

**10 Robertson St.
Meeting Number 17 of Radford City Council, F.Y. 2020-2021**

The "New River" City
April 12, 2021

Radford, Virginia

The regular meeting of the Radford City Council was convened at 7:00 p.m. on March 8, 2021 in the Radford City Council Chambers, located at 10 Robertson Street Radford, VA. The Mayor of the City, Raymond David Horton, was present and presiding. Other members of City Council present were Mr. Onassis Burress, Ms. Jessie Foster, Mr. Forrest Hite and Ms. Huntington.

Others present were as follows:

Mr. David Ridpath, City Manager
Mrs. Jenni Wilder, City Clerk

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

NONE

COUNCIL RESPONSE:

NONE

PUBLIC HEARING:

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1749-F.Y. 2022 Budget

SUMMARY: The Budget for F.Y. 2022 has been delivered to City Council from the City Manager, as required by the City Charter. Revenues are balanced with expenditures in the amount of \$62,057,466. The proposed budget provides sufficient revenues to pay for expenditures, maintains positive fund balances, provides resources for maintenance and improvements to infrastructure, supports core customer services and equipment replacement, acknowledges the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as identifies funds for payments to service the City debt. The funds are summarized as follows:

General Funds	\$28,726,722
Street Maintenance Fund	2,407,851
Water/Wastewater Fund	5,024,934
Electric Fund	20,118,408
Solid Waste Fund	1,541,050
Transit Fund	3,492,592
Internal Services Fund	745,909

In addition to the City Budget, the City Council is also considering the F.Y. 2022 Radford City School Board Budget. The \$33,145,146 budget was approved by the School Board on March 23, 2021. The funds are summarized as follows:

Operating Fund	\$18,126,228
Cafeteria Fund	705,026
Grants Fund	2,625,404
Textbook Fund	326,545
Capital Projects Fund	220,000
Health Insurance Fund	2,595,251
McHarg School Project	8,401,804
Region 7 Virtual academy Fund	144,888

Mayor Horton opened the public hearing at 7:49.

Mayor Horton read the following comment from Ms. Hamden

“In November 2020, Council committed to having a December work session with the Recreation Commission to explore budget, programming, future projects, ect. While council made the responsible decision of closing down in person meetings in December 2020 due to a spike in COVID-19 cases, perhaps accounting for the postponing of this meeting, council returned to in person meetings approximately 6-8 weeks ago. On March 9th, I made a request to council via email to provide a tentative timeline for when the community might expect the rec commission work session to be rescheduled. That request was met with 3 members of council (Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Huntington, and Mr. Hite) adamantly expressing they could not provide this, but that the meeting would still occur and the public would be made aware of the date at that juncture.

I pointed out my concern that this meeting should take place prior to the completion of the city budget, since the rec budget was one topic of exploration to be discussed in this work session. Considering our budget timeline, is council still committed to this work session prior to the completion of the budget? If so, I am most appreciative and look forward to being notified of that date.

If not, can you please provide the community with answers to the following questions -

- 1) Can you point to where residents can locate a list of funded positions in the rec budget and across the city?
- 2) Can you indicate which of those are filled and which are vacant?
- 3) Further, for those that are not filled, can you please indicate where the money allocated to those positions is located?
 - Is the salary absorbed if not being utilized?
 - If not, where is it held and for how long is it required to be held?
 - Do we have policy in place to inform these questions?
 - If so, where is that policy located?
 - If not, might council consider instituting policy on how to navigate vacant positions?
- 4) Can you please describe the hiring process and state requirements to secure employment with the Radford Recreation Department and employment across the city?

I appreciate your patience with these inquiries -

Keeping our residents informed is vital in determining our growth and in aspiring to our collective potential.

Lastly, I thank you for your service and commitment to bettering our community and for being so thorough in delegating tax-payer dollars.”

Mayor Horton closed the public hearing at 7:52.

*the public hearing was advertised as required.

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1750-Calendar Year 2021 Tax Rate

SUMMARY: The F.Y. 2022 Budget is supported by revenues generated from taxes, fees and utility rates. Ordinance #1750 is an Ordinance to establish the tax rates for Real Estate, Personal Property and Machinery and Tools for the 2021 calendar year. The proposed F.Y. 2022 Budget

reflects a tax rate of .84 for real property. The rate increase from .78 to .84 is to support the debt service payment for the McHarg Elementary School additions and renovations. The tax rates are as follows:

- Real Property tax would increase to \$0.84 per \$100 of assessed value
- Machinery and Tools tax remains at \$1.76 per \$100 of assessed value
- Tangible Personal Property remains at \$2.44 per \$100 of assessed value as described in section 15 through 19 of 58.1-3503A of the code of Virginia (Personal Property, vehicles, etc.)
- Tangible Personal Property remains at \$1.76 per \$100 of assessed value as described in section 15 through 19 of 58.1-3503A of the code of Virginia (Business Personal Property)

Mayor Horton opened the public hearing at 7:53p.m.

