



Minutes of Council Meeting  
Work Session  
Buchanan, VA

September 2, 2021

Present: Mayor Craig Bryant  
Vice-Mayor James Manspile  
Councilman Chris Petty  
Councilman Marlon Rickman  
Councilman Chris Witt

Mayor Craig Bryant opened the September 2, 2021 work session at 7:00 pm. Town Manager Susan McCulloch took roll call. With all Councilmembers present, a quorum was established.

First item on the agenda was the preliminary budget review. Town Manager McCulloch stated that there would be quarterly reviews. The General Fund Profit/Loss budget, Total Local Tax/ Other total is \$23,119.00. Last year at this time it was \$16,143.00, that has increased. Meals Tax, Utility Tax, and Vehicle Fees have increased this year. Town Enterprise Funds are up as well by \$500.00. The Town's biggest increase from last year, because there were no events due to COVID, were Carnival and Reggae by the River. This was a record year for the Carnival. Town exceeded the goal of \$70,000.00 in profit, actually made \$120,000.00 from Carnival. Reggae by the River surpassed expectations as well. Town expected a profit of \$5,000.00 and actually made \$7,500.00. The categorical aid is \$466,482.00 right now. That is half of the \$932,964, we will receive the second half between May and July of 2022. The challenges right now for the Town include an increase in legal fees. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the Town has had a lot of legal issues lately such as Inboden and Petrus. To help offset the increased costs, Town Attorney Jon Puvak is calling in to meetings instead of attending. That helps to save \$700.00 per meeting attended. Town Manager McCulloch stated that new overtime laws went into effect on July 1, 2021. The Town was required to pay out a lot of compensatory (comp) time especially to the Treasurer. The General Assembly changed the overtime laws so that comp time was no longer allowed. Around the day the checks were written, the General Assembly reversed the decision. Everyone has been zeroed out on overtime. Town Manager McCulloch stated that usually that time is held to use as vacation time, there is not a big financial change as is in this budget. The utilities budget is pretty level. Contract services have been placed in a different section of the budget this year. They appear higher or lower based on where they are placed. Town Manager McCulloch stated that over all the budget is looking good, we are to the positive. There are some recommendations, but right now

with the ARPA funds and the Carnival funds, the general fund is in good shape. Regarding the Utility Fund, the Town is hoping that any expenses can be rolled over from ARPA funding. Town Manager McCulloch asked if there are any questions. Next month will be a quarterly review as has been done in the past, with better graphs. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the Town needs to be watchful as the updates are done. The water and sewage repair and maintenance supplies, Town may need to move monies back and forth between the two as needed. Town Manager McCulloch stated that Town Treasurer Tina Kingery had mentioned that possibility as well. Town Manager McCulloch stated that ARPA money may be used to offset some of the needs stated in the last year as well. Councilmember Petty asked if the prices are fluctuating on these items like the prices on everything else. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the part that was ordered today for the filter building, an actuator on a valve, was \$2,037.00 not including shipping. Councilmember Rickman asked what size the actuator was. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that he had all the specifications, and he would get back to Councilmember Rickman. There is a possibility of rebuilding the broken one to have as a backup. Mayor Bryant asked if there were any construction related costs, whether planned for and not taken care of due to costs, or unplanned. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that nothing was purchased last year. Town is working on increasing supplies. There were items that had to be purchased for the water tap on 4<sup>th</sup> Street that allowed the Town to see that it needs to increase inventory. Right now, prices are holding steady for the purchases Town is making. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that some parts could not be found. When the Town runs out, the parts will be made in house. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that if the budget continues to look good, possibly replacing the John Deere zero turn mower. Town has spent a lot of money to repair it, but there are still problems with it. Vice Mayor Manspile would like to replace it with a Ferris 52-inch mower that would fit on the trailer and get in smaller areas than the big mower.

