Mayor Whitus called to order the regular work session of the Farmville Town Council, held on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 11:00 a.m., in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia.

The Town Clerk noted the following members as present: Mayor D.E. Whitus, presiding and Council members D.E. Dwyer, D.L. Hunter, B.R. Vincent, T.M. Pairet, and G.C. Cole. Council member A.D. Reid and J.J. Davis were absent.

Staff present was Town Manager, Gerald J. Spates; Assistant Town Manager, C. Scott Davis, Town Treasurer, Carol Anne Seal; Lisa Hricko, Town Clerk, and Administrative Assistant, Jackie Vaughan.

Mayor Whitus addressed the Council stating that going forth, Council will move slower through the agenda, discuss items more in-depth and on occasions request additional information from staff, on items presented to Council. Mayor Whitus stated that the town is growing, and the Council needs to take more time to get a full understanding of the operations of the town. He added that the Council will be reviewing current policies and make the necessary changes.

**CONTINUED ITEMS – REQUEST FOR BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT AND UPDATE ON PROBATION AND PAROLE EXPANSION**

**BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT**— At the April meeting, Mr. Reid, Chairman of Boundary Adjustment Committee, instructed Mr. Spates to schedule a joint meeting with Prince Edward and Cumberland Counties to discuss boundary adjustments. The counties have been contacted. Prince Edward County would like to meet with the Town separate from Cumberland County. Mr. Spates stated he anticipates hearing from Prince Edward County on their Committee’s availability within the next week.

**UPDATE ON PROBATION AND PAROLE BUILDING EXPANSION**—Mr. Davis, Assistant Town Manager, reported that he has been in contact with the representative from the Department of General Services (DGS). She has questions regarding the $30,000 a month rent that will be required with building the expansion of Probation and Parole Office. Mr. Davis explained that the Department of General Services requested a ten-year amortization schedule for the project. The rent of $30,000 is based on a ten-year amortization of the construction cost, which is the debt, plus all the incidentals such as fees for the bond, cost of maintenance and rent of the facility.
Thompson and Litton provided a cost estimate for the expansion project at a little over two million dollars. Currently, the Probation and Parole Office rent is $3,819.51 and that he would be contacting them to discuss the project.

Council agreed that the rent of $30,000 a month was high. It was also noted that the renovations would increase the value of the Town’s building, and there should be some consideration given when calculating the rent. Council directed the Assistant Town Manager to contact the Department of General Services to see if DGS was interested in exploring other options of financing to decrease the monthly rent.

**REQUEST ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF GROVE STREET BETWEEN BUFFALO STREET AND THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE (LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY) ON BEHALF OF SAINT THERESA CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The Infrastructure Committee met and will recommend the Council approves the request to abandon a portion of Grove Street between Buffalo Street and the pedestrian bridge (Longwood University) on behalf of Saint Theresa Catholic Church. Mr. Spates stated a public hearing has been scheduled, and letters had been sent to adjacent property owners. To date, no one has expressed concerns with the proposed abandonment.

**REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO TRANSFER FUNDS**

Mrs. Seal explained in March, the Town purchased two (2) pickup trucks that were budgeted in the Street and Building & Grounds Departments. One of the trucks was needed in the Water Maintenance department. Funds of $28,566.67 would need to be transferred from the Street Department to the Water Fund.

**REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED 2019-2020 TOWN BUDGET**

Mr. Spates provided the Council with an update on the amendments to the Capital Expenditures. In the budget for the Police Department, there are funds for three (3) vehicles. Mr. Spates stated at the previous meeting members were presented information on the Government Fleet Vehicle Leasing Program through Enterprise. Assistant Town Manager, Mr. Davis explained the Summary Fleet Cost Report. With a five-year lease agreement, in year one Enterprise would sell ten (10) vehicles from the Police Department fleet, that equity would then be deducted from the total capital cost to purchase seven vehicles, plus a one-time additional cost of “police packaging” on each vehicle. The packaging cost would fluctuate depending on the needs of each
Officer (marked, unmarked, with/without a cage, etc.). The net annual cost to lease seven (7) vehicles from Enterprise would be $16,105 for five (5) years. Next year the town would have Enterprise sell four (4) vehicles from their fleet and lease four (4). The cost would increase to $61,557, which includes the $16,105. The Police Department fleet would be replaced by the end of year five. At the end of the lease, the vehicles would belong to the Town, or Enterprise would sell them for the town. If Enterprise were to sell the vehicles for the town, those funds could be rolled over as equity in a new lease contract. Lengthy discussions followed. Council requested additional information which included:

- What is the life span of a police vehicle?
- What is the current mileage on each vehicle in the fleet?
- What was the mileage on the vehicle when purchased?
- After five (5) years, could the Town pay the market value and keep the vehicle?
- What is the state bid price for the three (3) vehicles that are requested?

