

The Mayor's Corner

BY MAYOR BETH A. TAYLOR

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I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone, mail or email.



Winter Weather

2022 has begun with a wallop of winter weather. Town Council and Staff would like to take a moment to thank the multitude of men and women on our staff who diligently perform their duties regardless of the weather conditions. The Public Works Department works around the clock to clear the Town streets, town parking lots and sidewalks. Those Public Works employees that are not clearing streets continue to collect garbage and perform a multitude of other public services in spite of the adverse weather, and for that we thank them. Thank you for your patience and cooperation as our crews endeavor to do their jobs in hazardous conditions. We also want to express our appreciation for the Wytheville Police Department and Wytheville Fire and Rescue Department personnel for their continued dedication to the performance of their duties during periods of inclement weather. These men and woman report to work and are there when our citizens need them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of weather conditions and for that we thank them. Water and Wastewater plant employees, without fanfare, report to work and go about the business keeping our water and sewer facilities operating, no matter the weather condition, all departments including Treasurers Department, Municipal Building, Health and Recreation Center, Meeting Center, Visitors Center, and Museums report to work to keep the Town of Wytheville running as seamlessly as possible, and for that we thank them. Because of the varied nature of the Town's services, there is no specific rule for closure of any facility or service in the event of inclement weather. The Town Manager may at his sole discretion, open a facility, department or service late, or close a facility, department or service early.

Important Information from the Police Department

You may have noticed on your cell phones an influx of unwanted text messages with strange attachments that say something similar to "lets meet" or "open this important information now." These are scams or spoof texts from compromised phone address books. DO NOT click on the attachments or respond to the unknown number. By doing so you have alerted the scammer that your number is active making it more valuable to other potential scammers. There is NO WAY these numbers can be traced. What do we do here at the Police Department when we get calls and texts like this on our cell phones? We do not answer, and we delete them.

Employment Opportunities

The Town of Wytheville is blessed to have many dedicated, hard-working employees. Many of these folks have been with the Town for decades and each one plays a key role in helping to provide the services that keep our town running smoothly.

If you are interested in working for the Town of Wytheville, or you know someone who might be, I encourage you to visit the Employment section of the Town's website at www.wytheville.org/employment. Departments that currently have open positions include Administration, Public Works, Recreation, Museums, Meeting Center, Visitors Center, Water, Building, and the Chamber of Commerce. You can also put in an application for those departments that do not have current openings so that your application will be on file when a position becomes open.

The Town offers a variety of fringe benefits to full-time employees including annual leave, sick leave, paid holidays, health, life and disability insurances, and a retirement program.

Many of our employees work ten, twenty, thirty, even over forty years for the Town. Wytheville Town Council values their loyalty and dedication. Without our dedicated employees, we would not be able to provide services to our citizens.

Important Information from the Fire Department

Here's some information regarding electric heater safety. Any electric heater should be plugged in directly to the outlet and not used with an extension cord or surge protector. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from the heater. Purchase a heater with a thermostat, overheat and tip-over auto shut off. Keep children and animals away from heaters and make sure the heater sits on a solid, flat surface.

Snow & Ice Problems, from our Town Engineer

Snow can look pretty, but when it begins to melt it can cause damage to your property. Icicles can look cool hanging from the gutters on the house during the winter months, but it can be causing damage to your roof and gutters. Ice dams occur when warm air in the attic melts the snow on the surface of the roof and the melting snow runs down the roof. When the melted snow reaches the portion of the roof over the eaves, the water can refreeze on the edges of the roof and in the gutter causing ice dams. This can weigh down the gutters, and when the ice begins to melt, the water can leak back into the house causing damage. To prevent this from happening, make sure your attic floor has proper insulation to keep heat from escaping into the attic. This can also help lower your power bill. Each year, before winter, make sure gutters allow water to flow freely and are clean with no restrictions. Melting snow and ice can flood the foundation of your home. To prevent this from happening, make sure gutter downspouts extend at least five feet from your house. Never pile snow next to the foundation of your home. Always place it where it will drain away from your home when it melts. Melting snow can also cause damage to your driveways and walkways. The melting snow can seep into cracks in the concrete. When the water freezes, it expands and widens the crack. To prevent this from happening, make sure to fill any cracks before winter, this can help prevent future damage.

Council Actions

January 10, 2022:

- Conducted a public hearing to consider an amending Chapter 2, Administration, Article II. Council, Division 1. Generally, Section 2-21. When and Where Regular Meetings Held, of the code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, regarding changing the time for Wytheville Town Council meetings.
- Council adopted on first and final reading Ordinance No. 1404, When and Where Regular Meetings Held, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, regarding changing the time for Wytheville Town Council meetings.
- Going forward, Wytheville Town Council Monday night meetings will be held at 6 P.M.
- Had a public hearing to consider amending the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget to appropriate \$4,109,085 to recognize the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 funds.
- Town Council amended and asked Town Treasurer to appropriate the ARPA funds as stated.
- Adopted and presented a resolution to the George Wythe High School Girl's Cross-Country Team for a successful season.
- Adopted Fair Housing Resolution

January 24, 2022:

- Scheduled a public hearing for February 14, 2022, Town Council meeting to consider amending various sections of the Town of Wytheville Zoning Ordinance regarding fencing and screening regulations in all Zoning Districts within the Town.
- Scheduled a public hearing for February 14, 2022, Town Council meeting to consider amending Article XVII-provisions for Appeal, to parallel the Town of Wytheville Zoning Ordinance with the current Virginia Code regarding the Board of Zoning Appeals and variances.

Important Information from the Treasurer's Office

Wythe County offers a "Real Estate Credit for Elderly and Handicapped" citizens. By applying with Wythe County for this credit, citizens can also qualify for a credit on Town of Wytheville real estate taxes.

Here is a list of the qualifications (each of the following must be met for eligibility):

- Must be age 65 and/or totally disabled before January 1 of the tax year.
- Annual household income may not exceed \$30,000.
- Total net worth (excluding the house and one acre of land) may not exceed \$80,000.
- An application MUST BE completed in the Wythe County Commissioner of Revenue's Office every year between February 1 and May 1.

There are several documents that must accompany the application for verification of income and assets. Please contact the Wythe County Commissioner of Revenue's Office for more information about necessary documents. You can reach this office by calling 276-223-6017.

Additionally, there is also a program for disabled veterans. There is no deadline for this application. It can become effective the date that the veteran becomes 100% service-connected disabled. The person must have a letter from the Veterans Administration, a photo ID, and proof of occupancy.

If a person is approved for either of these credits through Wythe County, the Commissioner of Revenue will notify the Town of Wytheville Treasurer's Office so that you can also receive a credit on your Town real estate taxes.