

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on February 13, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

**Council:** Tom Holley, Sandra Wyatt, David Smith, Steve Surber, and Ron Orr  
Eugene Call was absent due to illness

**Mayor:** C. Todd Young

**Staff:** Brian Martin, Town Manager  
Trent Crewe, Town Attorney  
Chris Wilcox, Police Chief  
R.B. Henderson, Public Works Director  
Tammy Carter, Front Office Clerk  
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

Before the invocation, the Mayor asked for a moment of silence for the recent passing of Shirley Carter. Ms. Carter had worked for the town for several years. He also mentioned Mary Gillenwater, a longtime Saltville resident who tragically passed away in a fire.

Councilman Holley made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

### **Citizens' Time**

**Kris Sheets** was at the meeting representing the Saltville library and spoke on the following:

- 1) She is preparing for the off-site reading program for this summer and asked to use the Palmer Mill like she has done in the past.
- 2) Other off-site programs include the luau at the wave pool and various activities at the elementary school and the Commons Area. The average attendance for her indoor programs is approximately 80 participants.
- 3) The dates needed for the Palmer Mill are July 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>. Councilman Surber made the motion to allow the use of the Palmer Mill on these dates, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

**John Norris** was at the meeting representing the Saltville Golf Course and spoke on the following:

- 1) He has been a member of the Golf Club for 51 years.
- 2) He has served on both the Council and the SIDA and noted that both bodies give money and incentives to people from out-of-town to locate their business in town. This is using the taxpayers' money for workers, materials, etc. for non-residents to locate here. Additionally, a forgivable loan was given to one of these businesses, and that business did not meet the loan requirements, including lease payments and utility payments, and is now closed.
- 3) He suggested the Council help the golf course instead since it has been around for decades and has always paid its town utilities (water/sewer) and town and state taxes.
- 4) The course is kept in beautiful condition in the heart of town, so it is a good tourist attraction, and visitors from Australia, Oregon, Kansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee played the course last year. When these guests were here, they spent money at town establishments helping the town's sales tax collections.
- 5) He concluded his discussion by asking the Council to provide the same materials, labor, and forgivable loan funding to the golf course as it did to the aforementioned out-of-town owned business that is now closed. With the Council's help, the golf course will remain a venue in Saltville like it has for eighty-nine years.

**Bryan Morris** spoke on the following:

- 1) He recognized the recently deceased Shirley Carter and Charlie Norris, both former town employees. Ms. Carter worked in the main office, and Mr. Norris was a former Police Chief.
- 2) Mr. Morris said the Town's contract with Veolia was a mistake, and the Council needed to learn from that mistake. The way he understands it, the town will incur costs in the thousands of dollars to make repairs if it takes over the water and sewer system again.
- 3) He encouraged the Council to really go through the bids for the operation of the water and sewer system since Veolia's contract is up in a couple of months. This process doesn't need to be rushed, and all scenarios (including the town running the systems itself) need to be carefully considered since this is vital to the town's future.

**John Clark** spoke on the following:

- 1) He was representing the Episcopal Church and asked about the rates that churches are charged for their water and sewer. His church uses, at most, 260 gallons a month, but sometimes as little as 50 gallons. However, the minimum bill is \$101.32 for churches, civic groups, and schools.
- 2) He asked that the Council consider moving the rates for churches to the commercial rate as part of the next budget cycle. This would save his church about \$1000 per year.
- 3) Referring to John Norris' discussion earlier about the Saltville golf course, Mr. Clark talked about his time as the Town Manager of Marion when Marion bought the Holston Hills golf course. He said that Marion received a \$1.5 million loan from the Smyth County Foundation with the debt service being \$38,000 annually. Saltville could contact the Foundation to see if they could procure a loan for around \$100,000 to help with expenses for the Saltville golf course with the annual debt service being approximately \$2500.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Town Manager Brian Martin asked that a Rescue Squad discussion be added to the agenda. Councilman Smith made a motion to approve the agenda with the Rescue Squad added, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

### **Old Business**

#### **1. *If I Were Mayor* contest**

The Mayor recognized Gage Foran, this year's winner of the annual *If I Were Mayor* contest, and presented him with a plaque. Gage is a student at Northwood Middle School. The Mayor said it's always a good thing to recognize the accomplishments of our youth and went on to congratulate the JV boys basketball team for playing for the Smyth County championship tonight, the varsity team for doing well this season, and the wrestling team for sending eight students to the state championships in Salem.

