

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on August 13, 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 Call made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting. Councilman Robinson seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Citizens' Time

Mike Maiden spoke on behalf of the North Fork Sportsman's Club. A new trap range recently opened and will operate on Sundays from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. There have been 99 shooters over the last six weeks, and on August 31st there will be an IDPA shoot to help benefit the Special Olympics and the Backpack Program.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Northwood High School Softball Recognition

The Mayor introduced the members of the 2019 Northwood Softball Team in honor of their recent season where they just lost two games and made it to the state semifinals. Plaques were

given to the members of the team who achieved post-season honors including all-district, all-region, all-area, and all-state. Coach B.J. Buchanan was given a plaque as coach-of-the-year.

Old Business

1. SIDA reappointments

The town received five letters of interest for the three open spots on the Saltville Industrial Development Authority, and they were from Cleve Atwell, Councilman Orr, Steve Spence, Gary Call, and Gary Clear.

Councilman Holley made the motion to reappoint Cleve Atwell to his position on the SIDA, and Councilman Orr seconded. The motion tied 3-3 with Councilmen Holley, Orr, and Robinson voting yes and Councilmen Call, Morris, and Surber voting no. The Mayor broke the tie with a no vote, so Councilman Holley's motion failed 3-4.

Councilman Surber made a motion to reappoint Councilman Orr to his position on the SIDA, and Councilman Robinson seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Orr abstaining.

Councilman Morris made a motion to reappoint Steve Spence to his position on the SIDA, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris made a motion to appoint Gary Call to the SIDA, and Councilman Surber seconded. The motion carried 5-1 with Councilman Holley dissenting.

2. Palmer Avenue paving bids

There was one bid in the amount of \$283,659.50 from W-L Construction. Town Manager Brian Martin asked the Council to approve that amount but give him the authority to negotiate with W-L downward since the bid contains a drainage allowance, all of which may not be needed.

Councilman Call made the motion to approve the bid and give Mr. Martin the authority to negotiate concerning the drainage allowance. Councilman Morris seconded, and all were in favor.

New Business

1. Property transfer of the old town shop site

Councilman Orr said the town itself could not apply for Brownfields funds to help cleanup this site since, technically, the town was one of the contributors to the site's hazardous spots decades ago. By transferring this property to the SIDA, the SIDA can then apply for these funds.

Councilman Morris made the motion to transfer the property to the SIDA, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

2. Fourth Avenue traffic flow

Councilman Surber said a resident of Fourth Avenue had turned out of his house and made a quick left to get to Easy Street and was given a ticket since Fourth is a one-way street. Another resident said the Council approved to allow this for the houses on Fourth right off of Easy Street before Fourth goes downhill. This supposedly happened many years ago, but no records can be found showing the Council voted to do this. He made a motion to allow those residents who live between Easy and the top of the hill on Fourth to have two-way flow with their vehicles, and Councilman Call seconded.

During the discussion, Councilman Morris asked if the town could legally do this. Police Chief Erik Puckett said at the bottom of hill on Fourth where it intersects with McKee Street, there is a sign that states vehicles can't enter. Town Attorney Trent Crewe said it was a town street, so the town could label it how they wanted and could, maybe, have it be one-way from the bottom of the hill at McKee to the top of the hill, but have it two-way from Easy to the top of the hill. But if there's a sign there now saying it's a one-way street, then that has to be enforced. If it's not going to be enforced, then there should be no sign. Councilman Morris said if the one-way sign at the intersection of Easy and Fourth were to be removed but the one at the intersection of Fourth and McKee were to remain, then the town is allowing people to go both ways at the top of the hill back toward Easy but stopping them from going up the hill from McKee. The Mayor suggested tabling this until next month to give Chief Puckett the time to come up with a plan for this situation, so Councilman Surber rescinded his motion.

3. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meetings continue to be beneficial for the town and for EMS.
- 2) The DEQ report for July has been submitted.

