

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on January 12, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Monica Johnson, Eugene Call, Bryan Morris, Steve Surber, and Gary Call
Hiram Robinson was absent

Mayor: C. Todd Young

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

Before the meeting started, the Mayor asked for two moments of silence for Virginia State Senator Ben Chafin and for former town police officer Albert Anderson, Jr. Both men recently passed away.

Councilman Morris made the motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

Citizens' Time

Nobody sent the town an email to be read.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Old Business

- 1. Bids on the town truck**

Clerk/Treasurer Steve Johnson said there were no bids on the truck. This truck had been vandalized recently and some of the windows had been broken. Councilman Morris mentioned that as long as the damage had been photographed and documented, the town could still get rid of it. Town Attorney Paul Cassell suggested that the Commonwealth Attorney be contacted to get his approval before the truck is disposed of.

Councilman Morris made the motion to take the truck to Berry's for scrap after Police Chief Erik Puckett gets the okay from the Commonwealth Attorney's office. Councilman Gary Call seconded, and all were in favor.

2. Surplus equipment

Public Works Director R.B. Henderson said he had gotten quotes for the items requested at last month's meeting. These items include air compressors, jackhammers, and a camera for looking into water and sewer lines. The Mayor suggested holding off on these items for now due to other pressing financial matters. Mr. Henderson said there had been a sewer issue recently on Wiley Drive, and the town had to borrow a camera from the county again, so it would be pretty handy to have one. However, he admitted there were other needs that were more important, so the topic was indefinitely tabled.

Councilman Morris made that motion to table, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

3. Lake Drive trail crossing

Mr. Henderson said he had spoken to people at VDOT, and there would be signage and crosswalks involved. Regarding the crosswalks, VDOT or some contractor can burn them into the pavement to make them more durable. The Mayor suggested tabling until the spring since he had spoken to the town's grant writer who told him there is a grant possibility for the trail in the spring that would fund the signage and maybe the crosswalks on an 80/20 basis.

Councilman Morris made the motion to table this, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

4. Patch paving

Mr. Henderson said the areas for consideration included Palmer Avenue in front of Friends Community Church, Wiley Drive, and Palmer Avenue near the home of Reynolds Frye. W-L did not come and give a quote, but Levi Turner did, and his quote was around \$17,000. The Mayor asked if a better quote could be obtained when the asphalt plants re-open in April, and Mr.

Henderson said that was a good possibility. This topic was also tabled until a later date, probably when the new budget is put together.

New Business

1. Sludge pump

Mr. Henderson said there were a couple of options for the new sludge pump. This pump attaches to the belt press at the wastewater plant and is used to mix polymer into the waste to condition it. The current pump still works but has slowed down quite a bit. Mr. Henderson put together a price list in the packets. The quotes were separated into two categories. One was having the town install it, and the other was having the company install it. Gary Johnson of EMS, Inc. said he thought the town could install it themselves, so that would save several thousand dollars. If they run into a problem, C.L. Boggs could always be called to help.

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the low bid, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. During the discussion, Councilwoman Johnson asked if the town would have to pay the freight, and Mr. Henderson said yes. The Mayor asked if other suppliers were called that would be cheaper in terms of the freight charge. He wondered if there were suppliers in Roanoke where the town could actually drive and get the pump and not pay the freight. Mr. Henderson said he would call around and see to which Councilman Morris replied that he didn't believe the shipping was the biggest concern.

The motion carried 4-1 with Councilwoman Johnson voting no.

2. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The DEQ report for December was submitted and so was the annual DEQ chloride report.
- 2) The town received a warning letter from DEQ regarding overflows from July – October. These were properly reported by EMS, and DEQ was satisfied with the town's response.
- 3) The town's vacuum truck cleaned out the headworks.
- 4) The VDH report and the VDH water treatment leak loss report for December were submitted.
- 5) Titan Wheel will not be renewing their discharge permit since they are closing.

6) Regarding the Phase II Project, there are a couple of small items that need to be addressed to close out the project. Crossroads Engineering will do a final walk through as will VDH.

