

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman

Members absent: None

Others present: Town Manager Stephen A. Moore, Assistant Town Manager T. Brian Freeman, Town Clerk Sharon G. Corvin, Town Attorney Michelle Workman Clayton, Police Officer Chastity Russell

**RE: CALL TO ORDER, QUORUM, PLEDGE**

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order and established that a quorum of Council members was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Gillman.

**RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2021. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented or to somehow be amended. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Pattison and seconded by Councilman Bloomfield to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2021, as presented. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the consent agenda. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None.

**RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. She noted that there are no citizens attending the meeting, therefore, she would proceed with the agenda.

**RE: OLD BUSINESS**

Under Old Business, Town Manager Moore reported the following:

1. The Town Manager's Report (TMR) included several attachments for the Council's review. There are two letters proposed to go to the citizens who have made separate requests to the Town and were considered by the Public Works Committee. Town Manager Moore inquired of the Council if there were any additional comments to be added to the letters, and, if not, Town staff will forward the letters to the citizens. It was the consensus of the Council for Town staff to forward the letters to the citizens regarding their requests.
2. The first and second month responses to the Employee Comment Boxes comments are included with the TMR attachments. Town Manager Moore inquired of the Council if they approved of the responses to the Employee Comment Boxes comments. It was the consensus of the Council for Town staff to distribute the first and second month responses to the Employee Comment Boxes comments to all Town employees.

**RE: BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councilman Bloomfield reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The Budget and Finance Committee report was entered into the record as follows: The Wytheville Town Council has, annually, supported affordable housing by adopting a Fair Housing Resolution and by participating in programs that increase the supply of affordable housing. Several months ago, at the request of HOPE, Incorporated, the Council agreed to waive a percentage of the water and sewer connection fees for an affordable housing project on Fairview Road. Last week, we had a request from the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (WRHA) to waive the connection fees for an affordable housing venture of seven dwelling units on Calhoun Street. We support the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority in the development of this housing stock. However, because the Town's revenues have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and budgets have been curtailed in all departments, it would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that 30 percent of the water and sewer connection fees be waived. We hope that this waiver will provide some leverage for other funding from other sources so that this project can be realized. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Councilwoman Atkins to approve the request of the

Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority for waiver of 30 percent of the water and sewer connection fees for a housing venture on Calhoun Street consisting of seven houses. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the Housing Authority's request. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None.

In the past, the Town Council has received requests from civic groups to place benches and other amenities in town parks. More recently, the Council has received requests from citizens who would like to honor family members or friends with a bench that would include a plaque. Two new parks have been established in the past several years, and both have been minimally outfitted due to funding constraints, and the older existing parks are outfitted with aging benches and amenities. The Town Council would ask that Assistant Planning Director John Woods and Town Arborist Tony Duncan evaluate the existing parks and compose master plans of the newer parks for desired improvements. They could help Town Council determine the locations where benches and amenities are needed and the quality standards for the benches and amenities that are desired. Once these studies are complete, the Town Council will also evaluate a program to receive benches and other amenities into the parks and the policies and procedures that will be established for these donations. We think that this could be a viable way for the Town to continue the development of beautiful parks, even during a pandemic when funding and resources are extremely limited. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Councilwoman Atkins to request Town staff to evaluate the existing town parks and compose master plans of the newer parks for any desired improvements. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to request Town staff to evaluate the town parks and compose master plans of the new parks for any desired improvements. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None. A copy of the Budget and Finance Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

#### **RE: PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Vice-Mayor Pattison reported for the Public Works Committee. The Public Works Committee report was entered into the record as follows: Throughout most of 2020, sports seasons, practices and camps across the United States were adversely impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. High school and youth sports programs in our area were no exception, with most being postponed or cancelled. The Wytheville Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the Wytheville Recreation Commission, carefully deliberated the feasibility of sponsoring each sports season as they have occurred, and they considered the health and safety of youth participants, coaches and staff as their primary focus. Youth football, which is traditionally played in the fall, was postponed with the hopes that the COVID-19 pandemic would improve to a degree that the Wytheville Recreation Commission and the Wytheville Parks and Recreation Department staff felt the program could safely be offered. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, and, as such, the Town of Wytheville, like many of our surrounding communities, will not offer a youth football season this spring. This was a difficult decision and an unfortunate circumstance for our youth and those passionate about youth sports. Parents who would like to register their children, who are in grades 3-6 for youth football and cheer, may still do so with the Wythe County Parks and Recreation Department now through March 3, 2021. Placement of Wytheville participants will be determined by the Wythe County Parks and Recreation Department and will be based on registration numbers and team needs.

