

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on March 13, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

**Council:** Tom Holley, Sandra Wyatt, Eugene Call, David Smith, Steve Surber, and Ron Orr

**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 meeting began, the Mayor mentioned that a meeting was just held with representatives from various state and federal agencies regarding funding for the proposed campground area and to further development for the Salt Trail, specifically for the land bridge. He thanked Town Manager Brian Martin for putting the meeting together.

Councilwoman Wyatt made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Holley made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2018 special-called meeting, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

### **Citizens' Time**

**Mike Maiden** represented the Northfork Sportsman Club and spoke on the following:

- 1) There are approximately 220 members, and the membership fees are \$100 annually. Lifetime memberships are \$1000.
- 2) The hours of operation are daylight to dark Monday – Saturday and 1:00 p.m. – dark on Sunday.

- 3) Weather permitting, there is an IDPA match on the first Saturday of each month. The one held in March attracted over sixty shooters.
- 4) Over the last three years, they've donated around \$12,000 to the Special Olympics of both Smyth and Washington counties.
- 5) There is a traditional turkey shoot every Saturday evening.

**Jeff Woodward** mentioned that he attended the meeting last September and afterward spoke to the town manager over the litter issue in town. The town manager told him the cleanup was doable and said he would be back in touch. At the October meeting, he spoke at Citizens' Time and presented the Council with photos of examples of violations of the town's litter situation and, as of now, nothing has been done to solve the problem.

While perusing the Smyth County newspaper's website, he read that the Police Chief had said the town's litter ordinance was being enforced since it is the police who are in charge of enforcing it by making sure that people are cleaning their yards, etc. However, driving around town, anyone would see unkempt yards, abandoned cars, and litter. People won't come here if they see litter, and it will just get worse. The Council drafted the litter ordinance, but they aren't enforcing it. For instance, there is a truck sitting at the old insurance building across the street and has been for a year. It has no tags and its back is full of junk, but nobody is doing anything about it. There is a Police Chief to enforce the laws and a lawyer to back him up. This town is too pretty to have litter and abandoned cars everywhere.

**Prentiss Mullins** told the Council he did not understand while the town charged one rate for the sewer bill at his trailer park but Washington County charged another rate for the water bill at the same park. Also, he has another piece of property in the town limits that has another rate structure. Tammy Carter, the Front Office Clerk, said those were just the rates that are charged for out-of-town customers and in-town customers in the particular parts of town, and the rates for out-of-town customers are higher.

**Neil Johnson** said he was at the meeting on behalf of the Saltville Golf Course. He mentioned that the Council was aware of the financial difficulties the course was having after John Norris spoke at the meeting last month. The members have spoken to representatives of the Smyth County Foundation to hopefully procure a loan, and any help from the Council when communicating with the Foundation would be much appreciated.

He concluded his discussion by saying there are six roads that come into town, and four of them have views of the golf course. It has been around for decades and anything that can be done to make sure the course stays in operation should be done.

## **Approval of the Agenda**

The Mayor asked that a discussion of water system resolutions be added to the agenda. Councilman Smith made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of those resolutions, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

## **Old Business**

### **1. Sale of Surplus Property**

There was one bid for the property on Buckeye Street Extension, and it belonged to Bryant and Amy McVey. They bid \$1250. Councilman Call made a motion to sell the property to the McVeys, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

### **2. Cell tower**

Mr. Crewe told the Council he been in contact with SBA II, LLC over three issues involving the sale of the tower to SBA. The first is the area to be leased. They are wanting the entire 100.8 acres described in the original lease made almost fifteen years ago. This is a non-exclusive easement to the entire tract, but they would have an exclusive easement at the tower itself which is 0.23 acres. The second topic is road maintenance. The original agreement said the town would provide access to the tower. It did not say the town would maintain it. The new agreement says the town will maintain all access roadways for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The third topic involved insurance. The old agreement did not require the company to have insurance, but the proposed agreement says the company would have two million dollars in coverage. During the discussion, Councilman Call said he did not agree with the company needing the 100 acres when the tower is just on .023 acres. Mr. Crewe said that SBA was referencing the survey plat. The tower lies within that 100-acre parcel, and that whole parcel was in the earlier agreement. The Mayor questioned the idea of the town and the town only maintaining the road. Councilman Orr said that there was a water tower up there too, and there was no point having that road available to pedestrian traffic. Also, the town's workers use that road every day, so there's no reason while their workers could not do the same. Mr. Crewe said he would contact SBA again to go over the Council's concerns over the acreage and the road maintenance.