Next on the agenda was discussion of Carnival net proceeds. Town Manager Susan McCulloch stated that between the Pandemic and the unfortunate events at the Salem Fair, attendance and revenue for the Carnival exceeded expectations. Operation expenses for the Carnival were \$73,095.50, including maintenance and utilities was \$75,511.00. Proceeds from the Carnival were \$104,674.32. Councilmember Witt asked if that included the volunteer time. Town Manager McCulloch stated that volunteer time is not quantified in QuickBooks. That would be in a separate report, this report is only expenses and revenues. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the Town worked with the managers of the different activities to get volunteer sign-in sheets for each night, but it is chaotic, and very difficult to get exact numbers. Staff can estimate the number of volunteers per shift per night and divide that number by volunteer dollars. The number would be very, very high. Town Manager McCulloch stated that staff time, Community Developer Harry Gleason worked for free that week. He worked his 40 hours, but he can't get overtime. So, all the time he put in at the Carnival, probably 100 hours or more, he was not paid. The number of hours he put in was scary. Councilmember Witt stated that it is getting harder to get volunteers, he wanted to know, if Town had to pay for help, what would the Town have to pay. Town Manager McCulloch stated that would have to be a paper document that does not have anything to do with QuickBooks or the budget, that would take a long time to calculate. It would be hard to quantify because the volunteers are willing to work harder than the people who would get paid to do it. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the volunteers don't want their time counted. Councilmember Rickman stated that the volunteers like to work with other people. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the volunteers like to be anonymous, and the Carnival really instills pride in Buchanan. Not just as a fundraiser, but probably one of the best community events Town Manager McCulloch has ever seen. Councilmember Witt stated that he doesn't think that it has ever been

quantified what it would take to run the Carnival without volunteers. Town Manager McCulloch stated that it would not be worth having, that Town would lose money tremendously. Mayor Craig Bryant stated that if you multiply minimum wage by how many hours worked you could get an estimate. Town Manager McCulloch stated that there were 100 volunteers every day, some of them working from 4pm to 10:30. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she asked Community Developer Harry Gleason what was needed to make improvements for the Carnival. This list is just estimates and recommendations. Emergency services requested funding, but Town connected them back to Jason Ferguson, Fire Chief of Botetourt County, to make sure the request does not put an undue burden on the County. Town Manager McCulloch checked with Jason Ferguson, but she has not heard back from him. What Emergency Services has requested costs around \$30,000.00, but we need to have four quotes. For that reason, this has been put on hold. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that his concern is that anything Town of Buchanan purchases for Emergency Services becomes property of Botetourt County. Town Manager McCulloch stated that Town had budgeted \$45,000 profit to balance the budget. That was exceeded by \$56,782.99. This is like the ARPA money, we don't know if we will ever see it again. Some of the things that are needed for Carnival are: the Fry Stand, 2 of the fryers are getting old to the point that they are getting so hot they are shutting down. Blossman had to come out twice for repairs. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that since the Carnival was shut down last year because of the pandemic, Town had planned to buy 2 new fryers last year, and 2 more this year. Now, Town should go ahead and purchase 4 new fryers. Vice mayor Manspile asked Mayor Bryant how many fryers are in the fry stand now. Mayor Craig Bryant stated there are 2 new fryers and 4 old ones. Mayor Bryant stated that the new fryers are bigger, and he believes there is only room for 2 more fryers. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that Town should purchase the fryers to replace the old ones. Mayor Bryant stated that the new fryers were working will this year, but it would be smart to invest in 2 more to help keep up with demand. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the roofing on the list probably has a paint warranty. That needs to be checked before Town tries to paint the roofing on the buildings. Town Manager McCulloch stated that coolers so that the Town can buy its own drinks and save money, air conditioning especially for the fry stand, the playground benches came from the county application that needs to be revisited, but benches at the basketball courts, the O's that switch out of the love work sculpture that the Technical Institute (BTech) makes would be really nice everything else is paid for, and 2 of the lights in the parking lot have burst and rained down glass when they exploded. LES has given a quote to replace the lights, they will donate the fixtures. Some of the planter barrels in Town need to be replaced, and a new planter at the triangle on the Bridge that will be more sustainable. Vice Mayor Manspile asked for Councilmember Petty's opinion on the barrels in Town. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the biggest thing the barrels do is collect cigarette butts and trash. Councilmember Petty stated that there have been no cigarette butts or trash in any of the planter barrels. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that someone must be cleaning them out. Councilmember Petty stated that when he first started watering, he thought what was the point of the barrels, but he has seen people lay down in the middle of the street to take pictures of the planter barrels. He stated that he thinks the planter barrels are an asset. Councilmember Marty Rickman agreed with Councilmember Petty. Vice Mayor Manspile asked if all of the barrels are lined. Councilmember Petty stated that no they were just typical wine barrels like you would get from a winery. Vice Mayor Manspile asked if they could be replaced with plastic 55-gallon drums with holes cut in the bottom. Councilmember Petty stated that if they resembled wine barrels it would be ok. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that something needed to be done to protect the wood better. Mayor Bryant stated that he would like for Town to work towards making sure there is nothing

