



## **Bowling Green Town Council Retreat**

**January 17, 2025**

**Bowling Green Town Hall**

### **Minutes & Notes**

Mayor Tina Gambill called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. In addition to the Mayor, Vice Mayor Valerie Coyle, and Council members John Chinault, Jean Davis, David Storke, and Jeff Voit were present. Council member Randy Hageman arrived at 10:15 a.m. and Council member Dan Webb arrived at 11:30 a.m. Also present were Town Manager/Clerk India Adams-Jacobs, Director of Community Development and Partnerships J.C. LaRiviere, and Berkley Group Executive Manager Kimball Payne, who served as retreat facilitator.

Notes for the retreat were captured on flip charts. A transcription of the notes, with clarifying annotations, is attached as an addendum to these notes.

After calling the meeting to order, Mayor Gambill turned the meeting over to the facilitator. Mr. Payne thanked the Council for inviting him back to serve as facilitator for the retreat. He then referred to the agenda and reviewed suggested goals for the retreat as follows:

- Work as a team and develop consensus
- Review progress on the work plan developed at last year's retreat
- Receive a briefing from the Town's financial advisors
- Receive a briefing on the Town's utility systems
- Review the Town's mission, vision, and values statements.
- Review major strategic goal areas
- Craft a work plan for the next 18 to 24 months
- Identify longer term issues
- Understand constraints to progress and identify means to overcome them

He mentioned some themes that might run through the day's discussion including Council roles and responsibilities; dynamics and processes, Council/Manager roles and relationships, Public engagement, and potential limitations that might have to be overcome to address the Board's priorities.

Mr. Payne then offered some ground rules to guide the Council's discussion:

- Everyone participates; no one dominates
- Engage
- Be honest

- Listen to each other
- Respect different opinions
- No idea is too outlandish
- Seek to understand
- Ask questions
- Seek consensus (formal action at a future Council meeting)
- Silence means consent – speak up if you disagree
- Use the parking lot for issues that may evade consensus or require more background
- Have fun; don't take ourselves too seriously
- We will take breaks when it seems appropriate

Mr. Payne asked if the agenda, the goals, and the ground rules were consistent with the Council's expectations and if there were any questions. There were no questions, and the agenda, goals, and ground rules were accepted by unanimous consent.

Mr. Payne thanked the Council members for making themselves available for pre-retreat interviews, which helped him to prepare the agenda. He shared with Council what he called the "common themes" from those interviews. He defined a "common theme" as an issue mentioned by more than one Council member, noting that some issues were mentioned by nearly all Council members. Those common themes were:

- Growth – downtown, in the Route 301 corridor
- Infrastructure – water & sewer utilities
- Town/County relations
- Citizen engagement – customer service, office hours, communications

### **Team Building Exercise**

Mr. Payne led the Council through a team building exercise. He asked that the Council members provide answers to the following questions:

1. *Tell your colleagues something about yourself that they probably don't know.*
2. *What strengths do you bring to the Town Council team?*
3. *What two things might people find challenging when working with you?*

Responses to the last two questions were recorded without individual attribution.

The cumulative strengths identified by Council members were (flip charts #1 & #2):

- Business owner
- Good people skills – gets along with cantankerous people
- Life experiences – adaptable
- Conservative – watches the money
- Shows up



- Diverse background
- Organizational skills, logistics, budget
- Adaptable to working with different people
- Billing investigations
- Government relations
- Logical
- Non-judgmental
- Clean slate, open mind
- Engineer, technical
- Listener
- Finger on the pulse
- Volunteerism

Mr. Payne complimented the Council on its cumulative strengths and asked if there was anything missing that would help the team to be more effective. Having a “unity of vision” was offered as one thing that would make the group stronger.

