



# MINUTES

## WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 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 T. Brian Freeman, Assistant Town Manager Elaine Holeyton, Town Clerk Sharon Corvin, Town Attorney Michelle Workman Clayton, Planning Director John Woods, Parks and Recreation Director Josh Sharitz, Building Official Timothy Spraker, Computer Operations Manager Ronald Jude, Police Chief Joel Hash, Corporal Jerrod Sadler, Corporal Joshua Jones, Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Alison Pollard, James Cohen, Tina Repass, Patricia Austin, Tommy Atkins, Glenda Crockett-Eans, Karen D. James, Richie Johnson, Kerrington Crockett-Eans, Kerry Eans

### 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.

### 5. **RE: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the Approval of Agenda. She inquired if the Council would approve removing items 16-A and 16-B Closed Meeting from the agenda. Mayor Taylor stated that she would need a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of items 16-A and 16-B Closed Meeting.

Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilman Gillman. 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: SCHEDULED RECESS AT 6:00 P.M.**

Mayor Taylor advised that she would like to remind everyone that if the Council needs to recess later in the meeting, there is a scheduled recess listed on the agenda.

### 7. **RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Mayor Taylor noted that the next agenda item is the Consent Agenda which consists of two items. She stated that the first item is the minutes of the work session and the regular meeting of March 13, 2023. Mayor Taylor advised that the second item is the request of the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce to close Tazewell Street, between Monroe and Main Streets, and to use a portion of the sidewalk on Main Street on Friday, May 5, 2023, from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., to conduct a Community Connections Day event. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins.  
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

**8. RE: PRESENTATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL**

**A. RE: PASTOR RICHIE JOHNSON**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item will be for Pastor Richie Johnson to discuss pluralistic religion and the Delegates of Peace Organization. She introduced Pastor Richie who advised that the Delegates of Peace was created to meet the needs of religious leaders working with community leaders. Pastor Johnson noted that there are two initiatives that the Delegates of Peace offer, which are private peace initiatives and public peace initiatives. He stated that the private peace initiatives consist of private events that are hosted by the Delegates of Peace that allow leaders on every level to express their faith freely without the fear of discrimination, legal backlash or misinterpretation of their public role of office. Pastor Johnson commented that examples of private peace initiatives would be an annual prayer breakfast or scheduled leadership devotionals. He stated that public peace initiatives are public engagements that require a more sensitive approach to inclusion and diversity, including officiating prayers and ceremonies in a manner that creates a respectful and inclusive environment for all participants on behalf of the administration. Pastor Johnson advised that the Delegates of Peace can conduct programs and facilitate sensitive topics and dialogue in a manner that promotes inclusion, respect and empathy for diverse perspectives on the behalf of the community. He noted that these were a few ideas that he wanted to present and inquired if the Council members had any questions. Mayor Taylor inquired if Pastor Johnson would invite everyone attending the meeting to the National Day of Prayer event. Pastor Johnson then invited everyone attending the meeting to attend the National Day of Prayer event. He then thanked the Town Council again for allowing him to speak. Mayor Taylor thanked Pastor Johnson for his presentation.

**B. RE: PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR JOSH SHARITZ**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item will be for Parks and Recreation Director Josh Sharitz to present a conceptual plan for improvements to the T-ball field. She noted that he will also discuss the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Grant, and how these funds could be used to help fund the T-ball field. Parks and Recreation Director Sharitz advised that the Parks and Recreation Department is seeking the Town Council's support in the opportunity for an alternative funding program through the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Community Revitalization Grant. He noted that they are seeking the opportunity to update the T-ball field, and that Planning Director Woods will be presenting the site concept for the updates. Director Sharitz stated that with the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Grant, Kubota awards \$100,000 to five organizations across the United States to organizations that are helping make an impact in their own communities. He commented that after the initial \$100,000 is awarded, there will be a public vote on the approved projects, and the winner of the vote will receive an additional \$100,000. Director Sharitz then discussed what updates he would like to make to the T-ball field, if the Town receives funding through this grant program. He stated that this project has not yet been adopted into the Town's Comprehensive Program, and due to the deadline associated with the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Grant, he felt that it was best to include the Council in this opportunity. Director Sharitz noted that the Parks and Recreation Department is also asking for the Council's support in adding an additional \$50,000, which would cover the cost of installing a playground and permanent restrooms. Mayor Taylor inquired about the grant and if the additional \$50,000 from the Town is required. Director Sharitz stated that the grant does not require those funds, however, he is requesting that the Town allocate an additional \$50,000 for this project. A brief discussion continued regarding the grant opportunities. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. There being none, she proceeded with the agenda and noted that the Council will take action on this matter later in the meeting.