The Wythe-Grayson Regional Library is seeking to locate a story walk in town owned parks and other prominent walking routes throughout town. Story walks are composed of freestanding displays of actual books whose pages are spread sequentially over a predetermined walking route. They can be temporary or permanent displays with stories that change periodically. Participants must walk from display to display to read the book, which promotes literacy and exercise and provides experiential learning opportunities for children in an outdoor setting. The Town Council and Town staff will continue working with the Wythe-Grayson Regional Library to identify and evaluate potential story walk locations in Wytheville. A copy of the Public Works Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

#### **RE: NEW BUSINESS**

Under New Business, Town Manager Moore reported the following:

1. The Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Advisory Board will meet on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., in Conference Room B of the Municipal Building.

2. The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County will meet on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 3:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.
3. The next Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 7:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

**RE: PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION – REVITALIZATION AREA**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider the recommendation from the Wytheville Planning Commission regarding the designation of a revitalization area for the part of town bounded generally by the following: Calhoun Street to the east, Jefferson Street to the southeast and 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the northwest. Mayor Taylor stated that the Planning Commission held a public comment session at their last meeting, and it is their recommendation that the Town Council approve the revitalization area. She noted that it will be necessary for the Town Council to hold a public comment session on this matter, which could be scheduled for the March 22, 2021, Town Council meeting. It was the consensus of the Town Council to set a public comment session for the March 22, 2021, Town Council meeting to consider the designation of a revitalization area for the part of town bounded generally by the following: Calhoun Street to the east, Jefferson Street to the southeast and 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the northwest.

**RE: CLOSED MEETING – PERSONNEL MATTERS**

Mayor Taylor stated that it will now be necessary for the Council to go into a closed meeting pursuant to Code Section §2.2-3711(A.)(1.) to hold a discussion regarding the employment of prospective candidates. A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Councilman Bloomfield to go into a closed meeting pursuant to Code Section 2.2-3711(A.)(1.) to hold a discussion regarding the employment of prospective candidates. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to go into a closed meeting. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None. (7:10 p.m.)

Mayor Taylor noted that it will now be necessary to go back into open session and to certify the closed meeting. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Councilman Gillman that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies and that only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Wytheville Town Council. The motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Holly E. Atkins, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None. A copy of the certification is attached and made part of these minutes. (8:45 p.m.)

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting (8:46 p.m.).

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Beth A. Taylor, Mayor

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Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk

## **BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

1. The Wytheville Town Council has, annually, supported affordable housing by adopting a Fair Housing Resolution and by participating in programs that increase the supply of affordable housing. Several months ago, at the request of HOPE, Incorporated, the Council agreed to waive a percentage of the water and sewer connection fees for an affordable housing project on Fairview Road. Last week, we had a request from the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (WRHA) to waive the connection fees for an affordable housing venture of seven dwelling units on Calhoun Street. We support the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority in the development of this housing stock. However, because the Town's revenues have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and budgets have been curtailed in all departments, it would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that 30 percent of the water and sewer connection fees be waived. We hope that this waiver will provide some leverage for other funding from other sources so that this project can be realized.
2. In the past, the Town Council has received requests from civic groups to place benches and other amenities in town parks. More recently, the Council has received requests from citizens who would like to honor family members or friends with a bench that would include a plaque.

Two new parks have been established in the past several years, and both have been minimally outfitted due to funding constraints, and the older existing parks are outfitted with aging benches and amenities. The Town Council would ask that Assistant Planning Director John Woods and Town Arborist Tony Duncan evaluate the existing parks and compose master plans of the newer parks for desired improvements. They could help Town Council determine the locations where benches and amenities are needed and the quality standards for the benches and amenities that are desired. Once these studies are complete, the Town Council will also evaluate a program to receive benches and other amenities into the parks and the policies and procedures that will be established for these donations. We think that this could be a viable way for the Town to continue the development of beautiful parks, even during a pandemic when funding and resources are extremely limited.

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Mark J. Bloomfield

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Holly E. Atkins

## **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

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Cathy D. Pattison

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Gary L. Gillman