

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on November 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Monica Johnson, Hiram Robinson, Eugene Call, Bryan Morris, Gary Call
Steve Surber arrived during the Christmas parade discussion

Mayor: C. Todd Young

Staff: Jordan Powers, Acting Town Manager
Trent Crewe, Town Attorney
R.B. Henderson, Public Works Director
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Morris made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020 special-called meeting, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

Citizens' Time

No one had any comments.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Old Business

1. Lowe Hollow Road speed bumps

Public Works Director R.B. Henderson told the Council that the speed bumps would need to be ten feet wide to go across the width of Lowe Hollow Road, so he suggested ordering a six-foot and a four-foot bump to make up that distance. These will also divert the water to the sides.

The Council agreed on the models SBR4S and SBR6S presented to them which also includes twelve-inch galvanized steel spikes to secure them to the asphalt. The spikes can be removed and the bumps will be temporarily removed if there is snow to be scraped. The total cost will be approximately \$510.00.

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

2. Christmas parade

Councilwoman Johnson said that instead of having a parade this year due to Covid, Pastor Clump of the Rich Valley Presbyterian Church and the Locust Cove Presbyterian Church was at the meeting to discuss an event in the Commons Area instead. Pastor Clump said this event, sponsored by his and other local churches, would be a concert sing along on the stage and a good Christmas atmosphere in general. He has already spoken to VDH, and they gave him a list of ten items that had to be adhered to including, but not limited to, signage for symptoms, social-distancing reminders, hand sanitizing stations, and announcements over the loud speakers. The area will have to be well lit, and face coverings will have to be provided. People can sit on their own lawn chairs and stay socially distanced. This event would take place from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. on December 5th.

The Mayor told Pastor Clump that the town would require him to sign a waiver stating that the town is not the sponsor for this event and cannot be held liable for anything occurring. The town would also like to have some type of letter or something similar from VDH stating they are in agreement that this event can take place as long as their guidelines are met. There was no vote taken, but the Council was in agreement that this can take place on December 5th in lieu of the annual parade as long as VDH guidelines are followed.

3. Comcast agreement

Town Attorney Trent Crewe said the proposed agreement put forth by Comcast had standard wording in it for things such as repairing any street or town property that Comcast may damage as part of their normal routine. Nothing was particularly worrisome in the agreement.

Councilman Morris made a motion to have the Mayor sign the agreement, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

New Business

1. Property re-zoning

Clerk/Treasurer Steve Johnson said he was approached by the prospective buyers of Edd's Drive-In who wish to open the restaurant and serve alcohol. This is a two-fold request since the property would have to be re-zoned to B-2 because that is the town's only zoning classification that allows alcohol to be served at an eating establishment. Additionally, a special-use permit is required to be able to serve alcohol at an eating establishment. Mr. Johnson asked for a motion from the Council to send these two requests to the Planning Commission for their input since that is the first step of the process.

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

2. Surplus equipment

Mr. Henderson stated that the maintenance department was interested in purchasing a push camera under the surplus equipment line item in the budget. The town always has to borrow the camera from Smyth County, for sewer problems mainly, so it may be beneficial to have one on hand in case the town were to damage Smyth County's and have to pay to repair or replace it.

The Mayor asked audience member and former Public Works Director Jacky Colston if the town could receive any assistance from the Virginia Rural Water Association with regard to this camera. Mr. Colston replied that he had never inquired of the VRWA whether they would help with this type of camera even though they would come down for other reasons such as finding leaks, etc.

Regarding other surplus equipment, Councilman Morris asked about getting rid of the town's Blazer, and Mr. Henderson recommended taking it to Berry's since the frame is really damaged. The Mayor asked about purchasing a mobile mixer and some jackhammers and an air compressor in order to start repairing some sidewalks. Mr. Henderson told him that the town already had the jackhammers and the compressor. He then asked Mr. Henderson to bring back some prices on a bigger gas mixer and some extra jackhammers. Councilwoman Johnson agreed about the sidewalk repair and stated that since Covid hit, she sees more people out walking, so it makes sense to fix the sidewalks. Councilman Morris made a motion to table this topic until December until more prices can be brought back on the camera, mixer, and jackhammers. Councilman Eugene Call seconded, and all were in favor.

In terms of the Blazer and the blue inmate van, Councilman Morris made the motion to take them to Berry's and then put the surplus truck out for bid. Councilman Gary Call seconded, and all were in favor.

3. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meeting continue to benefit both the town and EMS.
- 2) The DEQ report for October was submitted.
- 3) The inflow and infiltration issue has improved due to a lack of rain and the pumps that were recently installed.
- 4) The VDH report and the VDH Water Treatment Leak Loss report for October were submitted.
- 5) As part of the Phase II project, the pumps were installed at the Cardwell Town Well and are working fine. Both Smyth and Washington Counties are to be commended for their help.

Committee Reports

Councilman Robinson's Rec Committee met and they discussed the improvements to the ball fields, the new Barrow Trail extension, and other projects for the future.