in the stands that can be repossessed. Everything down there should be the Town's and marked as Town Property. There should be more security, possibly some cameras. Vice Mayor Manspile stated there should be some stenciling or etching on property. Mayor Bryant stated there needs to be more discussion on the Emergency Services request because that is very complex. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the LOVE sign was built at BTech, but he thought the money had been appointed for the foundation at the park. Town Manager McCulloch stated that it is all paid for, but we had to coordinate with the school because of the pandemic. There has been a delay, but we are back on the school's list. Vice Mayor Manspile asked if BTech has built the sign. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the sign is built, the letters are at the filter building, but BTech was working on the rest of the project. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that he thought the Town had to have a mason come in to build the foundation. Councilmember Petty stated that he thought the carpentry and masonry department at BTech was building the foundation. Mayor Bryant stated that he thought BTech was going to do it and donate it. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that something has been dropped because it hasn't been finished yet. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she was not sure if that was because of the rotating letters, but we have the original ones. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that BTech built the sign, but Town wanted to switch the O for the seasons. The Town was going to be responsible for switching out the letters once the sign was in place. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she would check what has happened then update Council. Mayor Bryant suggested that as safety becomes more of an issue, thinking of a different type of door for the Zoo Dip stand because of how heavy they are. Councilmember Petty stated that the doors were not changed on that stand because of the possibility it would have to be moved. Councilmember Petty suggested taking the wooden doors off the Zoo Dip stand and possibly replacing them with aluminum. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that if you want a dark color, get some of the Lexan plastic for the doors. Mayor Bryant stated that since the Drive-thru Christmas event was such a success, could we use any of this for that event. We didn't have the Carnival last year, so we need to account for that missing link this year. Councilmember Petty stated that the air conditioner in the Fry Stand where the potatoes are kept definitely need to be replaced. Councilmember Rickman stated that he had removed the leftover potatoes and donated them to citizens in need. Vice Mayor Manspile asked what Town wants to do about the bathrooms at the Town Park. Town Manager McCulloch stated that was part of the next item on the Agenda. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that since we are talking about using the money, this should be discussed as well. Since the Carnival made such a profit, let's do this now when the money is available without using Town Funds. The event itself is paying for its' own upgrades. Mayor Bryant stated he agreed with the Vice Mayor. Councilmember Rickman stated that he is concerned with the Emergency Services stuff as well. He thinks that there is only one rescue squad at the Buchanan Firehouse now. Mayor Bryant stated that if there is no more discussion, the Work Session would move forward. Town Manager McCulloch thanked Council for letting her share recommendations from Town Staff. Mayor Bryant asked what the next steps are for this. Maybe after the budget review in October, revisit this in a Work Session. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that after Mountain Magic in the Fall there will be winter shutdown for the buildings on the Town Park. That would be the optimum time to do maintenance, repairs, and equipment updates. That would give the Town more time to decide about Emergency Services request and the other recommendations. Vice Mayor Manspile asked if the Pattonsburg neighborhood bridge planter is the one on the corner of Main Street and Route 43. Town Manager McCulloch stated that it is the one Town gets complaints about from citizens. The weeds encroach on it to the point the plants get lost. The idea is to design it in a way to separate it better, plant it better, and have plants and shrubs that do not hinder line of sight. Vice

