

**MINUTES  
EMPORIA CITY COUNCIL  
RETREAT  
GREENSVILLE-EMPORIA EXTENSION OFFICE  
February 25, 2012**

*Note to Reader: Although the printed agenda document for this City Council meeting is not part of these minutes, the agenda document provides background information on the items discussed by City Council during the meeting. A copy of the agenda document for this meeting may be obtained by contacting the Office of the City Clerk.*

Emporia City Council held retreat on Saturday, February 25, 2012, at the Greensville-Emporia Extension Office. Mayor Adams presided over the retreat.

**SATURDAY, February 25, 2012**

City Council members in attendance:

Councilman F. Woodrow Harris  
Councilman James C. Saunders  
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey  
Councilwoman Deborah D. Dixon  
Councilwoman Beverly White  
Councilwoman L. Dale Temple

Others Present:

Samuel W. Adams, III, Mayor  
C. Butler Barrett, City Attorney  
Brian S. Thrower, City Manager  
Steve B. Hall, Assistant City Manager  
Tessie S. Wilkins, City Clerk  
Sheila Cutrell, Financial Director

Absent: Councilwoman Doris T. White

Mr. Thrower welcomed all in attendance and provided City Council members with an overview of the Emporia City Council Vision & Priorities adopted June 7, 2011:

Economic Development: Opportunities for Growth

Emporia is working to become both a regional hub of economic and commercial development and a solid partner in a regional effort to attract and maintain high paying jobs in larger scale advanced manufacturing. A focus on retail and commercial development through policies like the tax abatement program to reward and encourage growth allows Emporia to market itself as a community open for business. Our strategically defined region assures us of partners who share the desire to give our citizens opportunities to work in the same area of Southside Virginia in which they live and grew up.

Community Development: Pride in Our City

Council, staff members, and citizen's are working together to create a clean, beautiful, and inviting City that will result in a strong sense of pride among all. Our aggressive efforts to develop greenspace and appealing landscapes and to remove antiquated structures will create a new City image. Code enforcement will assure property owners, renters, and users of safe and attractive properties. The acquisition of federal and state grants, coupled with the City's investment will provide funds to rehabilitate properties such as the Emporia Elementary School and Citizens National Bank building into valuable assets for our City.

#### Emporia: We're Positive about Education

Emporia's Educational system, including its public schools and community college, is a highly accountable system that implements programs to enhance academic achievement through parental involvement. We develop programs that other districts desire to replicate. Parents feel comfortable and welcomed in the school arena. This focus and engagement has produced an atmosphere in our schools that encourages and produces qualified high school graduates that are college or university ready. Higher accountability in many areas ensures that our school system is not plagued with social ills such as drug use, class violence, or bullying. The Council and Manager maintain an active relationship with school administrators that ensures that the schools hire well-educated, qualified teachers.

#### Healthy Community through Physical and Mental Health

All of Emporia's citizens are healthy and active. Residents enjoy using the great recreational and health care facilities provided through the YMCA, health care providers and other agencies. Not only do we provide outlets for physical health, Emporia promotes mental health and social wellbeing through various arts and cultural opportunities and venues.

#### Service Excellence through Efficient, Effective, Well Trained, and Friendly Staff

The City of Emporia staff members are efficient, effective, and friendly in addressing citizen needs and issues. While assisting citizens, staff members protect the assets of the City while also providing the best services at the least possible cost. Staffs members are continually keep abreast of new technology attend education and training, and their equipment needs are met so that they can fully meet and exceed citizen expectations. Council and staff members maintain great working relationships with various local, state, and federal agencies to promote collaboration and success for all.

#### Physical and Infrastructure Capacity: Readiness for the Future

Emporia is the crossroad of Southern Virginia. Emporia's strategic investments in infrastructure enable positive growth and readiness for its citizens and businesses, as well as future generations to come. Improvements to the City's water, sewer, and stormwater systems have enabled Emporia to become a regional business and residential hub. These improvements, coupled with the continued maintenance and upgrades to roads, bridges, sidewalks, and trails, encourage business investment and provide amenities enjoyed by all citizens.

### ***Project Updates (Brian Thrower and Steve Hall)***

Mr. Brian Thrower, City Manager, provided City Council members with an overview on Community Development through a slideshow. Some of the highlights included:

- Water Treatment Plant and Distribution System Upgrade
- Citizens National Bank Building
- Elementary School
- Personnel
- Economic Development

Mr. Steven Hall, Assistant City Manager, provided City Council members with an overview on Community Development through a slideshow. Some of the highlights included:

- West Atlantic Street Neighborhood Revitalization
- South Main Street Enhancement
- Halifax Street Improvements
- Belfield Business District Revitalization
- East Atlantic Street Rehabilitation
- East Atlantic Street Rehabilitation
- Halifax Street Bridge
- Farmers Market
- Meherrin River Trail
- Sesquicentennial Civil War Committee
- Emporia Redevelopment and Housing Authority
- VDEM Grants
- DCR Stormwater Management Program
- Property Maintenance/ Code Enforcement

Council stated that they should explore the possibility of hiring a part-time attorney to expedite property maintenance case after the adoption of the budget.

### ***Finance/Budget (Sheila Cutrell)***

Ms. Cutrell provided City Council members with an overview of the City of Emporia's financial status in the form of a slideshow. Some of the highlights of the presentation were as follows:

#### ***General Fund Revenues***

- Revenue collections were at 55.40% of the budgeted amount as of January 31, 2012
- As of this date, revenues exceeded expenditures by \$772,236

#### ***General Fund Expenditures***

- Expenditures total 54.00% of the budgeted amount as of January 31, 2012

#### ***Utility Fund Revenues***

- Revenue collections were at 14.00% of the budgeted amount as of January 31, 2012
- As of this dates, revenues exceed expenditures by \$520,384

- \$131,100 of this amount is attributed to the wastewater that the City has been accepting from Brunswick County landfill.

