



MINUTES

WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, JULY 24, 2023 AT 5:00 PM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING - 150 EAST MONROE STREET
WYTHEVILLE, VA 24382

1. RE: ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Beth Taylor, Vice-Mayor Cathy Pattison, Councilwoman Holly Atkins, Councilman Gary Gillman, Councilwoman Candice Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Town Manager Brian Freeman, Assistant Town Manager Elaine Holeyton, Town Clerk Sherry Corvin, Interim Town Attorney Paul Cassell, Computer Operations Manager Ron Jude, Police Chief Joel Hash, Patrol Officer Clarence Doyle, Downtown Wytheville, Inc. Executive Director Todd Wolford, David Johnston, Melanie Fleenor, Rhiannon Powers, Mike Forrest, Alma Watson, Mary Alice Watson, Emerson Hardin, Camryn Hardin, Maggie Minton, Robbie Minton, Payton Rigney, Tammy Fisher, Glenda Crockett-Eans, Jim Cohen, Stephen Holston, Lorraine Dunn, Jim Dunn

2. RE: CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order.

3. RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Mayor Taylor established that a quorum of Council members was present.

4. RE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Atkins.

RE: WELCOME INTERIM TOWN ATTORNEY

Mayor Taylor advised that she would like to take a moment to welcome Interim Town Attorney Paul Cassell to the meeting. She thanked Mr. Cassell for attending the meeting. Mr. Cassell thanked the Council for inviting him to the meeting.

5. RE: APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the Approval of Agenda. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A motion was made by Councilwoman Atkins and seconded by Councilwoman Johnson to amend the agenda to include items under the Closed Meeting, Line Item E, to discuss the salaries for the Town's appointed employees, and to discuss the Town's appointed employees and their performance. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. She commented that she also has some questions, therefore, she would like for the appointed Town employees to stay for the Closed Meeting. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if during the Closed Meeting regarding salaries, could the appointed employees be asked to leave the room. Discussion ensued regarding the employees staying during the Closed Meeting discussion. Councilwoman Atkins stated that the employees could remain in the room during the Closed Meeting discussion. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

6. RE: CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Mayor Taylor presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of July 10, 2023. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the minutes as presented. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Pattison and seconded by Councilman Gillman to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of July 10, 2023. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson. Voting Abstaining: Councilwoman Atkins.

7. RE: PRESENTATIONS BY TOWN COUNCIL

- A. Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the presentation of a resolution to the George Wythe High School Girls' Tennis Team. She invited the members of the team to come forward for the presentation of the resolution and to have a photo taken. She read the resolution and presented it to the Tennis Team. A copy of the resolution is attached and made part of the minutes.

Mayor Taylor thanked the George Wythe High School Tennis Team and its coaches for attending the meeting.

8. RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS, REQUESTS, RESOLUTIONS, COUNCIL DECISIONS

A. RE: DISTRICT III ADDITIONAL BUS ROUTE

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the continued discussion to fund and provide an additional District III bus route in the Town of Wytheville. She noted that Town Manager Brian Freeman would now discuss with the Town Council the proposed additional bus route through District III. Town Manager Freeman advised that Ms. Melanie Fleenor, District III Director of Transportation, and Ms. Rhiannon Powers, District III Executive Director, are in attendance to help answer any questions that the Council may have regarding the additional bus route.

