

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on April 9, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Tom Holley, Hiram Robinson, Eugene Call, Bryan Morris, Steve Surber, and Ron Orr

Mayor: C. Todd Young

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

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Orr made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2019 continued meeting, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2019 special-called meeting, and Councilman Call seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Robinson abstaining since he was not present for that meeting.

Citizens' Time

Nobody spoke.

Approval of the Agenda

Councilman Holley made the motion to approve the agenda, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

Before the regular business began, the Mayor recognized Police Officer Jake Frye. Officer Frye had been recently named the Saltville Officer-of-the-Year by the Marion VFW. Officer Frye earned this honor based on his work ethic and how he handles everything the job entails.

Councilman Morris then made a motion to award Officer Frye an extra day off for his achievement, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

Old Business

1. Tree cutting and trimming bids

Town Manager Brian Martin said the town received bids from three different contractors, and the bids are as follows:

Tree trimming on Palmer Avenue

Pro Touch Tree Services:	\$10,800
S+T+B, LLC:	\$ 9,700
Generation Gap Tree Services:	\$ 9,000

Sycamore Tree at Palmer Mill

S+T+B, LLC:	\$ 4,000
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Councilman Call made the motion to accept the \$9,000 bid from Generation Gap for the Palmer Avenue trimming and the \$4,000 bid from S+T+B, LLC to cut the Sycamore tree at the Palmer Mill. Councilman Morris seconded, and all were in favor.

New Business

1. TJ's Restaurant ABC license

Representatives from TJ's Restaurant were at the meeting to ask the Council for permission to start the process to obtain a license to sell beer with evening meals. Mr. Martin stated that if the town grants the special use permit and the state grants the license, then TJ's would stay open longer than it now does. The Council would need to vote to send this to the Planning Commission for their recommendation and a Public Hearing would have to be held.

Councilman Surber made the motion to send this to the Planning Commission, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

2. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) He thanked everyone who attends the weekly update meetings.
- 2) The DEQ report for March was submitted. It contained data showing just one overflow in March as opposed to the seventeen in February due to the massive amount of rain.
- 3) The VDH report was submitted, and the town's water accountability is still showing a loss of millions of gallons per month.
- 4) On March 26th, a pump motor went out that caused a water outage due to the tank running dry. Those affected were on a boil notice until March 29th. The town had a motor that was installed rather quickly, so the service was not down long. Councilman Morris asked if a new motor had been ordered, and Public Works Director R.B. Henderson said the previous motor was being rebuilt.

Mr. Martin told the Council that as part of the water improvement project coming up, Phase II would include having a spare pump and spare motors at the well heads and stations. After meeting with the Washington County Service Authority last month, the town will go ahead with the interconnect with WCSA near Duncan's Store. This will enable the town to have water even if the well were to go dry.

Councilman Robinson thanked Rick Moore, Tony Stevenson, and Jacky Colston for staying on-site with the well all day as the replacement motor was being installed. All arrived early in the morning.

3. Board of Supervisors update

Saltville's representative, Roscoe Call, was not present for the meeting.

Committee Reports

- 1) Councilman Surber's Ordinance Committee met to discuss the water meter tampering issue. He said it was their recommendation to have tags installed in the meter boxes informing the

customer of the consequences involved if a turned-off meter is tampered with. The fine would involve a \$100 charge for a first offense and police involvement with additional offenses.

Town Attorney Trent Crewe suggested having formal language to adopt expressing those policies and present those for an official vote at the May Council meeting, so this topic was tabled until then.

2) Councilman Morris' Recreation Committee discussed the Palmer Mill and the pricing for events to be held there. Their recommendation was to charge \$500 for a wedding for people who live in the town limits and \$1000 for those who live out of the town limits. For things like birthday parties, they recommended \$40 for in-town residents and \$50 for out-town residents.

Picnic tables are going to be needed at the Mill, and the town's attorney will probably need to come up with some type of waiver for renters to sign. There could also be some type of 2 for 1 deal using the Mill and the pool for parties. The curfew for parties or weddings would be 10:00 p.m. to curtail late night noise.

In terms of serving alcohol, the town would need to have a set policy in place, so the renters would know exactly what type of license they would need. There could also be an off-duty office there to make sure no one drives after having too much to drink.

Councilman Morris made a motion to accept the price recommendations, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor. Mr. Crewe said he would put together a waiver agreement for renters to sign. The policy regarding alcohol will be discussed later.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

1) Both the Wellness Center representatives and the Board of the Smyth County Community Foundation agree on a phased approach to the establishment of the Wellness Center in Saltville. The Council got a tour of the Marion Wellness Center last week and sat in on a presentation. They then came back to the Town Hall and voted to give their support to the plan presented for the Saltville branch and requested funding from the Saltville Industrial Development Authority.

The SIDA is meeting soon, so Councilman Call made the motion to proceed with the project as long as the SIDA approves the funding. Councilman Morris seconded, and all were in favor.

