

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held on October 8, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Tom Holley, Hiram Robinson, Eugene Call, Bryan Morris, Steve Surber, and Ron Orr. Councilman Morris arrived during Citizens' Time.

Mayor:C. Todd Young

Staff: Brian Martin, Town Manager
Paul Cassell, Town Attorney
Erik Puckett, Police Chief
R.B. Henderson, Public Works Director
Tammy Carter, Front Office Clerk

Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

Councilman Holley made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

Councilman Call made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2019 special-called meeting, and Councilman Holley seconded. All were in favor.

Citizens' Time

Members of the Cookie Contractor Buddies, Inc. Lego League updated the Council on their projects. The members consist of Saltville Elementary School fifth graders, and the program is based on a set of core values that emphasize teamwork, discovery, and innovation. The competition consists of a robot game, an innovation project, and core values.

Their theme this year is called *City Shapers*, and their task was to identify a problem with a building or a space. They chose the Palmer Mill and presented their plan to renovate it and make it usable including renovating the wheel, adding a place to show movies, a stage, and an extended hiking trail. They also design robots to compete against other teams, so the group demonstrated the Lego robot they built.

Lynn Pease represented the Wellness Center in Marion to talk about veterans. The Wellness Center will hold on Friday, November 8th, from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m., a program of recognition for all veterans whether they are active duty or not. This is the first time the Center is doing this but hopes to make it an annual event.

There will be music, prizes, food, and a short speech given by Mayor Helms of Marion. Mr. Pease invited all veterans and town officials to attend.

Janice Orr represented the Museum of the Middle Appalachians. She thanked Councilman Robinson for being instrumental in getting the town to purchase the activity bus that is now being used to shuttle around tour groups with the most recent being the ladies of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Additionally, there have been a number of regular tour bus visits to the Museum throughout the fall.

Ms. Orr also mentioned that the annual Christmas tree exhibit in the Museum will start its kick off on November 17th. All organizations interested are invited to put up a tree.

Jeff Johnson of Easy Street told the Council that there was a hole in the paved part of his driveway that was actually on the town's property. Mr. Johnson had a survey done that shows this hole is on the town's property. He suggested that the town could have it surveyed too, and he brought deeds and plats that the town can peruse. Mr. Johnson left the information for the town's attorney to look over, and the Mayor said the town would be back in touch with Mr. Johnson.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Old Business

1. Humvee bids

Chief Puckett said Councilman Morris did some research and found that a Humvee in excellent condition could bring in \$23,000 and one in fair condition would be worth around \$9000. The four bids were as follows:

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|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1) \$2025.00 | 2) \$4250.00 | 3) \$3811.00 | 4) \$3854.29 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|

Councilman Morris said a business owner had inquired whether he could bid in exchange for services in terms of vehicle repair and/or cash for the police department. He then asked the town's attorney if the town put this back out for bid, could this person do this and could the town accept it. Mr. Cassell said he would have to look at the town's current procurement policy to see if this is allowed. Town Manager Brian Martin said the procurement policy does not address in-kind or exchange of services. Mr. Cassell responded that the Council could reject all of the bids, accept the highest bid, or table the issue entirely.

Councilman Morris made the motion to reject all of the bids, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

New Business

1. Playground maintenance

Mr. Martin told the Council that asphalt on the new playground had crabgrass growing through it in spots. By state law, a certified herbicide specialist has to be the one who kills the grass, and no employee of the town meets this qualification. People at the golf course who are certified have offered to assist the town.

Councilman Orr made a motion to proceed with killing the crabgrass, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

2. Traffic control services

The Mayor said he had spoken to Public Works Director R.B. Henderson about putting out an RFP for traffic control (flagging) services on highly traveled roads like Highway 107 and Highway 91 when the town's maintenance staff has to perform repairs on those areas. This would be especially beneficial when work is done at night.

Councilman Morris made the motion to put out this RFP, and Councilman Surber seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1 with Councilman Robinson abstaining.

3. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meetings to discuss operations and maintenance items that need addressing are ongoing.
- 2) The DEQ report for September was submitted.
- 3) The effluent flow meter had to be replaced.
- 4) The VDH report for September was submitted, and the water accountability is still a little high.
- 5) The line replacement for Allison Gap Road needs to be addressed, and the connection to Washington County needs to be completed.
- 6) There are numerous water leaks that have occurred.

4. Meeting times for November - February

Town Manager Brian Martin said that for several years now, the Council has moved the start times for the cold weather meetings to 5:00 p.m., and he asked the Council to vote whether or not to do it again from November through February.

Councilman Holley made the motion to adjust the start times of those four meetings to 5:00 p.m., and Councilman Surber seconded. The motion carried 4-2 with Councilmen Holley, Robinson, Call, and Surber voting yes and Councilmen Morris and Orr voting no with Councilman Orr stating that many people who work could not get here by 5:00 p.m.

5. Fall clean-up

Clerk/Treasurer Steve Johnson asked the Council to approve the dates of November 11 - 15 as Fall clean-up week. Councilman Surber made that motion, and Councilman Call seconded. All were in favor.

Committee Reports

No committees met during the previous month.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) The bids for the Wellness Center project were opened today, and the town should know something by Friday.
- 2) Student Government Day will be on October 22nd.
- 3) Mr. Johnson attended the VRSA Fall Workshop in Wytheville last week. Also, a VRSA Safety Consultant was in town to do a town-wide observation.
- 4) Everyone should check out the town's promotional video currently running on Saltville.org and the town's Facebook page.
- 5) The inmate crew and the town's maintenance staff cleaned up the area on Nichols Street.
- 6) The Daughters of the American Revolution held their annual wreath-laying ceremony at the Broady Cemetery on September 22nd.
- 7) He submitted two letters of support for the Northfork Sportsman's Club as they apply for grant funding for additional firearms and archery facilities.
- 8) The Mayor and Councilmen Holley and Surber represented the town at the Chamber's annual Town and Country Dinner. Front Office Clerk Tammy Carter serves as the Secretary of the Chamber's Executive Committee.
- 9) He attended the EPA's "How to Apply" workshop in Salem to pursue EPA cleanup funding for the old town shop site.
- 10) The new sign at the playground has been installed. It lists the major donors for the project.
- 11) He, the Mayor, and Councilman Orr in his role as the Chair of the SIDA, will meet with a business prospect on Friday.
- 12) The green Blazer that the town has had since 2003 finally bit the dust. The town will either take it to the state surplus sale or to Berry's as scrap.
- 13) The sign at the overlook on Highway 107 will be resurfaced.

14) The town received replacement signs from the Virginia Civil War Trails organization to replace the ones at the Salt Park.

15) The Emerald Borer, an invasive insect species, is responsible for destroying the Ash population. There will be more dead timber in the mountains which will increase the potential for fires and dead trees could fall over roads and power lines in the town. He asked to bid out in the next several months the cutting of the Ash trees in the Cemetery.

Councilman Morris made the motion to bid this out, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.

16) Councilman Surber asked about the tree that had fallen on Old Quarry Road. Part of it is in the creek and could cause a flooding issue. Mr. Henderson said the town had a bid to remove the tree. Councilman Surber made the motion to remove the tree, and Councilman Morris seconded. All were in favor.

17) Councilman Surber brought up the issue of a guardrail being needed on West Main Street at the playground area. His fear, echoed by the Mayor, is that a car will eventually go off the road and hurt someone or several people. The Mayor also mentioned that VDOT says it will not put up a guardrail. The town itself could put up barriers of some type including a guardrail, but they would have to be off of VDOT's right-of-way.

18) Councilman Call asked about the property in Perryville in terms of its clean-up. Mr. Martin said he has reached out to two contractors who will give a quote to fix the problem.

