

Minutes of the April 12, 2022 Public Hearing of the Saltville Town Council held at 6:45 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Monica Johnson, Jeff Comer, Eugene Call, and Gary Call
Bryan Morris and Steve Surber were absent

Mayor: C. Todd Young

Staff: Brian Martin, Town Manager
Paul Cassell, Town Attorney
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing and stated its purpose was to hear public comment on the town leasing the old VFW building to the Northwood Fellowship.

Nobody spoke, so the Mayor then closed the Public Hearing.

Minutes of the April 12, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting of the Saltville Town Council held at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall

Council: Monica Johnson, Jeff Comer, Eugene Call, and Gary Call
Bryan Morris and Steve Surber were absent

Mayor:C. Todd Young

Staff: Brian Martin, Town Manager
Paul Cassell, Town Attorney
Erik Puckett, Police Chief
R.B. Henderson, Public Works Director
Steve Johnson, Clerk/Treasurer

Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

Citizens' Time

Pastor Billy Guinn of the Northwood Fellowship said they would be handing out seventy-three food boxes for Easter this coming Saturday.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Old Business

1. Northwood Fellowship lease

Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the lease with Northwood Fellowship, and Councilman Gary Call seconded. All were in favor.

2. Mowing bids

The bids to mow the town's properties were as follows:

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|------------------------|---|
| 1) Willis Crusenberry: | Salt Trail: \$2800/month |
| 2) Danny Hanshew: | Salt Trail: \$3000/month
Town-wide: \$9000/month |
| 3) Lundy's: | Salt Trail: \$4000/month
Town-wide: \$11,500/month |

Councilman Eugene Call said that Town Manager Brian Martin needs to inspect the mowing before the contractors are paid. Councilwoman Johnson made the motion to accept the Crusenberry bid for the trail mowing as long as he picks up the trash in the way before he mows and have Mr. Martin inspect all mowing. Councilman Gary Call seconded, and all were in favor.

Councilwoman Johnson made the motion to accept the Hanshew bid for the town-wide mowing with the same guidelines as the Salt Trail bid. Councilman Comer seconded, and all were in favor.

New Business

1. Smyth County Chamber of Commerce

Sarah Gillespie, Director of the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce, spoke on the following:

- 1) The county clean-up will be April 23rd in all three towns including Saltville. The Chamber will provide the bags, gloves, and pickers.
- 2) On April 28th the annual Student Government Day and Opportunity Fair will be held.
- 3) There will be Easter pictures taken with Easter Bunny at the LOVE sign in Chilhowie.
- 4) So far this year, there have been 260 guests at the Visitors Center.
- 5) May will be Small Business Month, and there will be a speaker (yet to be determined) at the annual Business Appreciation Luncheon.
- 6) The town received a \$10,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Commission. Of that, \$6000 will go to a website called ExploreSaltville.org. Because this site will be under the umbrella of the Virginia Tourism Commission, it cannot have the regular town events and information, but a developer will basically take the current Saltville.org and have it work in conjunction with the new one. The remainder of the grant funds will go toward online promos and brochures and a four-week digital billboard campaign that could be used for Labor Day.

Also, the redevelopment of Saltville.org and procurement of that domain is on the horizon. This will cost approximately \$5000. Councilwoman Johnson made the motion to spend money for that purpose, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. The roll call vote was 4-0.

- 7) The Chamber partnered with United Way to get a \$30,000 childcare grant that could be increased to \$90,000.
- 8) The Chamber received a \$300,000 ARPA grant through Smyth Strong that will help county businesses.

9) A \$40,000 planning grant for a food innovation planning center was obtained, and the first meeting for this will be April 19th at 11:00 a.m. here at the Town Hall.

2. Smyth County Tourism Association

Amanda Livingston, Director of the Smyth County Tourism Association, spoke on the following:

- 1) The county had a restructuring year when it came to tourism. New marketing strategies were introduced including a lot of advertising in a so-called driving market radius.
- 2) A new website was launched last April and has had 45,433 unique users.
- 3) Using google-based analytics in terms of actual searches, the top local attractions searched were the Hungry Mother State Park Festival and the Saltville Labor Day Festival.
- 4) They received a Virginia Tourism Grant that will be used to showcase an events calendar that will pull in all events in the county no matter where and what it is.
- 5) ARPA funds for marketing were received in the amount of \$50,000. This will be used for billboard and print advertising.

3. Hay bids

Clerk/Treasurer Steve Johnson asked to advertise for the mowing of the town's hay fields and to have Mr. Martin go ahead and approve the winning bid without bringing it back to Council as has been done in past years. Councilman Eugene Call made this motion, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

4. Engineering updates

Les Sutherland of the Lane Group spoke on the following:

- 1) The preliminary design work is being done for the Rural Development project. Surveys of McCready, Plasterco, and the headworks area of the wastewater plant have been completed. Camera work has also been completed on the lines in McCready and will be done at the wastewater plant and the headworks. He gave the Council a map showing where the lines will be replaced.
- 2) Regarding the aerial crossing that is part of the DEQ project, it has been surveyed and the plans are being drawn up. A structural engineer will be in town next week to look at everything including the piers it rests upon. This will be put out to bid after a project manual is put together. DEQ has said that the cost of this would be a minimum of 50% grant.

