



Office of the Town Manager

Tommy Cureton

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council

Carter Nevill, Mayor

Heather Sutphin, Ward 1

William Semple, Ward 2

Brett Hamby, Ward 3

James Hartman, Ward 4 Vice Mayor

Jay Heroux, Ward 5

Paul Mooney, At Large

David McGuire, At Large

Council Meeting Date:	February 14, 2023
Agenda Title:	Town Council Work Sessions
Requested Action:	Receive the report for action at a future Town Council Meeting
Department / Agency Lead:	Town Manager
Staff Lead:	Tommy Cureton, Acting Town Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior to September 2020 the Town Council scheduled and held its work sessions at 7:00 PM on the Thursday before the regular Town Council legislative meetings, which are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month. Work sessions were held at 18 Court Street until August 2020 when the transition was made to 21 Main Street.

Beginning in September 2020 the Town Council work sessions are scheduled and held at 9:00 AM on the morning of the regular Town Council legislative meetings at 21 Main Street.

During the Town Council work session on January 10, 2023, Town Council directed staff to provide an analysis of returning to the schedule of holding Town Council work sessions at 7:00 PM on the Thursday before the regular Town Council legislative meeting.

The staff recommendation to Town Council is to continue to schedule and hold its work sessions at 9:00 AM on the same day as regular Town Council legislative meetings. It is further recommended that if a work session item will require Town Council action on major policy items, then ~~that~~ Town Council action will be scheduled for a subsequent month's regular Town Council legislative meeting.

BACKGROUND

Per the Town of Warrenton's Town Council Handbook, work sessions are informal, informational meetings where Council may discuss specific topics or receive an in-depth presentation from staff or an outside party on a particular topic. Generally, a work session aims to inform the Council on a topic and for Councilmembers to give staff or others general direction.

Very importantly, work sessions present an opportunity for the Council to receive information on major policy items and to consider and discuss the policy issues and alternatives amongst and between Councilmembers prior to giving direction or taking action.

Prior to September 2020 the Town Council scheduled and held its work sessions at 7:00 PM on the Thursday before the regular Town Council legislative meetings, which are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month. Work sessions were held at 18 Court Street until August 2020 when the transition was made to 21 Main Street.

Minutes indicate that in 2017 there were four Town Council work sessions, in 2018 there were four, in 2019 there were thirteen, and in 2020 there were twelve work sessions before the combining of meeting to one day in September 2020. When work sessions were held, they were not recorded nor live streamed, therefore, did not require Audio Visual / Information Technology staff and vendor support. In addition, the Council room at 18 Court Street did not require Public Works staff to set up and break down the Council room before and after each meeting.

CURRENT SITUATION

Town Council work sessions continue to be held at 9:00 AM on the same day as regular Town Council legislative meetings. This meeting schedule is a challenge to support as Audio Visual, Information Technology, Public Works, Town Clerk resources, and Police resources are drawn away from other service areas which compromises services in those areas and requires payment of overtime for certain employees. Moving the work session to another day, and to a night meeting would compound this situation and heighten the need to consider additional resources to properly support the Town Council.

Town Council meetings on the same day require the following resources:

- Town Clerk to help set up and take down the meeting, as well as run the meeting, and provide updated documentation between the morning and evening meetings.
 - AV specialist to set up and take down the meeting, as well as to run, live stream, and record the meeting.
 - IT staff to set up and take down the meeting, support the AV specialist, and handle any IT issues that arise during the meeting.
 - Public Work staff to set up and take down, as well as to help with crowd control.
 - Police Officers to help with security and crowd control.
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Town Council continue to schedule and holds its work session at 9:00 AM on the same day as regular Town Council legislative meetings. It is further recommended that if a work session item will require Town Council action on major policy items, then ~~that~~ Town Council action should be scheduled for a subsequent ~~months~~ regular Town Council legislative meeting.

Service Level/Policy Impact

The recommended action will not have any additional impact on the current levels of service. Staff resources in IT, Public Works, Town Mangers office, and Police will continue to draw away from other service areas or will incur overtime to support Town Council.

Town Council work sessions will continue to be live streamed and recorded. The recorded video is available for citizen viewing prior to Town Council action being taken on major policy items.

Major policy items will be presented at a work session a month prior to any required Town Council action on that item.

Fiscal Impact

The recommended actions do not present any additional fiscal implications.

Legal Impact

The recommended actions do not present any immediate or long-term legal impact.

The Town Council has the legal authority to continue to schedule its work sessions as recommended.

Alternative Option

Schedule future work session to begin at 6:30 or 7:00 PM for the Thursday before the Regular Town Council meetings.

Service Level

The alternative option will impact the current levels of service. Staff resources in IT, Public Works, Town Manager's Office, and Police will continue to draw away from other service areas or will incur overtime to support Town Council.

Information Technology will see a reduction in staffing availability for the help desk, will see increased demands on the AV specialist and an increased reliance on outside vendor support to facilitate the meetings.

Public works and facilities will face a greater strain with additional setups of the dais chambers for the meetings.

The Police Department will continue to staff the meetings with officers that have been pulled from other service areas with additional demands on the time and less access to resources for the community.

The Town Clerk will need to double the advertisements, minutes, and agenda creation for the meeting with impacts to the FOIA request responses and other legal deadlines. An additional evening meeting will pull the Clerk away from their daily work further impacting the deadlines of that department.

Town Council work sessions will continue to be live streamed and recorded. The recorded video is available for citizen viewing prior to Town Council action being taken on major policy items. Additional attendance is made possible with the scheduling of the work session after the standard workday.

Major policy items will be presented at a work session prior to any required Town Council action on that item. It will be a difficult challenge to prepare action items within the Two Working Days between the meetings. Items brought forward would still require action to be taken in the following month.

Fiscal Impact

The alternative option presents fiscal implications. The Public Works staff will need to set up and break down the dais for the meeting twice a month. It is not practical to leave the dais set up with the farmers market on the weekends or other routine community use of the space.

There will be additional cost for overtime for the IT department for overtime and the technology to support the setup and streaming of the meeting. Additional charges will be present for the streaming of additional meetings.

The advertisement cost will increase as meetings are increased.

Legal Impact

The alternative option does not present any immediate or long-term legal impact.

The Town Council has the legal authority to continue schedule its work sessions under this alternative.

ATTACHMENTS

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- 2.
- 3.