at the plant to make sure there is no contamination. Proud to report that Rocky Mount has a track record of great test results and that trend is continuing because of the hard work of the water plant's operations staff. Received some of the best results this summer, and this is usually the time when it is hard to get good clean samples.
- With the age of the water plant comes the need for repair and replacement of its equipment. Now in the process of doing both this year. Confident that the Town can get another 30 years out of the plant's current water pumps that recently was rebuilt, saving the Town thousands of dollars. Knowing that the plant's electric motors were at the end of their rope, chose to replace them with new more energy efficient models that will save the Town money in the long run, and increase the reliability of the water treatment plant. The goal is to be smart with the plant's budget and get the most value for the customers. Just received bids on this project and the engineer is looking at them. Will come to Council with options on what to spend to get the biggest bang for the buck.
- Improving the plant's water accountability is an ongoing effort in Rocky Mount. Working to know where every gallon of water goes after it leaves the water plant. A number of Town's departments have been working on separate projects. This summer, the Water Department worked with Trane Company to look at the plant's energy use and water accountability. Using funds from a grant program and lots of help from the Town's Public Works Department, sent off about 50 water meters to check for accuracy and found that the accuracy of the Town's residential water meters were actually very good and very accurate. Overall, tested very well. This is an on-going process.
- The water plant staff is currently in the process of testing every fire hydrant connected to its system. Citizens may have seen recently on the news where staff found some underperforming fire hydrants. Once the problem was discovered, quick action was needed to make it right. With a great deal of help from the Town's Public Works Department with the installation of a new water line, the flow and pressure to these hydrants has been restored to normal levels.
- Believe it is important for the Town's water plant customers to understand that they are getting a great value for their money. While the first responsibility of the Water Department staff of five operators and the Superintendent is to make healthy, good tasting water seven days a week, including holidays, other duties they are responsible for include: maintaining the signs and buoys on the Pigg and Blackwater rivers; maintaining the water plant's pump stations and storage tanks; flushing and testing fire hydrants; investigating complaints (happy to say that there are not many); administering the Town's Cross Connection Control Program and fire system inspection program; and all other duties as assigned.

- Very proud that all that staff do, hope to make the Town's water customers proud for years to come. They work hard to improve their product of producing water for the Town.

A question arose from the audience regarding if the water plant tested for pharmaceuticals. The Superintendent of the Water Department implied that they do not, but never know what the state may mandate further down the road.

The Town Manager explained disinfection byproducts. He stated that the Superintendent of the Water Department works aggressively to flush out the system, and by doing this, he and the water plant's staff have identified a lot of this and it is taken care of.

E. Wastewater Treatment Department (Timothy Burton)

- The Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant is a 2.0 MGD (million gallons per day) facility that operates seven days a week, 365 days year, is manned eight hours a day, Monday through Friday, and four hours a day on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.
- The plant is operated with a staff of four operators, including the Superintendent.
- The average flow at the plant in 2011 was 0.742 MGD, which is at 37.1% of its capacity.
- The plant continues to operate at over 99% efficiency with no permit violations, which enables the plant to continue to operate at a reduced testing schedule and reduced hours of operation, saving the Town a large sum of money annually on testing supplies and labor.
- The plant staff are also responsible for maintaining seven lift stations, with this including taking care of most maintenance issues and three visits weekly to each lift station.
- In the past 18 months, the plant had three major accomplishments:
 - o First, would be the building that was built over the UV (ultra violet) system. This building would have cost over \$25,000. With the combined efforts of the Public Works Department and the Wastewater Treatment Plant staff, the building was constructed for less than \$7,000.
 - o The second major accomplishment was upgrading the UV disinfection system in July of this year. This new system will assure the Town of being able to provide excellent disinfection well into the future. Another benefit is that this system allows staff to operate the older system with the new, or as a backup. The system that was removed was kept to be used for spare parts to the older system. This should save the Town a large sum of money over the years. This project also came in well under budget.
 - o The third major accomplishment would be maintaining the laboratory accreditation under the Virginia Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (known as VELAP). This deals with following the regulations of the Virginia Administration Code (VAC) 30, Chapter 45. All Virginia Wastewater Environmental Labs must have this accreditation or they have to send out all of their testing to commercial labs. This has doubled the amount of performance

- testing, quality control testing, training and paperwork. All parts of the testing and results must be defensible in a court of law.
- Every year the repair and maintenance cost continue to rise. In the near future, the Town of Rocky Mount will have to face the challenges of upgrading parts of its 18 year old treatment process due to the obsolete and worn-out equipment in order to maintain its excellent records of producing a very clean effluent.