## **2. GCS cubicles**

This issue was tabled since the call center in Marion says they have no room for any more cubicles by order of the Fire Marshall. Mr. Johnson said he was waiting to hear back from another call center in Bristol, then, to see if they wanted these particular cubicles.

## **New Business**

### **1. Salt Trail / Land Bridge**

The Mayor said plans had been drawn up for a land bridge for the Salt Trail a few years ago, and the Lane Group has looked over these plans. He asked the Council if they wished to put this out for bid to gauge a cost for this project. Mr. Martin said the completion of the Salt Trail to Glade Spring was important for the town, and the bridge was part of the plans. Back in 2013, both Saltville and Glade Spring signed a joint resolution in support of finishing the Trail completely.

Mr. Martin said the town could either put it out for bid now or work with the Lane Group to get new cost estimates. Councilman Smith made the motion to work with the Lane Group to get a cost estimate, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

### **2. Closed Session form**

Councilman Orr mentioned that there was a mix-up at last month's meeting regarding the topics that were to be discussed during Closed Session. He asked the Council to consider the enclosed form being filled out to show what the topics will be and the reasoning behind them. This would get rid of any confusion and ambiguity, and there will be no surprises to anyone on the Council. If there is a question about the correct section of the Code of Virginia to use, the town's attorney would be consulted.

Councilman Surber made a motion to accept this new Closed Session form, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

### **3. Comprehensive Plan update**

Mr. Martin told the Council that the town's Comprehensive Plan was in need of updating since it had not been since 1999. For the town to expand upon its recent opportunities such as the Brownsfield grant and the repurposing of the old town shop site, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated since funding agencies like to see how their grants would fit into the town's overall vision.

Mr. Martin also works for the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, and one of the services the MRPDC provides is working on the Comprehensive Plans for localities. Councilman Surber made a motion to have the MRPDC work on the town's Comprehensive Plan, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

#### **4. Veolia report**

Zach Maynard spoke on the following:

- 1) He couldn't attend last month's meeting due to working on a leak.
- 2) If the Council has any specific questions or comments, he asked that they contact him.

#### **5. Water/Sewer contract bids**

Mr. Martin reminded the Council that Veolia's contract was expiring on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The town currently has four proposals to run the water and sewer systems in response to the RFP that ran in the paper. One RFP option was to have an outside contractor just run the water and sewer plant and stations, and the other option was to have an outside contractor run the water and sewer systems and provide all the required other maintenance, too, like Veolia is doing now.

A called meeting needs to be set for next week to interview all four of the respondents to the RFP to assess how each would fit into the town's needs. Mr. Martin also requests that the town advertise for additional maintenance staff since if a contractor is chosen to only run the water and sewer system, then the town will have to perform all of the maintenance. Currently, the town does have enough maintenance employees to perform this additional work.

The Mayor set a meeting for February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. to interview the four RFP respondents and asked for a motion to advertise for maintenance workers. Councilman Smith made that motion, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

#### **Town Manager's Report**

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) He asked Les Sutherland of the Lane Group to update the sewer project. Mr. Sutherland said most of the line work was completed. Water is getting into the system on the back side of Henrytown Road where the sewer flows to the pump station. There are thirteen areas where

water is entering or the line is just broken, and this will be fixed. Currently, there is just one pump working in McCready, so a pump has been specified to get installed.

The Mayor said he gotten some questions about the conditions of the yards involved in the project, and Mr. Sutherland replied that the contractor is responsible for fixing all yards even if they have to come back several times to do so.

2) The town also received two proposals from firms regarding engineering services for the upcoming water improvement project. He asked that he, Public Works Director R. B. Henderson, and Councilman Call, the Chair of the Water/Sewer Committee, be given the authority to interview these two firms and pick the qualified candidate. Councilman Smith made the motion to allow this, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

3) He's working with the town's attorney to rectify the situation with the house on Henrytown Road regarding the roach and pest problem.

4) No bids were received for repairing the shelters in the Well Fields, Mr. Martin suggested having the town workers do it, especially since the town will advertise to hire more workers.

5) The residents on Third Avenue have not responded to the two letters regarding their chickens being kept in a residential area. Mr. Crewe said it was probably the time for this matter to go to court, so they will have to be served the papers to appear in court.

