

**CITY OF BUENA VISTA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 17, 2019**

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for a Regular Council Meeting on Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers (2039 Sycamore Avenue).

Council Members Present:	Mayor Bill Fitzgerald
Melvin Henson	Danny Staton
Stanley Coffey	Steve Baldrige
	Lisa Clark

Members Absent: Vice-Mayor Tyson Cooper

ADG#1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER:

Mayor Fitzgerald opened the meeting by requesting that everyone stand and repeat the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilman Baldrige delivered the prayer.

ADG #2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 3, 2019:

Motion was made by Council Member Clark to approve the above minutes, seconded by Councilman Coffey, carried by Council.

ADG #3 RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS:
Citizens who desire to speak on matters not listed on the agenda below will be heard at this time. Citizens who desire to speak on an item listed on the agenda, open for public comment, will be heard when that item is considered:

Chief Keith Hartman was the first to address Council. He advised they have had a profitable week with State grants. Yesterday the schools got a grant for over \$100,000.00 for safety and security. They will buy cameras, door locks and safety glass for some of the schools. Today the Police Department received a \$29,000.00 grant that will be used for radios for the schools. The radios will be tied into our 911 Center. Each school will receive 3 or 4 radios. If an emergency

occurs, they can get on the radios to dispatch instead of using the phones. They are also going to purchase 4 new computers for our police cars. The truck parade will take place at 9:30 on Saturday morning. They will start at 23rd Street and go down Magnolia. Some of the trucks will be at Camden Field so people can look at them. Chief Hartman opined that Council made a good decision after passing the budget this year by asking that everyone look at their budgets for next year now. He urged Council to look at the budget for the Police Department and if they have any questions, they can sit down with himself and the Lieutenants at any time and they will be more than happy to go over the budget with them.

Council Member Clark wanted to know if they wanted to meet individually or as a group.

Chief Hartman said it does not matter. Either way is ok with him.

Councilman Coffey advised that he met with Lt. Harrison several weeks ago and he was enlightened by a lot of things. He said that he and Lt. Harrison will talk again and discuss some things that we may be able to do to let the public know. The public is the one that gives the Police Department such a hard time concerning the number of officers and cars, etc.

Chief Hartman said the outcry is very, very minimal. There are very few people that talk about the number of officers and cars, etc. He said they are going to expend the grant money that they just received. There will be a gap of time until they will get the money back from the State. The grant is not one where we receive the money up front.

Mr. Scudder stated that is where the fund balance comes in.

Councilman Coffey wanted to know if the cameras have been installed at GMP.

Lt. Harrison said they have not been installed. They are waiting for Ken Talley to get the electricity installed. He also said the truck parade starts at 10:00 a.m. and only a few trucks will proceed to Camden Field.

Mr. John Butler, Chairman of the Rockbridge Area Social Services Board was the next to speak. He stated they have been understaffed since he has been on the board and they still are which makes them have a big backlog of cases. He opined some are critical and some are not. The former director started some procedures and the current director is following through with them. They have hired Social Service workers from other counties, so they have not had to train them. This has helped clear up some of the cases. Mr. Butler stated that 2

years ago the DSS started looking for a new building. They sent out an RFP and had only 1 response. They followed that response and got to the point of negotiating a lease and they then decided not to. They have been meeting with the City of Lexington, the City of Buena Vista and Rockbridge County to make them more aware of what is going on at the DSS. They are hiring a project firm to draw up a new RFP. He then thanked Council for helping with his sewer tap.

ADG #4 REPORTS:

1.) Mayor

None.

2.) City Manager

Mr. Scudder started his report by saying he attended the annual water awards banquet at the Horse Center. The meeting was very good and informative. He advised he had a meeting a couple of days ago with AMP that will oversee our paving projects and Mike Branscome with VDOT. He and Mr. Branscome worked hard to get those agreements signed and sent to the Richmond headquarters. He got the final signatures back. It is unlikely we will get the paving done in this season because of the asphalt plants. We are moving forward with everything we need to do to have it lined up and bid so if it is not done now it will be done in the Spring. We have the money for water and sewer for the Industrial Park. We also have the money for the road construction and paying all the engineering costs. We have some gaps in there that will be a little tight with electric, so he called the representative for this district and set up a meeting with the manager. They met today and they talked about the City franchise agreement with Dominion Power. Bottom line is he is trying to find some grant money or some way to get some money so we can pay for the electric for the Industrial Park. There was a GO VIRGINIA meeting at SVU on Tuesday. In order to get funding with GO VIRGINIA it must be regional. The first project done was with Byers Technology which turned out to be very successful. Mr. Scudder advised that we have a fair amount of interest in buildings and industry right now.

3.) City Attorney

Mr. Kearney said the real estate tax sale will be advertised before the next scheduled Council meeting. With this sale, it will clean up all the difficult properties. We have approximately 22 parcels accessed at around \$700,000.00. They are not worth that much and we will not receive that much when they are auctioned off. The next batch will be more recent delinquent tax bills.

