

Minutes of the Public Hearing held on September 14, 2021 at 6:45 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Monica Johnson, Jeff Comer, Eugene Call, Bryan Morris, Steve Surber, and Gary Call

Mayor: C. Todd Young

Staff: Brian Martin, Town Manager
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing by stating its purpose is to solicit local input for a Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant for trail and roadway improvements to encourage safe, accessible, non-motorized forms of transportation.

Town Manager Brian Martin stated that the town submitted a pre-application for a VDOT Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant that could be worth up to \$1.4 million and includes an 80/20 match meaning that VDOT would pay for 80%, and the town (or the town and some partners) would put up the 20%. The town is pursuing two options for this project. The ideal option would be to have the Salt Trail continue through the U.S. Gypsum property onto the former roadbed which would basically come out at the Tin Bridge Trestle and would complete the Salt Trail from Saltville to Glade Spring. The main problem with this option is that the town would have to get permission from USG to use their land. If the town were to be granted access through the USG property, then the town would not need the funding from VDOT. The first phase of the other option would be to complete a land bridge or do some grading near the Trestle to have it come down to the road with the second phase being that bike lanes would be installed on the road coming into town.

After a couple of comments from the audience, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on September 14, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Monica Johnson, Jeff Comer, Eugene Call, Bryan Morris, Steve Surber, and Gary Call

Mayor: C. Todd Young

Staff: Brian Martin, Town Manager
Paul Cassell, Town Attorney
Erik Puckett, Police Chief
R.B. Henderson, Public Works Director
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2021 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Gary Call seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Morris abstaining since he was not present for that meeting.

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2021 special-called meeting, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Comer abstaining since he was not present for that meeting.

Citizens' Time

Jason Kolar recently moved to the area and talked to the Council about the three-hole disc golf course that is currently on the Salt Trail past the playground area. He has worked in the Parks and Rec field and said he was willing to help build and maintain the current one and pursue money to actually make Saltville's course a nine-hole or an eighteen-hole course but gave the Council a proposal for a nine-hole course. The total cost would be approximately \$10,000.

The Mayor suggested turning this over to the Rec Committee. Councilman Jeff Comer, the Chair of this committee, invited Mr. Kolar to his next meeting on September 30th at 6:00 p.m. in the Lifetime Wellness Center.

Phil Collins represented the Allison Gap Community Center and mentioned their insurance was cancelled after filing a claim for damages incurred during a storm. They wish to rent the Palmer Mill for \$1 per year and will do the upkeep, mowing, etc.

The Mayor said this would be turned over to the town's attorney and would be back on the agenda for the October meeting.

Pastor Billy of the Northwood Fellowship updated the Council on events going on with his church. Last July, they fed the entire town for a week and had a bible school. Tomorrow night at 6:00 p.m. a Dove Award-winning band, *We Are Called*, will perform on the stage in the Commons Area.

Last year the town donated funds to help the church with their 100 Christmas boxes, and this year they are shooting for 200 boxes. They will also have their Christmas backpacks again this year on December 17th. Also, they are wanting to have the drive-thru Trunk or Treat again on October 30th. In addition to candy, hot chocolate will be given out too.

Approval of the Agenda

Councilman Morris made a motion to add the Trunk or Treat to the agenda, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris then made a motion to approve the agenda with that addition, and Councilman Comer seconded. All were in favor.

Old Business

1. Paving

W-L Construction was the only contractor to submit paving bids, and they were as follows:

Henrytown Road:	\$80,000
Government Plant Road:	\$68,000
Palmer Avenue:	\$80,000

Councilman Morris made the motion to accept all three bids, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

2. Softball field fence

Councilman Comer said his Rec Committee was going to meet on September 30th at 6:00 p.m. in the Wellness Center to discuss this matter further. Councilwoman Johnson then made a motion to go ahead and move the fence forward to benefit the Little League girls and the high school girls because it's not productive or useful right now and is holding them back athletically. Councilman Gary Call seconded.

During the discussion, Councilman Morris asked if the high school and Little League would have the same fencing distance, and Councilwoman Johnson said yes, 220 feet. Councilman Eugene Call said he would like to see the Rec Committee meet first before the decision is made to move the fence since the field would not be in use until next spring anyway. Councilwoman Johnson replied that it was tabled last month, and a meeting could have already been had, but it wasn't. Also United Salt has donated a scoreboard, and it can be put up in its permanent location if the fence is moved.

The vote to go ahead and move the fence was 3-3 with Councilmembers Johnson, Gary Call, and Surber voting yes and Councilmembers Morris, Eugene Call, and Comer voting no. The Mayor broke the tie with a no vote, so this issue will be tabled until October.

3. Town Shop

Councilwoman Johnson said the issue of a new town shop needed to be resolved since this has been going on for over a year. She sent the Town Manager some schematics for metal buildings since she did not think that trailers were a good option. Also, the old town shop needs to be completely fenced in until it can come down since it is a hazard. Town Manager Brian Martin said the property where the old town shop is located has gone from the town's ownership to the SIDA's ownership to the Smyth County EDA's ownership in order for a grant to be pursued to clean up that entire site. Town Attorney Paul Cassell said the town would have to request permission from the EDA before putting any type of fencing around the property.

