



MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2022 AT 4:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 150 EAST MONROE STREET
WYTHEVILLE, VA 24382

1. UNAPPROVED MINUTES

A. Persons Present

Beth A. Taylor - Mayor
Cathy D. Pattison - Vice-Mayor
Mark J. Bloomfield - Council Member
Gary L. Gillman - Council Member
T. Brian Freeman - Town Manager
Elaine R. Holeyton - Assistant Town Manager
Sherry G. Corvin - Town Clerk
Michelle Workman Clayton - Town Attorney
John Woods - Planning Director
Josh Sharitz - Director of Parks and Recreation
Shane Terry - Social Media/Marketing Project Coordinator
Michael G. Stephens - Town Treasurer
Zach Puckett - Police Officer
John Matthews - Deputy Director, Joint Industrial Development Authority (JIDA)

Persons Absent

Holly E. Atkins - Council Member

2. ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED

A. **Approval of Agenda**

Town Manager Freeman advised that the first item on the agenda is the Approval of Agenda, and this required a motion and approval by the Committee. He noted that the 4:30 p.m. agenda item regarding the finalization of the Town Property Trespassing Ordinance and park security would need to be removed, with the approval of the Committee. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to amend and approve the agenda.

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

B. Discussion regarding Housing Summit

Town Manager Freeman stated that Mr. John Matthews, the Deputy Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority (JIDA), will discuss their efforts in developing a Housing Summit. Mr. Matthews advised that he has spoken with Assistant Town Manager Holeyton regarding the lack of housing in our community. He noted the JIDA has been following the regional Housing Summit from Danville where developers, builders, investors, etc. discuss housing opportunities within their region. Mr. Matthews stated that the JIDA would like to hold a Housing Summit here around March or April of 2023. Discussion was held regarding the preparation of this event. Mr. Matthews noted that a planning meeting with their partners has been scheduled, as well as a meeting with the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA). Mayor Taylor inquired about how and where the event will take place. Mr. Matthews advised that they would like for consultants to present information to guests. He noted that would help show the greatest areas of need and how to move forward with the housing issue. Further discussion was held regarding the Housing Summit. Councilman Bloomfield inquired if there may be a possible solution for the vacant houses around town. Mr. Matthews noted that is a strategy they will be focusing on during this process. Town Manager Freeman noted that he believes there is a program to purchase, renovate and sell these homes. He noted that Staff could inventory these vacant structures and then present a possible listing of structures that could be renovated. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton noted that Mr. Matthews could present the Committee with more information regarding this matter at a future meeting.

Review of a request from Wythe County Public Schools to waive pool usage fees

Town Manager Freeman advised that the next item on the agenda is to review a request from Wythe County Public Schools (WCPS) to waive fees for the use of the Wellness Center pool during the season and for practice. He advised that Mr. Charles DeBord from WCPS has decided to table this request at this time, however, the Committee does have some concerns regarding this matter. Town Manager Freeman noted that Parks and Recreation Director Sharitz will address the Committee regarding these concerns. Director Sharitz noted that the Recreation Department was first approached by high schools and swim team coaches in 2009 regarding the development of a countywide swim team practicing together but competing individually to represent their school. He stated that an agreement was made allowing WCPS to host their practices, as long as the swimmers purchased a silver or gold pass plan to the facility. Director Sharitz noted that the request for waiving pool fees has been a recurring issue for a period of time. Discussion was held regarding the cost of pass plans and WCPS hosted swim meets. Councilman Bloomfield stated that he was approached by a parent regarding this matter, and he suggested that they contact WCPS for a formal request to the Town. He noted that he recently attended a booster meeting where he was informed that there are funds available for the swim team, however, they have not asked for funding. Director Sharitz stated that if Council approves reducing the fees, he would suggest developing an agreement offering a flat rate and stating that WCPS swim practices

will return to 6:00 a.m. practices. Town Manager Freeman inquired about the cost for the Town's swim program. Director Sharitz stated that the swimmers are participating in the program and pay registration fees around \$50 each season. He noted that the Town's swim program is growing rapidly, and that there is a new Aquatics Coordinator who is doing an exceptional job with great results. Further discussion was held regarding the reduction of pool usage fees for WCPS.