Mayor Manspile stated that is where the issue would be. The planters and baskets close in Town are well taken care of, but the ones in the outlying parts of Town are not. That used to be beautiful and maintained, but it took effort. Vice Mayor Manspile doesn't want another mess like the one between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at Lighttower property that the Town caused. The Town cut up asphalt at the storm drain to plant trees. There was no agreement with the landowner, it has changed hands several times, and now it is not maintained. Town Manager McCulloch stated that it has been mowed. The current property owner has been cited quite a bit. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that he is not comfortable with citing a landowner for something the Town instituted. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the new owner purchased it as is, but they are headquartered in Massachusetts, so they do not have to look at it. Absentee owners are also part of the problem.

Next on the Agenda was the ARPA funding update. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she has been conversing back and forth with VML for guidance on how the funding can be spent. Town has received half of the \$932,964. From what she has learned from being here, looking at the comprehensive plan, and looking at history during the pandemic, recommendations are: the water/wastewater infrastructure, WIFI at the Town Park to enable credit card sales, Park Enhancements – which includes the restrooms mentioned earlier, and public safety at the Town Hall which could be a ventilation system because one person was hospitalized due to COVID-19 last year. Someone has looked at the Town Hall for this purpose, but they were here for three hours. That tells Town Manager McCulloch that the quote is going to be scary high, so that will probably be modified or deleted. Town Manager McCulloch stated that lost revenue is what localities can spend on things that aren't as stringent as things such as the water/wastewater, public safety, emergency services, and lost pay. Based on a formula given to the Town by VML, our lost revenue is \$214,196, that is items 2 – 5. The top is for water/wastewater, just a recommendation, it can go for WIFI in the Town Park, or whatever Council feels is priority, but based on previous discussions, water/wastewater is top priority. These are all estimates, but the Town will be getting definite pricing. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the amount for water/wastewater is the amount that Town is allowed to spend on that. For the Wi-Fi at the Town Park, JL Computers is providing an estimate. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town wants to build a new pavilion restroom and looks back on the request of Botetourt County Parks and Rec from last year. Some people have mentioned business assistance, there is a suggestion for facade grants, and incentivizing someone from the Gauntlet to locate in one of the vacant buildings. Lastly, the ventilation system that was mentioned before. The recommendations total \$914,196.00, which leaves \$18,768.00 to assign. Town has three years to spend the money. Town Manager McCulloch stated that for the water/wastewater, they have to tie into the clean water act and the drinking water revolving fund. Town can repair and replace the pumps, do the Water Street lift station upgrade, or look for a new vehicle with a sewer jetter. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she is waiting to hear from Town Attorney Puvak as to whether the truck that was just purchased can be paid for with the ARPA funding. The Town received a quote from LES for lighting around the sewage treatment plant for safety for \$34,800.00. The Town has a wish list from public works as well that had been mentioned last year that has been brought back to Council's attention. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that one thing that can be removed from the wish list is the portable telescopic light. San Mar Co gives the Town access to anything on their lot anytime as long as it is returned fully fueled. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the sewer camera and the sewer jet have been mentioned before. Town Manager McCulloch just learned that the pocket analyzer is broken. It would cost more to fix it than purchase a new one. Town Manager McCulloch stated that all that is economic impact and infrastructure that is a staff recommendation totaling \$700,000.00. Town