Councilwoman Johnson said the Library had 313 people at their Halloween event, and her committee also discussed the cemetery, and they all agreed it looked better. She then gave the Council a handout of a proposal, which she read aloud, discussed by her committee to move the current library to the old Clark's Pharmacy space beside the Wellness Center. The committee realizes this is something that can't happen right now but hopes it will be considered later.

Regarding Library budget concerns, Councilwoman Johnson mentioned that the Saltville and Chilhowie branches were cut proportionally more (34% to 17.36%) than the Marion branch. It's unfair and will be explored later.

Finally, she mentioned that today is the 245th birthday of the United States Marine Corps and that tomorrow was Veterans Day, so she thanked all veterans, herself included, in the community for their service and invited everyone to stop by the Veterans Wall tomorrow. There is no service, but everyone can pay their respects as they choose. Also, it's the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

Public Works Director's Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) It took about a day and a half to install the pump at the #10 Well and three days to do the same at the Cardwell Town Well. Both Smyth and Washington counties were very helpful in the process as was Crossroads Engineering.
- 2) During the Phase I project, he hopes the waterline on Sanders Lane can be replaced.
- 3) Councilman Eugene Call asked if any roads were going to get patched soon. Mr. Henderson replied that after the clean-up week, there was going to be patching on Ridgeview, Henrytown, and Buckeye. Councilman Eugene Call asked him to also look at the area in the curve on Wiley Drive as well. Regarding the bump in the road at the Friends Church, Mr. Henderson said the road was settling and a camera was needed there and that he would call W-L to see about smoothing out that patch.

Councilman Eugene Call then asked about the building at the Little League that was torn down. Councilman Robinson said that Town Manager Brian Martin had set it up before he left on military leave since that structure was falling down and both the electrical and plumbing were bad. Councilman Eugene Call then stated he wished that had come before the Council before it was decided to have it torn down. The Mayor agreed and repeated that the Council should have been informed before it was torn down. Councilwoman Johnson said she didn't think there was anything left in that building that may have belonged to the former Little League president if that was part of the concern.

Police Chief's Report

Assistant Chief Bryan Lynch spoke on behalf of Chief Puckett who was absent.

- 1) The Trunk or Treat had a large turnout of around 300 cars, so it was very successful.
- 2) A Trump rally drove through Saltville on November 1st.
- 3) The Chief will be off the last two weeks of November on vacation.
- 4) The department is in the middle of No-shave November. This will continue through February with each officer donating \$50 to the toy drive.

5) There is an issue with the RMS system, so no stats are available.

6) Councilman Eugene Call asked Mr. Lynch to take note about speeding issues on both ends of town and at all times of the day as he had had calls and noticed this himself.

Fire Department Report

There were seventeen total calls last month with twelve being in the town, four in Smyth County, and one in Washington County. Councilwoman Johnson was informed that they are checking on a leasing option for both custom vehicles and commercial vehicles.

Rescue Squad Report

They handled eighty-four calls last month with fifty of those in the town, thirty-three in Smyth County, and one in Washington County. Of those calls, forty-seven involved a transport. In a response to a question from the Mayor, the Squad has not received any funding from Washington County.

Regarding the Wings air ambulance program the town is involved in, Councilwoman Johnson said the organization could be called directly if anyone needed to make any updates to the number of people in their household.

Town Manager's Report

Acting Town Manager Jordan Powers spoke on the following:

- 1) Catherine Van Noy, the town's grant writer, has prepared a list of items she has been working on for the town.
- 2) The VDOT paving project at the intersection of Highway 91 and Lake Drive will begin next spring.
- 3) The waterline at the Cedar Branch bridge is schedule to be completed in the next three weeks.

4) The town was awarded \$25,000 by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission to be used toward the sewer system evaluation survey. DEQ awarded the town the remaining \$75,000 for the project total of \$100,000. This includes mapping, manhole assessment inspections, night flow and wet weather inspections, smoke testing, and closed-circuit television inspection.

5) The Barbrow Trail extension has been completed. The contractor recommends that the town install metal bollards on the ends of the trail to prevent vehicles from driving on the trail. Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to install these bollards, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Eugene Call asked if everyone thought a crosswalk should be installed where the trail crosses Lake Drive for safety's sake. The Mayor recommended some signage as well. Councilwoman Johnson asked about possible rumble strips, and the Mayor suggested Mr. Henderson having VDOT contacted to see what they might recommend.

6) The paving on Hartspring, Mathieson, and Campbell has been completed.

7) AEP has schedule an outage to work on lines for parts of West Main Street on November 11th. All parties affected have been notified by AEP.

8) Councilman Morris said he would like to see employee Christmas bonuses this year consist of \$300 for full-time employees and \$150 for part-time employees. He then made the motion for this, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. The motion carried 3-2-1 with Councilmembers Morris, Johnson, and Eugene Call voting yes, Councilmen Surber and Gary Call voting no, and Councilman Robinson abstaining.

Since this is Mr. Powers' last meeting, the Mayor thanked him for what he had done for the town.

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