

Minutes of the Public Hearing of the Saltville Town Council held on June 9, 2020 at 6:45 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
Tammy Carter, Front Office Clerk
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing by stating it was for the purpose of hearing comment on a special-use permit sought by the Lily Pad so its owner can start the process with the state ABC to obtain a license to sell wine and beer.

Nobody had any comment, so the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on June 9, 2020 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 May 12, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Orr seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Call abstaining since he was not present for that meeting.

Citizens' Time

Jody Olinger reminded the Council of the Poker Run she is hosting on June 27th in the Commons Area. Registration starts at 10:00 a.m. and the event starts at noon. This is the fourth year of this event. There will be a DJ from Johnson City starting music at 6:00 p.m. and vendors selling crafts and food.

The Mayor asked Town Attorney Mr. Crewe how this would work during the current pandemic. Mr. Crewe stated that there should be segments of just fifty people and everyone should stay six feet apart, although this cannot really be enforced. The Mayor said he was concerned about the six-foot distance when the DJ was playing the music, other than family members being together. Mr. Crewe said a sign could be put up recommending the six-foot threshold based on the governor's orders unless people are in the same family like the Mayor pointed out.

Ms. Olinger said the fire department was supposed to do a fireworks display and asked if there would be a problem with that. The Mayor repeated that the town just didn't know what the next or newest set of orders from the governor would entail, and the town's hands are tied right now. He continued and said this was a good event that brings people to town and raises money for kids, and it's too bad there is an ongoing public health issue. Councilman Morris responded that the town is not sponsoring it, but just allowing the use of the area, so he did not have a problem at all with the event going on, especially since it was for the kids. Councilman Orr said it was his opinion that appropriate warnings could be posted allowing the event to happen. Ms. Olinger concluded her discussion by asking that the town notify her if there are any changes put out by the governor.

Rhonda Minton asked about using the stage in general if people maintain their social distance. The Mayor and Council agreed this could be done.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Old Business

- 1. Vote on special-use permit**

Councilman Morris made the motion to approve the special-use permit for the owner of the Lily Pad so she can apply for an ABC license from the state. Councilman Holley seconded, and all were in favor.

2. Mower bids

The bids were as follows:

Twinkle Mills: \$25 for all Jack Frye: \$50 for all Randall Smith: \$111.11 for all

Councilman Morris made the motion to accept the highest bid, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.

3. Town Shop

Councilman Call asked about the status of a new town shop. Town Manager Brian Martin said he and Councilman Orr, who's also the Chair of the SIDA, have had recent discussions about the SIDA funding a new town shop. The Mayor asked about procuring a modular office building, and Mr. Martin said they had researched it and found the costs to be between \$50,000 and \$70,000. To build in place, a shell building would run about \$160,000 with three bays and unfinished office space.

The Mayor asked for a motion to have Mr. Martin get some prices on modular spaces, so Councilman Call made that motion, and Councilman Morris seconded it. During the discussion, Councilman Orr said the SIDA would fund the entire cost of a new build, and that the money was in hand. The Mayor brought up that any extra money from the SIDA could go toward building the proposed campground at the old town shop site after it is cleaned up through the EPA grant the town just received. Councilman Morris stated that the process for a new town shop needs to go quickly since the Wellness Center is opening soon, and the town crew needs to move from their current location next to it. Mr. Martin then said that the town could get another one of those Conex structures to be used as an office space. The motion made by Councilman Call passed 6-0.

4. Labor Day and the Re-Enactment

Councilman Robinson said the Special Events Committee's recommendation was to cancel the Labor Day festival this year. He put the Labor Day cancellation in the form of a motion, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

Regarding the Re-Enactment, it had already been cancelled by the Historical Society. Additionally, the Lions Club cancelled their annual carnival.

New Business

1. SIDA

Councilman Morris said he asked for this topic to be discussed more so concerning the Health Center Commission and their finances since there had not been any accountability with that organization over the last twenty or so years. He asked Councilman Orr to provide the Council a copy of the SIDA's yearly audit to avoid the same situation now involving the Health Center Commission since there will be checks and balances in place. Councilman Orr then gave each Council member a copy of the SIDA's most recent audit.

2. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meetings continue to be a good communication tool between EMS and the town.
- 2) The monthly report was submitted to DEQ.
- 3) Mr. Martin said the town had received \$40,000 from the MRPDC from their water/wastewater grant pool that could be used to help fund the gravity sewer line at the 634 pump station. This won't be enough to build the entire thing, but it's a good start.
- 4) The town was issued a warning letter from DEQ today regarding recent overflows. The Mayor asked if bad drainage on VDOT roads contributed to any overflows and whether or not VDOT could be held responsible. Mr. Johnson said he wasn't sure, but it was possible that bad drainage on VDOT roads could contribute to the overflows.
- 5) The new pumps installed at the 91 pump station have really helped with overflows and increased the capacity.
- 6) A new agreement was signed with Waste Management to keep hauling the sludge through 2023.
- 7) The monthly report was submitted to VDH, and the water accountability is still high.
- 8) Regarding the inter-connect with Washington County, there may be a temporary connection set up first to see if it will work.

9) With the Phase II water project, it's important to get the word out that some residents of the town will be without water when the pumps and motors are replaced. The town cannot afford to be out of water for a couple of days, so measures will have to be taken.