### **3. AEP right-of-way**

Mr. Martin reminded the Council that the town previously discussed the right-of-way for the use of the bridge at the end of Government Plant Road. AEP wants a temporary right-of-way along the old rail bed as they do upgrades to the substation. Justin Amos of AEP spoke and told the Council they had been talking to other land owners involving an alternate route but this one over the rail bed seems to be better. AEP needs this right-of-way for twenty four months to transport transformers across the property.

Councilman Orr said he had mentioned before that from his perspective, the negotiations with the other property owner needed to be completely exhausted before the town goes into this. If those negotiations cannot be completed with the other property owners that were initially contacted, he said he would vote to approve AEP's request for a right-of-way over the old rail bed and have the Mayor or Mr. Martin sign that agreement. He put that in the form of a motion, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

### **4. Inmate program**

Mr. Martin asked for a motion to resume full-strength on the inmate program this coming Monday. Councilman Surber made a motion allowing this, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

## **New Business**

### **1. Wrestling resolution**

The Mayor updated the audience on the success for this year's Northwood High School wrestling team. Their first tournament at Lebanon produced a third place finish out of 12 participants followed by a second place finish at Graham where they were the only single A team competing. The conference tournament produced a second place team finish overall with five wrestlers earning individual titles. The super region consisted of sixteen teams comprising schools from both Region C and Region D. The Panthers finished fifth there sending seven wrestlers to the state competition in Salem. They finished the year placing ninth out of twenty-eight teams with four wrestlers placing in their respective weight class. It should be noted that Jake Keesee was the first freshman from Northwood to ever place in state.

The Mayor congratulated the wrestlers and their coaches on representing the school and town with pride and then read the resolution honoring their accomplishments.

## **2. Elementary school**

The Mayor said he and Chief Wilcox had been discussing the recent school shooting in Florida and the fact that the elementary school did not have a resource officer. Saltville Elementary has kids that are Pre-K through the fifth grade, and their safety is of the utmost importance. The town needs to step up and supply the resource officer for the building.

Councilman Surber made the motion for the town to pay for a resource officer for the elementary school, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

## **3. Flea market**

Councilman Smith said he would like the town to have a flea market on the Salt Trail where the so-called vendor row is during the Labor Day festival and suggested charging \$10 per spot to offset the cost of any electricity use. This fee would be paid at the main office at the Town Hall. People would set up that morning and take away their goods that night with the hours being 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on the first Saturday of each month.

Councilman Smith put his request in the form of a motion, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

## **4. Smyth County School Board lease**

Mr. Martin said it had been discussed that the bulk of the parking at the high school is on town-owned property. The School Board has inquired about getting a lease with the town enabling them to more strictly enforce their rules and disciplinary actions on this property while school events were going on. A draft copy of this lease was in the Council packets, and it has been approved by both Mr. Crewe and the county attorney.

Councilman Call made a motion to approve this lease, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

## **5. Little League fields draining and playground equipment**

Councilman Surber said the draining issue at the fields was fixed last weekend, and it was done as a favor to the town free-of-charge. It should really help with standing water issues that the fields have had in the past.

Regarding the equipment at the old playground, Councilman Surber reminded the Council that they had given the swings to George Robbins for his recreation area in North Holston. The remaining apparatus is supposedly to be given to the Little League. Councilwoman Wyatt

agreed and stated that when the Council gave the swings to Mr. Robbins at the meeting a couple of months ago, they also said that the Little League could have the big apparatus if they wanted it. The Mayor echoed her comment and said he called the Little League President, Steven Crusenberry, after that meeting and told him to mark a spot where they wanted the apparatus to be placed. Mr. Crusenberry was in attendance and said that he would like to see it installed behind the two big trees at the concession stand between the two fields.

## **6. Veolia report**

Zach Maynard spoke on the following:

- 1) There have been several routine leaks.
- 2) The second pump for the station on Highway 107 needs to be wired up and installed, and that should be done next week.

## **7. Proposed contract for water/wastewater**

Mr. Martin told the Council they had a revised proposal and a draft contract in front of them from the contractor with whom he had been instructed to enter into negotiations with to take over the operation of the town's water and wastewater system. The town itself would take over the maintenance of the water and sewer lines. Gary Johnson of EMS, Inc., the aforementioned contractor, was on hand to answer any questions.

The Mayor had a question about provision #8 which says that EMS will do all of the mowing at the plant and the stations. He asked if the inmates could do it instead, and Councilman Call agreed by saying that the town already had several mowers that could be used instead of having EMS do it. Mr. Crewe stated that on page two, paragraph 20-B, is the same language saying that EMS will maintain the plant in an orderly fashion including the building and grounds, so that's where he placed the mowing provision. If the town wants to do the mowing, then it needs to take out that provision, but whatever EMS will do needs to be in the final contract. And while the contract can be amended, the proposal put forth by EMS cannot since it was that particular proposal that the Council studied. Mr. Johnson just asked that everything be agreed upon mutually before anything is signed.

