



**Minutes**  
Town Council Budget Work Session  
March 22, 2022

Approved: April 11, 2022

The unprecedented emergency health crisis poses a challenge to all - individually and collectively. To protect ourselves and do our part to impede the spread of the coronavirus and COVID -19 disease, the Town Council Meeting and Budget Work Session was held remotely.

### **Call to Order**

Mayor Compton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Councilors Darrell Anderson, Dave Cosson, Christine Dibble, Patty Klein, Barbara Raimondo, and Gray Yachup. Also present were Treasurer Jean Moyer and several residents.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

*Action: Vote: 6-0 to approve as presented.*

### **Draft FY2023 Budget Work Session**

The Mayor and Council discussed many of the line items in the draft budget. The following may be noted for FY23:

- Real Property Tax proposed to decline to maintain constant yield.
- Dwelling Tax – Discussions with Potomac Disposal are in progress over their request for to double their contract price. This number will be finalized at the April meeting. This is a pass through of the cost of refuse and recycling pickup. Potomac Disposal has requested for an increase over the contract price for the balance of their contract through FY24 due to current economic conditions. Mayor Compton and Councilor Dave Cosson will discuss with them how to proceed.
- Projected Income Tax revenue.
- A projected increase in Highway User Revenue.
- The substantial increase in Municipal Tax Duplication to be received by year-end and projected for next year.

- Website costs and how long Councilor Dibble plans to continue maintaining and improving content and functionality by herself.
- Border Committee request for funds.
- Sustainability Committee request for funds.
- Salary adjustments of 7.4% for cost of living
- Road repaving plans utilize the balance of the FY22 budget before June 30 and for FY23 budgeting.
- McCathran Hall needs.
- Increase in the Refuse and recycling contract with Potomac Disposal (\*)
- Leaf Collection (Up for renewal 2023)
- Woods Management (Same request as FY22)
- Use of Reserves (Will add money to reserves this year)
- Racial and Social Equity Committee

(\*) Mayor Compton noted the draft FY23 Budget contains as placeholder double the costs of refuse and recycling collection and therefore also double the FY22 Dwelling Tax, since this is a pass through to each residence of the cost of refuse and recycling pickup. Potomac Disposal has requested for this increase for balance of their contract through FY24 due to current economic conditions. Mayor Compton asked the Council to consider mitigating the Dwelling Tax increase by paying part of the increase from general funds.

Mayor Compton also asked the Council to consider items to include in the Capital Improvement Program.

*Actions:*

- *Mayor Compton and Councilor Dave Cosson will respond to Potomac Disposal regarding the request to double their contract price.*
- *Mayor Compton will discuss the Border Committee budget request with Chairman Nagrod*
- *For the April Town Council meeting, Councilor Gray Yachup will present a full report on road conditions at the April Council meeting, and will create a Road Paving RFP to determine from contractor bids the cost of repaving specific road segments.*

## **Landscaping and Maintenance Contract**

Steve Werts, retired Town Maintenance Supervisor, was present to provide technical advice to the Town Council.

a. **Updates on Proposals from Bidders.** Councilor Anderson summarized the responses from the 4 bidders to questions from Council members. Questions included what limits of liability insurance were carried, the cost to water 25 new spring trees (in bid or extra), clearing drainage ditches and culverts, the extent of minor tree trimming provided, working with committees, inspection of roads and walkways and attention to obstructions, inspecting and reporting signage issues.

b. **Evaluation of Responses and Discussion**

- Bids received were A) \$34,100; B) \$59,500; C) \$40,200; and D) \$65,350. Two bidders did not request a guided walk-thru of the Town (A, B). It was noted that two bids included details of services offered to match services requested in the RFP and indicated the breadth of services the vendor could provide (C,D), while one bid provided limited detail (A), and one none (B).
- The limits of the liability insurance coverage to require was discussed. Bidders indicated the requested coverage (\$2M each/\$4M max) was twice what they normally carry (\$1M each/\$2M max), and the limits that Montgomery County requires. There was consensus to use the lower limits *pending input to the Mayor from the Town Attorney about this change.*
- There was a thoughtful, detailed discussion about the bids and the vendors. Confidence that each vendor could deliver the full breadth of services requested *for the amount bid* was assessed. Discussion focused on understanding the \$20,000 or more that separated the highest bids (B,D) from the lowest two bids (A,C). There was concern expressed about insufficient detail on services from 2 bidders (A,B). Potential extra costs for services within and outside the RFP was considered. The quality of the customer references provided was evaluated.
- After these considerations, Councilors unanimously agreed to exclude vendors A and B from further consideration.
- Councilors reiterated to themselves that using a vendor to provide groundskeeping and other maintenance services would be a learning experience for the Town. And the lack of experience made the choice of contractor for this first year an uncertain process. To arrive at a decision, the two remaining vendors were evaluated across all criteria.

- c. **Contract Award** – The Town Council voted unanimously to award the contract to RJ Landscape Contractors, *pending inquiry by Councilor Anderson and the responses from their references.*

The Mayor and Council decision reflected criteria that did not support selecting the lowest bidders. In addition to the challenges noted above, the award to RJ Landscape Contractors was made for the following reasons:

1. Their response was comprehensive
2. Their response best matched the RFP scope of work.
3. Confidence that the vendor can provide additional services as needed.
4. Fewer add-on costs are anticipated.

The Mayor and Council believe this contractor offers the best value to the Town.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Kathryn L. Lehman  
Town Clerk