10) The town's water accountability numbers will really improve as part of the Phase I water project, since it involves replacing all water meters. Many of the current meters in use are older and don't read correctly.

11) Rural Development has finalized the search grant the town applied for. The PER was submitted to the federal government, and Robert Hilt, the regional Rural Development contact, expects a letter-of-conditions to arrive soon.

Committee Reports

No committees met during May.

Public Works Director's Report

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

- 1) Per usual, the town crew checked roads, drainage issues, and generators each week and collected trash each Monday and Friday.
- 2) No graves were opened last month, and the drums of chlorine were moved to the well sites.
- 3) An inventory of chemicals was performed on June 5th.
- 4) There were ten water leak repairs done over the last month.
- 5) Leak detection was performed on May 27th to see if leaks can be repaired before the pump replacement at the well sites.
- 6) He met with Smyth County reps about a possible inter-connect at Allison Gap Road and Cardwell Town Road.
- 7) When the sewer project was done a couple of years ago, the backyard at 213 First Avenue pretty much remained wet, so the town put in some pipe, and that helped the drainage.

- 8) The sewer force main and storm drain pipe in Henrytown was repaired on May 24th.
- 9) The flags were put on the poles for Memorial Day, and there are a total of ten hanging baskets of flowers around town.
- 10) Some of the coating on the top of the GCS building has peeled. It's currently under warranty, and the contractor who installed it has been called.
- 11) Forty feet of an eight-inch pipe storm drain was replaced at 612 First Avenue.
- 12) The new pumps at the 91 lift station are performing well. One of those pumps can now handle more volume than the old two combined.
- 13) A few trees were trimmed in the Government Plant.
- 14) Engineers are looking into an erosion issue at the elementary school.
- 15) Councilman Morris mentioned a hole on Palmer Avenue near Larry Ratcliff's house and Ellie Branham's house that looks like a meter or valve covering. Mr. Henderson said it would be inspected.
- 16) The Mayor asked if a trash can could be placed at both ends of the Barbrow Trail.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) Alex Barker resigned from the department after he could not complete the Academy training.
- 2) Robbie Cruise was added as part-time. He's a seventeen year veteran of the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Chief Puckett asked that Mr. Cruise be added as full-time effective July 1st to replace Alex Barker. Councilman Morris made that motion, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.
- 3) Verizon was contacted by phone and email regarding a lack of service from East Main Street to Broadford.
- 4) The department's stats were put in the packets.

5) A person is interested in the Humvee that has been previously advertised for bids. He asked for the go ahead to bid this out again. Councilman Morris made that motion, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

6) There are vehicles which can be sold for surplus. Councilman Morris made a motion to have a list made available for the next Council meeting. Councilman Call seconded, and all were in favor.

7) He getting random complaints on the condition of people's yards. Of course, there are no inmates right now since the jail isn't releasing them during the pandemic. Currently there are four high school aged kids doing all of the mowing and weed eating for the town instead of 12 - 15 inmates. They are going a good job, but there is just so much to mow, especially the cemetery. The Mayor said there over fifty spots the town has to mow, and it isn't in the mowing business for property owners who don't take care of their own areas. Councilman Orr commended the current group of kids doing the town's mowing. Mr. Martin echoed that comment and asked the community be aware of the fact that the town currently does not inmate labor to do all of this work, but these kids are busting their tails to get work accomplished.

Fire Department Report

Chief Jimmy was not available to come to the meeting, but he left the Council the stats showing the locations, the number and types of calls the fire department had in May. He also asked for the town's help in performing some repairs on the fire vehicles since the department has stopped its BINGO night due to the pandemic and has lost some funding because of it. Councilman Morris said the Council would have to see the cost estimates first. The Mayor said he would like to see the county match the town's contribution dollar-for-dollar.

Rescue Squad Report

They are on pace to out-do last year's call volume by over 200 calls. The Council received a breakdown of their calls by county for May, and the Mayor invited them to the next budget meeting.

Board of Supervisors Report

Neither of the two counties' Supervisors were able to attend.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

1) The Wellness Center has received its occupancy permit from the county. The opening date is still to be determined, but people can go there now from 12:30 – 6:00 each day and sign up for membership. There are currently sixty memberships. The logistics created by the pandemic have backlogged some of the equipment that was ordered or else it would probably already be open.

2) VDOT completed their three-year study of the traffic flow at the traffic light at the intersection of Highway 91, Allison Gap Road, and First Avenue. They have determined that a light is no longer warranted, and the work to remove it should start in few weeks. There will be a 90-day period where the lights just flash before coming down permanently. The Mayor then mentioned this is strictly a VDOT decision, and the town did not request it.

Councilman Morris asked if VDOT would help with a crosswalk in that area now. Mr. Martin said he would make the request, but VDOT has not allowed one there before.

3) The paperwork has been completed to begin the initial drawdown of the \$250,000 EPA grant, and the process has begun for the town's newly awarded \$50,000 VBAF Grant.

4) Regarding the property on Perryville Road that was requested of the Council, the surveyor found out in his research that the town did not own that parcel of property, and that the county GIS map was incorrect. The actual property that Mr. Smith wished to purchase is marked in yellow on the map given to Council, so this will go back to the Land Management Committee.

Councilman Morris thanked Councilmen Holley and Orr for their service to the town and said they were owed a debt of gratitude since this will be their last regularly scheduled meeting. The Mayor reiterated those comments and stated it was a pleasure to serve the town with both of them.

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