No comments

Mayor Horton closed the public hearing at 7:53 p.m.

PROCLAMATION:

SUBJECT: National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

SUMMARY: April 11 - 17, 2021 is “National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week”. The week is designated to recognize the professionals who are first and most critical contact our citizens have with emergency services. Public Safety Telecommunicators serve as a vital link to police and fire personnel by monitoring their activities, relaying information and establishing the link from the caller to the scene.

ACTION: Ms. Huntington made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented, Mr. Burress seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

PROCLAMATION:

SUBJECT: Animal Control and Care Appreciation Week

SUMMARY: April 11 -17, 2021 is “National Animal Control Officer’s Appreciation Week”. The week is designated to celebrate and promote the professionalism and service within the Animal Control field for all they do in protecting the welfare of animals, providing public information and education, as well as enforcing animal control laws.

ACTION: Ms. Foster made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented, Ms. Huntington seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

SUBJECT: National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week

SUMMARY: The week of April 18-24, 2001 is “National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week”. The week is designated to celebrate and recognize the dedication and contributions to the health care field of the laboratory professionals and board-certified pathologists.

ACTION: Mayor Horton made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented, Ms. Foster seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton
NAYES: None-0

NEW BUSINESS:

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1749-F.Y. 2022 Budget

SUMMARY: The Budget for F.Y. 2022 has been delivered to City Council from the City Manager, as required by the City Charter. Revenues are balanced with expenditures in the amount of \$62,057,466. The proposed budget provides sufficient revenues to pay for expenditures, maintains positive fund balances, provides resources for maintenance and improvements to infrastructure, supports core customer services and equipment replacement, acknowledges the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as identifies funds for payments to service the City debt. The funds are summarized as follows:

General Funds	\$28,726,722
Street Maintenance Fund	2,407,851
Water/Wastewater Fund	5,024,934
Electric Fund	20,118,408
Solid Waste Fund	1,541,050
Transit Fund	3,492,592
Internal Services Fund	745,909

In addition to the City Budget, the City Council is also considering the F.Y. 2022 Radford City School Board Budget. The \$33,145,146 budget was approved by the School Board on March 23, 2021. The funds are summarized as follows:

Operating Fund	\$18,126,228
Cafeteria Fund	705,026
Grants Fund	2,625,404
Textbook Fund	326,545
Capital Projects Fund	220,000
Health Insurance Fund	2,595,251
McHarg School Project	8,401,804
Region 7 Virtual academy Fund	144,888

ACTION: Mr. Burress made a motion to approve Ordinance 1749 on the first reading, Mr. Hite seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton
NAYES: None-0

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1750-Calendar Year 2021 Tax Rate

SUMMARY: The F.Y. 2022 Budget is supported by revenues generated from taxes, fees and utility rates. Ordinance #1750 is an Ordinance to establish the tax rates for Real Estate, Personal Property and Machinery and Tools for the 2021 calendar year. The proposed F.Y. 2022 Budget reflects a tax rate of .84 for real property. The rate increase from .78 to .84 is to support the debt service payment for the McHarg Elementary School additions and renovations. The tax rates are as follows:

- Real Property tax would increase to \$0.84 per \$100 of assessed value
- Machinery and Tools tax remains at \$1.76 per \$100 of assessed value
- Tangible Personal Property remains at \$2.44 per \$100 of assessed value as described in section 15 through 19 of 58.1-3503A of the code of Virginia (Personal Property, vehicles, etc.)
- Tangible Personal Property remains at \$1.76 per \$100 of assessed value as described in section 15 through 19 of 58.1-3503A of the code of Virginia (Business Personal Property)

ACTION: Ms. Foster made a motion to approve Ordinance 1750 on the first reading, Ms. Huntington seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

ACTION: Mr. Hite made a motion to appoint Ms. Repass and Mr. Williams to the Onward NRV Board, Ms. Huntington seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1751-Cigarette Tax Increase

SUMMARY: The City of Radford has a tax on “tobacco” and “cigarette” products of .15 per pack. The rate has been level for over a decade. Radford has had the tax option since 2004. The state has now given counties similar authority. The rate in Christiansburg is 40 cents/pack and the rate in Blacksburg is 30 cents per pack. The surrounding counties are considering implementing 40 cents. An Ordinance has been prepared for City Council consideration to increase the Radford rate. A 2 cent tax per cigarette is the maximum.

Discussion was had surrounding the rate and it was decided to wait and have further discussion at the April 24, 2021 meeting when the City Attorney and other relevant staff members could be present.

