

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
July 28, 2009**

**PRESENT:** President Jeff Buettner; Vice-Mayor Michael Butler; Councilor Evan Clark, John Hill, Milt McInturff, Les Veach and John Willingham; Vice-President Art Major (8)  
**ABSENT:** Mayor Elizabeth Minor (1)

President Buettner called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes** – Councilor Clark moved to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2009 and June 16, 2009 Finance & Administration Committee Meetings as presented. *The motion was seconded by Vice-President Major then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

**Finance & Administration Report**

- Comprehensive Employee Management System (CEMS) Updates – Josh Didawick, Interim Administration Director

Mr. Didawick presented the proposal to increase the probationary period for employees of the Social Services department to 12 months instead of 6 months to allow a more realistic time period for training.

Councilor Willingham moved to forward the proposal to Council for approval. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Clark then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

Mr. Didawick presented an appendix to the CEMS for the transit substance abuse policy that came out of FTA review done earlier this month. FTA is aware of the proposed policy and that it needs to be taken to city council.

Councilor Veach moved to forward the appendix to Council for approval. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Willingham then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Motion to approve a Recovery Zone resolution - Jim Deskins, Economic Redevelopment Director

Mr. Deskins presented a resolution that allows the entire city to be deemed an Economic Recovery Zone in order to take advantage of funding available through the Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds and the Recovery Zone Facility Bonds.

Councilor Willingham moved to send the resolution forward to Council for approval. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Clark then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Discussion of amendments to City code to provide tax exemption for substantially rehabilitated property - Jim Deskins

Mr. Deskins stated the proposed amendments would expand the ordinance to include the whole city. Commercial properties that are 25 years or older can expand up to 100% instead of 60% and be eligible for the exemption.

Councilor Willingham moved to forward the amendment to Council. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Clark then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Discussion of new ordinance text to provide tax exemption for solar energy equipment and devices - Jim Deskins

Mr. Deskins stated the ordinance will allow for exemption from taxation and requires they are considered for a different tax rate provided the equipment and installation be approved by the building official. By state law, the exemption may only be taken by a resident of the city. Solar equipment can be used at a commercial property but the owner must be a city resident to get the exemption. The goal will be to correct that stipulation after the ordinance is adopted.

Councilor Clark moved to forward the ordinance to Council. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Veach then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Motion to approve Parking Authority Staffing structure changes - Anne Lewis, Assistant City Manager

Ms. Lewis stated after receiving input from the Winchester Parking Authority and the Old Town Development Board, the proposal has been revised from the original presentation. The OTDB director will take on the WPA with the supervision of the staff to fall under the administrative assistant. The increase in responsibilities will qualify the administrative assistant for a 5% salary increase but the position will remain at the same level. In consideration of the Industrial Development Authority's interest in the WPA, staff is recommending the Director of Economic Redevelopment serve as a member on the WPA similar to the current OTDB position. Two of the current WPA staff members have been transferred to the Facilities Maintenance Department to increase the maintenance to the Old Town area. The financial impact for the city is a savings of \$93,000.00 a year.

Councilor Willingham asked Interim City Manager Robert Noe to review the proposal.

Councilor Willingham moved to send the proposal forward to Council. *The motion was seconded by President Buettner then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Public Inebriate Center Funding Discussion

President Buettner stated during the budget process, it was a tight vote (5-4) to reduce the funding of the Public Inebriate Center to 50%. At the request of Frederick County Board of Supervisors Chair Dick Shickle and Frederick County Administrator John Riley,

he is bringing it back for discussion. Since the passing of the budget, they have looked at the 2200 individuals who visit the facility each year and determined a few individuals who have used the facility 500 times in the past year. Those individuals have been brought to Commonwealth Attorney Alex Iden and will not be able to visit the facility again. The facility staff is looking at policies for improvement and to become self-sufficient. The request is to fund the facility at \$140,000 instead of \$180,000. President Buettner stated he personally still has problems funding it but at this time, policies are not in place. He recommends funding the facility at the reduced amount for 6 months and to request they look at Council's concerns and come up with policy that Council can reevaluate at that time.

Councilor Willingham stated he voted against fully funding the facility. Based on the new information, he is inclined to fund it for the short term so they can get everything in order. He will not vote next time with tax payer money to fund the residential center.

Vice-Mayor Butler thanked President Buettner for taking the time and getting more information. He is in favor of giving them the short time to come up with policies that will allow them to be sustainable.

Councilor Veach would like to forward this on to Council but wants to see where the \$50,000.00 will come from. Vice-President Major stated the funds will come out of reserves.

Councilor Clark stated he is glad Council is reexamining it. By tightening up the policies, the facility can streamline their operation. He thinks it is certainly prudent to continue operations and to work with the county.

Vice-President Major stated he is having a hard time with this and cannot support it. Council has given them plenty of time. Council asked for a plan back in February but did not see any action until it came down to the vote. He does not believe tax payer money should fund the residential portion of the facility.

President Buettner stated he understands the concern but by not alerting the Board of Supervisors this was going to happen, it puts Council in a pickle. He does not have a problem supporting this with the residential portion taken out.