Staff was directed to speak with localities of similar size to Farmville that have participated in the Enterprise Government Leasing Program for at least five (5) years and ask about the pros and cons of the program. Council requested that the Enterprise Government Leasing representative and the Chief of Police attend the Wednesday, May 8 Council meeting to answer Council’s additional questions.

In reviewing the capital expenditures, the Town Manager reported on the condition of the children's playground at Wilck’s Lake and noted that the playground platform needs to be repaired/replaced. He estimated cost at $20,000 to $25,000. He added that a bathroom facility or port-a-john needs to be added to the new playground area donated by the Lion’s Club. Council suggested that the chainsaws, edgers, weedeaters, and blowers be removed from the capital budget expenses and added to the department’s operating budget.

Mr. Spates spoke of the condition of the carpet in the banquet room at the golf course and said it needs to be replaced. He provided the Council with an estimate of $28,000 for LVT flooring. However, the $28,000 is not included in the current proposed budget. Members supported adding $28,000 to the banquet room budget.

Mr. Spates updated Council on the amendments to the proposed 2019-2020 Revenue. He mentioned the increases to the Lodging Tax, Food Tax, and Cigarette Tax. Council questioned if the ICA per-diem on inmates could be renegotiated? Mr. Spates stated he was unsure as the Town
does have a contract for $1.00 per day, per detainee. The Assistant Town Manager, Mr. Davis, spoke on the internal transfers from the water and sewer enterprise funds to the general fund, and Mr. Spates reported on the grants that are in the proposed budget.

Council reviewed and discussed the Expenses in the proposed amended 2019-2020 Town budget. There were several comments regarding expenses. Conversations included the Employee Retirement Benefit policy of 25 years of service, creating a 1.9 million dollar liability for the town. The Council stated the policy was adopted in 2002, and for the past twenty years, the town has offered its full-time employees a 401 Retirement Plan. Consideration should be given to phasing out the employee policy of the retirement benefit after 25 years of service. Also mentioned was that the policy does not state the age of retirement. Staff was directed to contact other localities to gather information on similar benefits.

It was also suggested that the town consider contracting out seasonal work, Council stated it may be more cost-effective than hiring employees. Mr. Spates said the Treasurer’s Department shows an increase in salaries because the Water Meter Reader position has been moved from Public Works-Water Department to the Treasurer’s Department. He confirmed that the town plans to hire an additional person to read water meters. Mayor Whitus reminded the Town Manager that all positions must be approved by the Council. He said once staff is ready to move forward with advertising for the position, present the information, including the salary range, to Council for approval.

**REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION PLAN STUDY**

On a motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Vincent and with a recorded vote with Council members Dwyer, Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, and Cole voting “aye,” the motion to authorize the Assistant Town Manager to proceed with advertising the request for proposals for the Classification and Compensation Plan Study as presented to Council was approved.

**BACKGROUND:** Mr. Davis, Assistant Town Manager, provided a brief review of the RFP. Included in his report was information on the Scope of Work profile. The Scope of Work requires profile survey of a minimum of twelve government agencies, which are to include the Towns of Bedford, South Boston, Ashland, Abingdon, Bridgewater, South Hill, Strasburg, Vinton, Wytheville, and Christiansburg as well as Longwood University and Hampden Sydney College. Council questioned the selection of towns. Those chosen have similar populations as Farmville,
and all have a college near or within the town, except for the Town of South Hill. The Assistant Town Manager stated from his experience, the Town of Farmville consults with the Town of South Hill when seeking information and comparisons. Longwood University and Hampden Sydney College were included because they are local institutions and operate with similar departments. The Council asked why Centra Southside Hospital had not been included as well as no local area businesses. Some members stressed that Farmville’s economy and cost of living should play a role in the compensation assessment as well as the benefits package the Town offers. The Assistant Town Manager stated it is difficult to compare government positions with those in the private sector and problematic to compare benefits, especially with those entities that offer VRS.

