

**WISE TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING
Tuesday, April 8, 2025; 4:00 P.M.
WISE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS
501 WEST MAIN STREET - WISE, VIRGINIA 24293**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Caynor Smith, Jr., Mayor
Laura Taylor
Teresa Adkins
Robin Dotson
S. Duane Phillips

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

AGENDA CHANGES:

Town Manager Laura Roberts advised that there were no changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

There being no one from the public audience wishing to comment, Mayor Smith closed public expression.

DISCUSSION OF THE FY 2025-2026 BUDGET:

Town Manager Laura Roberts provided an overview of the first draft of the proposed budget for FY 2025-2026, reflecting a 5.74% increase over the current year's budget. She noted the draft included expense requests, capital projects, and additional personnel requests and changes. Roberts reported a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment and a 3% automatic step raise for eligible employees was also included, with an 8.3% increase in health insurance premiums. She also noted proposed increases to the real estate tax rate, as well as to rates and fees for garbage collection, water, and sewer services.

Roberts requested Council's guidance on the creation of a Community Revitalization Fund, as authorized by Virginia Code §15.2-958.5, to be included in the upcoming fiscal year budget. She explained the fund would be supported by local revenues and used to provide loans or grants to both for-profit and non-profit organizations. Roberts advised eligible uses would include the construction, renovation, or demolition of residential structures located in the Town, as well as infrastructure improvements and the acquisition of blighted properties, in accordance with the Code of Virginia. She noted the establishment of the fund would enable the Town to assist developers interested in revitalizing residential areas. Mayor Smith directed Roberts to prepare the Ordinance for consideration at the regular Council meeting to be held later in the month.

Department heads presented Capital Outlay departmental budget requests for consideration:

Doug Bates, Recreation Specialist:

- Completion of Tee Ball fields
- Installation of Basketball / Pickleball Court
- Installation of Volleyball Court

Sarina Collins, Town Treasurer/ Clerk of Council:

- New computers to replace aging machines

Jack Mullins, Fire Chief:

- Side by Side utility vehicle
- Pumper truck and cutting tools
- Fire Hoses
- Nozzles
- Turnout gear
- Burn building repairs
- Fire Department building repairs

Mullins advised grant funding had been secured to cover a portion of the expense for turnout gear.

Adrian Dale, Street Superintendent:

- Snow plow truck
- Multipurpose truck (rear-loading debris/brush truck)

Dale advised a new multipurpose truck was available for immediate purchase, at a savings of \$35,000 compared to the anticipated cost of purchasing a similar truck in the upcoming fiscal year. He informed a letter of intent to purchase and payment of a \$2,000 holding fee would secure the available vehicle for acquisition in July. Following diligent review of the request, Duane Phillips made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to issue a letter of intent and remit a \$2,000 holding fee to secure the purchase of the truck with funding allocated in the FY 2025-2026 budget. Teresa Adkins seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

Caynor Smith, Jr., Mayor	"Aye"
Laura Taylor	"Aye"
Teresa Adkins	"Aye"
Robin Dotson	"Aye"
S. Duane Phillips	"Aye"

Natasha Proulex, Special Events:

- Reader Board for Big Glades

Proulex encouraged Council to consider the development of a Welcome Center for the Town within the next few years, noting that funding for the project was not included in the upcoming fiscal year's budget. She added the recently completed Tourism Strategic Plan identified the need for such a facility.

Reagan Walsh, Town Planner:

- New computer to support GIS software operation

Caleb Ramsey, Water Treatment Plant:

- Raw Water Pump
- New computers to replace aging machines
- Filtration maintenance

- Metal storage building

Jerry Kilgore, Utility Superintendent:

- Water & Sewer line replacement
- Fire hydrant replacement
- Leak and line tracing equipment
- Service truck
- Radio-read water meters
- Lead & Copper Rule expense
- Skid steer loader
- Flusher pump

Kevin Yates, Police Chief:

- New computers (partially grant-funded)
- Copier

Yates reviewed his request for an increased allocation under Contract Services - Other Government Entities. He stated Virginia's radio system, STARS, was a reliable and modern communication platform utilized by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia State Police. Yates explained the Town's Police Department transitioned from analog to digital communications several years ago, resulting in a 75% reduction in communication capabilities. He reported the Wise County Sheriff's Office participated in a grant program aimed at equipping all local law enforcement agencies with compatible equipment to operate on the STARS system. Yates advised the requested allocation for the FY 2025-2026 budget would cover the annual licensing fee and any third-party installation costs associated with the new equipment. He estimated the ongoing licensing cost at \$19,000 per year for the Town and noted any damaged or malfunctioning equipment would be replaced at no cost through the grant program.

CLOSED SESSION:

On a motion made by Laura Taylor and a second by Duane Phillips the Wise Town Council moved to convene into closed meeting for the purpose of and including:

Personnel – Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body as permitted by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1).

OPEN SESSION:

Robin Dotson made a motion to reconvene in open session. Laura Taylor seconded the motion that carried 5-0.

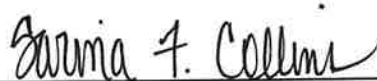
CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION – CM RESOLUTION #5, 2025:

Sarina Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer, read Closed Meeting Resolution #5, 2025, "Resolving and certifying that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applied, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Town Council of the Town of Wise," and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Caynor Smith, Jr., Mayor	"Aye"
Laura Taylor	"Aye"
Teresa Adkins	"Aye"
Robin Dotson	"Aye"
S. Duane Phillips	"Aye"

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional discussion by the Wise Town Council, Robin Dotson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Laura Taylor seconded the motion that passed 5-0.



Sarina F. Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer



Caynor Smith, Jr., Mayor