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**HERNDON TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 21, 2023**

The Town Council held a work session meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Police Department (HPD) Community Room, 397 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. In attendance were: Mayor Sheila Olem, Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick, and Councilmembers Naila Alam, Pradip Dhakal, Keven LeBlanc, and Donielle M. Scherff.

Councilmember Cesar del Aguila was absent.

Staff present during the meeting: William H. Ashton II, Town Manager; Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney; Chief Maggie DeBoard, Herndon Police; Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Town Clerk; Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development; Page Kalapasev, Director of Information Technology; Marjorie Sloan, Director of Finance; Scott Robinson, Director of Public Works; Anne Curtis, Chief Communications Officer; Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks and Recreation; Tammy Chastain, Deputy Director of Public Works; Michael Mueller, Golf Course General Manager; David Stromberg, Zoning Administrator; Dave Bracamonte, Systems Manager; and Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Olem called the work session to order at 7:00 p.m. and determined there was a quorum, with Councilmember del Aguila absent. Mayor Olem reminded Council of the meeting decorum.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Ordinance to consider amending the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Adopted Budget for the budgets of the General Fund, Golf Fund, Water and Sewer Fund, and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund

Marjorie Sloan, Director of Finance, presented the staff report dated February 21, 2023. The proposed amendment would allocate funding to the General, Golf, Water and Sewer, and ARPA Funds, as outlined in Attachment A to the proposed ordinance. She reviewed the appropriation amounts and corresponding funding sources which includes:

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(1) General Fund: \$1.74 million, (2) Golf Fund: \$860,000, (3) Water and Sewer Fund: \$240,000, funded by current and future rates, and (4) federal ARPA funds: \$8.2 million. If approved, the Town will have appropriated all of the \$25.5 million in ARPA funds that were received. Staff recommends approval of the proposed ordinance, as presented.

There was brief discussion amongst Council and staff on this item.

Responding to Mayor Olem, Ms. Sloan and Mr. Ashton confirmed that staff is closely monitoring the projects included in the ARPA funding to ensure they meet the required deadlines. ARPA funds must be encumbered by December 31, 2024, and spent by December 31, 2026.

b. Ordinance to consider zoning ordinance text amendment, ZOTA #22-01, to amend Chapter 78 (ZONING), Article XIV (Signs), Section 78-141.4 (Sign Standards for Commercial Districts), and Section 78-180 (Definitions), to revise the regulations governing the maximum number of freestanding signs permitted with a drive-through use

David Stromberg, Zoning Administrator, presented the staff report dated February 21, 2023. He provided a brief overview of the zoning ordinance text amendment process and stated that while Town staff usually drafts text amendments, this item was submitted by an applicant, Pollo Campero of Virginia, LLC. The applicant received an approved special exception (SE #20-01) on March 23, 2021, for an eating establishment with associated drive-through service. The site plan is currently under review, with approval expected this spring. The proposed ordinance will allow two primary drive-through signs up to 24 square feet and two secondary drive-through signs of up to six square feet. Staff made several changes to the applicant's proposal, and the applicant requested to proceed with staff's version. Staff recommends approval of the proposed ordinance, as presented, listed as "Attachment 1" in the agenda.

There was brief discussion amongst Council and staff on this item.

Responding to Vice Mayor Hedrick's questions about the number of drive-through lanes, Mr. Stromberg stated that the number of signs does not increase with the number of lanes and that double lanes are not permitted at this location. He was not sure at that time if there were any double drive-through lanes in the Town.

3. GENERAL

a. Ordinance to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign a three year lease agreement between Town of Herndon and The Elden Street Players d/b/a NextStop Theatre Company, for space at 717 Lynn Street, commonly known as the Depot

Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney, presented the staff report dated February 21, 2023. She briefly outlined the Depot's history. She stated that the current lease expires at the end of the month and the proposed lease term will be for two years, expiring on February 28, 2025. The rent for the current lease is \$1.00 per lease term (one year) and will continue in the proposed lease terms, which is the standard for leases to nonprofit groups in Town. Staff recommends approval of the proposed ordinance, as presented.

There was brief discussion amongst Council and staff on this item.

Following brief discussion and with the concurrence of Council, staff was directed to place this item as presented on the Consent Agenda for the next meeting's agenda.

b. Resolution to approve an Interjurisdictional and Cooperative Agreement for Organic Material Disposal with Prince William County

Tammy Chastain, Deputy Director of Public Works, presented the staff report dated February 21, 2023. The facility that the Town has used for processing yard waste, Loudoun Composting, closed at the end of Fiscal Year 2022. At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2023, the Town began taking its organic materials to Prince William County's facility. The proposed resolution will formalize the agreement for the Town to take yard waste to Prince William County's composting facility. Staff recommends approval of the proposed resolution, as presented.