## 9. **RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. She noted that there are citizens listed on the sign-in sheet who would like to address the Council during Citizens' Period.

Ms. Patricia Austin was recognized and stated that she would like to thank the Town Council for their time and for interviewing her as a Planning Commission applicant. She noted that in the future, she would like to receive notice of any Committee vacancies at the beginning of the year. Ms. Austin advised that she would recommend that all applications be reviewed to make sure the applicants are fully qualified for the Committee they applied for, and to include a timeline into the applicant information, if possible. She stated that there are more people becoming engaged in this community and she wants to see that engagement continue. Ms. Austin commented that with clarification and notification, she thinks community engagement will increase from various groups of the community. She then thanked the Town Council again for their time.

Ms. Karen James was recognized and stated that she resides at 665 East North Street, Apartment B, in Wytheville. She noted that she is a member of the Virginia Organizing Group in Wytheville. Ms. James commented that she was born in Wytheville, moved away and moved back to Wytheville eight years ago. She advised that in those eight years, she has noticed an increase in homelessness, and that it has become a problem in the town. Ms. James commented that Wytheville does not have any place for the homeless to go, especially for men, and that the closest homeless shelter she knows of is in Roanoke. She stated that the homeless are struggling to receive housing or even assistance, and this is a problem that the Town Council needs to look at and address. Ms. James then thanked the Council for allowing her to speak.

Mr. Kerrington Crockett-Eans was recognized and stated that he resides at 50 Lee Circle in Wytheville. He noted that he would like to add to some of the things that Ms. James discussed regarding the homeless. Mr. Crockett-Eans advised that there are a lot of people in Wytheville who are homeless, and that he believes the problem can be taken care of. He commented that Wytheville is the perfect size to be able to work on this problem and come to a point where there is little to no homelessness. Mr. Crockett-Eans stated that he wanted to bring this issue to the Town Council's attention and make sure that they are thinking about this issue. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Crockett-Eans for his comments.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there were others who wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period. There being none, she proceeded with the agenda.

## 10. **RE: REPORTS**

### A. **RE: BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councilman Gillman reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The Budget and Finance Committee report was entered into the record as follows:

**1. Law Day Recommendation:** Last year, the Southwest Legal Aid Society sponsored "Law Day" events in Abingdon, Marion, Lebanon and Tazewell. Prior events have been free to attend and open to the public and have offered blood drives, guest speakers and free legal advice to those in attendance, as well as free food for first responders, law enforcement personnel and veterans. This year, the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society would like to host an event at the Wytheville Community Center. It is the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Town of Wytheville allow the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society to host a Law Day event in the parking lot of the Wytheville Community Center and provide a small room rental for one-on-one legal consultations at no cost to the event sponsor. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. Councilwoman Johnson inquired if the Town Council will be paying for the small room rental and about the amount of the fee Town Manager Freeman stated that the rental is less than \$100. A brief discussion was held regarding the Town Council providing the rental fee to the Meeting Center budget. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Town of Wytheville allow the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society to host at Law Day event in the

parking lot of the Wytheville Community Center and provide a small room rental at no cost to the event sponsor.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison.  
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to include moving the amount of the room rental fee from the Town Council budget to the Meeting Center budget.

Motion made by Councilwoman Atkins, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison.  
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

**2. Insurance Renewal Recommendation:** The Town of Wytheville offers its employees insurance through The Local Choice, a state health benefits program established by the General Assembly in 1989. The Local Choice serves Wytheville, along with many other local governments and public school systems across the state. Each year, participating entities are evaluated, and new rates for the upcoming year are established. The rate for each locality is established based on their usage of the policy through the year, as well as the combined rate with all other agencies across Virginia. The revised rates are then provided to each entity for their consideration during the renewal period. The Local Choice notified the Town of a 5.2 percent increase for the 2023-24 plan year. by April 1, 2023, it will be necessary for the Town of Wytheville to initiate the renewal and declare the percentage of the plan offerings being covered by the Town and employee respectively. After careful consideration, it is the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Town of Wytheville renew with The Local Choice with the same plan offerings and continue to pay the 92 percent of blended rate for employee only insurance plans. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. Councilwoman Atkins stated that when she was on the Budget and Finance Committee, she believes there was discussion about possibly looking into different insurance plans and rates. Town Manager Freeman advised that the Staff has not looked into different providers, however, Staff has evaluated different insurance plans from other localities that are offered through the same provider. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if Staff could look into other providers that possibly offer the same coverage that is less expensive. Town Manager Freeman stated that is possible. Councilwoman Johnson stated that for her understanding, she would like to confirm that the Town is renewing with The Local choice, with a 5.2 percent increase and that the Town will cover the cost. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Town will cover the majority of the cost at a 92 percent blended rate of the two highest plans offered. A brief discussion was held regarding Town contributions to the employees insurance. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if there was a way for the Town to pick up the extra cost that employees would be paying for the increase, so that employee insurance rates would stay the same. Councilwoman Johnson stated that she would like for the Council to consider picking up the extra cost. She noted that she did not want to take away from the cost of living adjustment that has just been implemented with increasing insurance costs, and that she did not think that was fair to Town employees. Town Manager Freeman stated that Staff can work that out, as long as a motion is made that covers the extra cost of the increase. He noted that the 92 percent will change to 92.2 percent, for example. Discussion continued regarding the Town covering the extra cost of employee insurance increases. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison to renew with The Local Choice with the same plan offerings. 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.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to freeze current employee premiums being paid toward the insurance premiums and for the Town to pay the remainder of the blended rate premiums for employee only insurance plans.