With respect to the challenges that might arise when the Council members worked together, the following were identified (flip chart #3):

- Loquacious
- Asks a million questions
- Thinks outside the box
- A bit O.C.D.
- Tends to overthink things
- Shy, reluctant to speak up
- Technology adverse
- Frustrated with slow progress
- Communications, articulation, getting my point across
- Too loud, boisterous

Mr. Payne pointed out that a combination of strengths and challenges was a characteristic of every team. The goal was to utilize the strengths and overcome the challenges for effective teamwork. He also noted that some strengths, taken too far, could become challenges, and asked how potential challenges might be overcome or compensated for to help the Council work better together. The consensus was that listening, focusing on the positive, seeking to understand, acknowledging each other, providing mutual support, having unity of vision, and a shared respect would be keys to working together (flip chart #3),

### **Review of Progress In Addressing Action Items Identified at the Previous Year’s Retreat**

Mr. Payne asked Council to identify notable accomplishments since the previous year's retreat. They were (flip chart #4):

- ✓ FY 2021 audit was completed
- ✓ The Town had a "hard reset," or "reboot" of staff and finances
- ✓ Zoning ordinance amendments
- ✓ Addressing water & sewer issues
- ✓ New water permit
- ✓ New wastewater permit
- ✓ Wastewater treatment plant operations were contracted out to a third party.

The Town Manager also provided a PowerPoint presentation that listed accomplishments in 2024.

When asked if there had been any surprises, the following were identified (flip chart #4):

- Chesapeake Bay Act audit
- Lead/copper regulations
- The poor condition of the Town code
- An outdated Town Charter

The need for additional work in the following areas was identified (flip chart #4):

- Water/sewer
- Infrastructure
- Finances
- Relations with the County

### **Presentation by Financial Advisors, Davenport & Company, LLC**

Finance Director/Treasurer Tina Staples joined the meeting for the presentation by R.T. Taylor and Ben Tolbert of Davenport & Company, LLC, the Town's financial advisors. They provided a high-level overview of financial management principles and practices to establish a baseline for further financial analysis and planning and for the development of financial management policies to improve both sustainability and resiliency. As audits subsequent to Fiscal Year 2021 are completed, Davenport will update its financial models and provide recommendations on budgeting and debt management.

### **Briefing by Moonshot Missions on Utilities Planning**

The retreat broke briefly for lunch and then was briefed by Utility Advisor Sara Neiderer and Managing Director Andy Koester of Moonshot Missions on their ongoing analysis and evaluation of the Town's water and wastewater utilities. At the conclusion of the briefing, the following next steps were identified for action (flip charts #5 & #6):



1. Debrief on the findings and recommendations from the utility systems review.
2. Meet with ERG and ask them to develop a preliminary engineering report for sludge management.
3. Meet with Davenport to coordinate financial planning with project development.
4. Develop a strategy for a rate study to be completed in the first quarter of 2026.
5. Utilizing funding from the Virginia Department of Health, complete an inventory of the utility system and place the data into a geographic information system (GIS) database.
6. Prepare funding memos for capital projects.
7. Develop and document standard operating procedures (SOP's) for utility operations.
8. Develop a Fats, Oil, & Grease (FOG) management plan; draft regulations for implementation.
9. Review other utility related ordinances and regulations and update as necessary.

During the discussion, there was agreement that the goal was to have a utility system that is safe, compliant with federal and state regulations, and fiscally responsible. Council agreed by unanimous consent that staff and consultants should proceed with the actions identified.

### **Review of the Town Vision, Mission, and Values/Operating Principles**

Given the time remaining for the retreat, Mr. Payne suggested only a quick review of the Town vision, mission, and values statements. He encouraged Council to draft a succinct and memorable vision statement for the Town.

Possible components of a Vision Statement identified during the 2024 retreat:

- ✓ Vibrant, lively, thriving community
- ✓ Sustainable/resilient
- ✓ Connected regionally
- ✓ Walkable/connected neighborhoods
- ✓ A destination for visitors
- ✓ Small town vibe; a village with historic charm
- ✓ A cultural & business center of Caroline County
- ✓ Beautiful public spaces and streetscapes

Town Mission Statement: “To serve the citizens.”

