

Minutes of the February 9, 2016 regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Tom Holley, Eugene Call, David Smith, Randall Brickey, Ron Orr
Sandra Wyatt arrived during the Palmer Avenue discussion.

Mayor:C. Todd Young

Staff: T. Michael Taylor, Town Manager
Trent Crewe, Town Attorney
Chris Wilcox, Police Chief
R.B. Henderson, Public Works Director
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

Councilman Holley made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2016 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Smith seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Citizens' Time

Smyth County Sheriff Chip Shuler spoke on the following:

- 1) He has been an employee of the Sheriff's Office for over thirty-two years and thanked former Sheriff David Bradley for the smooth transition.
- 2) His main priority is to jump on the county's drug issues and hopes to obtain national funding to help with this problem. He has also increased the manpower of officers involved in stopping the spread of drugs. There are also two state police officers in his office.
- 3) He has met with Chief Wilcox to discuss the drug problem and to offer solutions to help since he believes that all crime is tied to drugs in one form or another.
- 4) Senior Citizens and kids are the most vulnerable groups which need protection.
- 5) The DARE program is in place.
- 6) He thanked the town for asking him to be here.

7) Councilman Brickey thanked him for being at the meeting and appreciated his help for the town.

Bobby Dye asked the Council to consider placing a sign for Palmer Avenue where it intersects with Main Street (Highway 91) near the BB&T bank. He mentioned that several vehicles, most of which were trucks, had stopped recently and asked him the location of Palmer Avenue, so there probably needs to be clarification.

Susie Hopkins thanked the Mayor for sending the town trucks to her hill (Dream Circle) in Edgewood during the last big snow. However, prior to doing that, the town trucks rode up and down in Edgewood several times without coming up her hill. All the times they scraped in Edgewood, they could have easily gone up her hill too. Instead, they had to come back to Edgewood to scrape her hill which she stated was a waste of gas, and as a taxpayer, she felt that did not need to happen. She also commended the town for pretreating the roads yesterday (Monday) for the snow that just arrived.

Approval of the Agenda

Councilman Brickey made a motion to add the issue of the Palmer Avenue sign to the agenda. Councilman Call seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.

Councilman Brickey made a motion to add a discussion of the Council packets as they pertain to the fire department. This could be part of new business or during the regular fire department discussion. The motion died for lack of a second.

Councilman Smith made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of the Palmer Avenue sign, and Councilman Call seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

New Business

1. Trash pick-up credit

Town Manager Mike Taylor told the Council that due to the recent snow, the trash truck did not run that particular week. As in years past, the town will issue a refund for that week to the customers once the company deducts that week's charge from their invoice. He asked the

Council to go ahead and authorize the refund to the customers when the company authorizes its own refund.

Councilman Brickey made the motion to authorize the credit to the customers after the company issues the credit to the town. Councilman Smith seconded, and it passed 5-0.

2. Washington County Mutual Aid Agreement

Mr. Taylor gave the Council a copy of the Washington County Mutual Aid Agreement and said it was the same as the previous one except for paragraph 15. Usually these agreements end December 31st. This one will be retroactive to January 1st and will expire on December 31, 2019. The town will just have to change the names of the Mayor and the Police Chief. Councilman Brickey asked the Chief if he had looked this over and he said he had not, but that Sheriff Newman had looked this over and wanted to amend it a little; however, he had no problem helping the town by continuing the agreement.

Mr. Crewe has not looked over the agreement either since Mr. Taylor had just received it. The Mayor suggested tabling this, so Councilman Brickey made the motion to table this until the next available meeting whether it be a special-called meeting or a regular one. Councilman Smith seconded, and the motion carried 5-0. Councilman Orr asked for clarification that the current agreement is still in effect, and the Chief said it was.

3. Saltville Industrial Development Authority

Councilman Orr mentioned that Roger Smith had recently resigned from the SIDA due to ongoing health reasons. Mr. Smith served on the SIDA from May of 2005 until December of 2015, and he showcased a vast amount of knowledge and professionalism.

The members of the SIDA had discussed this and have unanimously recommended Tabby Henderson as a member since she had put in a letter of interest before for an open position. Councilman Smith made the motion to appoint Ms. Henderson, and Councilman Orr seconded. During the discussion, Councilman Call asked if this open position needed to be advertised. Councilman Orr replied that appointing people to the SIDA had been done several ways in the past, so he did not think this was an issue now. The motion carried 5-0.

4. Town events

Councilman Smith discussed two upcoming events. The first is the annual car show for Relay for Life that should be held on May 7th from noon – four with the proceeds going to Kelsey Frye. Ms. Frye was recently diagnosed with leukemia.

The other event is the annual BBQ Cook-off tentatively scheduled for June 11th. It will include monetary prizes to hopefully bring in more contestants.