3) The town got another grant from DEQ to look at the sewer system in the Government Plant.

4) He asked the Council to approve the resolution given to them regarding participating in the Lead Elimination Assistance Program (LEAP) funding. VDH has a lead elimination program that is 100% grant funded to be used for waterlines. The town will use this to do work on Sanders Lane, McKee Street, and on Lick Skillet.

Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to adopt the resolution, and Councilman Comer seconded. All were in favor after a roll call vote.

5) Current costs to construct a new town shop hover in the neighborhood of \$1.5 million, which comes out to \$200 - \$250 per square foot for a building of the size the town needs. Costs are elevated due to supply chain issues.

6) The cost estimate for a campground was higher than the town could afford to spend, so alternatives are being researched.

5. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

1) They continue to meet with town staff every Monday at 10:00 a.m.

2) The DEQ report for March was submitted.

3) There was an overflow in March. The town received a letter from DEQ regarding this and Mr. Martin is crafting a response.

4) The VDH report and the VDH Water Treatment Leak Loss report for March were both submitted.

5) Due to supply chain issues, there has been a delay on the meters for the replacement project.

6. Board of Supervisors update

Saltville's representative on the Smyth County Board of Supervisors, Roscoe Call, spoke on the following:

- 1) The new Emergency Services Department has done a great job.
- 2) The Allison Gap Community Center is going to be torn down, and hopefully, a new building will take its place.
- 3) The concession stand at the Rich Valley Fair will be moved to inside the main building.
- 4) The Saltville library is the best in the county in terms of the activities that it offers. He'd like to see a new one built since the current one is aging and probably not big enough. The Mayor said he had recently spoken with an aide in Morgan Griffith's office about this very thing, so maybe a new one is getting closer to reality.
- 5) The community center at Nebo will be undergoing repairs.
- 6) There is a new travel center in the works at Seven Mile Ford. Councilman Comer asked where it would be, and Mr. Call said it was where that huge old brick house is currently located at the Seven Mile Ford exit.
- 7) The county is doing a water connection system with Rural Retreat that will feed Hutton Branch.

Public Works Director's Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) Speed bumps were laid back down on the lower end of First Avenue and the bottom of Fourth Avenue. The one on Fifth Avenue will need to be put back down.
- 2) The prepping of the pool has started for the Memorial Day opening.
- 3) The Hartwood property the town purchased in being cleaned, and there has been eighty tons of trash hauled off so far.
- 4) There was a water leak on Elmwood Drive, and the pipe was actually about six feet deep, so it was hard to find.
- 5) There are about thirty bags of fluoride and seven barrels of chlorine in stock.

6) Councilman Comer asked about taking the Hartwood trash to the landfill. Mr. Henderson said it cost \$56 per ton. The metal is being separated for other uses, including the LOVE sign. The funds for this cleanup will come from the ARPA money.

7) Councilwoman Johnson asked about fuel pricing, and Mr. Henderson said the supplier lets the town know when the prices are probably going to rise. The town usually only keeps about 4000 gallons in the tank, filling up every month or so.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) There were Easter Egg hunts on April 3rd and 10th.
- 2) The Little League parade was moved to the 10th due to inclement weather.
- 3) The Fish-a-Ree will be held on April 30th. The fish arrive on the 27th, (there are 550 pounds of trout coming in) so there will be no back-up date. Councilman Eugene Call made the motion to block off Lake Drive and have the event, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

Kids will fish from 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Lunch will be from 11:00 a.m. until noon, and then everyone can fish after noon. All adults have to have a regular fishing license.

- 4) The code enforcement official has been hired. His name is Jeff Collis, and he's a retired police officer and recently worked for the funeral home. Mr. Collis will have training on code enforcement since this job can entail both civil and criminal penalties.

Fire Department Report

- 1) There were twenty-five calls last month.
- 2) Ten members of the department are taking the FF-1 class until the end of June. There will be a two-month break, and those members will then take the FF-2 class.
- 3) They donated some funds used to purchase the fish for the upcoming Fish-a-Ree.
- 4) Their BINGO night is still successful with the doors opening at 4:00 p.m. each Wednesday.

Emergency Medical Services Report

Richelle Lowman spoke on the following:

- 1) They had ninety calls during March, and the ALS coverage was 100%. There was \$23,868 in billing income, but there were some expenses in March involving repairs to the turbo, new uniforms, and training including purchasing two adult and two child dummies.
- 2) The new ambulance has arrived, and the new monitors were shipped last Friday the 8th.
- 3) They participated in the Little League parade and the first night of play for Little League.

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