Values/Operating Principles

- ❖ Transparency
- ❖ Open communications (two-way)
- ❖ Good customer service
- ❖ Honesty
- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ Sound financial management
- ❖ Follow through
- ❖ Staff development
- ❖ Welcoming
- ❖ Facilitative
- ❖ Creative/innovative
- ❖ Efficiency & effectiveness
- ❖ Trust

Council affirmed the language from the previous retreat.

## Review of the Strategic Goal Areas

Council affirmed the strategic goal areas identified in 2024.

- **Utilities** – *Improve and maintain the Town’s water and sewer system infrastructure, including water supply, treatment facilities and distribution/collection systems.*
- **Excellent Town Staff** – *Foster a Town workforce that is well-trained, appropriately compensated, has development opportunities, and demonstrates a dedication to public service.*
- **Economic Development** – *Support business development and expansion that enhances the tax base and provided gainful employment.*
- **Smart Growth** – *Support development that improves community vitality.*
- **County Relations** – *Communicate and collaborate with Caroline County for mutually beneficial results.*
- **Vibrant Downtown** – *Act to ensure that the Town remains an attractive, historic, and convenient center for commerce, culture, and services as the County seat.*
- **Government Performance** – *Improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery through the adoption of appropriate policies, procedures, and practices; adapt and implement best practice.*
- **Financial Management** – *Provide fiscally responsible, sustainable, and resilient financial management that addresses both current and future needs.*

## Identification of Action Items

The remainder of the retreat focused on identifying actions under the relevant strategic goal areas. Given the time constraint, some areas were not addressed.

Utilities (flip chart #7)



- 1) Complete the corrective action plan required by the new water withdrawal permit; drill an exploratory well
- 2) Complete the Hydrologic Source Evaluation Project with funds provided by the Virginia Department of Health – by July 1, 2025

#### Government Performance (flip chart #7)

- 1) Document standard operating procedures (SPO's) for Town operations – by February 1, 2026
- 2) Build a Town master calendar of deadlines and other significant events, over the twelve
- 3) Research the previous contract with Municipal Code Corporation; update the Town Code for consistency with common practice – include the cost in the FY 2026 Budget proposal
- 4) Review the Town Charter and consider revisions for consistency – after the Town Code is updated
- 5) Include funding for review and revision of the Town's Comprehensive Plan in the FY 2026 Budget
- 6) Complete Chesapeake Bay Act and Virginia Department of Health audits

#### County relations (flip chart #8)

- 1) Initiate a meeting with the Board of Supervisors in July 2025
  - a. Identify a facilitator for the discussion
  - b. Conduct informal outreach to Board members
- 2) Invite the Town's Board representative to meet with the Town Council quarterly
- 3) Attend Board of Supervisors meetings
- 4) Focus on current positive interactions with the County
- 5) Clarify areas of mutual concern including: utilities, growth, the tricentennial celebration, Fort Walker, building permits, events, and a potential boundary adjustment

#### Citizen engagement (flip chart #8)

- 1) Address concerns about office hours at Town Hall – consider a permanent schedule to improve predictability; keep the office open on tax payment day
- 2) Develop a communications plan with talking points for Council and staff use to ensure a consistent message

#### Wish list (flip chart #8)

The following items were identified as actions to consider once the priorities listed above have been addressed:

- Seek corporate sponsorships to provide funding for playground improvements

- Develop a sidewalk plan to address ADA compliance, maintenance, and extensions

As the retreat concluded, Mr. Payne thanked the Council members for their active engagement and expressed appreciation that the Berkley Group and he could be of service to the Town of Bowling Green.

Mayor Gambill declared the retreat adjourned at 3:30 p.m.