Councilman Morris said he would like to have a special-called meeting about a new town shop where building information would be known ahead of time. The Mayor suggested having Mr. Martin get information regarding building materials and sizes from at least three manufacturers, and then he would schedule a special meeting.

New Business

1. Police Department shooting range

Councilman Morris said the continuation of the Barbrow Trail comes within twenty feet of the gun range, so that presents a liability to the town. Also, the gun range is unprotected as well. Chief Puckett said he would like to see fencing put around it. Both Councilman Morris and Councilwoman Johnson mentioned that they would also like to see a flag raised when the range is in use, and Chief Puckett said that people fire away from the trail.

Mr. Martin said the current range is in need of repair regarding the back stops and benches. There is land at the new town shop where a range could be located if the Council wanted to explore that option. Chief Puckett then brought up the point that DCJS in Richmond has to formally approve any new gun ranges. Mr. Martin said he would get some pricing together for fencing and moving the current range. Councilwoman Johnson reminded the Council that the crosswalk in that area still needed to be painted. Mr. Martin said that Public Works Director RB Henderson is going to order the signs and install the crosswalk since KBWV is not taking on any new projects, and San Marcos has yet to return his call.

2. VDOT resolutions

Mr. Martin said the first resolution was related to the grant opportunity discussed during Public Hearing and was a requirement for any Transportation Alternatives projects. Councilman Morris made a motion to have the Mayor sign this resolution, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

The second resolution involved the upcoming bridge rehab on Government Plant Road. No town money is required for this project since it is funded by VDOT. Councilman Morris made a motion to have the Mayor sign this resolution, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

3. SIDA reappointment

Mr. Martin told the Council that Johnny Norris' term on the SIDA was up on August 30th, and he has expressed his willingness to serve another four-year term should he be reappointed. Councilman Morris said he would like to see the town accept interest letters for the open position as it has done in the past and made the motion to do so. Councilwoman Johnson seconded, and all were in favor.

Ron Orr, the Chair of the SIDA, said one of the current members is not attending the meetings and asked to deal with that at the same time as the new member. Councilman Morris said that if more than one interested party submitted a letter of interest and that person not attending the meetings wished to resign, then the idea could be entertained to appoint more than one person. Mr. Cassell replied that the agenda item for this next month should reflect that there could be a second appointment as well.

4. 2020 Census

Mr. Martin gave the Council a handout about the 2020 Census. Southwestern Virginia lost about 8% of its population from the 2010 Census. Smyth County lost about 2400 people and fell below 30,000 for the first time ever. Saltville itself lost 253 people, a 12.2% loss from 2010, and fell under 2000 people for the first time ever. Councilman Morris said it was his opinion that many people did not fill out the Census information either because of apathy or a lack of understanding.

5. EMS, Inc. Report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meetings with the town's staff continue each Monday at 10:00 a.m.
- 2) The DEQ report for August was submitted.
- 3) The inflow and infiltration issue has not been bad lately due to a lack of rain.
- 4) The town has applied for DEQ construction funds to replace the aerial crossing at the river.
- 5) With regard to the upcoming Rural Development Project, they are putting together a wish list of items for the wastewater plant.
- 6) The VDH monthly report and the VDH Water Treatment Leak Loss Report were submitted for August.
- 7) The system will have to be pressurized while the tanks are being painted.
- 8) Individual reports have been given to the homeowners who submitted samples for the lead and copper testing.
- 9) Councilwoman Johnson asked if fluoride was still being used, and Mr. Johnson replied yes.

6. Trunk-or-Treat

Councilman Morris made a motion to have the drive-thru Trunk-or-Treat on the Salt Trail on October 30th. Councilman Eugene Call seconded, and all were in favor.

Committee Reports

Councilwoman Johnson said some of her committee members have requested that the Council meetings be shown on YouTube again since they still do not want to be around a bunch of other people due to COVID. The Mayor said would be put on next month's agenda.

This week is Homecoming week at the high school. The parade will be on Thursday, the game on Friday, and the dance on Saturday. She made a motion to close Palmer Avenue for the dance, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

The LOVE sign is still in the works but has yet to be made. She has been asked about when the murals at the Veterans Wall would be put back, and Mr. Martin said they were in storage until they could be repainted. The back wall also needs to have its stucco resurfaced.

There were no big problems with the Labor Day celebration. She thanked the ladies of the Eastern Star, the police and fire departments, and everybody for their work during those four days. The Mayor echoed her sentiments regarding Labor Day.