**INFORMATION – PRINCE EDWARD VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD**

At the direction of Mayor Whitus, Mr. Cole has been representing Town Council in meetings with Board members of the Prince Edward Volunteer Rescue Squad. A representative from Hampden Sydney College and Longwood University along with representatives from Prince Edward County have also been included. The meetings have been to assist the Rescue Squad in formulating a plan to become financially stable.

Mr. Cole spoke of the valuable service that the Rescue Squad performs and the importance of supporting the town’s First Responders. He said the Rescue Squad has recently made changes to their bylaws and will be forming an Executive Committee with four (4) external appointees that will be able to vote on issues. Mr. Cole stated the Squad has two (2) immediate challenges: one being their equipment, and the second is the need for an Executive Director position. He suggested that an outside organization that has extensive knowledge in the area of EMS should do a comprehensive evaluation of the Squad. Mr. Cole said assisting with purchasing equipment will not fix the problem within the Rescue Squad. He suggested that the Town fund the position of Executive Director at $55,000 with a set of expectations given to the Rescue Squad that must be met. The funds could be distributed monthly, and if the terms are not met, then the funds would not be allocated. Members spoke of the desire to help the organization but expressed concern in funding a staff position. Conversations continued, and members agreed to revisit appropriating funds to the Rescue Squad at the regular Council meeting.

Discussions returned to the Rescue Squad and funding. It was suggested that each of the four (4) entities: the Town, Prince Edward County, Hampden Sydney College, and Longwood University each contribute $20,000. The $80,000 would be used to cover the salary and benefits
of the Executive Director position. Mr. Cole was asked to share the Town Council’s suggestion with the Prince Edward Volunteer Rescue Squad Board.

The Council returned to budget discussions. Mr. Spates stated the budget includes an additional $20,000 for maintenance of sidewalks and spoke of the need for additional handicap cut-outs. Members questioned if grant funds were available for playground equipment which could be used to build a park near the Haynes Street area. It was suggested that the Town’s Recreation Department work with the YMCA to combine programs and that staff seeks ways to increase revenue at the Farmville Municipal Golf Course. Council questioned the wages of the summer help asking why the salaries were above minimum wage. The Town Manager stated that lifeguard positions are difficult to fill and the pool operates with two lifeguards. Also, he added that the Public Works Department, Water Treatment Plant, and Wastewater Plant will not be hiring summer help this year.

Mr. Scott Davis, Assistant Town Manager, briefed Council on the transfers to the Street Maintenance Funds and Mr. Spates spoke on the grants that the Town has been awarded.

Mayor Whitus stated the proposed budget did not balance and questioned if staff plans to raise revenue or cut expenses. Council stated an option would be to cut the 2 percent increase for full-time employees which would generate a savings of $140,000. It was also suggested that those employees that are over their paygrade regardless of their income level would not qualify for a pay increase but would receive a bonus based on the percent increase. There was also discussion of offering those full-time employees making $50,000 or less, a 2 percent increase, and those full-time employees making more than $50,000, a 1 percent increase. The Council asked staff for additional information on salaries:

- Does the town withhold the retirement contribution from a bonus;
- What is the cost of a 2% pay increase for those employees making $50,000 and under;
- What is the cost of a 1% pay increase for those employees making over $50,000?

**AUTHORIZE PAYMENT FROM THE NARCOTIC’S FUND TO WITMER PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP, INC. AND ENTERPRISE LEASING COMPANY**

Mrs. Seal stated the payment from the Narcotic’s Fund was to purchase one (1) riot helmet from Witmer Public Safety for $153.00; and the rental of a vehicle for Detective Paulette for one week for $569.65.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**
Finance and Ordinance Committee, Chairman Mr. Davis—no report
Public Safety Committee, Chairman Mr. Hunter—no report
Personnel Committee, Chairman Mr. Reid—no report
Infrastructure Committee, Chairman Mr. Pairet—no report
Town Property/Building, Chairman Mr. Dwyer—no report
Parks/Recreation Committee, Chairman Mr. Cole—no report

TOWN MANAGER AND STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Spates spoke on the following items: The Farmville Chamber of Commerce has awarded the Beautification Award for May to the town and plans to take a picture with Council in front of the entry garden on South Main Street on May 7th. The beams are being set for the Pedestrian Bridge project today, and the Milnwood Road project has gone out on bid.

COMMENTS BY MAYOR WHITUS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS—no comments

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED: ATTEST:

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David E. Whitus, Mayor     Lisa M. Hricko, Clerk