

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on May 12, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commons Area

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

**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

There was no meeting held in April.

Councilman Surber made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Orr seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Councilman Morris abstaining since he was not present for that meeting.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

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

### **Old Business**

#### **1. Mower bids**

Councilman Orr said there were three bids taken for the mowers at the March meeting, one of them being a \$200 bid for the John Deere, which he made the motion to accept, but there was not a second. He made the motion again to accept the \$200 bid for the John Deere, and Councilman Surber seconded. The motion carried 3-1-1 with Councilman Morris voting no and Councilman Robinson abstaining.

Councilman Morris asked about the remaining mowers that weren't bid for and was told the town could re-bid them or take them to Berry's for scrap. He then made the motion to re-bid the remaining mowers, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.

## **New Business**

### **1. Alcohol license**

Town Manager Brian Martin said a new business in town, The Lily Pad, has expressed interest in obtaining a license to sell alcohol at the establishment. This requires a special-use permit, so the first step is to send this request to the Planning Commission and have that body's recommendation brought back to the Council.

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

### **2. Hay bids**

Mr. Martin said it's the time of year for the town to bid out the mowing of the hay fields and requested Council's permission to do so. He also requested that the town staff be given the authority to open the bids when they are due and choose the highest bidder because the first cut is coming up fairly quickly.

Councilman Surber made the motion for this, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

### **3. Spring clean-up**

Clerk/Treasurer Steve Johnson requested that the spring clean-up be held June 8 - 12. Councilman Morris made the motion to have the clean-up on those dates, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.

### **4. EMS, Inc. report**

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meetings with the town's staff continue to be productive.

- 2) The DEQ report for April was submitted.
- 3) There were six overflows last month due to the excess rain.
- 4) New pumps will be installed at the Route 91 lift station.
- 5) The VDH report for April was submitted.
- 6) The water accountability has come down a little.
- 7) Mr. Martin has a call with the WCSA tomorrow regarding the interconnection with Washington County.
- 8) Mr. Martin signed the notice-to-proceed regarding the Phase I water project. Phase II should start later in the year.
- 9) Regarding the PER being put together by the Lane Group for Rural Development funding, within a couple of months, the town should get a really good offer that may include as much as a seventy percent grant. Mr. Martin said that is the highest grant/loan ratio he has heard about in over twenty years of doing projects with local governments.

### **Committee Reports**

There were no committee meetings during April. Councilman Morris mentioned that he had a Recreation Committee meeting before the March meeting that dealt with issues like the wave pool, but those may have become moot due to COVID, and if anyone had any questions about his meeting, they could ask him.

Councilman Robinson said that Terry Hunt had approached him about whether or not the Council thought the annual Re-Enactment should go on as planned. Councilman Morris said there's no way to predict the regulations that will be in place when the Reenactment is scheduled, so he suggested looking at this again at the June meeting. Councilman Orr said he would like to see it move forward if the circumstances at that time dictate it can happen.

### **Public Works Director's Report**

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) There were several leaks last month due to the excess rain, and he thanked Gary Johnson and Rick Moore of EMS, Inc. for their assistance.
- 2) Two graves were opened last month.
- 3) The chemicals for the water and sewer systems were inventoried. There are fifteen barrels of chlorine, sixteen barrels of fluoride, eight drums of the blocking agent for the wastewater plant, and twenty-eight bags of water softener for the well sites.
- 4) An eight-inch line near the water tank on Lick Skillet broke, and a ten-inch line on Allison Gap Road broke as well.
- 5) The fire hydrants were recently color-coded to help determine which ones need to be repaired.
- 6) There is an issue with the bathrooms at the train shelter. They have to be cleaned out regularly where people put clothes, bags, shoes, etc. down the toilets. This causes the sewer to back up in the post office.
- 7) A pipe busted at the river crossing at Cedar Branch when debris carried along by the swollen river knocked into it. Luckily, VML covered this.
- 8) Councilman Morris thanked Mr. Henderson and the town crew for the jobs they were doing even though they sometimes have limited resources.

