

Proposed Minutes

ELKINS COMMON COUNCIL REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

***401 Davis Avenue
Council Chamber, 2nd Floor
March 17, 2022
7:00 p.m.***

Elkins Common Council met in regular session in the council chamber of city hall. Present were Mayor Jerry A. Marco; Councilpersons N.E. Bross-Fregonara, R.C. Chenoweth, M. D. Cuonzo, C.H. Friddle, III, J.A. Guye, C.J. Higgins, G.M. Hinchman, C.C. Lowther, D.C. Parker, and L.H. Vest; City Treasurer T. Judy; Fire Chief S.D. Himes; Police Chief T. Bennett; Operations Manager J. Sanson; City Attorney G. S. Roberts; and City Clerk J.R. Sutton (acting as recording secretary).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Madalyn Higgins, resident of 639 Capital St. and Elkins Main Street Director recognizes the difficulty and challenges in creating a budget. The current proposed FY23 budget including cuts to many outside organizations that would be detrimental. EMS, the RCDA and the ERCCC are ambassadors and proudly serve as the “sales team” for the city. Ms. Higgins asks that these cuts be reconsidered. EMS works to improve the economic health of the downtown. Recent activities include the market study, historic building reports, streetscape study and more. Our goals align with those of the city’s, and we work side by side as partners with city officials towards these goals. The upcoming E3 event is an example of this. Now is the time to invest and support those that support Elkins.

Scott Goddard, 220 Buffalo St., is speaking as a concerned citizen, board president of Elkins Main Street and board vice president of the Randolph County Community Arts Center. Mr. Goddard had lived in Elkins for thirty years this August, hired by D&E the day after he graduated from that same institution. There is truly positive momentum, examples of which include the Taylor Hospitality and WDG revitalization of the Tygart Hotel; restoration of the Wilt building; riverfront and trail development; refresh of the farmer’s market; renewed focus on the arts; and BTB’s move into downtown. As you discuss the budget, please consider contributions to non-profit organizations as an investment in the community that will make this a great place to live, work and play.

Jared Howell, resident of 4458 Chenoweth Creek Rd. and Executive Director of the Elkins-Randolph County Library thanks council for their continued support. The basic operations of the library depend on the financial support of our donors. Please reconsider a the proposed 60% cut in funding to our library, which accounts for approximately 12-13% of our total budget. We were recently forced to close our doors due to unforeseen circumstances while continuing to work through the negative impacts of the pandemic. A reduction in funding to the library will result in a reduction in services to all citizens. More than 3,000 patrons access the library monthly. He

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asks that you thoroughly review the budget to be sure it's balanced and how cuts affect the community.

Robbie Morris, resident of 131 Castle Rock Drive and Executive Director Randolph County Development Authority, appreciates the task before council and respectfully requests a restoration of funding. The Elkins Strategic Plan 5.C. calls on annexation and revenue goals for Elkins and explicitly lists three organizations to assist in this goal – the RCDA, ERCCC and EMS - all three of which are proposed to be cut in the FY23 budget. Site identification is one of the milestones within the plan. The RCDA has invested \$10,000 in GIS platform to promote commercial land and buildings. The RCDA also has multiple broadband plans in the works. Annexation is another identified goal. Before council tonight is an ordinance to voluntarily annex property owned by the RCDA for the intended expansion of the industrial park. An increase in businesses and population is a goal. The Opportunity Guide created by the RCDA has been distributed throughout the country for recruitment. It promotes many of the organizations which council is proposing to cut. RCDA currently has a project valued at \$8.2 million in the works for the railyard. It was mentioned at a recent Finance Committee meeting that Buckhannon doesn't give any outside contributions. While it's true they may not give to as many organizations, there are some they consider strategic partners and provide significant support to. This includes money to Create Buckhannon, \$25,000 to the Strawberry Festival and \$45,000 to the Upshur County Development Authority. Mr. Morris only asks for \$13,500. Don't cut the "sales team" that helps bring additional revenue to the city. Strongly encourage council to restore funding.

Heather Biola, 12 Prospect St. Speaking for the Kump Education Center. I know almost everyone in this room and that they are dedicated to the things they are doing for the town. Without the volunteers we have in Elkins we wouldn't be the town we are. You can't replace what you get for free. The KEC is unique in that the city owns the building. I've worked for 14 years as a volunteer with no pay. I believe that the city should help with the regular expenses. We raise over \$50,000 a year and have restored the building to nearly it's original state, but still have things to do. The city should pay the utilities for the building, especially since many are paid to the city. When you support the volunteers and agencies you maximize the people who make Elkins what it is.