19) Councilman Morris asked about the line replacement on Allison Gap Road that Gary Johnson referenced in his report. Mr. Martin said there are a couple of contractual options involving this project that will be discussed in Closed Session.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

1) Officer David Frye completed his two-week training for defensive tactics and will be officially certified by November 25th.

2) He asked for guidance for working the inmates after October. One of the three supervisors has taken a leave of absence until the spring, so that leaves two. Councilman Surber asked about this leave of absence, and Chief Puckett replied that this will be the second year he has done this after giving a letter to the Town Manager.

Councilman Morris suggested keeping one crew for the winter and alternate the two supervisors on a weekly basis. He put that in a motion, and Councilman Orr seconded. All were in favor.

3) The department assisted the Town of Chilhowie with the Apple Festival parade and provided a presence for the Northwood homecoming parade.

4) The department had a joint evidence burn with the Town of Chilhowie. The town's burn barrel was purchased with the Abbott Pharmaceutical money from the Smyth County Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

5) The Mayor asked about the property at 1124 West Main Street. It is going into foreclosure and has no water or electricity hooked up. The owner comes back on occasion and sometimes causes a neighborhood disturbance. The neighbors have called the Washington County Health Department because of the unsanitary nature of the property.

Mr. Cassell said the foreclosure process does not prevent occupancy. The lack of water, sewer, and electricity could prevent occupancy as a violation of the building code of Washington County. He suggested contacting the county for assistance.

Councilman Call asked about the property on Smokey Row that had recently caught fire and stated that it needed more clean-up than just having the yellow tape around it. Mr. Martin said he would send out a letter.

Public Works Director's Report

Mr. Henderson spoke on the following:

1) Several water leaks were fixed this month including a big one in Edgewood. A new meter was installed, and a new line was installed on Overlook Court.

2) A six-inch line busted on Highway 107 and split the whole joint, but it was repaired.

3) A valve on the Digester 1 has broken. It will have to be pumped down and then fixed.

4) The main frame for the salt shed should be finished in the next couple of days.

5) The costs of fluoride and chlorine have risen slightly, so the town will save the containers to save some money.

6) The water towers on Highway 107 and in Edgewood have had their maintenance performed.

7) Councilman Call asked when the pool's pumps and other electrical components would be officially shut down and about the ditching on the Pike. Mr. Henderson replied that the impeller has not arrived yet, and he was waiting to make sure everything would work. Since the paving is starting soon, the ditching will be done before the paving is laid.

The Mayor asked about the pool impeller, and Mr. Martin said that he had had an email exchange with the contractor. His technician was involved in an accident and had lost a finger and, therefore, he was behind on his work. If need be, the installation can wait until next spring.

Fire Department Report

Bryan Lynch told the Council that the department had twelve calls last month with six being in the town and six being in the county.

Rescue Squad Report

There is new leadership at the Squad run by the Board and the line officers. There is still twenty-four hour coverage seven days a week. Regarding their financials, they had a positive month in September for the first time in a while. Since Joe Arnold is no longer with the Squad, they should save about \$22,000 in salary alone, and they are receiving about a 20% return on billing those who refuse to be transported.

They anticipate bring operational for several months to come. Councilman Morris asked for a copy of their financial report for the first quarter and was told it would be here next 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 the discussion of an 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 meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. Councilman Call 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 Orr seconded, and the roll call vote was 6-0 in the affirmative.

Councilman Morris made a motion for the Town Manager to move forward on the Allison Gap water project with another public entity. Councilman Holley seconded, and all were in favor.

Councilman Morris made a motion to have the easement agreements reviewed by the town's attorney, and if authorized, have the Mayor sign them regarding the AEP Highway 91 project. Councilman Holley seconded, and all were in favor.

Councilman Morris made a motion to have the town attorney review the easement agreements with AEP regarding the transformer move, and if approved, have the Mayor sign them. Councilman Call seconded, and all were in favor.

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