4.) Council Committee/Representative

Councilman Baldrige stated that we had more vendors for Mountain Day than we have ever had. The Buena Vista Arts Council hosted the event. Some of the vacant building have art on display. He said the Veteran's Memorial Bridge dedication was very nice. The Sunday afternoon 5 p.m. prayer meetings are going on. He opined they are very nice. The GO BV open house that we had a week ago included several properties that are not associated with Ed Walker. This Saturday the Scouts as well as volunteers from the college will start a food drive with putting out door hangers. They will pick the food up on the next Saturday, October 26th. Councilman Baldrige said he did the radio interview for Council today. He also attended the meeting at Augusta Health where they discussed addiction recovery and he also attended the Municipal League conference where they discussed the opioid crisis and how to overcome it. He advised that services provided for these types of crisis have more than doubled in the past 5 years for our area. He also attended the grand opening for the expanded Rockbridge Health Center.

Councilman Henson stated that Public Works did a great job for the dedication of the Veteran's Memorial Bridge this past weekend. He also thanked Councilman Baldrige, Councilman Staton and Mr. Scudder for their help with the dedication. He also thanked Tom Roberts and his group for the work done on Mountain Days. He also attended the GO VIRGINIA meeting. He said they discussed getting into competition with North Carolina and Tennessee for industries. He then wanted to know about the creek on Long Hollow Road being cleaned out.

Mr. Scudder said the property owners are responsible to keep the creek clean.

Councilman Henson said when the water gets up it blocks access to a lot of homes.

Council Member Clark advised that past Hill Side Drive on the other side of the bridge the bank is eaten out and needs a piece of guard rail installed.

Councilman Henson stated that Katy Patterson at GMP has a big event planned for this Saturday night. He wanted to know if there would be open fires at the park which is against the law.

Mr. Scudder advised that Ms. Patterson purchased fire pits to use for this weekend.

Councilman Coffey wanted to know if Public Works could clean up the area around 2374 Maple Avenue. He said the grass is high.

Mr. Scudder said he will look at it and see what can be done.

CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES:

ADG #5 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS:

Mr. Casey Crookston has resigned from the Board of Zoning Appeals. His term will expire on December 31, 2021. This is the eleventh time this item has appeared on the agenda. **NO APPLICANTS - ADVERTISED NEWS GAZETTE MAY 15, 2019; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 MAY 13, 2019**

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

ADG #6 ROCKBRIDGE DISABILITY SERVICES BOARD:

Mrs. Lucy Ferrebee's term will expire on December 31, 2019. This is a 4 year term. Mrs. Ferrebee does not want to be re-appointed. This is the first time this item has appeared on the agenda. **NO APPLICANTS - ADVERTISED NEWS GAZETTE OCTOBER 16, 2019; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

ADG #7 ROCKBRIDGE DISABILITY SERVICES BOARD:

Mr. Devin Robinson has moved from Buena Vista and can no longer represent the City on this Board. His term will expire on July 31, 2021. This is the first time this item has appeared on the agenda. **NO APPLICANTS - ADVERTISED NEWS GAZETTE OCTOBER 16, 2019; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

OB #1 DISCUSS ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY FIRE-RESCUE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM:

Mayor Fitzgerald started the discussion by saying Council discussed this subject at their last meeting and had asked Mr. Scudder to provide some numbers to Council.

Mr. Scudder advised that he got with Nathan Ramsey concerning the number of calls within the City limits that would affect the fee. Mr. Ramsey feels that \$8,500.00 would be closer to the cost with \$10,000.00 being on the high end. He and Charles Clemmer looked at the budget and determined that we are projected to collect \$30,000.00 more than anticipated in our meals tax and more taxes collected for back real estate taxes than anticipated. Those are the 2 areas within our revenue stream where we are seeing an increase in trends because of the uniqueness of some of those circumstances.

Councilman Baldrige said we put together a budget where we magically thought expenses would be lower to the tune of about \$60,000.00. He wanted to know if we have seen lower expenditures.

Mr. Scudder stated that we have expenditures in areas that are trending upward. He said if you go back and look at the first quarter that is where the math is.

Mayor Fitzgerald opined it is a great idea. However, he feels we should wait until our next budget to look at it and see what we can do. He stated that we are really trying to be tight on everything to get through this year to see what we have.

Council Member Clark stated this is a result of not increasing the tax rate last year. She opined it is a wonderful program and we need to do it. She asked Mr. Scudder to include \$10,000.00 in next year's budget for this program.

Councilman Henson said this program was presented before the budget back in February or March but never got presented to Council. He also stated that all the other area firefighters are receiving the funds except for Buena Vista.

Mayor Fitzgerald said that Council is not saying no; they are just asking to wait for next year's budget.

Councilman Henson advised that the budget is about 8 months away and a lot can happen in that time.

Councilman Baldrige stated that his real concern is that we need to bring this into alignment with our neighboring jurisdictions. Right now, even with the revenue enhancements that we have been talking about, he feels we are still under water and are going to have to go into our reserve for the fourth year in a row. He feels we must find a solution to our financial problems.

Mayor Fitzgerald stated if Council had passed the tax increase, we would still have to go into the reserve for funds. He reminded everyone that he said there are 3 ways the City will get money: Machinery tax; Food tax. He said we will have the \$105,000.00 in the end without raising taxes.

Councilman Baldrige said we are building 10 houses in Buena Vista right now. He opined that it shows that people have a sense of hope for the future. He said there are revenue enhancers that we can see.

Mayor Fitzgerald stated that all of Council is for the program, but we need to wait and put it in the next budget.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

William H. Fitzgerald, Mayor

Dawn M. Wheeler, Clerk of Council