Ms. Melanie Fleenor was recognized and stated that she is the Transportation Director for District III Governmental Transit. She continued to explain to the Council the bus routes that provide service in Wytheville. Ms. Fleenor distributed pamphlets to the Council regarding the bus routes and rider information. She commented that in Fiscal Year 2022, in Wytheville, District III provided more than 8,400 hours of service, with a total ridership of 34,791. Ms. Fleenor remarked that in the Town of Abingdon, there is a similar bus service with the bus loop routes that are provided, however, Abingdon has two extra buses. She stated that for the same Fiscal Year, their ridership was about 10,000 less than Wytheville's. Ms. Fleenor continued to discuss the bus service in Wytheville provided by District III. Councilwoman Johnson inquired of Ms. Fleenor if it would be possible for the hours to be extended to citizens who work late hours such as 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. She remarked that she has noticed walkers late at night where there are no sidewalks, and she would like for them to have bus access, if possible. Councilwoman Johnson stated that in the winter is especially a concern. She continued to express her concerns regarding people who work past 5:00 p.m. to have an opportunity to have a ride home. Councilwoman Johnson expressed her appreciation to Ms. Fleenor and District III for what they are doing regarding the bus routes. Ms. Fleenor advised that this particular request is a struggle that all of the nation faces, which is extending hours due to hiring prices. She continued to discuss the issue with extending the hours past 5:00 p.m., researching the need for the extended hours, the cost associated with the extended hours, etc. Ms. Fleenor noted that if there is a demand for hours past 5:00 p.m., then District III will consider it. Councilwoman Johnson thanked Ms. Fleenor. Mayor Taylor inquired of Ms. Fleenor as to what the latest time a bus route runs in any locality where District III operates. Ms. Fleenor stated 6:00 p.m. is the latest time that a bus runs in any locality, at this time. Discussion ensued regarding how District III would collect the data to determine the demand for a bus to run after 5:00 p.m. Vice-Mayor Pattison inquired of Ms. Fleenor as to when the busiest time of day is for District III in Wytheville. Ms. Fleenor stated that lunchtime is the busiest. Discussion ensued regarding the busiest times of days, the busiest days, etc. Mayor Taylor inquired if there were any other questions for Ms. Fleenor. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she serves on a Committee with Ms. Fleenor and Ms. Powers, and she wanted to let them both know what a phenomenal job they do and how much she appreciated

them. Town Manager Freeman stated that he wanted to clarify with Ms. Fleenor that assuming that District III receives their new buses and is willing to try a new trial bus route in the fall of 2023, when would District III need approval from the Town Council to provide this additional bus route to continue with the "X" bus for Fiscal Year 2024-25. Ms. Fleenor stated after the trial, they would then need Town Council approval to continue the "X" bus route. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would stay in contact with Ms. Fleenor and Ms. Powers and revisit the topic in the spring of 2024 to see how the "X" bus is progressing in Wytheville. Councilwoman Johnson stated that she would prefer to vote on the bus route funding at this meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the funding in next year's budget. Mayor Taylor inquired if there were any other questions before voting. Ms. Fleenor advised that District III would proceed with a survey for those interested in riding the transit in Wytheville after 5:00 p.m. Mayor Taylor thanked Ms. Fleenor for proceeding with the survey. Mayor Taylor stated that she would need a motion to approve the additional route. A motion was made by Councilwoman Johnson and seconded by Councilwoman Atkins to approve an additional District III bus route in town and to approve the additional funding for the bus service in the amount of \$12,480 due in July 2024, as well as request the Town Manager to keep the Town Council apprised regarding the bus route and to revisit this matter in the spring of 2024. Mayor Taylor inquired if there is any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

B. RE: APPOINTMENT - WILLOW BROOK JACKSON/UMBERGER HOMESTEAD MUSEUM ADVISORY BOARD

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the appointment of a member to the Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Advisory Board to fill the expiring term of Ms. Jean Lester (term expires July 31, 2023). Town Manager Freeman noted that there are two applications for consideration for appointment to the Board which include Mr. James Spraker and Ms. Elizabeth Trevillian. He remarked that this is a five-year appointment that will expire on July 31, 2028. Mayor Taylor inquired if the Council would like to interview Mr. Spraker and Ms. Trevillian before making an appointment to the Board. Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that she would like to speak on behalf of Ms. Trevillian in regard to her serving on the Board. She noted Ms. Trevillian's qualifications to serve as a member of the Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Advisory Board. Vice-Mayor Pattison advised that she personally would like to see Ms. Trevillian appointed to the Board and noted that she is sure that Ms. Trevillian would be delighted to attend a meeting for an interview by the Council. Councilwoman Johnson advised that in all fairness, she would like to invite Mr. Spraker to a Council meeting for an interview, as well. It was the consensus of the Town Council for Town Staff to schedule a Meet and Greet Session for Mr. James Spraker and Ms. Betsy Trevillian to be considered for appointment to the Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Advisory Board.