## **Bowling Green Town Council Retreat**

**January 17, 2025**

### **Transcription of Flip Chart Notes (with annotations for clarity)**

#### **Flip Chart #1**

BOWLING GREEN

1/17/25

##### STRENGTHS

- BUSINESS OWNER
- GOOD PEOPLE SKILLS – GETS ALONG WITH CANTANKEROUS PEOPLE
- LIFE EXPERIENCES – ADAPTABLE
- CONSERVATIVE – WATCHES THE MONEY
- SHOWS UP
- DIVERSE BACKGROUND

#### **Flip Chart #2**

##### STRENGTHS CONT

- ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, LOGISTICS, BUDGET
- ADAPTABLE TO WORKING WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE
- BILLING INVESTIGATIONS
- GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
- LOGICAL
- NON-JUDGMENTAL
- CLEAN SLATE, OPEN MIND
- ENGINEER, TECHNICAL
- LISTENER
- FINGER ON THE PULSE
- VOLUNTEERISM

MISSING  
UNITY OF VISION

#### **Flip Chart #3**

##### CHALLENGES

- LOQUACIOUS
- ASKS A MILLION QUESTIONS
- THINKS OUTSIDE THE BOX
- A BIT OCD
- TENDS TO OVERTHINK THINGS
- SHY, RELUCTANT TO SPEAK UP
- TECHNOLOGY ADVERSE
- FRUSTRATED WITH SLOW PROGRESS
- COMMUNICATIONS, ARTICULATION, GETTING MY POINT ACROSS
- TOO LOUD, BOISTEROUS

OVERCOME: LISTEN, FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE, SEEK TO UNDERSTAND, ACKNOWLEDGE, MUTUAL SUPPORT, UNITY OF VISION, RESPECT

#### **Flip Chart #4**

##### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- AUDIT
- HARD RESET, REBOOT – STAFF, FINANCES
- ZONING ORDINANCES
- ADDRESSING WATER & SEWER ISSUES
- NEW WATER PERMIT
- [NEW WASTEWATER PERMIT]
- WWTP OPERATIONS

##### SURPRISES

- CHESAPEAKE BAY ACT AUDIT
- LEAD/COPPER REGULATIONS
- TOWN CODE CONDITION
- CHARTER

##### ADDITIONAL WORK TO BE DONE

WATER/SEWER  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
FINANCES  
RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTY

#### **Flip Chart #5**

##### MOONSHOT NEXT STEPS



10. DEBRIEF
11. MEETING WITH ERG => PER [Preliminary Engineering Report] FOR SLUDGE MANAGEMENT
12. MEETING WITH DAVENPORT
13. STRATEGY FOR RATE STUDY – COMPLETE 1ST QTR 2026
  - GIS \$ FROM VDH – INVENTORY SYSTEM
  - FUNDING MEMOS (CAPITAL ONLY)
  - SOPS

### **Flip Chart #6**

#### **MOONSHOT CONTINUED**

F.O.G. PLAN/REGULATIONS  
OTHER ORDINANCE/REGULATION CHANGES

#### **PRINCIPLES**

SAFE  
COMPLIANT  
FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

\*GO!

### **Flip Chart #7**

#### **UTILITIES**

- CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN  
DRILL EXPLORATORY WELL  
HYDROLOGIC ANALYSIS – VDH, BY JULY 1, 2025

#### **GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

SOPS – 12 MONTHS  
MASTER CALENDAR – BUILD 12 MONTHS  
TOWN CODE – CONSISTENT WITH MUNICIPAL CODE, PLAN THE COST IN  
THE BUDGET  
CHARTER – LATER, AFTER CODE [REVISION]  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW – FY26 BUDGET

## CHESAPEAKE BAY & VDH AUDITS

### **Flip Chart #8**

#### COUNTY RELATIONS

MEETING WITH BOS – JULY

I.D. FACILITATOR

INFORMAL OUTREACH

INVITE BOS REP TO QUARTERLY MEETING

GO TO BOS MEETINGS

FOCUS ON CURRENT POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

[ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN]

UTILITIES

GROWTH

TRICENTENNIAL

FORT WALKER

BUILDING PERMITS

EVENTS

BOUNDARY

#### CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

OFFICE HOURS

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

TALKING POINTS

#### WISH LIST

PLAYGROUND – CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

ADA COMPLIANT SIDEWALKS