Motion made by Councilwoman Atkins, Seconded by Councilwoman Johnson.  
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: STAFF REPORT**

Town Manager Freeman presented the Staff Report, and a copy is attached and made part of the minutes.

**11. RE: NEW BUSINESS**

Under New Business, Town Manager Freeman reported the following:

1. The Wytheville Town Council will hold a Work Session on April 10, 2023, prior to the regular Town Council meeting that will be held at 5:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building. Town Manager Freeman stated that there has not been a time set for the April 10, 2023, Work Session yet. He noted that he would recommend either 3:00 p.m. or 3:30 p.m. for the start time of the Work Session. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to set the start time as 3:30 p.m. for the April 10, 2023, Work Session.

Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilman Gillman.  
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

**12. RE: APPOINTMENTS**

**A. RE: WYTHEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider an appointment to the Wytheville Planning Commission to fill the expired term of Mr. Bradley Tate (term expired March 2, 2023). She noted that the Town is lucky and blessed to have five very talented and qualified individuals available to serve on the Planning Commission. Mayor Taylor commented that three of the applicants serve in some capacity on the Board of Zoning Appeals, but all have offered to resign if chosen for the Planning Commission. She advised that under Roberts Rules of Order, she would open the floor for nominations before any discussion. Councilman Gillman stated that he would like to nominate Mr. Keith Jones to serve on the Planning Commission. Councilwoman Johnson noted that she would like to nominate Ms. Patricia Austin to serve on the Planning Commission. Councilwoman Atkins advised that she would like to nominate Mr. Kerry Eans to serve on the Planning Commission. Mayor Taylor inquired if there were any other nominations. There being none, she closed the floor for nominations. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion regarding the candidates. Councilwoman Johnson stated that she nominated Ms. Austin because she appreciates her willingness and intelligence. She commented that Ms. Austin seems as if she knows what is going on in the community, would be vocal when addressing matters and add more diversity.

Councilwoman Atkins noted that she nominated Mr. Eans because she feels as if he would bring a lot to the table, and that he actively serves in the community.

Mayor Taylor commented that she believes any candidate would do well on the Planning Commission. She stated that they all have the qualifications, however, Mr. Keith Jones has experience and knowledge in planning. Vice-Mayor Pattison advised that she serves as the Council liaison on the Planning Commission, and that she would be delighted to work with any of the candidates. She stated that they are all great candidates, and she is very thankful there are multiple candidates to choose from. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. There being none, she proceeded.

Mayor Taylor asked each Council member to state their name and the nominee they support. Councilman Gillman stated that his vote is for Mr. Keith Jones Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that her vote is for Mr. Keith Jones. Mayor Taylor stated that her vote is for Mr. Keith Jones. Councilwoman Johnson stated that her vote is for Ms. Patricia Austin. Councilwoman Atkins stated that her vote is for Mr. Kerry Eans. Mayor Taylor stated that, at this point, there is a majority vote for Mr. Jones. She advised that she will need a motion to finalize the appointment of Mr. Jones to the Planning Commission. A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison to appoint Mr. Keith Jones to the Wytheville Planning Commission.

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. Voting Nay: Councilwoman Johnson.

Mayor Taylor stated that she hopes those who were not chosen will be available in the coming year for other positions that are opening on various Town Commissions, Committees and Authorities. She noted that on behalf of the entire Council she is very grateful for the applicants' willingness to serve.

