

**ROUND HILL TOWN COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
October 7, 2020**

A Work Session was held by the Round Hill Town Council on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting was conducted electronically pursuant to *Ordinance 2020-04: Providing for Continuity of Government* adopted by the Mayor and Town Council on April 28, 2020. The Mayor, Council Members, Staff, and public attended this meeting electronically using Zoom.

Council Members Present

Scott T. Ramsey, Mayor
Mary Anne Graham, Vice-Mayor
Donald W. Allen
Jesse Howe
Michael B. Hummel
Paula James

Council Members Absent

Melissa Hoffmann

Staff Members Present

Melissa Hynes, Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator
Danielle Albright, Town Planner
Marty Feltner, Utility Supervisor
Maureen Gilmore, Town Attorney
Robert Lohr, Project Specialist
Harriet West, Town Clerk

Others Present

There were no members of the public in attendance.

IN RE: CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Mayor Graham read the *Notice of Electronic Meeting* into the record, as follows:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting will be conducted electronically pursuant to the Emergency Ordinance to Modify Public Meeting and Public Hearing Practices and Procedures to Address Continuity of Operations Associated with Pandemic Disaster adopted by the Mayor and Town Council on April 28, 2020. There will be no public access to the Town Office for this meeting. The Mayor, Council Members, and Staff will be participating remotely. Members of the public may attend this meeting electronically using the link or call-in number provided.

Mayor Ramsey called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. Mayor Ramsey noted that, as the meeting was being held via electronic means, and an American flag was not available, the Pledge of Allegiance would not be recited.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Mayor Ramsey conducted the Roll Call, with each Council Member responding as his or her name was called. Mayor Ramsey noted that only Councilperson Hoffmann was absent, thus a quorum was established.

IN RE: PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received prior to this evening's meeting, and there was no public comment presented at the meeting.

IN RE: ADOPTION OF WORK SESSION AGENDA (Amendments & Deletions)

Vice-Mayor Graham moved **that the Agenda be adopted.** Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes asked to clarify if any Council Member wished to include additional items to the Agenda; it was noted that there were two Action Items to be included. Vice-Mayor Graham amended her motion to add, under *Action Items*, **Approval of Drinking Water Construction Financial Assistance, Initial Offer; and, setting a Public Hearing date for Article 14, Landscaping, Screening, and Outdoor Lighting, of the Town Ordinances.** Councilperson Hummel seconded the motion. There was no discussion of the motion. A vote was held; the motion was approved 5-0-1, with Councilperson Hoffmann absent. The vote is recorded as follows:

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Mary Anne Graham	Aye
Michael B. Hummel	Aye
Paula James	Aye
Jesse Howe	Aye
Donald W. Allen	Aye
Melissa Hoffmann	Absent

IN RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes presented for approval.

IN RE: BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Utility Department Update

Vice-Mayor Graham presented this item, beginning by reporting that Emery and Garrett Groundwater Investigations recently conducted a four-hour step-down test at Well D; it was noted that the test was successful, with no complaints received from adjacent property owners.

Vice-Mayor Graham also reported that the Franklin Park Trail/Main Street Enhancement Project is proceeding quickly, with Utility Staff currently working on marking water and sewer lines.

Mayor Ramsey asked for an update on well recovery times and the currently enacted water restrictions. Utility Supervisor Feltner reported that well recovery times are improving, with no further issues identified. Mr. Feltner noted his preference that voluntary water restrictions be kept in place, and noted that there has been a decrease in water usage.

Vice-Mayor Graham reported that Staff has worked with customers who have had excessive usage complaints and/or high water/sewer bills. Utility Supervisor Feltner reported that 31 system customers have contacted Staff regarding these concerns, with Staff working with those customers to resolve problems. It was noted that the period of time which exists between when bills are calculated and when they are due sometimes creates confusion for customers. Mayor Ramsey asked if a change in how water/sewer bills are designed would help to alleviate this problem, with Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reporting that she, Town Clerk West, Utility Supervisor Feltner, and Utility Billing Administrator McGaha are working on a solution to this issue. Utility Supervisor Feltner also noted that, frequently, customers do not understand how sewer charges are calculated. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes explained that some of this work with customers has taken upwards of eight hours of Staff time per customer; Ms. Hynes commended Utility Supervisor Feltner and his Staff for this work. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reported that Mr. Feltner has provided suggestions for an update to the Town's website regarding this concern.

Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reported that a company has been hired to exercise valves, in relation to the Franklin Park Trail/Main Street Enhancement Project; this firm will also provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) information related to Town infrastructure.

Utility Supervisor Feltner thanked the Mayor for his assistance with customers who recently commented on social media regarding the higher-than-usual water/sewer bills. Mayor Ramsey described the focus of his efforts on this issue, and explained his goal of increasing his efforts to work against negativity on social media. Mayor Ramsey thanked Utility Billing Administrator McGaha for her work with customers.

2. Water/Sewer Ordinance Update

Vice-Mayor Graham presented this item. Ms. Graham explained the work remaining to be done on the draft ordinance, with review of this work to be carried out by Town Attorney Gilmore. Updated documents will be provided to Council Members for their review and to provide an opportunity for Council to make comments. Additionally, Vice-Mayor Graham, Councilperson Hummel, and Town Attorney Gilmore will review the draft prior to a Public Hearing for the Ordinance Amendments. It is hoped that the Public Hearing

for this item can be combined with the upcoming Public Hearing for amendments to the Landscaping Ordinance.

3. Franklin Park Trail/Main Street Enhancement Project Update

Project Specialist Lohr presented this item, noting that a notable amount of time has been spent in the past two weeks working with residents, in an effort to answer any questions, and calm any concerns, they may have. Mr. Lohr expressed compliments to both Town and County Staff for their work with residents. Project Specialist Lohr reported that silt fencing is being installed, valves are being marked, and that further work on the project will begin next week. Project Specialist Lohr also reported that work has been required on some easements related to the project, as it was discovered there were some earlier easements which were not recorded; Mr. Lohr noted that this process has taken some time to complete. Project Specialist Lohr expressed his confidence that there will be nothing more to delay progress.

Mayor Ramsey asked when digging will begin; Project Specialist Lohr reported that is expected to begin in one or two weeks, and that he will update Council regarding this via e-mail. Project Specialist Lohr reported that, as work progresses at the intersection of Evening Star Drive and Loudoun Street, work is expected to begin on Main Street and Loudoun Street.

4. Strategic Planning Meeting Update

Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes presented this item, noting that she has been working with staff at the Franklin Park Arts Center to facilitate holding the retreat there; this will provide for adequate social distancing for attendees. Ms. Hynes reported that the Retreat is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2020, with *Zoom* to be utilized to allow for remote attendance, as needed. It was decided to begin the Retreat at 4:00 p.m.; a meal will be provided beginning at that time. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reported that the Annual Survey will be sent to Council Members within the next week. In addition to the socially distanced setting, attendees are requested to wear masks. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes noted that additional information regarding this meeting will be provided to Council Members.

5. Update on Utility Late Fees and Disconnections

Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes presented this item, noting that changes to the Town's Ordinances are not required to resume charging late fees and carrying out disconnections for delinquent utility bills; Ms. Hynes asked for direction from Council on the resumption of these measures. Mayor Ramsey suggested a return to imposing late fees beginning with the January 2021 billing, with disconnections to be resumed beginning with the March 2021 billing; Council agreed to this suggestion. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes provided information to Council regarding a letter recently sent to utility system customers whose accounts reflect excessive usage and/or late payments, in an effort to address these concerns; Ms. Hynes noted that a second letter will be sent this

month. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reported that Round Hill's effort to assist its utility system customers during these difficult times spurred similar action being undertaken by Loudoun County. Ms. Hynes noted that additional reminders will be sent to utility customers, with information included regarding avenues available to them to address financial difficulties they may be experiencing. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reported that the Town's utility system remains financially stable, despite the financial hardships being faced by some of its customers.