Councilman Smith made a motion to accept the contract the Council had before them by having the Mayor sign it. Councilman Surber seconded, and all were in favor.

## **8. Water system resolutions**

Mr. Martin presented the Council with resolutions necessary to undertake a town-wide water improvement project when the current sewer project is completed. These are required by the state funding agencies. He asked the Council to approve these resolutions so the town's engineers, Crossroads Engineering and the Lane Group, can apply for grant funding.

Councilman Call made a motion to approve the resolutions with the Mayor's signature, and Councilwoman Wyatt seconded. All were in favor.

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

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) Les Sutherland of the Lane Group gave a quick update on the sewer project.
- 2) Regarding the house at the entrance to Henrytown Road that is infested with roaches, until a legal remedy can be obtained, the town staff needs to remove the trash from the property. The neighbors have had complaints for months so the trash removal should help with the roach problem. Councilman Holley made a motion to remove the trash, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.
- 3) For those concerned about blighted properties in the town, letters will start going out this spring. Any citizens who have concerns should write them down, put their name and numbers on it, and give them to the front office. Since the weather will be breaking soon, the process will start.
- 4) With the town going back into the water and sewer business, more maintenance staff will need to be hired. Additionally, the town's equipment inventory will have to be restored. Therefore, he asked the Council to consider either a loan or a line of credit of up to \$200,000 for various purchases. Right now, the rate provided by the MRPDC is 3%, while the two banks in town have a higher rate. Councilwoman Wyatt made a motion to obtain this line of credit. Councilman Holley expressed concern over the line of credit and said he had never seen it work, so he preferred a loan. Councilwoman Wyatt rescinded her motion and made a new one to procure a loan instead through the MRPDC in the amount of \$200,000. Councilman Surber seconded, and all were in favor.
- 5) A representative from the so-called Widow's Garden spoke at the Council meeting a couple of months ago and mentioned that their funding had been cut by \$600. Through his administrative discretionary account, he wrote them a check for \$600 to cover this deficiency and keep the garden going strong.

6) The MRPDC has agreed to put together a new Comprehensive Plan for \$10,000. The Mayor said that all funding agencies that he has spoken with and were in attendance at the meeting this morning said that the Comp Plan needed to be updated since it was last done in 1999. Councilman Smith made the motion to allow the MRPDC to proceed with this update for \$10,000. Councilman Orr seconded, and all were in favor.

7) The town has two VDOT grants right now. One is the Transportation Assistance Grant to help with the Salt Trail and the other is the Urban Assistance Grant for improvements at the intersection of West Main Street and Lake Drive. VDOT has given approval for the town to procure its consultants. Mr. Martin recommends that the town contract with the MRPDC to administer the Transportation Grant since the money to administer the grant is already built in that particular grant and it is not with the Urban Assistance Grant.

Councilman Call made a motion to have the MRPDC administer the Transportation Grant for the built-in fee of \$10,000. Councilman Orr seconded, and all were in favor.

8) DEQ issued a temporary burning permit to the town for the big pile at the old town shop site and has required the town to make sure that site is clean. There are leftover logs from Asplundh at the old Moss Trucking site too. The property the town purchased on Battleground Avenue for the new town shop and a salt storage facility needs to be cleaned up as well.

Councilman Orr said a contractor has given a price to clean up all three areas and grind into mulch for the town, and they are as follows: Moss site - \$4500; burn pile at old town shop - \$4500; Battleground property on the left side of the right-of-way where the new shop will go - \$6500; and the remaining part of the lot on Battleground toward the EPOVA property for grading and debris removal - \$4500. This particular \$4500 price is contingent upon the fact that this work is done at the same time as the left side of the right-of-way. If not, the price for the area toward EPOVA would be \$7500.

Councilwoman Wyatt asked why the town should pay to clean up the logs left by Asplundh. Mr. Martin said he had made several calls to Asplundh about this and had received no response. The Mayor asked Mr. Martin to reach out to VDOT about Asplundh since they were using the services of Asplundh to begin with. Mr. Martin replied that he would also reach out to AEP since Asplundh also does work for them. The Mayor asked that this topic be tabled until the April meeting so Mr. Martin could contact both VDOT and AEP.