### **13. RE: ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS**

#### **A. RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1420 - NUISANCES ON PROPERTY AND CLUTTER**

Mayor Taylor presented Ordinance No. 1420, an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 12. Solid Waste Collection and Disposal, Article VI. Condition of Premises, Division 1. Generally, Division 2. Removal of Weeds, Etc., and Division 3. Unsanitary Accumulations of Refuse, Etc., of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia. She noted that this ordinance changes the regulations to include nuisances on premises, amendments to the mowing guidelines and a new section on clutter. Mayor Taylor stated that this ordinance is before the Council on first reading only. She advised that a public hearing will be held on this ordinance at the April 10, 2023, Town Council meeting, with the ordinance being considered on second reading at that meeting. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve Ordinance No. 1420 on first reading. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Pattison and seconded by Councilwoman Johnson to approve Ordinance No. 1420, an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 12. Solid Waste Collection and Disposal, Article VI. Condition of Premises, Division 1. Generally, Division 2. Removal of Weeds, Etc., and Division 3. Unsanitary Accumulations of Refuse, Etc., of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on first, but not final, reading. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about who will be enforcing the ordinance. Town Attorney Clayton stated that the Building Official will actively enforce this under the current ordinance, however, there may be some amendments including the Town Manager, or his designee, and potentially a committee to review properties in violation. Discussion continued regarding the details of Ordinance No. 1420 and being able to enforce clutter. There being no further discussion, 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.

Ordinance No. 1420 was approved on first, but not final, reading.

### **14. RE: OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. RE: "KUBOTA HOMETOWN PROUD" GRANT**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next item on the agenda is to consider approving the request of Town staff to apply for the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Grant. She inquired if there was a motion to consider approving Parks and Recreation staff to apply for the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Grant. A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Councilwoman Atkins to approve Town staff applying for the "Kubota Hometown Proud" Grant and to approve providing a \$50,000 match, if the grant is awarded. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. Vice-Mayor Pattison inquired about receiving more details on the grant. Town Manager Freeman stated that he recalls that applicants will be eligible for up to \$100,000 from the Kubota grant, and that Director Sharitz requested a \$50,000 match from the Town if funds were awarded from the grant. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she wanted to make sure that they are only voting on the grant funds, and not that the Town will pay \$150,000 to the Parks and Recreation Department from next year's budget, if they do not receive any grant funding. Councilman Gillman stated that is correct. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. 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: COUNCIL MEMBER TIME**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Council Member Time. She inquired if Councilwoman Atkins had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she did not.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilwoman Johnson has anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Johnson stated that she would like to thank Staff for the installation of a stop sign on North Street. She noted that she would like to thank the Public Works Department for their work, and that their efforts do not go unnoticed.

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

Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilman Gillman had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilman Gillman stated that a citizen approached him stating that the side of the road is caved in on a portion of Rose Hill Road. Town Manager Freeman stated that he will check into this matter.

Mayor Taylor stated that she would like to discuss the garden plots at the balloon tank site. She noted that there was a total of 14 plots in 2022 and that the Council decided that a gardener's first plot would be free, and the second plot was 10 dollars. She inquired if the Council would like to keep the cost the same or if they would like to change the cost of the plots. It was the consensus of the Council to continue with the current regulations, which include waiving the fee for the first plot and allowing one additional garden plot to be requested for a fee of ten dollars, with a limit of two plots per gardener.

**C. RE: ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER TIME**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Assistant Town Manager Time. She inquired if Assistant Town Manager Holeton had anything to discuss during this time. Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that she did not.

**D. RE: MISCELLANEOUS**

Mayor Taylor stated that she would like to remind everyone of the upcoming ribbon cutting at the Homestead Museum on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

**16. RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. (6:21 p.m.)

---

Beth A. Taylor, Mayor

---

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk

## **STAFF REPORT**

**MARCH 27, 2023**

1. Payroll modifications associated with the Comp Study Implementation are being keyed now and barring an unforeseen setback will take effect on the 3/31 payroll. On behalf of the staff and our employees I'd like to thank the Town Council for committing to this important study and helping us see it through.
2. The 2023-24 Budget process has been underway for several weeks now and we've had the opportunity to meet with the & Finance Committee three times thus far. The Budget & Finance Committee will meet again on 3/28/23 and plans to meet regularly throughout this process. The Public Works Committee will meet on Thursday 3/30/23 and the focus of that meeting will also be on the budget and covering the same topics the Budget & Finance Committee is discussing. We feel this is an appropriate way to get all council members up to speed on the contents and finer details of budget ahead of our first work session, which is scheduled for April 10, 2023.
3. Real Estate Taxes are due by the end of the week. Treasurer Stephens reports that these are coming in well and that about 82% of these have already been received. This is a very good collection rate for this stage of the Real Estate Tax collection process.