SUBJECT: Resolution REDI Program

SUMMARY: The Radford Economic Development Incentive Program was established to enhance local economic development efforts. The plan was adopted in October, 2018 to recognize the public purpose served by providing incentives that attract new business and investment, create jobs, expand the tax base and enhance the local economy. The program established an 80% reimbursement of real property taxes up to the amount of \$12 million. Since the REDI was established, the City is seeing larger project investments. The EDA has

recommended that the cap be increased to \$25 million, with all of the same original conditions, subject to a performance agreement and City Council Appropriation. A resolution has been provided to advance the program modifications.

ACTION: Mr. Burress made a motion to approve the resolution, Ms. Huntington seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton

NAYES: NONE-0

SUBJECT: Appropriation Ordinance 1726.32

SUMMARY: The City has received \$2,613 in donations from citizens, organizations and businesses for the Animal Shelter. The funds will be used for preventive vaccines and medical care for sick and injured animals

ACTION: Ms. Foster made a motion to approve Appropriation Ordinance 1726.32 on the first reading, Mr. Hite seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton

NAYES: NONE-0

ACTION: Mr. Burress made a motion to dispense with the second reading of Appropriation Ordinance 1726.32, Mr. Hite seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

REPORT: Economic Development

SUMMARY: Kim Repass, Economic Development Director, presented an overview of the advancing Radford economy. Focus was on business assistance, private sector investment and activity, Oransi announcement, Main Street development and promotion.

CHANGE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS:

The General Assembly has directed that all local elections be moved from May to November.

Mr. Hite stated, "I've done quite a bit of research on this issue. I was extremely frustrated with the State Government's decision to move our May elections—I think it's bad policy, as it will likely lead to hyper-partisanship of local elections, overshadow local candidates and issues, and misalign the City's fiscal year with its elections (to name a few reasons). Still, what's done was done, so I started to look into what our options might be moving forward. That's when I saw that the city of Fredericksburg was considering moving their elections up instead of back—from May 2022 to November 2021 instead of November 2022.

Though May would be my preference, I like the idea of moving to odd-year Novembers better than even years, reducing our terms instead of extending them; I think it makes a lot more sense for a number of reasons, to include: aligning with state elections instead of federal, aligning with

our local constitutional offices, and aligning with many of neighbors (Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Pearisburg, Floyd), among other reasons. There are downsides too—one of the biggest issues with making this happen would be timing. We would be in a significant time crunch in having to get it done quickly—with a November 2021 election, the filing deadline for candidates would be June 8th, only 8 weeks away.

If there had been some measure of consensus on Council with moving in this direction, then perhaps we *might* have had the time to reach out to the other stakeholders—namely the School Board members and the public at large—in advance of this meeting. There was not immediate consensus, however.

So to put it bluntly, barring a filing deadline extension that gives us a little breathing room, we're essentially out of time. I still do think, long-term, that this would be the better of our two options; but I understand that it's not a clear-cut decision, and the timeline as it stands right now simply does not afford us the opportunity to work through this in a measured manner. I do plan to follow up with Mike and Tracy as to what a filing extension would look like.

So, all of this to say—there's not a lot to say at this juncture, unfortunately. But I did want to inform Radford's citizens that I'm taking this seriously and that we're having these conversations; to thank David, Mike, Tracy, and my fellow councilmembers for your research and input; and to vent a little bit of my own frustration with the General Assembly for implementing this change without really consulting its stakeholders.”

Ms. Huntington stated that this is a tough issue and she appreciates Mr. Hite’s remarks. This decision is tough and people will be angry no matter what the decision is. I am not prepared to make a decision on this today and that while this is a decision that does affect us all personally, we all need to make the decision based off of what is best for Radford and not us individually.

Ms. Foster stated the November election cycle might allow for the local election to get more attention. It is irresponsible to shorten our terms and school board terms for six months. Ms. Foster said she made the promise to complete four years and she intends to do that, but she does not believe that we should extend the term a full year. Take the extra six months and move the city and schools to a better place and move Radford forward. For Ms. Foster it is simple, extended six months is the right solution.

Mr. Burress stated that a November 2021 election is what he is in favor of. Mr. Burress stated that he has heard the interest of the incumbent not the people or voters. I understand there is nothing we can do now, but shame on us for not getting ahead of this earlier. Logistically having a November election is not smart or feasible at this time.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:
NONE**

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Ms. Huntington reflected on the layoffs at the Roanoke Times and reminded everyone of the importance of local news. reminded everyone that there is an election tomorrow.

Mr. Hite invited everyone to attend the Pregnancy Resource Center’s Walk for Life on April 23 from 4-7.

Ms. Foster detailed her recent ride along with the Radford City Police Department and visit to the Radford Fire Department.

Mr. Burress made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 seconded by Mr. Hite

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

ATTEST:

Jennifer Wilder, City Clerk