

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on November 12, 2019 at 5:00 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

Citizens' Time

Preston Frye represented the Saltville Little League and mentioned that they plan to replace the back stop with the town's help. They've purchased new equipment including bases, and donations have come in for the softball field. The outer fence at the boys' field will have been replaced as well. To encourage more participation, registration will now be online in addition to usual walk-ins. Finally, there will be several fundraisers before the start of next season, and the members of the Board will go around seeking additional sponsors.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Junior Panthers Recognition

The Mayor presented plaques to the Third and Fourth Grade team and the Fifth and Sixth Grade team of the Saltville Junior Panthers. The Third and Fourth Grade team won the league title by beating Holston 50-0, and the Fifth and Sixth Grade team won the league title by beating Chilhowie 24-20.

Old Business

1. Humvee bids

Councilman Morris said he would like to see the Humvee put back out to bid for the January meeting and put that in a motion. Councilman Surber replied that based on the bids received the last time, he'd like to see it stay in the Police Department since the bids were not that high. Chief Puckett said that he spoke to one of the garages in town and they would still like to have it in exchange for services, but Councilman Morris reminded him that at last month's meeting, Town Attorney Paul Cassell said the town's policy did not have an "exchange for services" portion. Chief Puckett stated that if the town couldn't get close to what it was worth, he'd like to see it stay.

Councilman Call seconded Councilman Morris' motion, and all were in favor.

New Business

1. Resolution of Support

Town Manager Brian Martin told the Council that Smyth County is looking to donate a building for use as a drug rehab facility. The county is petitioning the state to use one of the buildings at the state hospital for this project and is asking for support from the towns in the county for this to happen.

Councilman Orr asked that the wording of the resolution read the Town of Saltville instead of the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Martin said he would make that change. Councilman Morris then made a motion to have the Mayor sign the resolution, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

2. EMS, Inc. Report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The DEQ and VDH reports for October were submitted to both entities.
- 2) The water accountability is still a little high, and the I&I issue could be better.
- 3) The line has been replaced on Allison Gap Road.

4. The connection with Washington County needs to be completed. Mr. Martin said it was his understanding the Washington County Service Authority was going to hook up the interconnect. The WCSA has applied to Mt. Rogers for funding to do this, but if they don't get the funding, he's not sure if they will go ahead with the project. He recently sent them an email regarding this but has not received a response just yet.

5. The Lane Group has put together a draft version of a preliminary engineering report to get some grant funding through Rural Development.

Committee Reports

There were no committee meetings in October.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

1) Jerad Ward, principal of the high school, has requested the Christmas parade be moved to 6:00 on Saturday, December 7th to enable the band to get back from Bristol in time. There were no objections.

2) The Mayor said the Smyth County Foundation had voted to officially move forward with the Wellness Center branch in Saltville. The majority of the GCS building will be remodeled to do this.

3) The two trestles on the Salt Trail had fallen into disrepair, so the maintenance staff and the inmates have completed 95% of the resurfacing.

4) The town has applied for a grant from the EPA to help with the cleanup of the old town shop site. Award notifications will be in May of 2020.

5) The Smyth County Conservation Camp was held at the playground and in the GCS building on October 23-24. All third graders in the county attended over the two days.

6) The town uses a company called TACS, in consultation with the county, to collect the delinquent taxes owed. The total owed includes any charges the town has incurred in cleaning up any blighted properties. If no taxes are owed, the cost of the town cleaning the property are also added as a lien to the property. The Mayor commented that the town needed to get out of

the mowing business in general, and Councilman Morris said he'd like to see something done with these properties before mowing season gets here again in the spring. Mr. Martin said he would get together with Mr. Crewe with a list of properties that were mowed. These are mowed by the inmates a few times each summer to keep the neighbors happy.

7) Youth Government Day was held on October 22nd at the Town Hall, and five Northwood seniors and Councilman Morris attended.

8) He, the Mayor, and Councilman Orr will be meeting with DEQ to discuss a potential Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund planning project for the Salt Trail.