Responding to Councilmember Dhakal, Ms. Chastain stated that she will send him the rate difference between the previous and current facilities.

Following brief discussion and with the concurrence of Council, staff was directed to place this item as presented on the Consent Agenda for the next meeting's agenda.

4. DISCUSSION

a. Water and Sewer Fund Capital Planning and Rates Update Presentation by Davenport and Company

Scott Robinson, Director of Public Works, provided opening remarks for the presentation. Last year, staff presented a six-year water and sewer plan that included gradual rate increases to help the Town cover increasing expenses. In the past few months, the Town received notice of two large cost increases, which are: (1) 24 percent increase for Fairfax Water's wholesale rates, and (2) cost increases due to the improvements at the Blue Plains Waste Processing Facility. Staff asked the Town's consultants at Davenport to conduct another water and sewer analysis and provide updated rate information. Mr. Robinson introduced the consultants from Davenport and Company: Kyle Laux and Austin Sacks, who presented a PowerPoint dated February 21, 2023.

Mr. Laux reviewed the Town's water and sewer fund policies, expenditure challenges, goals and objectives, and observations. He discussed several case studies and outlined Davenport's recommendations to the Town, which included: (1) a 1.5 percent rate increase per year over four years (FY 2024-2027) above the rates from the previous rate study, (2) account for and finance the Fairfax Sewer costs as a capitalized expense, and (3) update the plan/model annually at a minimum, to re-evaluate and reassess the Multi-year Financial Plan. Mr. Laux then reviewed the projected outcomes using Davenport's recommendations.

Following the presentation, Mr. Ashton stated that a major change from the last rate study is that the anticipated \$30 million sewer capacity purchase to support the Metro and Transit Related Growth (TRG) development was moved to after FY 2027. Once development necessitates the purchase, approximately \$10 to \$15 million will be needed to fund infrastructure costs. Additionally, while staff was advised that the cost increase from the improvements at the processing facility will decrease once the project is complete, the costs may not return to their previous levels. The Town will need to pivot if the sewer costs remain higher than anticipated. Mr. Ashton thought that the proposed plan provides flexibility and stated that he appreciated Davenport's work on the project.

There was brief discussion amongst Council, staff, and the consultants on this matter, including the proposed model and rate increases, financing options, and current borrowing rates.

Vice Mayor Hedrick expressed concern about how increasing water and sewer rates would impact the taxpayers. While he thought it made sense to reflect the water and sewer market rates, he suggested offsetting the cost of services by trying to reduce taxes elsewhere.

b. Clear Communication Standards to Include Process

Mayor Olem stated this item was tabled at the Town Council's work session on February 7, 2023. She recognized Councilmember Scherff to begin the discussion.

Councilmember Scherff provided comments highlighting the importance of communication, accountability, and transparency as a public body.

Councilmember Scherff stated that she wanted to have this discussion with all Councilmembers in attendance. Therefore, she made a motion to table the item and add it to the agenda for the Town Council's upcoming retreat. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dhakal.

There was brief discussion amongst Council and staff about the communications process and on moving this item to the Town Council's retreat.

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Responding to Vice Mayor Hedrick, Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney stated that the Town Council's retreat is not a closed meeting. She asked Mr. Ashton to provide further information on the retreat's agenda.

Mr. Ashton stated that the agenda has not been set because the moderators still needed to meet with individual members of Council to discuss their goals for the retreat.

Responding to Councilmember Scherff, Mr. Ashton indicated that this discussion item could be included on the Town Council's retreat agenda. He stated that the Council is having a separate training session on diversity and preventing harassment on Thursday, March 9, 2023.

Vice Mayor Hedrick asked Councilmember Scherff if she thought it was beneficial to have the discussion at the meeting tonight ahead of the retreat. Councilmember Scherff expressed concerns about a Councilmember being absent that evening missing the discussion.

Responding to Councilmember LeBlanc, Councilmember Scherff stated that the Council's discussion at the retreat could focus on interpersonal communication, and they could have the process improvement discussion at a later time.

Mr. Ashton suggested that the Council would benefit from having the facilitators lead the discussion and that they could help build consensus. Councilmember Scherff concurred having a facilitator as part of this discussion would be beneficial.

Councilmember Scherff restated her motion to move this discussion item to the Town Council's retreat, focusing on interpersonal communication.