Discussion regarding the Mid-Atlantic Electrification Grant

Town Manager Freeman advised that the next item on the agenda is the discussion regarding the Mid-Atlantic Electrification Grant. He noted that Assistant Town Manager Holeton and Project Coordinator Shane Terry will present information regarding this matter to the Committee. Assistant Town Manager Holeton noted that several members of Town staff have recently been working together to research electric vehicle charging infrastructure and potential grant opportunities. She noted that the Town of Wytheville is dependent upon travel related revenue. She advised that with the growing support and demand of electric vehicles, more electric vehicle charging stations will be needed. Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that Staff is requesting that Council allow them the opportunity to have a discussion with the Mid-Atlantic Electrification Partnership Grant and the company Blink. Discussion was held regarding possible electric vehicle charging opportunities and Blink. Councilman Bloomfield inquired about what the Mid-Atlantic Electrification Grant will provide. Assistant Town Manager Holeton noted that it will provide up to \$3,500 per port for the associated cost of putting in charging stations, as well as 50 percent of the revenue for the kilowatt hours used. Councilman Bloomfield stated that there is a design to upgrade the parking lot of the Fourth Street Civic Center allowing about 30 additional parking spaces. He advised he would like to address the parking lot upgrade before making decisions on where to place charging ports. Coordinator Terry noted that the Tourism department is currently promoting green travel, and he believes that this grant will foster what they are promoting. Discussion continued regarding the locations of charging ports. It was the consensus of the Committee to allow Staff to move forward with the Mid-Atlantic Electrification Grant. Town Manager Freeman noted that Staff will provide more information at a future meeting, once they receive more information.

Discussion regarding Personal Property Tax

Town Manager Freeman advised that the next item on the agenda is the discussion regarding the Personal Property Tax. He stated that Town Treasurer Michael Stephens will be addressing the Committee regarding this matter. Town Treasurer Stephens presented the comparisons of the Personal Property Taxes from 2021 and 2022 to the Committee. He noted that assessments have increased at a rate of about 29 percent. Mr. Stephens inquired if the Council would like to keep the Personal Property Tax rates the same, or possibly give an allowance due to the 29 percent increase in assessments at the following Council meeting. Discussion was held regarding Personal Property Tax rates. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to keep the Personal Property Tax rate at \$0.38 per \$100 valuation with a deadline extension to pay the taxes until December 30, 2022.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Mayor Taylor
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Bloomfield, Councilman Gillman

A brief discussion was held on the donations the Town is receiving for the memorial fund for former Town Manager Wayne Sutherland. It was the consensus of the Committee that once all funds were received, the Town Council and the Sutherland family would decide how the money will be spent.

C. Review of Peeples Special Exception Permit

Town Manager Freeman advised that the next item on the agenda is to review a request from Kenneth and Jennifer Peeples for a Special Exception Permit. He advised that Planning Director Woods will provide the Committee with more information on this request. Planning Director Woods noted that there has not been any changes with the request since he first presented it to the Committee. He stated that he has visited the Peeples' property, and it is well maintained. Director Woods advised that the Planning Commission has recommended that the request be approved. He stated that the Committee may want to modify the stipulation stating that the permit is nontransferable, due to the fact that these permits are usually assigned to the land based on land use. A brief discussion was held regarding Special Exception Permits and appropriate land use. Director Woods noted that the stipulation stating that the permit will need to be reviewed annually may need to be modified. Town Manager Freeman stated that since the permits are, typically, constantly under review since there are guidelines to follow, reviewing them annually is not always necessary. Discussion was held regarding the modifications to the Special Exception Permit stipulations. Town Manager Freeman noted that Council will act on this matter in the following Council meeting.

D. Review of a draft Technology Zone Ordinance

Town Manager Freeman advised that the next agenda item is to review a draft Technology Zone Ordinance. He noted that this is an existing ordinance that the Town can renew, and the current ordinance expires in December. Town Manager Freeman noted that that it can be renewed for ten years. A brief discussion was held regarding the Technology Zone. Town Manager Freeman noted the Council will act upon the Technology Zone Ordinance at the following Council meeting.

Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to recess the meeting until after the following Town Council meeting. (5:40 p.m.)

Motion made by Councilman Bloomfield, Seconded by Mayor Taylor
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Bloomfield, Councilman Gillman

Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to reconvene the Work Session meeting. (7:00 p.m.)

Motion made by Mayor Taylor, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison
Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Bloomfield, Councilman Gillman

E. Update regarding the Church Street Trunk or Treat event

Town Manager Freeman advised that the next item on the agenda is an update regarding the Church Street Trunk or Treat event. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton noted that Ms. Bonnie Wright attended the most recent Safety and Events Committee meeting with concerns about the Town co-sponsoring this event. She noted that Ms. Wright spoke with Staff members regarding her concerns, but has now decided that the Town will still co-sponsor the Church Street Trunk or Treat event.

F. Wythe County Public Schools Foundation for Excellence request to hold the Sandman Half Marathon and MLK 5K event

Town Manager Freeman presented a request from Wythe County Public Schools Foundation for Excellence to close various streets to hold the Sandman Half Marathon and MLK 5K event on January 14, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that the Safety and Events Committee has reviewed the request and would recommend that it be approved. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to approve the street closure request of Wythe County Public Schools Foundation for Excellence.