7) There will be another demonstration of new water meters tomorrow by the same contractor as last time.

3. Litter

The Mayor said it was likely that town would not be getting the inmates back for several months. They used to pick up the litter, and since they have been gone since last April, the town is not as clean as it should be. The high school kids hired to do work last summer did a good job, but they mainly mowed. The Mayor feels the town's citizens should do their part by not littering, but if they do litter, the town has an ordinance that will be enforced. There's a convenience station not far out of town, and in-town customers have trash pickup. Even though there are trash cans on the Barbrow Trail, people still throw their trash on the ground there, and it's just uncalled for.

Councilwoman Johnson agreed and said she had cleaned the area at the overlook before as have some members of the town crew. There's a can there now that has a lid, but people still throw trash everywhere. There are cans everywhere in town, but people just aren't using them. There needs to be more local pride in the town's appearance.

Mr. Cassell said the town's ordinance provides the mechanisms for enforcing a litter ordinance including labeling the littering act as up to a Class I misdemeanor with a \$2500 fine. The Mayor then thanked Chief Puckett for enforcing the ordinance.

Committee Reports

Councilwoman Johnson stated that the Christmas decorations had been taken down in the downtown area and the ones at the Veterans Wall will come down in a few days.

The Mayor then mentioned that Councilman Hiram Robinson has submitted his resignation on Monday. Councilman Morris said there might be a special election in June, but in the meantime, the current Council members could leave the position open until the special election or appoint someone on a temporary basis. He suggested taking letters of interest from anyone interested in serving until the special election and having the current Council members choose from the pool of letters. He then made a motion to add this topic to the agenda, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris then made a motion to advertise for letters of interest for those wishing to serve on the Council and set a deadline for these letters to be January 27th at the close of business. There will then be a special-called meeting on the 27th at 6:00 p.m. to pick someone to serve. Councilman Eugene Call seconded, and all were in favor.

Public Works Director's Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

1) The packets contained photos of a sewer problem on Wiley Drive. The pipes in place were the old clay types in addition to concrete ones, and the town replaced what it could to stop the leak. There are about three houses there that need a new service line. The Mayor commented that the new service line could be installed during the upcoming meter replacement project. Councilman Morris asked Mr. Henderson to bring back a little more information about this issue.

Councilwoman Johnson said the owners of the house on Wiley that had the problem dug up their yard at their expense. Councilman Morris replied that he did not know if it could be determined if it was the town's responsibility or the homeowner's responsibility. Councilwoman Johnson responded by stating that the town recently set a precedent by paying the repair cost for other homeowners who had issues that were similar, so this needs to be discussed more. There needs to be something set up because this will happen to others eventually as well. She mentioned that something similar actually happened at her house, and the problem was on the town. Her street had the same clay pipes as the house on Wiley.

2) There's also an issue on Sycamore Road where a house needs a sewer tap and will need an eighty to a one hundred foot pipe installed. Councilman Morris asked if that cost would be passed on to the customer, and Mr. Henderson replied that there is a fee to dig across a road and to install the tap.

3) Mr. Henderson then asked the Council that when employees are hired, are they hired to do specific jobs and nothing else. The Mayor replied that they are hired to do what needs to be done. The town is too small, so everyone has to do whatever is needed. Mr. Henderson is in charge so he tells the workers what to do.

Mr. Henderson then stated that he felt there was a HIPAA law broken against him and his family last month. Councilman Morris suggested that Mr. Henderson talk to Town Manager Brian Martin when he returns in a couple of weeks.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) The litter situation will be more closely monitored.
- 2) Skylar Call is currently enrolled in the Academy.
- 3) There was a meeting with Smyth County involving the ECO process.

Fire department Report

Chief Bryan Lynch spoke on the following:

- 1) There were thirteen calls last month with seven in the county, four in the town, and two assisting Chilhowie. The total calls for 2020 were 189 as compared to 142 for 2019.
- 2) The department gained members at the January meeting and now has sixteen total. In response to a question from Councilwoman Johnson, Chief Lynch said two members are EMTs and the rest are fire.

Rescue Squad Report

They were not present for the meeting.

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