Manager McCulloch and Vice Mayor Manspile have discussed this extensively, CHA will provide a preliminary engineering report to Town within the next week. Town already has funds from the SEARCH grant, then we have the ARPA funds, what better way to use our funds than to ask CHA to look at the best way to use the SEARCH grant money, then use the ARPA funds to balance it off. CHA would like to come to the October Work Session to discuss with Council the engineering report and make recommendations. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that he would like to discuss this again after the Closed Session. Town Manager McCulloch stated that the second project is Wi-Fi in the Town Park. The Wi-Fi would have to be set up so that there is no competition with Shentel. JL Computers Larry Etzler suggested offering it password protected, limit the bandwidth so that people cannot stream movies etc., and turn it off at a certain time every day. Vice Mayor Manspile asked if this has been cut from last year's budget? It was put in the budget last year to install Wi-Fi for Carnival purposes. Mayor Bryant stated that it was removed. There was a lot of discussion about installing Wi-Fi, but it was sidelined. Mayor Bryant stated that he did not understand the comment about competing with Shentel. At the time, the Town was going to try to partner with Shentel and Shentel was very interested. How would the Town be competing with Shentel? Town Manager McCulloch stated that Town could not offer neighborhoods Wi-Fi. Shentel can only offer neighborhoods Wi-Fi. Town can only extend WIFI to the park for limited times or that would be over-reaching what we could do as a locality as opposed to the revenue generating business of Shentel and the agreement the Town has with Shentel. Councilmember Witt stated that there was a promotion at the time to push free Wi-Fi on state and local departments. Town was trying to utilize it for our security system. Mayor Bryant stated that Town was trying to partner with Shentel. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she was unaware of the previous arrangements. She will reach out to Shentel and restart the discussion. Town Manager McCulloch stated that Project 3 is the Park Enhancement Project. This is the new bathroom project that was started with Botetourt County before the pandemic. That is a ball park figure from a person that does construction, Town has not received a quote yet. Mayor Bryant asked if the figure was based on today's prices. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she had mentioned that, but that the figure may not be accurate. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that he would like to see a combination of modernize the bathrooms, make them handicap accessible, but do some grading around it to elevate the building and keep the river flooding minimal. Town Manager McCulloch stated that Project 4 is the business assistance. The ARPA funding encourages assisting businesses especially those impacted by the pandemic. The idea is that the façade grant will improve the buildings, increase the Town's tax revenue, and increase the value of properties when selling. It also makes our Main Street better. Vice Mayor Manspile asked if the ARPA money be used for a block grant to get in the blighted residential areas. Town Manager McCulloch stated that ARPA specifically mentioned private businesses. There was nothing about neighborhood development and blight in this particular instance. ARPA really wants to help businesses, economic development, tourism, and public safety. This is to help businesses open up and stay open should there be another wave of COVID. There are other programs out there, such as rental assistance, for citizens, but this is not for personal property. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that this is the one time we can spend money on Main Street and not have to pay for it using Town funds and tax dollars. Any other time there would be complaints that tax dollars are being used on one area of Town, not all of Town. Town Manager McCulloch stated that this doesn't have to just be Main Street. The grant can be used by any business in Town. Councilmember Witt stated that the grant money is for tourism and stuff like that. There were several projects put on hold such as improving the gateway entrances to Town and the foundation for the LOVE sign were impacted by the pandemic. Use some of