The Superintendent of the Wastewater Plant concluded by stating that if anyone has questions or concerns, they can reach him at the plant (giving out the phone number and his e-mail address).

The Town Manager congratulated the Superintendent of the Wastewater Plant for doing such a good job in upgrading the UV system and saving the Town money on this project.

F. Public Works Department (Cecil Mason)

- Worked on the water line on Dent Street to increase the flow to Diamond Avenue and Anderson Street areas of the Town. Explained that there was only a 6" line feeding the whole area, further explaining how the lines were tied-in to the other lines to increase the flow. With this work being done, this should take care of the water pressure flow problem that was in this area.
- Will start the annual leaf pickup the second week of November.
- Receives quite a few calls regarding streetlights being out. Always encourages the caller to get the streetlight pole number and address it is near, and then call the Town Clerk, whose office reports the outage to American Electric Power.
- Explained that in snow or ice events, major roads will be cleaned first, then the residential roads will be cleaned. Encouraged everyone not to clean their driveways until the street in front of their homes are cleaned.
- The Town's clean-up week is always the first Monday of the month for large items to be picked up, unless that day is a holiday. If this is the case, the large item clean-up day will be the next working day. Emphasized for people not to put their brush needing to be chipped or picked up in the same pile that other items are placed in or piled up in (this makes it hard to separate out). Confirmed to Vice Mayor Walker that it would not hurt to put something in the newspaper about people needing not to combine the trash. The Assistant Town Manager stated that he would take care of this.
- Fixed part of the stormwater system that was not planned.
- Did several jobs on the water leak today. Has not seen the water leakage report, but hopes now that everything is okay.
- Mentioned that he is finding more needles being thrown in the trash, with this being dangerous for his staff that pick-up trash. Council Member Greer commented that he would like to see the Town require everyone to have a trashcan and to eliminate placing trash out in trash bags. The Town Manager mentioned that when the Public Works Department staff picks up bags with needles, it does make it dangerous and that he is looking into getting "sharp boxes" and distributing it those who throw the needles into the trash. He further mentioned that if the Public Works Director would

give him a list of those that are throwing them in the trash, he will write them a letter not to do so, similar to what his office has had to do in the past regarding this very same matter.

The Town Manager stated that before shifting off from the utility departments that have given their reports, the utility budget is a budget unto its own. Pointed out that the utility operation is under budgeted and everything that has been reported by these departments, they are doing with less money that was originally budgeted to do in order to keep utility rates low for the citizens of the Town.

G. Community Development

- Town Planner (Patrick Rust)
 - Stated that he will be going over a few projects that he has worked on and continue to be working on with the Community Development Department, with all of these past and present projects being assets to the Town's goal to enhance the community.
 - Water meter audit overview:
 - This project consisted of recording all of the water meters on the Town's water system by using Global Positioning System (GPS).
 - Took attribute data for record keeping and looked for any problems.
 - Results found a few minor issues, but then abated those issues (got good records).
 - Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Revenue Sharing (funding for road projects):
 - The State Route 40 East improvements for pedestrian improvements is expected to be completed by August 2013.
 - Regarding the expected completion date for the project for guardrails on Grassy Hill and little section of Weaver Street, that is yet to be determined.
 - The Scuffling Hill project application will be submitted for 2014 funding year. This includes curb and guttering to help alleviate issues of runoff and gravel going across the road.
 - Adopt-A-Street/Park:
 - Will be a community/volunteer program.
 - Presented visual overview of proposed streets that could be adopted.
 - Did receive a litter grant in the amount of \$3,000 that will help with this program.
 - There has been some interest shown from the high school and some civic organizations. Will start advertising next month to see if there is any further interest in this.
 - Welcome garden/welcome sign:
 - Presented visual overview of site located to the entrance onto North Main Street off of U.S. 220 South coming into Town.
 - The site is scheduled to be graded this week.
 - The planting of trees is scheduled to be done by mid-November.
 - The welcome sign will be a nice element to have in-town for a gateway to Rocky Mount.