Councilman Surber asked Mr. Martin if he had heard from the office of the Smyth County Attorney, Jeff Campbell, regarding the building code violation at the same address where the chickens are located. Mr. Martin said he had heard nothing from the county about this separate issue. Councilman Surber reminded the Council that this violation was given to Mr. Campbell's office back in May of 2017 by Clegg Williams, the head of the Smyth County Building and Zoning Department, and it had yet to be acted upon. Mr. Johnson said he would get all of the correspondence regarding this building code violation to Mr. Crewe to have for his records. Moreover, Mr. Martin said he and Mr. Johnson would send an official letter to Mr. Campbell's office asking for resolution regarding the code violation.

Councilman Smith made a motion for Mr. Crewe to pursue a court remedy regarding the chickens, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.

6) A so-called *State of Good Repair* grant from VDOT has been filled out. This grant is highly competitive, and the town probably won't get it, but it is worth a try. It is for repairs to the bridge on Government Plant Road.

7) He asked the Council for permission to apply for a search grant through USDA. This grant would help Saltville perform an engineering study on the water and sewer system. Redundancies need to be built back into those systems, and this \$22,500 grant would help with

that. The town would have to match this amount. Councilwoman Wyatt made the motion to apply for this grant, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.

8) Councilman Smith brought it to the Council's attention that the Palmer Mill is in need of repairs and isn't really fit to use, and the waterline is busted at the bathrooms. Councilwoman Wyatt asked Mr. Henderson to go through the building and put together a list of what needs to be done and bring it back to the Council for the next meeting so an approximate cost can be figured.

9) Quotes have been obtained for vendor row to receive an electrical upgrade before the next Labor Day festival. Councilman Smith made a motion to put this out for bid, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

10) We've applied for a grant of \$5000 for more waste receptacles on the Barbrow Trail. The only cost to the town would be the labor to install the cans.

11) The town has been invited to speak at the 2018 Appalachian Regional Brownsfield Conference on April 18<sup>th</sup> in Pulaski. Mr. Martin and the Mayor will represent the town.

### **Police Chief's Report**

Chief Wilcox spoke on the following:

1) The overtime for January was minimal, but next month will rise since Officer Cline resigned.

2) The candidate selected for the scholarship at the Academy was not initially allowed to attend due to a physical fitness issue. The Chief asked for a waiver, but it was denied. However, the candidate can come back in June. Councilwoman Wyatt made a motion to allow the candidate to return in June, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

3) He thanked the fire department members for their efforts with the fire on Court Street. Councilman Surber mentioned that if Chilhowie had not been here to help, it is probable that more houses could have burned, so he thanked them for their efforts. The Chief did the same and complimented John Clark, Chilhowie's Town Manager, and the Chilhowie Fire Department.

## **Maintenance Report**

Public Works Director R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) Four graves were opened and closed this month. Due to all of the rain this month, some graves have settled, so they will be filled back up.
- 2) Council had asked for quotes for the roof on the GCS building. Additionally, water had frozen, so he got quotes on compressors too.

The bids on the compressors were as follows: Air Movers: \$59,860 Starnes: \$58,275

The bids on the roof repair were as follows: Paul Williams: \$136,000 for a new roof  
Dunford Roofing: \$126,000 for a new roof or \$54,000 to repair the existing one  
H. S. Williams: \$50,615 to repair with a ten-year warranty or \$62,087 to repair with a twelve-year warranty

Councilman Surber made the motion to have H.S. Williams repair the roof for \$50,615 with the ten-year warranty, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

- 3) The chipper is running but still needs a hydraulic pump.

## **Fire Department Report**

Chief Jimmy Davidson spoke on the following:

- 1) He thanked the Chilhowie Fire Department for their assistance in last week's fire and mentioned that the Rescue Squad and Police Department were helpful too. Jacky Colston was instrumental in helping maintain adequate water pressure with respect to the pumps involved, and an unknown couple brought everyone food from McDonalds.
- 2) The department had nine calls last month. Six involved specific rescue, two pertained to fires, and one was a vehicle accident.
- 3) The department has smoke detectors to give away, so anyone can come by the department and pick one up.
- 4) Shane Davidson said there will be a Fourth of July bash on Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. A parade will start at 11:00 a.m. followed by seven different bands performing in the Commons Area all day. There will be games, food vendors, bouncy houses and a fireworks display.



## **Rescue Squad Report**

The Captain of the Rescue Squad, David Frye, introduced himself to the Council and said he would give an update at every Council meeting.

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