C. RE: REQUEST FROM TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AN INCREASE IN MEMBERS

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the request of the Wytheville Tree Advisory Committee to increase the number of Committee members from five to seven. She stated that Town Manager Freeman would present a Staff Report to the Town Council. Town Manager Freeman advised that Wytheville Tree Advisory Committee Chair Alma Watson is attending the meeting and is available to answer any questions that the Council may have regarding this matter. He remarked that the ordinance that formed this Committee notes that it can have no less than five members and no more than nine members, so this request is within the confines of the ordinance. Mayor Taylor inquired if Ms. Watson would like to share with the Town Council as to why the Committee is requesting to increase the number of Committee members.

Ms. Alma Watson was recognized and stated that she resides at 580 East Withers Road. Ms. Watson explained that the reason for the request is to help with community involvement to help promote nominations for historic trees into the specimen tree program, in the reviewing and the approval process and then as the guide is published. Mayor Taylor inquired if there were any other questions or

comments. There being none, she inquired if there is a motion to approve increasing the number of members on the Wytheville Tree Advisory Committee from five to seven members.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Councilwoman Johnson. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

9. **RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. She noted that there is no one listed on the sign-in sheet who wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period, therefore, she will proceed with the agenda.

10. **RE: REPORTS**

A. **RE: STAFF REPORT(S)**

Town Manager Freeman presented his Staff Report, as follows:

New River Regional Water Authority Update: Town Manager Freeman advised that the New River Regional Water Authority (NRRWA) met on July 20, 2023. He explained that the previous fiscal year he served as Chairman and that this was his last meeting serving as the Chairman. Town Manager Freeman noted that in the next fiscal year, Carroll County Administrator Michael Watson will serve as Chairman, and he will serve as Secretary/Treasurer. He updated the Council regarding a \$3M grant that the NRRWA has been awarded by the Federal Economic Development Authority for the plant expansion project. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would keep the Council apprised of the progress of the project as the Authority moves forward.

Virginia HB2175 - Fire service needs; sustainability of funding, and alternative funding models: Town Manager Freeman explained that House Bill 2175 directs the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security (the Secretary) to establish a work group to study existing fire service needs, analyze sustainability of current funding and review alternative funding models from other states. He noted that in conducting its study, the work group may hire an outside consultant and shall create a needs assessment survey that analyzes existing fire service needs, the sustainability of current funding, any gaps in current funding, how other states fund fire and EMS services and best practices from other states. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Secretary shall report the work group's findings and any recommendations to the Chairman of the House Committee on General Laws and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology on or before October 1, 2023. He noted that last week, he, Town Treasurer Stephens and Fire and Rescue Chief Slemp worked on the survey, and they hope that the survey will highlight the need for additional funding for the Commonwealth and support finances moving forward.

B. **RE: UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Town Clerk Corvin presented the upcoming meetings, as follows:

1. The Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Advisory Board will meet on Thursday, July 27, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., at the Jackson House.
2. The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County will meet on Thursday, July 27, 2023, at 3:00 p.m., here in the Council Chambers.
3. The Wytheville Tree Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, August 10, 2023, at 8:30 a.m., in Conference Room A.
4. The Wytheville Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, August 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., here in the Council Chambers.
5. The next regular meeting of the Wytheville Town Council will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 14, 2023, here in the Council Chambers.

11. RE: OTHER BUSINESS

A. RE: TOWN COMMITTEE/BOARD UPCOMING VACANCIES

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the review of vacancies/upcoming vacancies on Town Committees/Boards. Town Clerk Corvin stated that the Council has a listing of all the upcoming vacancies through the end of the year. She commented that the vacancies that are marked in yellow are the most recent vacancies and will be upcoming in the very near future. Town Clerk Corvin reviewed the list of vacancies with the Council. She commented that if the Council knew of anyone who would like to apply for any of the vacancies, to have them do so on the Town's website through the OpenGov portal.

