

Minutes of the March 8, 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 February 8, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting, and Councilman Gary Call seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Councilwoman Johnson abstaining since she was not present for that meeting.

Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2022 special-called meeting, and Councilman Gary Call seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1 with Councilwoman Johnson abstaining since she was not present for that meeting.

Citizens' Time

Dr. Heath Miller introduced himself to the Council and said he was the Chiropractor at the Saltville Chiropractic Center inside the Wellness Center and would be in that office two days a week since his main office is in Marion. Dr. Miller is originally from Honaker and attended Chiropractic school in Florida. His Saltville office hours will be on Tuesday and Friday from 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. initially. This may increase if he gets some more help.

Bruce Wilkinson of 536 Campbell Drive said he wanted to discuss the current humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. He asked if there could be some formal town support such as a support letter for possibly raising cash and a method for collecting it so everything would be on point. Maybe the town's residents could donate canned goods as well.

The Mayor suggested a resolution, and Town Manager Brian Martin said he would write a letter of support for the endeavor. Mr. Wilkinson said that would work and would set up a meeting with Mr. Martin to discuss this letter in more detail.

Pastor Billy Guinn said there would be a community Easter Egg Hunt on April 2nd from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Commons Area. The Mayor asked if he would like Palmer Avenue blocked for safety reasons for the event, and Pastor Guinn agreed.

Councilman Gary Call made the motion to close Palmer Avenue for the event, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Old Business

1. Little League parade

Clerk/Treasurer Steve Johnson asked the Council to allow him to contact VDOT for a permit for the parade on April 9th. Councilman Eugene Call made the motion to do so, and Councilman Gary Call seconded. All were in favor.

2. Ordinance for dissolving town committees

Mr. Martin said the town's attorney, Paul Cassell, had drafted an ordinance for the Council to approve to dissolve the town's committees. Mr. Cassell stated that this would still allow the Mayor to appoint special committees.

Councilwoman Johnson made the motion to adopt this ordinance, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. During the discussion, Councilman Comer asked that the members of all the town's committees be notified. The vote was 4-0.

3. Town Shop

Mr. Martin said the town's engineers will update this at the April meeting. The prices for building materials should be coming down by mid-spring. The Mayor stated the materials are on the ground, but the problem is the freighting getting to the lumber yards.

Councilwoman Johnson asked about the fencing at the old Town Shop. Mr. Martin replied that property was put into the ownership of the Smyth County EDA, and that body did not want to do anything with it until it is known if the town will receive any EPA clean-up funding for that area. There are concerns about soil contamination.

4. Trail cameras

This was tabled until the April meeting.

5. Mowing

Mr. Martin said that the jail was still not releasing the inmates, so the town will either have to contract the mowing or hire part-time help. Non-violent offenders performing community service could also be used per a suggestion from Councilwoman Johnson. Mr. Martin said the issue with that is those people are not a steadily available five-days-a-week worker.

The Mayor said that any contractor who mows needs to pick up trash before they do, and he also suggested that they weed-eat at the same time as they mow because it makes no sense to mow a certain area and then weed-eat that same area a few days later. Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to advertise for part-time mowing help (especially for the cemetery) and for contractors for town-wide mowing. Councilman Gary Call seconded, and all were in favor.

Mr. Martin also asked to advertise for pool workers, too, since summer is coming. Councilman Gary Call made the motion to advertise for pool workers (lifeguards and managers), and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

6. Northwood Fellowship draft lease

Mr. Cassell has drawn up a lease agreement for the Northwood Fellowship to use the old VFW building. He said there needs to be a Public Hearing before a vote since this involves town property. Councilman Eugene Call made a motion to have a Public Hearing at 6:45 on April 12th for this, and Councilwoman Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

New Business

1. Campground

Mr. Martin said that the original plan for a campground on the old town shop site is delayed because of the EPA concerns. However, a cost assessment and a rough conceptual sketch of a campground has been done for the other side of Lake Drive. He's talked to the Bundy Architectural Firm and the Lane Group to work with the town to get a workable plan. This will be funded with the ARPA funding the town has already received and will receive later, too.

Councilman Gary Call made the motion to proceed with this plan, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. During the discussion, Councilwoman Johnson asked that the architects and engineers work this up in the greenest way possible in terms of recyclable materials and water and that local resources are used. The motion carried 4-0.

2. Murals

Councilwoman Johnson said that Marion, Abingdon, and Damascus have plenty of murals in town, and she would like to see this in Saltville as well. She mentioned that some of the places in town that could have murals include pump houses, the pool buildings, library, and the back of the stage in the Commons Area. These wouldn't have to be permanent and could even be swapped out.

She suggested using the students at the high school or from Emory & Henry and local artists to paint these. Grant money could even be used to purchase the supplies. She suggested starting with town-owned properties to show the public how it would look, and then maybe some privately-owned properties would want to do murals on their facades, too. She will get together with Mr. Martin to chart a plan for getting this to fruition.

3. Term limits

Councilwoman Johnson said that she would like to see the Council set up term limits for themselves. She gave an example of Councilmembers serving terms back-to-back and then taking time off before running again. Right now, with the unlimited term's structure, there is no space for others to be involved in the town's affairs.

Mr. Cassell replied that the town currently does not have the authority to set term limits. For that to happen, the state's delegates and senators would have to pass legislation and the governor would have to sign it into law allowing cities and towns to set term limits. He suggested that she talk to her local legislators.

4. Library

Councilwoman Johnson said it has been discussed before, but the current library may not last much longer, so it's time to find a new place to put it. She suggested the current location of the

town shop since there was a big parking area there, it's still centrally located, and it's handicapped accessible. Councilman Comer asked if the library was currently doing a study about this, and Mr. Martin said the county was doing this study and was looking into options for all of the local branches.

Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to recommend that the library moves to the current location of the town shop beside the Wellness Center once a new town shop is in place and the town crew moves. The motion died for lack of a second. Councilman Comer said he did not think the location should be restricted to just one spot. He suggested passing the Council's input to the county since the county is the one doing the study, so Mr. Martin said he would do that.

5. EMS, Inc. report

Gary Johnson spoke on the following:

- 1) The weekly meetings with the town's staff continue to be productive.
- 2) The DEQ report for February will be submitted by the 10th.
- 3) Because of heavy rain, there were several overflows on February 24th. The plant produced a 500% flow increase. The overflows were properly reported to DEQ.
- 4) The belt press conveyor belt has been repaired.
- 5) The VPDES permit renewal is due by September 1, 2022. Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to have EMS, Inc. complete the application, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.
- 6) Both the VDH monthly report and the VDH water Treatment Leak Loss Report for February have been submitted.
- 7) The meter replacement project will begin when the parts finally arrive.
- 8) The mapping of the town's valves, hydrants, etc. will start soon.

Public Works Director's Report

R.B. Henderson spoke on the following:

- 1) A contractor did some electrical repair at the old VFW building in anticipation of the Northwood Fellowship moving there.
- 2) The asphalt hot box was procured.
- 3) The water accountability is pretty much staying the same. Smyth County is doing a water study with the town's help. Once the inter-connect is done at Plasterco, the town will be able to get water from both counties if it needs to.
- 4) The batting cage was fixed, and the press box repairs are almost finished.
- 5) He asked if the Council wanted to have speed bumps put back down when the weather broke and was told yes.
- 6) He thanked some of the town's citizens for picking up trash around town since the inmates are still not being released.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Puckett spoke on the following:

- 1) He requested that the Council authorize April 30th as the day for the Fish-a-Ree and have Lake Drive blocked off. Councilman Eugene Call made the motion to approve this, and Councilman Gary Call seconded. All were in favor. The schedule is as follows: 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. is for kids only. Lunch will be from 11:00 a.m. – noon. Anyone can fish after noon.
- 2) Blue Line Solutions has done a speed study at the elementary school. They are wanting the town to participate in their program. The Mayor said that tonight's meeting would just be recessed and not adjourned so that this topic could be discussed at a continued meeting next Tuesday.
- 3) There is interest in a part-time code enforcement position that has been discussed, so it will be officially advertised. Other positions like a Rec Director will be taken up during the budget preparations.

Fire Department Report

Chief Lynch spoke on the following:

- 1) There were ten calls last month with one in the town and nine in the county.
- 2) There have been several brush fires lately.
- 3) He thanked the Council for recently purchasing new air packs for the members.
- 4) A Fire Fighter 1 class will start on April 2nd and go through the end of June.

Emergency Medical Services Report

Kyle Brewster spoke on the following:

- 1) There were eighty-six calls last month.
- 2) Last month, all three trucks broke down. Currently, the Squad is using a loaner truck from Abingdon. Two have been fixed and are back in service. An emergency grant was applied for and awarded for \$206,000 to purchase a new truck. This grant is an 80/20 match with the rest of the funding coming from the county.

Councilwoman Johnson if the truck was new, and Mr. Brewster said it was a 2021 version and had 3000 miles on it and runs on gas and not diesel which means the maintenance costs will be lower. She then mentioned that the town will now have two new trucks and one that is a 2009 model.

- 3) There are twenty-six active employees.
- 4) Richelle Lowman told the Council that they had a \$16,000 loss for February which was mainly due to repairs since those are usually unexpected. However, since September the Squad has obtained \$300,000 in grants with more applications on the way.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Martin spoke on the following:

- 1) Our new IT company will have the new computers installed next week.
- 2) He asked the Council to support a resolution for a CDBG in the amount of \$450,000 with zero match. The project area is in Cardwell Town where several leaks have become a bigger

problem. Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to adopt the resolution, and Councilman Eugene Call seconded. All were in favor.

3) The residential waste contractor transition has gone smoothly so far.

4) The Smyth County Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a town-wide cleanup on April 28th, and Student Government Day will be on that day as well. The town will host five students.

5) Funding requests have been sent to both counties.

6) Dale Clark is the new CEO of the Smyth County Community Hospital and will be here on March 21st for a tour of the town. The town is looking to possibly partner with Ballad Health on issues in Saltville.

7) Bridge inspections have been completed.

8) Neil Kilgore with the Virginia Outdoor Foundation is helping the town try and receive funding for further trail development.

9) Councilwoman Johnson asked if the deed was signed for the property on the Salt Trail, and Mr. Cassell told her it was. She said that some objects were being removed that property today, so she was concerned since it now belongs to the town, and it was a liability issue to have others on the property. Mr. Cassell said to post No Trespassing signs and have the police monitor it.

10) Councilman Comer asked Mr. Martin and Mr. Johnson if they would put together a quarterly report on the town's real-time revenue streams, especially if there was a concern about the town's finances. They agreed to do so.

11) Councilman Eugene Call asked to have nets installed on the basketball court beside the golf course and then asked why AEP left old cables when they installed new poles. Mr. Martin said he would contact AEP and ask.

12) The Mayor asked Mr. Martin to confirm that he reached out to Washington County for possible funding for the EMS Department and the Fire Department, and Mr. Martin told him he did. The Mayor then mentioned that Washington County received over \$400,000 in tax revenue from the gas company, so they should be able to help the citizens more.

The meeting was then recessed until Tuesday, March 15th at 7:00 p.m.