Andrew Carroll, 128 Buffalo St. Speaking in support of ordinance #297. This action demonstrates the real power of partnerships and value in being part of the city. This is indicative on how future growth will happen given state legislative restraints. Good relationships have monumental impact both economically and in the fabric of the community. Secondly, I am afraid the actions of the Finance Committee to slash budgets will have negative impacts in both of these areas. A budget is about balancing interests. We all want good wages for employees, essential services and solid infrastructure, but we also want to support our community partners that add value and serve the citizens of Elkins. This is not a problem of intentions but a problem of decision-making. Council should consider the needs of the organizations, the value they add, and make reasonable cuts they can withstand.

Chris Lowther, resident of 135 Heavner Avenue and city councilor. Been on council since 2017. Last year I was assigned to the Finance Committee and my role changed. Our recent task has

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been to create a balanced budget and that is what is before you tonight. These cuts were not made on a whim or irrationally. I spent countless hours working on it to be sure everyone got a piece of the funds. For every citizen that spoke against the proposed cuts, there are twice as many citizens that support the cuts. They see the value in putting the city of Elkins first and those are the ones I represent tonight. We must always consider change.

MINUTES

Cm. Chenoweth, **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2022, MEETING.** The motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS

Council received the following correspondence and notifications:

- Issued building permits
- Treasurer’s report
- External Affairs 2021 annual report

The following building permits have been issued since the previous regular council meeting.

ISSUED BUILDING PERMITS				
Permit	Applicant	Location	Description	Value
220057	Pennington, Harold	1520 Lavalette Ave	Replace Roof Shingles	10,883.00
220058	Rosenblum, Bret	133 Elm St	Replace Roof Shingles	6,887.00
220059	Weese, Ann	101 Pike St	Replace Roof Shingles	6,200.00

PRESENTATION

Davis & Elkins College President Chris Wood – for 118 year Elkins and D&E College have been inextricably linked. President Wood provided a snapshot of the College in 2022. 50% of students come from within WV. 16% come from Randolph County. 48% of students are Pell eligible. 37% come from 35 states and 13% come from 32 countries. Our academics are consistently ranked high. We have 32 majors and 42 minors. This fall we are adding a Natural Resource Management and Forestry Technician program which will be working directly with the USFS and an undergraduate degree in special education. Last year we offered \$5.4 million to WV students and a total of \$15 million to all. D&E is comparable to all other state institutions. Phase I of the physical master plan is complete. We’ve invested \$12 million in the past 5 years, much of which was awarded to local contractors. Phase II is beginning and is focused on residence halls. D&E is financially stable and debt free. We live within our means. However, these are unprecedented times for private high education institutions and so please don’t take us for granted. History does not guarantee a future. We are not the college on the hill, we are the college in the community. D&E contributes to the quality of life to the citizens in the

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community. Our payroll alone contributes \$7 million to the local economy, \$3.5 million in vendor payments, plus ancillary economic impacts, which are being studied now. We bring human capital with our 225 faculty, their spouses, and staff. We bring culture to the community. D&E has 23 NCAA athletic teams. Finally, we bring diversity. We are committed to community partnerships. Examples include the Myles Center for the Arts; immersive learning with internships; partnership with DHS in nursing programs; Augusta Heritage Center; Randolph County BOE in athletics and dual enrollment; start of a new cycling program adding to the excitement already here; community service; and primary host for MSFF. Currently working to replace the amphitheater. More than 75% of the funds are committed and an application has been submitted to the ad-hoc ARPA Advisory Committee for additional support.

COMMITTEE REPORTS provided by all committee chairs present.

STAFF REPORTS provided by all administrative officers and the chief wastewater operator

APPROVAL OF VENDOR INVOICE PAYMENTS

Cm. Hinchman, **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE INVOICES PRESENTED.** The motion carried.

The invoices in question were as specified on the following list, which is attached and made part of this record:

- Accounts Payable check transactions for the period February 28 – March 11, 2022

NEW BUSINESS

Cm. Friddle, **MOVED APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 297: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF ELKINS, WEST VIRGINIA, PURSUANT TO PETITION FILED BY ROBERT L. MORRIS, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ON BEHALF OF THE RANDOLPH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, REGARDING CERTAIN TRACTS OF REAL PROPERTY IN LEADSVILLE DISTRICT, RANDOLPH COUNTY, OWNED BY THE RANDOLPH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND KNOWN AND IDENTIFIED AS AREA 1 AND AREA 2 ON THE ATTACHED PLAT, TO INCORPORATE AND ANNEX SUCH PROPERTY INTO THE CITY OF ELKINS PURSUANT TO WEST VIRGINIA CODE §8-6-4 (2ND AND FINAL READING).** The motion carried.