- 3) The gravity sewer line that goes across the river needs to be addressed.
- 4) The VDH reports for July were submitted.
- 5) The water accountability was still high due in part to those leaks on Allison Gap Road.
- 6) Everyone met with the town's engineers to discuss the water improvement project.
- 7) Councilman Orr thanked Mr. Johnson and Rick Moore for their assistance with those leaks on Allison Gap Road.

Committee Reports

The only committee that met last month was the Special Events (Labor Day) Committee. Councilman Robinson said there has been non-stop planning for this year's event, and they are even working on next year's celebration since it will be the fiftieth. Front Office Clerk and committee member Tammy Carter updated the Council and the audience on the musical acts that will be performing this year.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) Those who want to attend the Chamber of Commerce's annual Town & Country dinner need to notify the front office by the 18th of September for the dinner on September 26th.
- 2) While the Salt Trail has a leash ordinance, the Barbrow Trail through the Wellfields does not, and the Town Hall has received calls about dogs running loose on the Barbrow Trail. Councilman Robinson said having dogs in the Commons Area during Labor Day, on leashes or not, can be problematic because of the mess they leave behind, especially when their owners don't clean up after them or just jumping on people who may not want it. Councilman Call made a motion to have the leash law for pets on the Barbrow Trail, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.
- 3) He, Mr. Crewe, and others met with the Southwest Virginia Community Health Systems Board to talk about disbanding the Saltville Health Commission. More updates will follow in the upcoming months.

4) The town's engineers were consulted about the major leaks last week. The topics discussed were the aging water lines and the interconnection between the town's water system and the Washington County Service Authority.

5) The Mount Rogers Water/Wastewater Fund grant application will be turned in by the end of the month.

6) The burned-out house on Court Street is finally coming down after the asbestos-certified firm was selected. The town will reseed the area.

7) We and the staff from Chilhowie met with Republic Services regarding their can count and billing policies.

8) The trestles on the Salt Trail have become unsafe with rotted boards. The town will purchase the required lumber and repair and/or rebuild the decks as well. Councilman Morris made the motion to proceed with this, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.

9) The town will receive a wireless system for the Salt Trail through VDOT that will count overall pedestrian use of the trail. It will be closer to the Glade Spring side of the Salt Trail. Councilman Orr asked Mr. Martin to replace the signage at the top of Smokey Row that leads people from the Trail to the road. The Mayor and Councilman Morris expressed interest in having the blue advertising and directional signs in town and the sign at the wastewater plant freshened up.

10) The town will become more involved in the *Main Street* Program. This could help the town in the future when applying for grant funds through DHCD or the Appalachian Regional Commission.

11) The contractor who painted the pool had to repaint it due to several complaints from customers who said it was too slick. He did not charge for the labor to repaint it but did charge for the paint. There had been discussion about whether that invoice should be paid, so Mr. Martin asked the Council's guidance. Councilman Morris asked if a guarantee came with the original paint job and was told that the only guarantee was a time frame before it needed painted again in terms of cracking and peeling but not the slickness. Councilman Morris then made the motion to pay the invoice, and Councilman Robinson seconded. All were in favor.

12) Councilman Call asked about the debris on Perryville Road where the Mitchell house once stood. Mr. Martin replied that the new owners of the property had the house torn down, but have yet to remove the debris from the tear-down. He said he would contact her about this.

Councilman Morris inquired about the debris at the house on Davidson Street that the Council had approved to be cleaned up by a contractor at the same time they had approved the demo at the house on Court Street. Mr. Martin said at the time, he prioritized the house on Court Street, and that particular house ate up the funds allocated for the project.