5. Lane Group report

Les Sutherland spoke on the following:

- 1) He brought three sets of preliminary plans for the ongoing sewer improvement project for the Council to peruse.
- 2) He met with Tim Cook, the manager at Reline America. Mr. Cook and their sales representative will come to Lane's office in Abingdon to share information about their product to see if they can help with the sewer project too. Lane needs to look at monitoring for current lines, so this should work well. Reline's product is used to repair lines.
- 3) The leak in Edgewood on Overlook Court that caused the pavement to subside into a depression will be delved into further when the weather permits, but the issue could be the subgrading.

6. Veolia report

Bill Duty spoke on the following:

- 1) Not many leaks occurred last month.
- 2) The problem on Overlook Court was due to a three foot separation in the pipe. They are unsure what caused this separation. There appears to be a shift in the ground somewhere. Initially, Veolia could hear the leak but could not find it. Miss Utility was called to mark everything and the morning after Miss Utility was called, the leak finally came to the top.

The Mayor asked how leaks were tracked and gallon loss was calculated. Mr. Duty replied that the readings at the stations are monitored daily by checking them every morning. Councilman Brickey asked how long it took to find the leak, and Mr. Duty replied that the town received a call around 2:30 in the afternoon that there was no water at the top of Edgewood. There's a little tank at the top that feeds about twelve houses there. Councilman Brickey asked for clarification that they just received a call that the water was out and this leak was nothing that Veolia knew about beforehand. Mr. Duty said that was the case.

7. Palmer Avenue sign

Councilman Brickey said he had dealt with drivers trying to find United Salt before, so he understood what Mr. Dye was referencing about a sign for Palmer Avenue. He made the motion to authorize the Public Works Director to obtain this sign. Mr. Taylor reminded the Council that Palmer Avenue will be closed for a while when VDOT starts their project around the ball fields this spring, so signage will be needed for that too. All trucks then will have to be rerouted through the Well Fields area. Councilman Brickey then suggested authorizing both of these signage projects at the same time and Councilman Smith seconded. During the discussion, Councilman Orr asked if there was something the town could legally do regarding signs for United Salt on Highway 91 since many of the trucks come into town and have no clue how to get there. Mr. Taylor said that VDOT has been contacted many times by himself or the Chief or the Mayor asking them to install signs with blinkers this side of Rita's store on Highway 107, but they have not done so as of yet. Councilman Brickey asked who had been contacted at VDOT and Mr. Henderson said Jeff Jones and James Schwartz were two of them. He then stated that there should be others at VDOT who could provide the town with a better solution. Councilman Orr asked if a written request had been sent, and Mr. Taylor said yes, but the town had also called and visited with VDOT officials directly. The Mayor suggested that the town's citizens should call VDOT's complaint line to express their sentiments, and Councilman Brickey said this was also a safety issue since these drivers are confused about where to go. The Chief said a ticket could possibly be written for drivers who go down Sycamore Road, but he would look into it more after seeing what the signs there currently say.

The motion to install the signage carried 6-0.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Taylor spoke on the following:

- 1) The flag on the wall behind the Council bench is the one that was presented to the Mayor during Labor Day.
- 2) Though there was a hiccup or two, the snow removal plan worked. All departments worked together and all roads in town were open on Friday with the exception of one or two. Charlie Harrington from Smyth County kept Mr. Taylor updated frequently on the storm's location and intensity.
- 3) The Town Hall was open on Friday and was the only one in the county that was. The building remained open all weekend in case anyone needed to come by. It was not an official shelter since there are no beds available, but people could stay warm.

- 4) Several senior citizens called and were told that someone could get to them if they needed help. They were given procedures to follow including putting together all of their medicine.
- 5) There were some complaints about blocked roads. Our attorneys and insurance carrier were contacted. Their responses are in your report.
- 6) He talked with Eddie Frye regarding the ongoing water runoff issue at his father's house on Palmer Avenue. Mr. Taylor said he hoped Mr. Frye didn't think this was a problem that was being pushed aside, but he and Mr. Henderson do not know what to do. The Lane engineers have looked at this area before and a meeting is to be set up between the family and Lane directly, so that Lane can describe exactly what needs to be done to alleviate this runoff. Gary Kelly and his family, who live on Sheep Hill Road, are also experiencing runoff issues, so a meeting will be set up between that family and Lane as well.
- 7) The berms that VDOT built to help with the runoff on Government Plant Road have helped some, but water is still reaching Ms. Wilson's property. Another meeting with VDOT is in the works.
- 8) The packets contain lead and copper reports from Veolia regarding the town's drinking water. All levels are acceptable according to state guidelines. In response to a question from Councilman Brickey asking whether this information is being made available to the public, Mr. Taylor said the information in the Council packets is available to the public if anyone wishes to see it, and an extra packet is at the front window. However, contractual information or legal information, etc. will not be available to the public.
- 9) The Smyth County Chamber of Commerce will have a networking breakfast at the Museum on March 2nd starting at 8:00 a.m.
- 10) The town is working with the SIDA, Smyth County Economic Development Director Lori Deel, and Smyth Chamber Director Sarah Beth Gillespie on an event in May for Business Appreciation Month.
- 11) Our insurance carrier, VML, supplies the town with webcasts which offer many programs for municipalities in the state. Members of the police department just viewed a program on sexual harassment.
- 12) Local churches were thanked for putting together a so-called First Responder Appreciation Meal for the town's police officers, fire fighters, and members of the rescue squad.
- 13) There were 241 people who attended the Woolly breakfast according to Councilman Orr.
- 14) The town is a member of the group Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, and this organization is currently undertaking several projects all over the area.