IN RE: ACTION ITEMS

1. Approve Nonprofit Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Fund Grants

Town Clerk West presented this item, reporting that she and Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes have been working on compiling the grant application package, on providing information regarding this effort to local nonprofit organizations, and on placing the information regarding this program on the Town's website and social media sites. Ms. West reported that three applications have been received; those applications were included in Council packets this evening. Town Clerk West reported that Catholic Charities has requested \$30,000.00 in funding to provide utility assistance to Round Hill households; Middleburg For Immediate and Sympathetic Help (FISH) has requested \$4,000.00 to provide medical, rental and utility assistance; and Tree of Life amended their original application, based on feedback received from Loudoun County, and has made a request of \$4,500.00 for room monitors for a tutoring program they provide, and of \$950.00 for COVID-related expenses in assisting Round Hill families, for a total of \$5,450.00. Town Clerk West explained that the funds must be distributed by the nonprofits by November 30th, with unspent funds returned to the Town following that date, so that Round Hill may report the unspent amount to Loudoun County by the December 15th deadline.

In response to a concern raised by a member of the Council, Town Clerk West explained that reporting requirements will be in place, and that Round Hill will work with Loudoun County to ensure funds go only to residents of the 20141 Zip Code area. Town Clerk West reported that caps exist for the amount of funding provided to each resident requesting assistance.

Town Clerk West noted that Staff recommendations for funding have been included in Council packets; these recommendations include a total of \$25,700.00 to go to Catholic Charities, \$4,000.00 to go to Middleburg FISH, and \$5,450.00 to go to Tree of Life.

In response to a question from Council, it was noted that the funds may be used for expenses incurred during the timeframe specified by the CARES Act.

Town Clerk West reported that a notable effort will be made to inform residents of the availability of this assistance. Ms. West also noted that any unspent funds returned to the

Town could be used to assemble Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) packages for distribution to Town residents.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of reallocating unspent funds from one nonprofit to another which still has a need for the funds. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes stated that Staff sees value in buying PPE and providing those packages to residents, and stated that some lead time will be necessary to facilitate this type of program.

Mayor Ramsey explained that the task before Council this evening is to determine how it wishes to handle any unspent funds from this effort, specifically, to decide if it would like that funding to go toward providing PPE to residents. Mayor Ramsey noted that a policy for use of the unspent funds should be determined, to allow time to prepare for the program decided upon. Discussion of a timeline and how to handle the funding ensued, with it being suggested that a policy be voted upon at the first Town Council meeting in November. Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes requested that Council make a motion this evening to allow Staff to begin work on the PPE program. Councilperson James then moved **that the Town Council award Round Two CARES Act funds, as follows: \$25,700.00 to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington; \$4,000.00 to Middleburg For Immediate and Sympathetic Help; and, \$5,450.00 to Tree of Life. Furthermore, any nonprofit CARES Act funds that are not distributed to the residents be used to purchase personal protective equipment, and distribute it to Town residents.** Vice-Mayor Graham seconded the motion. There was no discussion of the motion. A vote was held; the motion was approved 5-0-1, with Councilperson Hoffmann absent. The vote is recorded as follows:

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Mary Anne Graham	Aye
Paula James	Aye
Donald W. Allen	Aye
Jesse Howe	Aye
Michael B. Hummel	Aye
Melissa Hoffmann	Absent

IN RE: REPORTS

There were no Reports.

IN RE: TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilperson Hummel asked to clarify that the Town Council meeting, originally scheduled for October 21st, had been cancelled; Mayor Ramsey noted that that was correct, as that meeting has been replaced by the Strategic Planning Meeting scheduled for October 28th. Councilperson Hummel also asked if there were any recommendations Round Hill was making in regard to Halloween activities; Mayor Ramsey suggested that the Town follow the recommendations put

forth by the Loudoun County Department of Health. Town Clerk West will ensure that a link to the County Department of Health website is included on Round Hill's website. Finally, Councilperson Hummel thanked the Town Council for its appointment of Mr. Frank Etro to the Planning Commission.

Vice-Mayor Graham reported that she attended the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference "break out" sessions, held today; these included a session which provided material on the Freedom of Information Act.

Mayor Ramsey reported that a Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) meeting was not held. Mayor Ramsey also reported that he will be working with Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes to provide the Annual Survey to Council Members ahead of the Strategic Planning Retreat.

Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator Hynes reported that she recently attended a pre-application meeting with representatives of Loudoun County for the Weona Villa property near Round Hill; the proposal being put forward would create offices at the site. Ms. Hynes noted that she will keep Council apprised regarding this proposal.

IN RE: MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Ramsey at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott T. Ramsey, Mayor

Debra McDonald, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: January 6, 2021