13) Councilman Orr reminded everyone that the Reenactment would be this coming weekend (August 16 – 18). A tour bus that was scheduled to be at the museum only recently found out about the event and will now stay for it as well. He asked that their bus be allowed to park fairly close to Lake Drive to enjoy the scene.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) There were no major incidents during the Carnival.
- 2) Officers Jake Frye and Dane Keene resigned and are working for the Smyth County Sheriff's Office.
- 3) The department helped during *Saltville Gives Back* day on August 3rd and during the 5K race through the Wellfields and around the golf course on August 10th.
- 4) All law enforcement in Smyth County attended *National Night Out* activities in Marion and Chilhowie. Saltville hosted one of these events a couple of years ago at the wave pool.
- 5) Chief Puckett asked to hire part-time help and mentioned that those hired would probably be local Smyth County Sheriff's Office deputies. Councilman Call made the motion to hire the part-time help, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris then made the motion to advertise for the two full-time positions that were just vacated. Councilman Robinson seconded, and the motion carried 5-1 with Councilman Call dissenting. Chief Puckett said he had already received a couple of applications, but those applicants weren't certified and couldn't start at the Academy until January. Councilman Orr asked for clarification that anyone going to the Academy will get paid for forty hours a week without overtime, and Chief Puckett said that was the case.

6) Mr. Martin said there was grant funding available for a school resource officer and thanked Councilman Morris for this information. Gabe Johnson, the grant writer for the Smyth County Sheriff's Office, has said he would do the application for the town as well as other grant applications, too. He could be employed on an hourly basis but only on an as-needed basis. Councilman Morris made the motion to hire Mr. Johnson in this capacity, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor. Chief Puckett then told the Council that Mr. Johnson could be paid by the DMV Grant, thereby, not costing the town any money.

Board of Supervisors Report

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

Maintenance Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) Holes were repaired near 232 Palmer Avenue.
- 2) All of the generators at the lift stations were load tested, and the one near Gypsum failed. It cost around \$1200 to perform the appropriate repairs.
- 3) A copy of the latest VDH report was in the Council packets.
- 4) The roof at the GCS Building has three leaks, so H.S. Williams will be on site tomorrow to repair them.
- 5) The pump at the headworks that went out several weeks ago cost the town about \$9000 to repair. The second pump is experiencing similar problems, so Mr. Henderson asked the Council what they would like to do about it. Councilman Call made the motion to fix the pump, and Councilman Morris seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Robinson abstaining.
- 6) Near the house of Garland Holmes at the corner of First Avenue and McKee Street, there's a galvanized two-inch line that has sprung several leaks over the past several weeks. Councilman Surber made the motion to replace the line, and Councilman Call seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Robinson abstaining.
- 7) He presented the Council with pictures of the pipe that was removed on Allison Gap when it sprung a few leaks over the course of a couple of days. Darian Musick of Crossroads Engineering explained to the Council that the cost to replace the entire line (approximately 2200 feet) was probably between \$110,000 and \$115,000. The town is turning in a grant application for the Mount Rogers Water/Wastewater Fund that could be used to offset about half of that cost. The replacement line is recommended to be 8-inch fused high density polyethylene since once it's fused, there are no joints. It would be placed on the southbound lane. The Mayor asked about VDOT permitting this work, and Mr. Musick replied he thought they would expedite the permitting process since this is the main line coming from Allison Gap. The Mayor then stated he would like to see a special-called meeting called to start work on this project once the financing is procured.

Councilman Orr stated he was on Allison Gap Road when the crew was fixing those leaks, and they need a better light source when it gets dark whether it be a police car with flashing lights sitting there or just a new set of lights. The Mayor suggested borrowing a set of the big lights from W-L if needed or purchasing some out right.

8) The town crew will get started on the salt shed foundation shortly.

Fire Department Report

Bryan Lynch told the Council that the department had 14 calls last month with 8 being in the county and 6 being in the town.

Rescue Squad Report

Nobody from the Rescue Squad was present, but Councilman Robinson, a member of their Board, stated that they were continuing to cut their expenses and recently had their cable television disconnected. Everyone is working hard, and they're bringing in good money through their billing service and Medicare.

Lastly, Councilman Robinson made the motion to adjourn, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.