***Utility Fund Expenditures***

- Expenditures total 11.36% of the budgeted amount as of January 31, 2012

***Budget Outlook for FY11***

- Debt payment changes due to the following:  
     Carter Bank & Trust Note 2009 - \$32,695 reduction beginning in FY13  
     Citizens Bank Note 2007 - \$13,393 reduction beginning in FY13

USDA Rural Development Loan (Fire Truck) 2011 - \$23,035 increase in Y13  
 USDA Rural development (WTP) 2011 – will pay interest only in FY13

Total savings for the General Fund from debt service for Fy13 - \$12,410

No expected savings for the Utility for FY13

Mr. Thrower stated that the FY13 budget process, with the state budget cuts, there would be some avenues that may need to be discussed such as:

- Social Service Budget
  - ❖ City/County funding split
- Greenville County School System
  - ❖ Schools are requesting City and County adopt joint funding resolutions by March 19 and March 20 meetings due to having to send out layoff notices in April
  - ❖ If City and County funded the school's budget as requested, the City's FY13 increase is approximately \$217,000 (assuming ADM number remain equal)
  - ❖ Equivalent to an increase of .06 cents in real estate tax rate in FY13 if City and County fully fund school request

Council stated that they are willing to fund the School System budget enough to avoid the staff's layoff.

- Southside Regional Jail
  - ❖ Estimated City FY13 increase is approximately \$300,000. This includes taking \$200,000 out of Jail fund balance to soften the hit in FY13. City and County will have to make up this difference in FY14.
  - ❖ Equivalent to an increase of .09 cent in real estate tax rate in FY13
- VRS Rates
  - ❖ City's projected increase for FY13 is approximately four percent
  - ❖ Four percent increase equals approximately \$150,000
  - ❖ Equivalent to an increase of four percent in real estate tax rate in FY13
- Economic Development/IDA
  - ❖ ED Manager position, fringe, operations, contribution to TransTech, etc. equivalent to annual IDC contribution
  - ❖ IDA incentives
    - \$281,000 drops from FY13 expense

- ❖ Some loss of sales tax revenue from Lowe's closing
- ❖ Bank Building debt service through IDA – estimated at approximately \$90,000 per year
- ❖ Anticipated approximate net gain after debt, lease revenue, electric, heat, air, etc. = \$145,000
- ❖ Retail Recruitment Study and ED Workplan estimated at \$110,000
- ❖ Estimated net gain of \$35,000
- Health Insurance
  - ❖ Renewal increase of 4.1% in FY13 – Approximately \$27,000 increase
- Total of School, Jail, VRS, ED/IDA, and Health Insurance Expenses
  - ❖ City's FY13 increase is approximately \$659,000 (Assuming Council Funds All Items Above and School System at requested level)
  - ❖ Equivalent to an increase of 19 cents (18.3) in real estate tax rate in FY13 (assuming City and County fully funds school system request)
- Revenue/Expense Options
  - ❖ Increase real property tax rate to fully fund item above – 19 cents
  - ❖ Implement Cigarette Tax to cover a portion of items above
    - Estimated revenue of \$250,000 - \$300,000 per year (conservative figure) @ 50 cents per pack
    - Equivalent to a seven to nine cent increase in Real Property Tax Rate

Councilman Harris stated that the smarter approach would be to reduce expenditures as opposed to raising revenues. Councilman Harris also stated that he would oppose to the cigarette tax. He further stated that a cigarette tax is unfair to only one segment of the community. He stated that other budget items such as Retail Recruitment Study and ED Workplan could be eliminated.

- Cut services such as leaf, brush/limb, and/or bulky waste pickup, i.e. employee lay-offs, to cover a portion of items above
- Combination of options above

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Adams asked if anyone wished to bring a matter before City Council members adhering to the three minute time limitation.

With there being no comments to come before City Council, Mayor Adams closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

**\*\*\*Closed Session\*\*\***

With no further business to present before City Council, Mayor Adams moved into closed session for the purpose of discussing Virginia Code **§2.2-3711(A) (3)** Disposition of publicly held real property pertaining to the former Emporia Elementary School.

Councilman F. Woodrow Harris	aye
Councilman James C. Saunders	aye
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey	aye
Councilwoman Deborah D. Dixon	aye
Councilwoman L. Dale Temple	aye

Councilwoman Beverly White                      aye

**\*\*\*Regular Session\*\*\***

Councilwoman Dixon moved that the meeting be returned to Regular Session. Councilwoman Temple seconded the motion, which passed as follows:

Councilman F. Woodrow Harris                      aye  
Councilman James C. Saunders                      aye  
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey                      aye  
Councilwoman Deborah D. Dixon                      aye  
Councilwoman L. Dale Temple                      aye  
Councilwoman Beverly White                      aye

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**CERTIFICATION**

Councilwoman Dixon moved to certify the following:

1. only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed in the Closed Session to which this certification applies, and
2. only such public business matter as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Session was convened were heard, discussed, or considered by City Council.

Councilwoman Temple seconded the motion, which passed as follows:

Councilman F. Woodrow Harris                      aye  
Councilman James C. Saunders                      aye  
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey                      aye  
Councilwoman Deborah D. Dixon                      aye  
Councilwoman L. Dale Temple                      aye  
Councilwoman Beverly White                      aye

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before City Council, Mayor Adams adjourned the meeting.

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Samuel W. Adams, III, Mayor

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Tessie S. Wilkins, City Clerk