Responding to Mayor Olem's comments about a session at the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference on civility, Mr. Ashton stated that the moderator for that session was with the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA) and Mr. Ashton could engage him to assist the Council if that is something they want to pursue.

Ms. Yeatts clarified that while a motion was made and seconded, only consensus is needed to defer discussion of this item to the Council's retreat.

Following further discussion and with the concurrence of Council, Mayor Olem stated that the item will be discussed as part of the Town Council's retreat.

Mr. Ashton stated that he would provide the materials Councilmember Scherff prepared for this discussion to the retreat's facilitators.

c. Organizational Orientation Discussion by the Town Manager and the Herndon Centennial Golf Course

Mr. Ashton stated that tonight's department orientation presentation is for the Herndon Centennial Golf Course and recognized Mike Mueller, General Manager of the Golf Course to provide the presentation.

Mr. Mueller presented a PowerPoint dated February 21, 2023. He provided an overview of the department and discussed the Golf Course's mission and responsibilities, staffing structure, initiatives, accomplishments, and challenges.

There was brief discussion amongst Council and staff about the Golf Course Master Plan, initiatives and programs for this year, rates and pricing structure. Several Councilmembers complimented the Golf Course on their Audubon certification and sustainability practices.

Responding to Mayor Olem, Mr. Mueller thought that the Golf Course first received the Audubon certification in 2009, but he wanted to confirm it. Councilmember Dhakal confirmed Mr. Mueller was correct, as 2009 is listed as the first year the Town received the certificate on Audubon International's website.

5. ROUNDTABLE

Councilmember Dhakal: Suggested moving some of the department organizational overviews to the Council's regular meetings instead of having them during work sessions, due to the length of the work session meetings. He thought that was something the next Council could consider for their term.

Responding to Councilmember Dhakal, Mr. Ashton indicated he could look into that suggestion for the next Council's term. He explained that the orientations were scheduled during work sessions rather than at regular meetings because of how the agendas are structured. Ms. Yeatts stated that staff will look at ways that the orientation discussions could be included on regular meeting agendas.

Councilmember Scherff: Stated that she supported having shorter work session meetings that did not last until midnight.

Councilmember Scherff stated that several Sunset Business Park business owners are concerned about the planned Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) improvements in the area. She thought that they intended to approach the Council about the impacts of the project on access to the business park and traffic flow in the area.

Councilmember LeBlanc: No comments.

Councilmember del Aguila: Absent.

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Councilmember Alam: No comments.

Vice Mayor Hedrick: Offered kudos to the Department of Public Works (DPW) staff for opening the right turn lane at the intersection of Spring Street and Herndon Parkway.

Responding to Vice Mayor Hedrick, Mr. Ashton stated that lane is only currently open when construction is not active. He discussed the project and potential completion dates.

Vice Mayor Hedrick stated that Fairfax County released this year's real estate assessment information. He noted that the average tax assessment increased by approximately 6.97 percent across the County, and by approximately 7.78 percent in the Dranesville District. He understood this was the second year in a row that there was a significant increase in tax assessment amounts. He asked his colleagues to be cognizant of how this increase will impact residents during the budget process.

Councilmember LeBlanc stated that he heard the County has a tax abatement program for senior citizens that make less than a certain income threshold. He wanted to make sure that Town residents were aware of the program.

Responding to Vice Mayor Hedrick and Councilmember LeBlanc, Mr. Ashton discussed potential impacts of the County's real estate tax assessments. He also stated that while the Town has an elderly tax relief program, he was not sure where that item is listed in the budget.

Mayor Olem: Stated that March 1, 2023, is the last day to sign up to be a sponsor for this year's Friday Night Live.

Mayor Olem stated that the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) is going to support relief efforts for the earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria. NVRC did not yet know what items they are going to collect, but she stated that Northwest Federal Credit Union (NWFCU) in Herndon has again agreed to be a drop-off point for the items. NWFCU had served as a drop-off point for coats and towels that were donated to Ukraine last year. She stated that she will keep the Council updated on this donations.

William H. Ashton II, Town Manager: Reminded the Council that the facilitators for the Town Council retreat are going to contact them to schedule individual meetings.

Mr. Ashton noted that he is going to be out of town from February 23 to 27, 2023, and he is appointing DPW Director Scott Robinson as Acting Town Manager in his absence.

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6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Olem adjourned the February 21, 2023 Town Council work session at 9:15 p.m.

Amanda E. Monaw Kertz

Amanda E.M. Kertz
Chief Deputy Town Clerk



Minutes approved by Town Council: March 14, 2023