Cm. Lowther, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1501: APPROVING “FULL-TIME REGULAR EMPLOYEE” STATUS AND CONFIRMING COMPENSATION LEVEL FOR W. BROSCART.** The motion carried.

Cm. Hinchman, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1502: REAPPOINTMENT OF C. PREUSCH TO THE ELKINS WATER BOARD.** The motion carried.

Cm. Chenoweth, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1503: AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL PARTNERSHIPS FOR OPPORTUNITY AND WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION GRANT, AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION THEREOF.** The motion carried.

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Cm. Lowther, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1504: AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL FOR HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT.** The motion carried.

Cm. Chenoweth, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1505: AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE GRANT FUNDS, AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION THEREOF.** The motion carried.

Cm. Hinchman, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1506: APPROVING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN 22D CENTURY SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS, LLC DBA GOVTECH CLOUD AND THE CITY OF ELKINS FOR THE PROVISION OF A BETA SOFTWARE PILOT PROGRAM.** The motion carried.

Cm. Friddle, **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE ASSIGNMENT OF CITY TREASURER T. JUDY AS THE RISK MANAGEMENT SIGNATORY FOR THE GOVTECH CLOUD MOU.** The motion carried.

Cm. Hinchman, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1507: AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF FUND #036 FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTERING THE REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES OF THE ELKINS FIRE DEPARTMENT.** The motion carried.

Cm. Friddle, **MOVED TO TABLE RESOLUTION 1508: APPROVING TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM THE FINANCIAL STABILIZATION ACCOUNT.** In accordance with Resolution 924 and the amended City of Elkins Rules of Council the chair called for a roll call vote. The clerk called roll in random order. The motion failed. Council votes were as follows:

N. Bross-Fregonara	No	J. Guye	No	D. Parker	Yes
R. Chenoweth	No	C. Higgins	No	L. Vest	No
M. Cuonzo	No	M. Hinchman	No	Mayor J. Marco (in case of tie)	n/a
C. Friddle, III	Yes	C. Lowther	No		

Cm. Lowther, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 1508: APPROVING TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM THE FINANCIAL STABILIZATION ACCOUNT.** In accordance with Resolution 924 and the amended City of Elkins Rules of Council the chair called for a roll call vote. The clerk called roll in random order. The motion carried. Council votes were as follows:

N. Bross-Fregonara	Yes	J. Guye	Yes	D. Parker	No
R. Chenoweth	Yes	C. Higgins	Yes	L. Vest	Yes
M. Cuonzo	Yes	M. Hinchman	Yes	Mayor J. Marco (in case of tie)	n/a
C. Friddle, III	No	C. Lowther	Yes		

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Cw. Cuonzo, **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MSFF ABCA ENDORSEMENT REQUEST.** The motion carried.

Cm. Hinchman, **MOVED APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AD-HOC ARPA ADVISORY COMMITTEE INCLUDING: \$55,000 TO UPGRADE THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY SCADA SYSTEM; \$31,000 TO EPRC FOR A REPLACEMENT SEWAGE PUMP AT RIVERBEND PARK (\$9,000) AND RUBBER MULCH AT ALL PARKS EXCEPT FOR ELKINS CITY PARK (\$22,000); AND \$9,709 TO DAVIS HEALTH SYSTEMS FOR THE PURCHASE OF 200 RESPIRATORS.** The motion carried.

Cm. Hinchman, **MOVED APPROVAL OF THE FY23 COAL SEVERANCE BUDGET AS PROPOSED BY THE CITY TREASURER.** The motion carried.

After comments and lengthy discussion of the FY23 budget recommended from the Finance Committee, no action was taken.

Cm. Parker, **MOVED APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL CALL COUNCIL MEETING ON MARCH 22, 2022, AT 9:00 A.M. FOR THE PURPOSE OF FURTHER DISCUSSING THE FY23 BUDGET.** The motion carried.

Cm. Parker requests line-item budgets for each department as well as revenues for the last two fiscal years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cm. Hinchman advised he is cancelling the ad-hoc ARPA Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on March 22, 2022.

MAYOR’S COMMENTS were provided.

Cm. Lowther, **MOVED ADJOURNMENT.** The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

*Approved by council at the meeting
of MONTH DAY, YEAR*

Jerry A. Marco, Mayor

Attest:

Jessica R. Sutton, City Clerk