2) Ernie Sands of United Salt Corporation was at the meeting and stated that USC was coming off a very successful year. Upper management is going through a transition, and the overall company is doing well. They're excited about the changes going on in Saltville, so Mr. Sands

presented a check for \$30,000 to the town to be used toward the construction of the Wellness Center, and USC hopes this is the first step of a new partnership.

3) AEP is going to redesign the utilities along Smokey Row which should improve reliability and allow quicker responses to outages.

4) Surveying is continuing for the transfer of the old town shop site property. The Mayor asked if the Council would be willing to see what the cost would be to abate this property and tear it down. Councilman Morris made the motion for this, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

5) A drainage issue on East Main Street overlaps the properties at 1070 and 1072. There's a drain there that was partially installed by the town that is on private property, but the town has cleaned it out occasionally. The town's policy now is that what is town property belongs to the town, and private property is the concern of the owner. Mr. Henderson said the town has replaced that pipe a couple of times the last five years. Most of the problem stems from the fact that the fields above this area are pretty bare, and the runoff is extensive, thereby, blocking up the drain.

Mr. Martin said he had asked Mr. Crewe to look and see if anything in the deeds to those properties tie them into town maintenance, and Mr. Crewe said he found no record of this. Councilman Morris wondered why the town would clean it out if it didn't affect the town or if the drainage would go into the main road. Mr. Henderson said the runoff was going into the basement at 1070. Councilman Call asked if this road or right-of-way used to go up to Buckeye Street, and Mr. Henderson said yes. Councilman Orr asked if a pipe could be installed where it would not be the low point. Mr. Henderson said no since there was just too much runoff.

The Mayor said the sediment was his concern since it could flow on down to the river, and the town could have issues with that. Councilman Morris said that since the town had already installed the pipe more than once and cleaned it out on occasion, then the town may be on the hook for its maintenance. Councilman Call said that was his thought as well.

Councilman Morris then brought up the fact that one of the maps given to them show the livestock at 1072 is actually on town property, and that brings up additional issues. He made a motion to table this topic, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

6) There's another drainage issue on Sycamore Road at 209. There's a drain tile underneath 209's driveway that is stopped up and partially collapsed. Due to this, and compounded by the fact that there are issues involving the property owners at 211 Sycamore (they're in a property dispute with the owners of 209), the creek has been blocked from its natural course and is continually running into the road. This water had become a safety hazard and is beginning to damage Sycamore's asphalt, which was just laid three years ago.

The drain tile needs replacing, so Mr. Martin met with the owners of 209, and they told him about the dispute with the owners of 211. The owners of 209 did, however, give the town permission to enter their property to make the needed repairs as did the owners of 211 under the condition they would not be charged. In a nutshell, the drain tile is on private property, but there exists a safety hazard that is damaging the town's road. Normally, the owner of 209 would be required to fix this, but the owners are currently in that property dispute.

Mr. Crewe said that without permission from the owners, the town cannot go on their property, but that is not the issue here since Mr. Martin has a signed letter from the owners giving the town permission. Since the owner is the one who put in the drain, the town could bill him for the work after the town does it if the town were to do it. In this case, though, the owner said the town could fix the problem, but he would not pay for it. Mr. Crewe said the town could then take him to court to recoup the costs. The town also needs to monitor what is happening between those two owners since they're in a dispute with each other.

The Mayor said the bottom line was that the town could remedy a dangerous situation by going on the customer's property at no charge. Councilman Orr said he felt like the town probably did not have a choice since the water is damaging the road, so he made a motion for the town to fix the drain. Councilman Call seconded, and the motion carried 5-1 with Councilman Robinson voting no.

7) The VDOT-funded projects are moving forward.

8) The restoration and cleanup at the Veterans Wall and park area is underway.

9) Regarding repaving and doing base improvements to Palmer Avenue, a VDOT approved consultant will provide a cost estimate.

10) Work is continuing to demolish the fire damaged house on Court Street. The asbestos survey was recently completed, and bids will be taken on the abatement.

11) The Mayor conducted the first meeting of the Complete Count Committee in preparation for the upcoming 2020 Census.

12) The brick dust purchased for the town's ball fields was cheaper than anticipated, so the town's net expense will be under \$700.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) He again recognized Jake Frye for being the Officer-of-the-Year.
- 2) The Mayor and Assistant Chief Lynch were in the lead car for the Little League Opening Day Parade on April 6th, and Councilman Morris threw out the first pitch.
- 3) Jake Frye and Chris Hogston will be attending the DUI conference in Virginia Beach free of charge via a DMV grant from April 14-17.
- 4) Jake Frye will be attending FTO School in Bristol from April 22-26.
- 5) The Bill Whitely Memorial Fish-a-Ree will be on April 20th from 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. for kids followed by the adult portion starting at noon. Lunch will be served from 11-noon. The fire department was gracious enough to donate \$1000 for the fish.
- 6) Due to circumstances beyond the town's control, 28 of the 39 trustees got broken off, so the town went from eleven inmates to seven. Therefore, the inmate supervisors have been cut from three to two. Hopefully, the full crew will return soon.
- 7) The department was involved in a multi-jurisdictional homicide investigation. Three of the department's officers, Jake Frye, Dane Keene, and Chris Hogston, were instrumental in the apprehension of the suspects.
- 8) The Smyth County S.E.R.T. team were complimentary on Jake Frye's and Dane Keene's actions involving a domestic situation that occurred on Pickle Hollow Road.
- 9) The Smyth County Community Hospital gave the department Sharp's Containers free of charge. These are used for storage for any hypodermic needles that are recovered.
- 10) The geese are still a problem, so the department received the paperwork from the office in Christiansburg to have another roundup.
- 11) The department is maintaining seven officers, and everything is running well. The new hires are under contract, and the veteran officers are helping the new ones. Councilman Holley asked about the contracts, and Chief Puckett said the three newest hires signed their employment contracts which stated they would go to the Academy and work for the town for at least two years.