9) At the request of several residents, the town will move the stop sign at the intersection of Government Plant Road and Russell Street from the left side of the intersection to the right side of the intersection. This is more in line with state traffic signal requirements.

10) He and the Mayor will represent the town at the SWVA Legislative Breakfast to be held in Marion on November 22nd.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) The new vehicle has arrived and quotes are being obtained to have it fully equipped.
- 2) There were no issues with the Trunk-or-Treat.
- 3) He and Officer Frye were present at the signing of the Memo of Understanding for the schools. This defined what the roles of the teachers, staff, and the police are.
- 4) He attended two days of executive in-service in Bristol. This program is for chiefs and ranking officers of police departments.
- 5) Assistant Chief Lynch gave a presentation at the Lions Club on particular scams currently going around.
- 6) Officer Frye is now the SRO at the elementary school.
- 7) The department will look to hire before the Academy starts in January, and there are four or five good local candidates. The Town of Marion is also hiring, and Chief Puckett said he could use their background reports on prospective candidates that also have applied to Saltville, and this will put the department ahead of the game.

8) Decals for the black Explorer will be \$695.00.

9) The department is participating in *No Shave November*. Each officer is going to donate \$40.00 to the elementary school for the Santa's Elves Christmas project.

10) A citizen accidentally shot himself at Food Country last Sunday. It was a concealed handgun, and nobody else was hurt. It's currently under investigation, but more than likely he will be cleared.

Public Works Director's Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

1) The paving of Palmer Avenue began yesterday. A concrete pipe was also installed to help with drainage.

2) The fall clean-up is currently underway.

3) A digester at the sewer plant had a valve come apart, so that was repaired.

4) The waterline installation on Allison Gap Road is almost complete. Near the Stillwell house two pipe caps had to be attached. Mr. Martin said this project would have cost around \$130,000 if it had gone out for bid, but it will only cost about \$55,000. The Health Department recognized this was an emergency since this is the main pipe coming into town, so they let the town work with another locality to speed the process. Hopefully, this should help with the water accountability about which Gary Johnson spoke.

5) Per a request from Councilman Orr, the department would like for the Council to consider purchasing a truck. It's a diesel L-650 with a dump bed and has a snow plow and spreader on it. It has 31,000 miles, and the price is \$40,000. The Mayor suggested having the local garage look it over to make sure everything is in good working order. Councilman Morris made a motion to have the garage look it over, and Councilman Call seconded. Mr. Martin could then call a special meeting to discuss its condition and the financial aspects of the purchase. All were in favor.

Board of Supervisors Report

Saltville's representatives from either county were not present for the meeting

Fire Department Report

Chief Jimmy Davidson said the department helped with the Trunk-or-Treat with the elementary school and also took candy to the McCready Head Start. The BINGO games continue to draw in a good crowd, and on November 6th, a lady won \$26,000.00. Last month, the department had a total of seven calls with three being in the town and four in the county.

Rescue Squad Report

They participated in the Truck-or-Treat with the Fire Department. The Council had received a financial report showing the Squad was in the black for last month. Councilman Morris asked if the town gave them money last month and was told that Mr. Martin said it would happen after tax revenue started coming in. They continue to provide twenty-four hour coverage and ran sixty calls last month.

Closed Session

Councilman Morris made a motion to enter Closed Session in accordance with the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711(A)(29) for discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body; and Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. Councilman Orr seconded, and all were in favor.

After exiting Closed Session, Councilman Morris made a motion to certify that the Closed Session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law regarding those matters that are exempted from open meeting requirements and nothing was discussed other than what was mentioned in the motion to convene Closed Session. Councilman Holley seconded, and the roll call vote was 5-0 in the affirmative. Councilman Call left during Closed Session.

Councilman Morris made a motion to direct the town's attorney and staff to follow up on those matters discussed in Closed Session, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor. Lastly, Councilman Morris made the motion to adjourn, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.