Vice-Mayor Butler moved to forward to Council to increase the funding to \$140,000.00 or half of it for 6 months. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Clark then passed 7/1 with Vice-President Major voting in the negative.*

**President Buettner stopped the Finance/HEW Committee meeting at 6:03 p.m. to conduct the Planning & Development Committee meeting. The Planning & Development meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m. at which point the Finance/HEW meeting continued.**

## Health, Education & Welfare Report

- Community Development Committee Discussion

Chairman Willingham stated with the departure of Martha Shickle and the intermixed leadership since then, the committee has become stagnant. The CDC would like feedback from Council on what direction the committee move in and what other activities they should be involved in.

CDC Chair Ron Mislowsky stated the committee originally working on CDBG, spot blight, housing projects, and the home consortium funds. Since Ms. Shickle left, Mr. Diem and his staff have taken over spot blight and are doing a great job. The CDC does help out where they can. The committee would like to be more involved in spot blight and enjoyed working on the CDBG.

President Buettner asked if the CDC discussed other possible areas. Mr. Mislowsky stated the committee will do what Council wants them to do. The original thought was the committee would meet quarterly to do CDBG but they would like to do more.

Vice-President Buettner stated Council would really miss an opportunity if it does not come up with a plan for this committee. The original emphasis was on affordable housing and homeownership for low income housing. He would like to see the committee working towards Council's goals from the retreat to increase the quality of housing and the home values. Council is also spending time on adult education but does not have a committee tasked with it. He also suggested giving direction to Mr. Diem's Community Response team.

President Buettner suggested scheduling a meeting with the CDC, Carla Taylor and Chief Sanzenbacher for further discussion. He asked Chairman Willingham to coordinate the meeting.

Chairman Willingham stated he would like Mr. Noe to look at other areas in the city that would be touched by this as well and who should be involved in the discussion.

- Winchester Public Schools Update – Kevin McKew, Executive Director

Mr. McKew presented a summary of the written report provided to Council in the agenda packet.

- Review of Park Master Plan – Brad Veach, Parks & Recreation Director

Mr. Veach presented a summary of the master plan to be incorporated over the next 5 years. The plan was developed by looking at the previous accomplishments and the future opportunities including the Babe Ruth Work Series and the Green Circle. The board identified needs for improvement through public meetings and information gathered from the 2008 Comp Plan Survey. The board realizes there is a high concentration of seniors and children in the community so focus was placed on those areas. They also looked at the number of people from outside of the city (60%) participating in the programs. After comparing a list of the city's facilities and amenities to the national guidelines, it was determined the city meets or exceeds the guidelines

except for a few playgrounds. The 5 year plan includes improvements to Bridgeforth Field, the outdoor pool, and the amphitheater. A 10 year plan includes an increase in swim lessons and open swim time, land acquisition to develop more parks, cooperating with Frederick County Parks Department, and new program development to meet future needs. Currently, there is a total of 15 parks in the city or 248 acres of land. City Council and the previous boards have done a great job in preserving land for parks and recreation. The Park Board did endorse removing the skate park from the master plan due to being unsuccessful in getting private help on funding.

- Education Attainment in DSS Caseload - Carla Taylor, DSS Director

Ms. Taylor provided a brief update on the outcomes that staff has been doing. She introduced Amber Johnson, chair of the Foster Care Program.

Ms. Johnson presented a summary of the services offered, the funding sources, and the accomplishments for the Foster Care program. She stated there are currently 43 children in care with 30 of them over age 14 and eligible to receive independent living services. During 2008-2009 school year, 8 of the children were seniors - 6 graduated with diploma, 1 received a GED, and 1 returned home prior to graduation. Nationally, 37% of children in foster care fail to complete their education. However, all 7 students that graduated are continuing with secondary education - 4 at LFCC and 3 at vocational programs.

- Social Services New Building Update - Carla Taylor

Ms. Taylor presented an update on the new building and stated the move in date will be December 1<sup>st</sup>. The offices may be closed for a couple of days depending on the IT implications.

- Disability Services Board Update – Anne Lewis

Ms. Lewis stated the regional commission is responsible for the work of the Disability Services Board. The state is reallocating funding to rehabilitation programs leaving the commission to look for ways to continue serving the needs of the communities. The consolidation of the 3 boards is being considered and an update will be provided as soon as possible.

- Motion to Endorse the Transit Services Plan for WinFred Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – Anne Lewis

Ms. Lewis presented the executive summary by regional commission which was endorsed by the MPO Policy Board. She stated the summary reports there is a need for regional transportation and ways we can partner on it. Council endorsement does not obligate the city but will recognize the need of regional transportation and possible further discussion.

Councilor McInturff moved to forward the plan to Council for endorsement. *The motion was seconded by Vice-President Major then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Taxi Cab Ordinance Amendments Discussion

No discussion was held on this issue.

### **Other Items**

- Motion to send forward to Council the nomination of Matt Mischenko, Brian Wigley, Kyle Homan as members of the Parks and Recreation Board.

Vice-President Major moved to forward the nominations. *The motion was seconded by Councilor McInturff then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Motion to send forward to Council the nomination of Patrick Rodgers as a member of the Community Development Committee.

President Buettner moved to send the nomination forward. *The motion was seconded by Vice-President Major then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

- Other Board & Commission appointments

Councilor Willingham moved to nominate Bryon Grigsby to the Shenandoah University position on the Old Town Development Board. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Veach then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

### **Adjourn**

Councilor Willingham moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. *The motion was seconded by Vice-President Major then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*