the ARPA funds to complete these projects. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that Councilmember Witt brings up a good point. There had been discussion for new entrance signs on the gateways and other possibilities. Town Manager McCulloch stated that she would check to see if a case can be made for using the funds especially if way finding is involved. Mayor Bryant asked if the funds can be used to repair rock walls on the side of Main Street that are falling into the road. Town Manager McCulloch stated that could be ruled as public safety. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that when it comes to this ARPA money replacing the money lost during the pandemic, Town cut the funding for the Gateway signs and stuff from the budget because of the pandemic. Councilmember Witt stated that Community Developer Harry Gleason had started working on designing new Gateway signs and moving the existing signs to areas that had none, but those projects were stopped because the funds were not in the budget. The LOVE sign had the same issue, there were no funds in the budget. These projects came to a complete halt, and the Planning and Zoning Commission started reviewing Planning and Zoning codes. Town Manager McCulloch stated that we are talking to Fincastle and Troutville about working together to apply for an economic development administration tourism grant as a region. We have specifically mentioned signage. That could be another avenue to explore. There are a few ideas for construction, that could also be something to think about. Signage, way finding, and gateways were discussed when we talked. Councilmember Witt stated that new street signs are needed too, half of the ones we have are unreadable. Mayor Bryant stated that the flood memorial marker and the Park Entrance that had been designed were both removed because of the pandemic. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that prices for materials is still more that was originally budgeted. Councilmember Witt stated that finding someone to do the work would not be easy. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that he and Town Manager McCulloch have discussed that issue. With the ARPA funding, no one will cut a deal because contractors know you have the money to spend, and other municipalities that have the jobs ready are picking contractors. So, if you do not have a job ready, you have to go on a waiting list to get the work done. Mayor Craig Bryant thanked Town Manager McCulloch for putting all the information together, and asked what the next steps would be. Town Manager McCulloch stated that everyone should be thinking about the presentation. The number one priority is infrastructure. This is the revenue reduction, the \$200,000.00 for numbers 2 through 5. Think about and prioritize what the Town needs, get some quotes, and go from there. Mayor Craig Bryant stated that council would review the information and revisit at the October work session which is also a budget review; and move forward with whatever is decided. Town manager McCulloch stated that hopefully the CHA engineer will hopefully come with the water/wastewater recommendations at that time so that there will hopefully be some projects there as well. Mayor Bryant stated that Vice Mayor Manspile was correct in stating that the Town needs to move quickly to get these jobs underway. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that the infrastructure is priority one. Councilmember Witt stated that the LOVE sign should be a priority. The students at BTECH created that sign. They should be able to see it in place before they graduate and go to college or join the work force. Vice Mayor Manspile stated that these projects, like the parking lot beside the Town Park and the LOVE sign, should be worked on after the tourism season winds down. Mayor Bryant stated that this will be revisited at the October work session so Council will have a draft for the October Council Meeting.

Next on the Agenda was to go into closed session. Mayor Bryant made a motion for the Council to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing matters that are exempted from the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3711 paragraph 1. Which deals with personnel. Then section 2.2-3711 paragraph 5, discussion of a business where no other previous announcement has

been made. Councilmember Chris Petty gave a second to the motion. Mayor Bryant asked for any further discussion. With no further discussion, the vote to go into Closed Session carried with a vote of 5 – 0.

Council went into Closed Session at 8:02 pm.

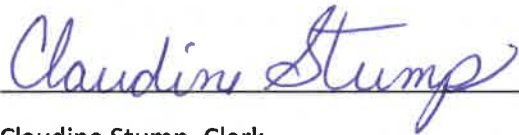
Council came back into session at 9:44 pm.

Mayor Bryant made a motion to certify the closed session by stating that the Council certify that only matters that are lawfully exempted from the open meeting required by the Freedom of Information Act, and were identified in the motion to go into Closed Session, were heard, discussed or considered. Vice Mayor Manspile made the motion with a second from Councilmember Chris Petty. Mayor Bryant asked for further discussion. With no further discussion, the motion passed with a vote of 5 – 0.

Mayor Bryant stated that for the next Council Meeting, there needs to be a resolution about the vacation. Vice Mayor Manspile made a motion to adjourn with a second from Councilmember Rickman. Mayor Bryant asked for any discussion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with a vote of 5 – 0.

The Work Session adjourned at 9:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Claudine Stump, Clerk



Craig Bryant, Mayor