15) The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission sponsored a meeting whose topic was helping brand Smyth County. Resources for this include the Smyth County Chamber, local businesses, industries, or colleges, and whatever is at everyone's disposal.

16) There will be a conference call with DEQ on February 18th regarding the town's sewer project. This will include discussion of the proposed loan of almost one million dollars for the improvements that DEQ mandated. Veolia and the Lane Group will be included in this call. The town needs to thank the DEQ employees in Abingdon for working with the town to get this project started. They have gone above and beyond to accommodate the town when they did not have to.

17) There will be more meetings with both local and state economic professionals regarding the available buildings in town.

18) The town's website is being revamped.

19) VDOT is starting the core drilling at the ball fields in preparation for their project there. The work will start in early spring.

20) There will be people sifting through the piles of dirt on the sides of the road in the cemetery. There was an incident where the ground was upset, and bones came out of that ground. A citizen who lives near the cemetery, Raymond "Squirrel" Call, first saw this bone and reported it to Mr. Taylor. The Chief was notified, and through police channels, the bone was sent to the medical examiner. The contractor who digs the graves, Bill Brickey, assisted by showing the locations where this dirt was taken. Radford University's Anthropology Department will be responsible for sifting through this dirt to see if other bones can be found.

The town's attorney was notified of this situation as was Smyth County Commonwealth Attorney Roy Evans.

21) The Mayor asked that the Council members get any agenda items to the main office by noon on the Thursday before the regular meeting. He also asked that these items be put in writing.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Wilcox spoke on the following:

1) It was determined that no criminal offense was involved with the discovery of the bone in the cemetery.

2) He thanked the town crew for their work during the snow storm and thanked the churches for the aforementioned meal.

3) Officer Frye completed his field training.

4) He said he was excited to work with Sheriff Shuler and Smyth County.

Fire Department Report

Assistant Chief Bobby Dye spoke on the following:

1) He, too, thanked the churches for the meal.

2) The department hosted the Southwest Virginia Firefighters Association meeting and had over sixty-six attendees with some as far away as Danville. Both he and Alex Renfro got nominated to the membership committee.

3) The Firefighter I class is ongoing, and next week the participants will go in the burn building. Though thirteen initially started the class, four will finish.

4) The members decided not to go through an outside agency for their billing since money could be saved by doing it themselves. The QuickBooks computer program will be purchased instead for this task.

5) The department's budget has dropped significantly.

6) The bingo permit has been applied for, and the process should take about forty-five days. The building is being remodeled slightly, but parking needs to be addressed. The Lions Club lot may be the solution. Councilman Brickey commended the department for their work.

Closed Session

Councilman Smith made a motion to enter Closed Session in accordance with the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) for the 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; and Section 2.2- 3711(A)(7) for the consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such

consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Councilman Orr seconded, and the motion carried 5-1 with Councilman Brickey voting no.

After exiting Closed Session, Councilman Smith made a motion to certify that the Closed Session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law regarding those matters that are exempted from open meeting requirements and nothing was discussed other than what was mentioned in the motion to convene Closed Session. Councilman Holley seconded, and the roll call vote was 6-0 in the affirmative.

Councilman Brickey made a motion to have the Council support the 9-1-1 Committee's recommendation to establish the enhanced 9-1-1 system in Smyth County and have the Council take up the cost during the upcoming budget session. Councilman Smith seconded, and the motion carried 6-0.

Councilman Smith made a motion to re-enter Closed Session in accordance with the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) to discuss police department regulations. Councilman Call seconded, and the motion carried 4-2 with Councilmen Brickey and Orr voting no.

After exiting the second Closed Session, Councilman Smith made a motion to certify that the Closed Session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law regarding those matters that are exempted from open meeting requirements and nothing was discussed other than what was mentioned in the motion to convene Closed Session. Councilman Call seconded, and the roll call vote was 6-0 in the affirmative.

Lastly, Councilwoman Wyatt made the motion to adjourn, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.