Public Works Director's Report

Mr. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) Labor Day was a busy weekend.
- 2) The pumps at the pool have been shut off, and it will be winterized.
- 3) There have been more water leaks this month than any month in recent memory.
- 4) Four graves were opened last month.
- 5) He requested that a light be put at the Little League field to help with the littering problem. Mr. Martin said they would contact AEP.
- 6) Palmer Avenue in front of Friends Church is starting to settle again, so it will have a camera run through it again at the manhole.
- 7) The fence was taken down at the gravel lot on Palmer Avenue. Councilman Comer commented that the area looked better.
- 8) Councilwoman Johnson thanked him and his staff for helping with Labor Day and Patriots Day.
- 9) Councilman Eugene Call asked about the roughness on the pool bottom where people enter. He asked that it be sanded down before the pool opens next summer.
- 10) Councilman Morris asked that a No Truck Parking sign be placed at the lot where the fence was removed, and Councilwoman Johnson agreed.
- 11) Councilman Surber asked about the police vehicles parked and why they haven't been sold or scrapped yet. Police Chief Erik Puckett replied that one of those is to be used for the inmate program and another will be given to the EMS department. He said he would have the other old vehicles at the old town shop site taken to Berry's and that the fire department wanted to use a couple of those vehicles for training purposes.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) There were two fatalities in town involving traffic accidents.
- 2) Steve McVey has officially started work.
- 3) Labor Day brought no major issues.
- 4) A stolen car was recovered, and the perpetrator was apprehended and charged.
- 5) It had been previously discussed to make Bank Street one-way, so if the Council still wants that, some guidance is needed. Mr. Cassell said this would have to be advertised quite a bit and the local businesses affected would have to be notified. This will be added to the agenda in October.
- 6) The town still can't get inmates from the jail, and the possibility of getting them on Washington County's off-days fell through.
- 7) Officer Bordwine was added to the U.S. Marshalls' Task Force.
- 8) The stats are included, but the six arrests did not print.
- 9) No-shave November has started early, and each officer will donate \$100 for the Christmas program at the elementary school.
- 10) Councilman Morris said he was glad to see that traffic enforcements have improved.

Fire Department Report

There were twenty-three calls last month with ten in the town, eleven in the county, and two assisting Chilhowie. The department has procured new extraction tools. Currently, there are twenty members with three of those being new in the last month.

Emergency Medical Services Report

Director Kyle Brewster spoke on the following:

- 1) Seventy-four calls were run last month with a refusal rate of 16% and 81% being ALS calls. The average response time has been 9:51 with ten minutes being the national standard. Councilwoman Johnson said she expected the refusal rate to continue to go down as more people see the EMS members in the community.
- 2) The new monitors have arrived and are currently in use.
- 3) The Boy Scouts are helping to set up the Explorer Program due to insurance purposes, and everything should be set up in the next couple of months.
- 4) There have been two resignations, but there are five more applications for employment, and all have been interviewed. One is already an EMT, and two are almost done with EMT school, and one is going to apply. Another current member passed his paramedic test yesterday.

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the applications for membership, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

- 5) Office Manager Richelle Loman told the Council that she had submitted \$329,000 in grant applications broken down with \$170,000 for a new ambulance; \$80,000 for new monitors for backups; \$15,000 for ambulance supplies; and \$64,000 for advanced CPR machines. There is also a grant application in the works for a new ATV for rescues since the current one needs to be replaced.

They have received approval to start billing insurance and Medicare just thirty days after submitting the paperwork. It usually takes sixty days. For July and August, \$80,000 has now been billed, and it will start to slowly come in.

- 6) The Mayor asked about the ambulances being at the football games and how that effects response time. Mr. Brewster replied the unit at the games is the second unit and is designated to the game. If the first unit gets a call, the second unit will stay at the game until it gets a call. Also, if a player is injured and needs transporting, another truck will be called to transport the patient.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) The interim financing has been approved for the meter replacement by the Bank of Marion. Councilman Morris made a motion to authorize Mr. Martin and the Clerk/Treasurer to sign the documents, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.
- 2) A \$100,000 grant application has been put together for the Mount Rogers Water/Wastewater funding.
- 3) The VDOT traffic projects in Chilhowie are underway. The work will ultimately affect the citizens of Saltville.
- 4) The AEP Hillman Highway / Saltville transmission line rebuild project will start soon.
- 5) There will be an ARPA committee meeting in the next couple of weeks to put together a spending plan for the ARPA funding.
- 6) The town was awarded a \$20,000 grant for marketing to be managed by the Chamber. The town will apply for ARC funding for the trail and proposed campground as well.
- 7) There have been meetings with the grant writer and engineers to complete the VDOT T/A grant for the Salt Trail.

Closed Session

Councilman Morris made a motion to enter Closed Session in accordance with the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) to discuss personnel in the maintenance department. Councilman Eugene Call seconded, and all were in favor.

After exiting Closed Session, Councilman Morris 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 Eugene Call seconded, and the roll call vote was 6-0 in the affirmative.

Councilman Morris made a motion to instruct Mr. Martin to make the personnel change involving the cemetery as discussed. Councilman Gary Call seconded, and all were in favor.

Lastly, Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to adjourn, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