9) Reading from minutes of the February Council meeting, Councilman Surber stated that Mr. Martin had told the Council that he and Mr. Johnson would send a letter to the office of the Smyth County Attorney, Jeff Campbell, over the zoning code violation on Third Avenue that had been discussed at several prior Council meetings. Councilman Surber asked Mr. Martin if he had heard anything from Mr. Campbell's office, and Mr. Martin said he had yet to hear anything. Councilman Surber said he felt the town was getting the runaround and had asked Saltville's



representative on the Smyth County Board of Supervisors, Roscoe Call, to ask Mr. Campbell about this matter, and Supervisor Call said that Mr. Campbell had said that he had been backed up since he was also a Delegate in the Virginia Legislature. However, Mr. Campbell has two other attorneys working with him, so Councilman Surber thought they could have handled this matter in Mr. Campbell's absence. The Mayor reminded the Council that the county has also not redone its water contract with the town. When Supervisor Call had spoken at the Council Meeting a few months ago, he had said he would set up a meeting with the Mayor, Mr. Martin, and Councilman Call (The Chair of the Water/Sewer Committee) to discuss several issues involving the town, including the water contracts, but he yet to set up that meeting.

Mr. Martin said that with the Council's approval he would call the Smyth County Administrator, Michael Carter, to set up a meeting to discuss the zoning violation and the water contracts specifically. Councilman Surber made a motion for Mr. Martin to set up this meeting, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

10) Councilwoman Wyatt asked that the Historical Society members be allowed to use the VFW building once a month to have their meetings, and put that in the form of a motion. Councilman Surber seconded, and all were in favor.

11) Mr. Martin said he has explored having the entire water and sewer system in the town mapped through the Smyth County GIS structure and will meet with the Smyth County GIS Coordinator, Manual Street, to look into this further.

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

Chief Wilcox spoke on the following:

- 1) He thanked the Council for voting to place a resource officer at the elementary school.
- 2) There have been issues with dogs and cats recently. After researching the Code of Virginia, he discovered that towns can revise county ordinances relating to animal control. He suggested the Ordinance Committee have a meeting to discuss what can and cannot be done regarding the fees and licensing involved. Councilman Smith made a motion for the Ordinance Committee to meet to go over this topic. Councilman Call seconded, and all were in favor.
- 3) The department overtime this past month consisted of 59 total hours.
- 4) There will be a concealed weapons class on March 31<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Anyone wishing to attend can show up, but they need to bring twenty rounds of ammunition.

5) The annual Fish-A-Ree will be held on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Kids will fish from 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., and then adults can participate.

6) The Little League parade will be on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Wyatt made a motion to close the road for the parade. Councilman Smith seconded, and all were in favor.

### **Maintenance Report**

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

1) Four graves were dug this month, and more have to be filled in where there has been a lot of rain.

2) A line to the holding tanks at the restroom at the ballfields was leaking causing the tank to fill up even though the water had been off. It has been fixed.

3) He presented the Council with a list of the items that need to be addressed at the Palmer Mill following the request at the February meeting. The Mayor said the Palmer Mill was discussed at this morning's meeting. It was the consensus of the people there that it would be good for the town if some outside person or company might come in and transform it into a restaurant to go along with the proposed campground area and further development of the Salt Trail. Mr. Martin said there was a demand these days for niche developments like this for a restaurant or micro-brewery or something similar. There's a lot of potential there.

4) Holes were patched on Bank Street, and the trees in Edgewood have been cut.

5) Since the town is taking back over the water and sewer maintenance, the water pumps and any replacements for them need to be inspected and bought since it's important to have spares. Generators need to be bought for the wells.

6) Since more people are going to be hired, more equipment is needed. He and Councilman Orr found a 2006 F-350 truck with a tool bed and pipe rack. The cost is \$11,500 after being reduced from \$18,000. This particular truck would be around \$40,000 if it was new. It has good tread on the tires and two new batteries. Councilman Orr made a motion to buy the truck for \$11,500, and Councilman Smith seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Smith made a motion to allow up to \$20,000 for pumps and other inventory, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor. Since a sewer vacuum will also be needed, Councilman Orr made a motion to spend up to \$40,000 on one. Councilman Surber seconded, and all were in favor.

## **Fire Department Report**

Chief Jimmy Davidson spoke on the following:

- 1) BINGO is going strong, and the department is going to help out with the Fish-A-Ree.
- 2) The big Independence Day celebration is on tap for Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Chief Davidson asked for permission to have a parade and close the roads. Councilman Smith made a motion to allow the roads to be closed for the parade. Councilwoman Wyatt seconded, and all were in favor.

Lastly, Councilman Smith made a motion to adjourn, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.