B. RE: COUNCIL MEMBER TIME

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Council Member Time. She inquired if Councilwoman Johnson had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Johnson inquired as to when the Lodging Tax would be discussed at a future meeting because when the budget was voted on by the Council, it was mentioned that the Council could revisit the budget and always do an amendment, therefore, she wants to hold a discussion regarding the Lodging Tax so that it is fair to all constituents of Wytheville. She remarked that the Council raised Meals and Property Taxes, but Lodging Taxes were not raised. Councilwoman Johnson continued to explain why she wanted to place the Lodging Tax on a future Council agenda or schedule a future Council Work Session to discuss the topic. Discussion ensued regarding the Council being divided on the decision to raise the Lodging Taxes, as well as how items are formulated on the Council agenda. Interim Town Attorney Cassell advised the Council that there are policies regarding how items are placed on agendas. He noted that almost all localities have some sort of policy regarding agendas. He continued to discuss the other localities he represents and the policies that they have for their Council agendas. Councilwoman Atkins inquired of Mr. Cassell if the Lodging Tax item could be revisited. Mr. Cassell advised that there are very few decisions that a Town Council makes that cannot be revisited, therefore, his answer to Councilwoman Atkins would be that is correct. Mayor Taylor inquired if the Council all agreed to place the Lodging Tax topic on a future agenda for discussion. Councilman Gillman commented that the Council should be prepared for the Municipal Building to be overcrowded with people attending the meeting when the topic is listed on the agenda. Town Manager Freeman inquired of the Council as to which of the two August Town Council meetings they would like the topic to be placed on the agenda. Discussion ensued regarding the previous Lodging Tax increase and the proposed increase, as well as the required information for the public hearings. Councilwoman Johnson stated that she thinks the Council needs to discuss the Lodging Tax rate as a group and create a rate together. Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilwoman Johnson is requesting for this item to be placed on the next Town Council agenda for discussion. Councilwoman Johnson stated that the item could be placed on the August 28 agenda for discussion and that way a public hearing could be scheduled at that time. Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilwoman Johnson had anything else to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Johnson stated that she did not at this time.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilwoman Atkins had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she wanted to inquire regarding the recognition of the Town volunteers in the different departments and how Town Staff is progressing on this request. Town Manager Freeman advised that he did not have an update for Councilwoman Atkins at this time.

Councilwoman Atkins stated that she did not attend the last Council meeting, therefore, she wanted to extend her thanks for a successful July 4th Celebration and to everyone who was involved.

Councilwoman Atkins inquired regarding the buses at the Wytheville Recreation Center and the decals being replaced. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would like to update the Council regarding the 15-passenger van for the Wytheville Recreation Center. He inquired if Assistant Town Manager Holeyton had any input to give the Council. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton stated that Parks and Recreation Director Sharitz is currently researching available models for purchase. She noted

that to her knowledge, the two existing buses will be removed from service following the Kidventure Program because Town Staff feels this is the last year for those two buses to provide service. Councilwoman Atkins remarked, therefore, those two buses will not be used after a couple of more weeks. Town Manager Freeman stated that is the plan. Discussion continued regarding the buses.

Councilwoman Atkins inquired regarding paving on Lithia Road from the Harley Shop to Cracker Barrel. She noted that, apparently, the road is in bad shape. Town Manager Freeman advised that this portion of road is on the paving schedule for this year because, last year, it was a part of the emergency repair of the force main from the Lithia Road Pump Station when the paving contract was issued. He noted that the same conditions exist on Industry Road and will also be paved because it is rough, as well.

Councilwoman Atkins stated that she wanted to make the Council aware that, apparently, there were some geese hit around 400 Peppers Ferry Road. She noted that there are some speeding issues in this location, and speed patrol has been requested in this area.

Councilwoman Atkins inquired regarding elderly citizens who visit the Wytheville Recreation Center and sit with children who are swimming at the pool and if the small fee that is charged could be waived for the individuals who are not swimming but only watching. Town Manager Freeman inquired if Councilwoman Atkins was referring to those attending swim meets. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she was not, but, rather any time someone brings a child to the pool to swim, but the adult is only watching.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Vice-Mayor Pattison had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that she did not have anything to discuss at this time.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilman Gillman had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilman Gillman stated that he did not have anything to discuss at this time.

Mayor Taylor reported that the 9/11 Commemoration Event that she and Councilwoman Johnson are working with Town Staff to help sponsor is on track and will be held in Elizabeth Brown Memorial Park at the small stage.

Mayor Taylor stated that she has a request for speed patrol in the Loretta Subdivision. She noted that it was reported that individuals are not stopping for the STOP signs, speeding in the neighborhood, etc.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Town Manager Freeman could please bring Interim Town Attorney Cassell up to date on the Clutter Ordinance, the list of individuals who are in violation and where they stand in regard to the ordinance and the process of the ordinance, when they both have time.

Councilwoman Johnson stated that she would request to make sure that citizens' emails are coming through the Town server.

Councilwoman Atkins stated that she had a request for speed patrol from a citizen on Fairview Road.

12. RE: CLOSED MEETING

- A. Mayor Taylor advised that it will now be necessary for the Council to go into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A.) (3.) Discussion regarding the acquisition/disposition of real property used for a public purpose; Section 2.2-3711 (A.) (1.) Interview with candidate for Town Attorney position; and, Section 2.2-3711 (A.) (1.) Discussion regarding the salaries for appointed employees and the performance of an appointed employee. She inquired if there was a motion to go into a closed meeting.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion regarding the motion. There being none,

the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson. (6:06 p.m.)

- B. Mayor Taylor advised that it is necessary to certify the closed meeting. She noted that after the closed meeting, it is also necessary to reconvene into an open session by stating that the Town Council is now in session. Mayor Taylor inquired if there is a motion to certify the closed meeting held pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A.) (3.) Discussion regarding the acquisition/disposition of real property used for public purpose; Section 2.2-3711 (A.) (1.) Interview with candidate for Town Attorney position; and, Section 2.2-3711 (A.) (1.) Discussion regarding the salaries for appointed employees and the performance of an appointed employee, and that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Council.

Motion made by Councilwoman Atkins, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison. The motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson. (9:21 p.m.)

Councilman Gillman departed the meeting at 9:10 p.m. and was absent for the certification of the meeting.

13. **RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be discussed a motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. (9:22 p.m.).

Beth A. Taylor, Mayor

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk

STAFF REPORT

JULY 24, 2023

1. **New River Regional Water Authority Update:** Town Manager Freeman advised that the New River Regional Water Authority (NRRWA) met on July 20, 2023. He explained that the previous fiscal year he served as Chairman and that this was his last meeting serving as the Chairman. Town Manager Freeman noted that in the next fiscal year, Carroll County Administrator Michael Watson will serve as Chairman, and he will serve as Secretary/Treasurer. He updated the Council regarding a \$3M grant that the NRRWA has been awarded by the Federal Economic Development Authority for the plant expansion project. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would keep the Council apprised of the progress of the project as the Authority moves forward.
2. **Virginia HB2175 - Fire service needs; sustainability of funding, and alternative funding models:** Town Manager Freeman explained that House Bill 2175 directs the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security (the Secretary) to establish a work group to study existing fire service needs, analyze sustainability of current funding and review alternative funding models from other states. He noted that in conducting its study, the work group may hire an outside consultant and shall create a needs assessment survey that analyzes existing fire service needs, the sustainability of current funding, any gaps in current funding, how other states fund fire and EMS services and best practices from other states. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Secretary shall report the work group's findings

and any recommendations to the Chairman of the House Committee on General Laws and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology on or before October 1, 2023. He noted that last week, he, Town Treasurer Stephens and Fire and Rescue Chief Slemp worked on the survey, and they hope that the survey will highlight the need for additional funding for the Commonwealth and support finances moving forward.