### **Police Chief's Report**

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) Training at the Academy resumed on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Both of town's officers started back.
- 2) There is a rumor going around that the police department is currently enforcing a curfew due to COVID-19. There is no such curfew in town and never has been.
- 3) The department is working with the golf course in reference to a buzzard complaint. They are working with USDA on the use of pyrotechnics to help with the problem.
- 4) He requested the Council's guidance on a geese round-up this year. This normally costs the town around \$6000. Due to budget concerns, Councilman Morris made a motion to put this off until next year, and Councilman Robinson seconded. All were in favor.

5) Chief Puckett said the packets contained the department's stats from March 1<sup>st</sup> through May 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Fire Department Report**

Chief Jimmy Davidson spoke on the following:

- 1) The department answered thirteen calls last month with six being in the town and seven in the county. They included six miscellaneous calls, two fire calls, two assisting the rescue squad, and three MBS.
- 2) The tanker that was in the accident last winter has been repaired.

### **Rescue Squad Report**

The Squad had seventy-five calls last month, which was down a little from the previous month due to refusals stemming from COVID-19. They are minimizing their overtime and have given their budget requests to the town and the county. On a request from the Mayor, they said they would provide a breakdown of calls in the town and the county.

### **Board of Supervisors Report**

Neither county's representative was present for the meeting.

### **Town Manager's Report**

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) Blight letters have been mailed to a few property owners.
- 2) The SIDA received a \$250,000 grant from the EPA to complete the asbestos abatement and demo of the old town shop along with abatement of surrounding soil contaminants. Saltville

was one of only four localities across the state to receive this grant out of sixteen applications. Councilman Orr, the Chair of the SIDA, and Mr. Martin attended a virtual press conference today regarding this award. Councilman Morris asked if the SIDA had already moved forward with the process of using this grant funding, and Councilman Orr and Mr. Martin replied that over the next couple of months, the paperwork will be completed. The engineering consultant for the project says the actual work probably won't start until next year after the bid process has completed.

3) The Wellness Center is almost completed, but the date to open is a little muddled due to COVID-19. The Mayor said the Board of Supervisors voted to abate the real estate taxes so the town will not owe these to the county. As long as the wellness Center is operational, the town will receive no tax bill.

4) Guidance from the Council is needed regarding whether or not the wave pool will open this summer. As of now, no other close-by locality is opening their pool. The town has not advertised for applications for lifeguards and managers, and the qualified applicant number of lifeguards is down due to the fact that the Wellness Center and Coombs Center have been closed so no lifeguard training and testing has been completed. Lastly, the town could be open to liability if a COVID-19 outbreak were to occur at the pool.

Due to the reasons that Mr. Martin stated, Councilman Morris made a motion to not open the pool this year, and Councilman Surber seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris then stated that Preston Frye, the current Little League President, wanted to know when or if they would be able to use the ball fields this summer. He said that this was the similar situation with the Re-Enactment since the town is at the mercy of the state when it comes to re-opening things like the ball fields. The town can't really give a definitive answer yet. But if the governor re-opens everything, then Little League will be good to go. Mr. Frye said Little League International was leaving it up to individual leagues and states. The Mayor stated that when the order is lifted, everyone looks forward to Little League starting.

5) Regarding the annual Labor Day celebration and the Lions Club carnival, decisions will have to be made sooner rather than later. If the carnival and Labor Day are held, will the town be held accountable if an outbreak happens? The Mayor then reiterated that the town is again at the mercy of the state.

6) Northwood will have a so-called drive-thru graduation on May 21<sup>st</sup> followed by fireworks on the football field.

7) He thanked the town's citizens for their patience during the ongoing pandemic.

8) Councilman Morris asked about the proposed easement agreement with AEP that was discussed at the March meeting for which he was not present. Mr. Martin said the agreement was signed and AEP is currently installing new poles in various spots all over town including

those areas involved in the easement agreement. AEP continues to be a good corporate partner for the town.

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