

MINUTES

The Board of Councilmen of the Town of Rural Hall held an agenda briefing on November 4, 2019 at 10:00 AM in the Town Hall Conference Room. The following members were present: Mayor Larry T. Williams - presiding; Mayor Pro Tem John N. McDermon; Councilman Timothy M. Flinchum; Councilman C. Thomas Griggs; Councilman Ricky S. Plunkett; Town Manager Megan M. Garner; and Town Clerk Dora K. Moore.

Town Auditor Eddie Carrick presented the draft 2018-2019 Audit Report to the Council. He reported the audit was submitted to the Local Government Commission (LGC) on time, however, approval has not yet been issued. He stated the Town received an unqualified opinion. Available fund balance for the Town was 82% of the 2018-2019 expenditures and the ad valorem collection rate was 99.4%. Both are well above the state average of 67% fund balance availability and 96% collection rate. Mr. Carrick noted the audit was trying this year due to the software conversion so next year will be much smoother. Once the LGC approves the audit, Mr. Carrick will present the audit at a regular Council Meeting for Council approval.

The following were added to Announcements & Meeting Updates:

- Holiday Concert at Rural Hall Moravian Church – Thursday, November 21, 7:00 PM
- Retirement Reception – Mayor Williams – Sunday, November 24, 2:00-4:00 PM
- Public Hearing – Annexation Agreement with Village of Tobaccoville – Monday, December 9, 7:00 PM

The following items were discussed:

- Manager Garner reported that when the Town joined the State Health Plan (SHP) the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should have been compared with the Personnel Policy. The SHP requires new hires to be enrolled within 30 days of employment. The Personnel Policy has a 90-day probationary period for benefits. Staff followed the Personnel Policy of 90 days and this recently caused issues with the SHP. Fortunately, the SHP allowed an exception this time. Manager Garner presented proposed changes to the Personnel Policy related to the probationary period:
 - o New hires will receive benefits including insurance, holiday pay, vacation/sick leave accrual when hired.
 - o The existing 90-day probationary period changes to 6 months and can be extended an additional 90 days by the Town Manager.
 - o Two performance evaluations will be conducted by the Department Head. The first at 3 months and the other at the end of the probationary period when a recommendation will be made to retain or terminate the employee.
 - o Vacation leave during the first six months of the probationary period is not permitted unless an exception is approved in writing by the Department Head.
 - o Leave without pay is permitted but extends the probationary period.

The proposed changes will bring the Town in line with the SHP. It will also eliminate the manual process in payroll of removing holidays during the probationary period and compensating the employee after the probationary period.
- The 2020-2021 Budget Calendar includes a budget work session once the budget is presented. Manager Garner noted that once the new Council is sworn in a general work session will be scheduled.
- The Town's annexation agreement with Tobaccoville expires January 2020. A public hearing must be held to extend the agreement an additional 20 years. A public hearing will be scheduled for the December 9 Council meeting and announced at the November 12 Council meeting.

- Manager Garner presented a budget amendment to the Council reflecting additional revenues in sale of fixed assets in general government. This additional revenue will be used to purchase a special events trailer. Staff hopes in the future to purchase a mobile stage but is currently unable to do so. Revenue in the Fire Department's sale of fixed assets is greater than anticipated as well. This additional revenue will be used to replace fire hose that failed hose testing. A fund balance appropriation will be used to replace a heating/AC unit at the fire station.
- Council consensus was to have the swearing in ceremony at the conclusion of Old Business at the December 9 Council meeting.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Ricky S. Plunkett to adjourn at 11:35 AM.



Dora K. Moore
Town Clerk