- Economic development:
 - o Working with the Community Development Director's direction on creating a data base on vacant lots so the Town can have a database of available properties (anywhere from buildings to vacant lots) to use to enhance the Town's economic development efforts.
- Traffic light upkeep:
 - o This is an on-going effort.
 - o Traffic lights are at 20 intersections with 162 traffic light heads.
 - o Town has contractual engineer that works on the traffic lights so they can be operational, with them looking at the technical issues when needed.
 - o Continues to do Lights-for-Life system upkeep. Trying to make sure any issues are addressed and taken care of quickly so those lights are working properly.
 - o Between the Police Department and Public Works staff (those in the field), there are staff "eyes" seeing what most of the problems are, but what is not seen by staff cannot be fixed. Encourages the public to report any problems they see with traffic lights to his office.
- Updating data and mapping:
 - o Continually updating data and mapping.
 - o Finally, a part of their department is maintaining records and keeping data up-to-date. A huge asset to their department is their computer software (GPS), which allows staff to keep spatial information and produce maps. The Town's water, sewer, roads, buildings, geography, land use and much more data is stored on this data base system, which needs to be updated continually to be utilized correctly.

The Town Manager stated that what the Town Planner had mentioned about the gateway sign to the Town is a thrust for the Town to look its best. Some time back, all the welcome signs on the major corridors coming into the Town were refurbished by Indigo Signs. He further stated that the main entrance sign will be done at no extra money to the Town by using Town staff and energy.

- Assistant Town Manager/Community Development Director (Matthew Hankins)
 - Working on the Performance Center.
 - Working on blight conditions on properties (went over streets they are targeting).
 - Recognized the Planning Technician (Stacey Sink) for getting zoning ordinance updated.
 - Uptown construction project is completed. Few facades needing to be re-done.
 - Enterprise Zone letters will go out to businesses affected by the state's closing of the Enterprise Zone by the end of 2013. Will try to make 2013 a banner year to get as many businesses as possible in the Enterprise Zone before the deadline date.
 - Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) completed the arts and cultural district form and application.

- Next big project will be the department's comprehensive plan revision. This is mandated by the state. Will take a lot of their staff time. Will guide the Town for the next five years.
- Working on the first responder memorial, which will be a peaceful location to honor the memory of fallen first responders.
- Town has had its own social media presence for about a year now.
- Prospect counts up on economic development. Waiting on political uncertainty nationally to die down.
- Working to bring in November the VDOT Six-Year Plan project for realignment of 220/40 intersection at Main Street, Pell Avenue and Franklin Street. Hope to have that traffic headache cleaned up for the future.
- Working on undeveloped subdivisions.
- Working on getting website updated.
- Everything is a team effort and could not have done what has been accomplished without his staff.
- Thanked Council for their support.

H. Town Manager (C. James Ervin)

- Stated that Town staff pulls a big load by doing sometimes less with less.
- Focusing on keeping those things citizens want, such as: trash pickup; police protection; good streets; etc.
- The budgeted fire suppression and cigarette fees helped address some of those things.
- Council Member Cundiff, Public Works Director, and Superintendent of Water Department worked together to find the water line leaks.
- Have very little employee turnover, with this being mainly due to Council making the Town a great place to work.

Mayor Angle stated that he believes he speaks for the rest of Council that they appreciate what all the staff does every day for the Town.

At 6:45 p.m., the Town Hall meeting was concluded.

Steven C. Angle, Mayor

ATTEST:

Patricia H. Keatts, Town Clerk
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