Maintenance Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) The pump on the generator at the head works was replaced at a cost of \$700.
- 2) Two graves were dug last month.
- 3) The sewer line across from 811 West Main Street was replaced with forty feet of plastic pipe.
- 4) The field lights on the softball field need to be replaced.
- 5) Hiram Robinson and Tony Stevenson made repairs at the concession stands at the ball fields.
- 6) The pool coating the Council approved is being applied by South Star Distributors.
- 7) The area where the salt shed will be has been graded and filled.
- 8) As part of the budget process, he would like the Council to consider a garbage truck.
- 9) Palmer Avenue is on the list to be paved this year and is in desperate need of it.
- 10) At the medical center on West Main Street, a four-inch line was installed beside the existing one, which had a bad leak.
- 11) It will be good for the town when the meter tampering provision is approved next month, since there was a meter that had been cut off and locked out and had the lock removed by a customer recently.

Fire Department Report

Chief Davidson spoke on the following:

- 1) The department had twelve total calls last month with four being in the town and eight in the county. This includes five fire calls in the county, four rescue assists in the town, and three rescue assists in the county.
- 2) There will be a rope rescue class in May.
- 3) They are still working on the hydrant upgrades and repairs.

Rescue Squad Report

Captain Joe Arnold spoke on the following:

- 1) He gave the Council a list of the Squad's upcoming fund raising activities with projected profits and thanked them for their recent payroll funding.
- 2) They had seventy calls last month with fifty six of those involving a transport. Sixty six of those calls had a Saltville address.
- 3) The funding the town provided will run out with the payroll of April 28th; therefore, they are looking to sell their four-wheel drive tractor. The fire department has expressed interest in their Kubota and trailer.
- 4) The third party billing company the Squad is using, EMS Consultants from Atlanta, has billed out a good amount of money, and some of that is starting to come in. All of the bills for March and April have been paid, barring any surprises.
- 5) The Medicare application is in the final review stages. Once it is finalized, the Squad will be able to bill starting back from January 31, 2019 going forward.
- 6) Councilman Morris asked if Brenda Evans was still with the Squad, and if she was, what job duties she had since an outside company is doing the billing. Linda Larmer, a member of the Squad, said Ms. Evans did their QuickBooks (accounting software) work and other paper work as it came about. She does this work in the office and only gets paid when she works. Councilman Morris said he was always under the impression that she did the billing, so if that other company is actually doing it, then why was her position needed. Councilman Surber said he wanted to know the same thing. Ms. Larmer said she was the office manager who paid the bills and did all of the other accounting work and miscellaneous paperwork. Ms. Larmer invited the Council to come out to the Squad whenever they wished to see what went on daily.

Councilman Surber asked how much they got from the county, and Ms. Larmer replied \$40,000. The money they received from the town enabled them to make payroll through April, but she was not sure if the county would fund the same in July when their new budget starts. Mr. Arnold said the Squad submitted an RFP to the county per the county's advertisement for EMS services, and their bid was the lowest, but he does not know what the county is going to do. The Squad is going to continue operating until they no longer can.

Councilman Morris said it was his opinion that the Council would only continue to help fund the Squad if the county made a big commitment first. He then asked if there was a contingency plan in place if the Squad shut down. Ms. Larmer stated that their attorney has told them that since they are considered a 501(3)-C agency, their equipment could not go to a municipality and had to go to another EMS entity. If the Squad does run out of money and needs to shut down, the Council will be notified. At this point, the county then becomes responsible for providing

EMS services. The Mayor then stated that it would be impossible for the town to fully fund a rescue squad since the cost is very high, and Mr. Arnold agreed and again thanked the Council for what they had done so far.

Regarding the tractor for sale about which Mr. Arnold spoke previously, Councilman Morris said he and Mr. Martin had looked it over, and the town might be interested in buying it. Mr. Martin said Mr. Crewe would have to give an opinion if the town could purchase it. Mr. Crewe replied it would depend on how it was purchased in terms of through a grant or loan or just buying it outright. If there are no strings attached, they might be able to sell it to the town, but he would have to research it more. He suggested having the Squad's attorney make the determination based on how it was purchased and how it is currently used.

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