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

G. HOPE, Inc. request to hold Stuffed Strut 5K event

Town Manager Freeman presented a request from HOPE, Inc. to close various streets to hold the Stuffed Strut 5K event on Thursday, November 24, 2022, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that the Safety and Events Committee has reviewed the request and would recommend that that it be approved. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to approve the street closure request of HOPE, Inc.

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

H. Spiller Elementary School request to hold the Veterans Day Parade event

Town Manager Freeman presented a request from Spiller Elementary School to close various streets to hold a Veterans Day Parade on Friday, November 11, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that the

Safety and Events Committee has reviewed the request and would recommend that it be approved. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of Spiller Elementary School.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Mayor Taylor.

Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman, Councilman Bloomfield

I. George Wythe High School request to hold the Homecoming Parade event

Town Manager Freeman presented a request from George Wythe High School to close Main Street to hold their Homecoming Parade on Thursday, October 27, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Assistant Town Manager Holeyton advised that the Safety and Events Committee has reviewed the request and would recommend that it be approved. Town Manager Freeman inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of George Wythe High School.

Motion made by Vice-Mayor Pattison, Seconded by Mayor Taylor.

Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman, Councilman Bloomfield

J. Council Member Time

Councilman Bloomfield stated that the Christmas Events Committee had their first meeting, and is planning a variety of things. He inquired if Council is willing to invest up to \$7,500 as they have done in the past. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would like time to look at the budget before a decision is made. Mayor Taylor inquired about the tree lighting and when it will take place, and if the venue has been changed. Councilman Bloomfield stated that the tree lighting should take place in Withers Park before the Christmas parade. He then discussed some ideas for Christmas events with the Committee.

Councilman Gillman inquired about Withers Park and if there has been any update on the park and the Board of Supervisors. Town Manager Freeman noted that there has not been any update, but he will check on this matter.

K. Miscellaneous

Town Manager Freeman advised the Committee that they received an invitation to the 76th Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet for the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce. He noted that, typically, Council does reserve a table for this event. Town Manager Freeman stated that Council members will need to notify Staff if they plan to attend the banquet. Town Clerk Corvin noted that the last day to reserve tickets for the banquet is Friday, October 14, 2022.

Town Manager Freeman stated that he would like to discuss the Town Manager's Report with the Committee. He noted that the Town Manager's Report has been a

way to communicate confidentially with Council members. Town Manager Freeman advised that he would like to look further into this to make sure that these reports are in compliance with State regulations. Further discussion was held regarding Town Manager's Report.

Town Manager Freeman noted that there will be a follow up meeting with Bolton on Thursday, October 13, 2022, regarding the compensation study. He noted that they are going to review certain recommendations and a draft of their study results. A brief discussion was held regarding the study results and recommendations.

Town Manager Freeman stated that the Parks and Recreation Department is still understaffed, and that there are multiple coordinator positions vacant. He noted that these vacancies affect Parks and Recreation Director Sharitz and Assistant Director Hylton, however, he believes they will be able to manage these issues.

Town Clerk Corvin stated that she would like to present a new format for Council members to receive their Work Session packages. She presented the new package format and noted that Staff would not have to compile notebooks with the new approach. Town Clerk Corvin inquired of the Committee what their thoughts were on the new package style. It was the consensus of the Committee to switch to the new format for Work Session packages.

Town Manager Freeman advised that there will most likely be a recommendation from Staff in the future for Council to try and address most meeting matters in one meeting. He stated that almost all matters that are addressed in the Council Work Session are addressed at the regular Council meeting, as well. Town Clerk Corvin reiterated that most of the information is duplicated between both meetings. Discussion was held regarding the options for Council to only have one meeting. Councilman Bloomfield expressed his concerns about only having one meeting, and why he believes Work Session is beneficial. Town Manager Freeman noted that it is very hard for Staff to prepare for both meetings. Councilman Bloomfield stated that his perception of the Work Session, from prior years, was to build the agenda for the following regular meeting. Town Manager Freeman commented that the point of only having one meeting is not to bring less content or make fewer decisions, but to make it more efficient for Staff and Council regarding the information that will be presented at these meetings. Councilman Bloomfield inquired about what would happen if there was a topic needing to be voted on and members could not agree. Town Manager Freeman stated that a motion could be made to table the discussion until a future meeting. He noted that the transition will take time, but the goal is for the Town to work more efficiently.

There being no further business, the Work Session was adjourned (7:45 p.m.)

T. Brian Freeman, Town Manager

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk