

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 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 T. Brian Freeman, Chief Deputy Clerk Brandi N. Jones, Town Attorney Michelle Workman Clayton, Patrol 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 Vice-Mayor Pattison.

**RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of July 26, 2021; the request of Ms. Bonnie Wright to close Church Street, between Spring Street and Withers Road, on Sunday, October 31, 2021, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the Church Street Trunk or Treat event; the request of the Ruritan Road Club to conduct the St. Jude's Annual Motorcycle Ride on Saturday, September 4, 2021, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and, the request of Brock Hughes Free Clinic, Incorporated for issuance of a raffle permit for calendar year 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 July 26, 2021; the request of Ms. Bonnie Wright to close Church Street, between Spring Street and Withers Road, on Sunday, October 31, 2021, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the Church Street Trunk or Treat event; the request of the Ruritan Road Club to conduct the St. Jude's Annual Motorcycle Ride on Saturday, September 4, 2021, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and, the request of Brock Hughes Free Clinic, Incorporated for issuance of a raffle permit for calendar year 2021, as presented. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. 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 who wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period, therefore, she would proceed with the agenda.

**RE: OLD BUSINESS**

Town Manager Freeman advised that he did not have anything to report to the Council under Old Business, however, later in the meeting, he did have some New Business to report. Mayor Taylor inquired if Old Business could be removed from future Council agendas. She noted that it is only a suggestion and something that she would like for the other Council members to think about. Councilman Bloomfield suggested that Old Business could always be added to the agenda if there is anything carried over from a previous meeting.

## **RE: STAFF REPORTS**

Town Manager Freeman presented the Staff Reports, and they were entered into the record as follows:

- A. On Monday, July 27, 2021, the Town of Wytheville submitted a Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund application to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in the amount of \$1,967,137 for the rehabilitation of approximately 10,000 lineal feet of sewer line and dozens of manholes and cleanouts to prevent infiltration and inflow of surface and groundwater into the sanitary sewer system. At present, the Wytheville Wastewater Treatment Plant experiences 1.8 - 2.2 million gallons per day (MGD) during dry weather periods, but this rises to 6.0 - 8.5 MGD during wet weather events. If awarded, it is anticipated that 50 percent of the project cost will come in the form of a grant, and 50 percent will be offered as a conventional loan or come from other local revenue sources. The DEQ is expected to review and recommend projects by December 2021 with construction taking place in 2022.
- B. On Thursday, August 12, 2021, the Town will open sealed bids as part of its annual street maintenance program. This year's paving is anticipated to be completed by October 15, 2021. For the safety of all involved, motorists are advised to be on the lookout for paving crews and to use caution when approaching paving operations.
- C. Like many local businesses, the Town of Wytheville is experiencing across the board staffing shortages. While this presents us with many operational challenges, it does create unprecedented opportunities for members of the community to join our team. Currently, we have 28 part-time and 23 full-time positions available. Those interested in employment with the Town of Wytheville should contact our Human Resources Department at (276) 223-3321 or visit the Town's website at <https://www.wytheville.org/employment> for a listing of employment opportunities. The Staff Reports are attached and made part of these minutes.

Councilman Bloomfield stated he had a question regarding the paving report. He inquired of Town Manager Freeman who received the paving bids. Town Manager Freeman advised that the Town has not received bids at this time, and that bids will be received on Thursday, August 12, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

Mayor Taylor stated that this would be a good time for Town Manager Freeman to discuss the process for paving the Town streets. Town Manager Freeman explained that the Director of Public Works, typically, compiles the paving list, which is an ongoing list throughout the year. He noted that the list is then brought back to the Engineering Department to compile a cost estimate, and once this estimate is compiled, there is a better idea of how many streets fit in the budget to be paved that fiscal year. He continued to explain to the Council the process for the paving of the Town streets. Mayor Taylor inquired if a Council member is approached by citizens about getting their streets paved, what are they supposed to tell the citizens. Town Manager Freeman advised the Council to have citizens contact the Town Manager's office to inquire about having their street placed on the list of possible streets to be paved. He noted that he would give the list to the Director of Public Works to be reviewed, along with the Public Works Committee. Discussion continued regarding the paving and maintenance of the Town streets.

Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that she had several comments regarding the third Staff Report concerning the Town of Wytheville Employment Opportunities. She inquired of Town Manager

Freeman if the minimum wage increased. Town Manager Freeman advised that the minimum wage has increased and will continue to increase again. He noted that on January 1, 2020, it increased to \$9.50, and, it will increase to \$11.00 on January 1, 2022. Vice-Mayor Pattison inquired of Town Manager Freeman if the Town could perform a salary survey. Town Manager Freeman advised that he would like to do this, as well. Discussion continued regarding this topic.

Vice-Mayor Pattison advised that she does not think the Town is fair when it comes to family healthcare coverage prices. She noted that she hesitated discussing this topic at the Council meeting, but she would like the Council to review the family plans in the next four to six months to see if there cannot be some improvements to these plans. She commented that the Council needs to look after the people who need family coverage, and they need to see if there are other options. Councilwoman Atkins commented that she has mentioned this during a Budget and Finance Committee meeting. She noted that Town Treasurer Stephens was supposed to be checking into a different insurance company because there are some potentially good employment prospects who would like to come work for the Town, but they cannot, due to the family healthcare coverage plans. Mayor Taylor advised that Councilwoman Atkins did bring this topic up at a previous meeting of the Council. Councilman Bloomfield and Vice-Mayor Pattison requested Town staff to perform a wage and benefit study as soon as possible. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would make sure that this happens. Discussion continued regarding the Town's benefits and wages for its employees.

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

Under New Business, Town Manager Freeman reported the following:

1. The Tree Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, August 12, 2021, at 8:30 a.m., in Conference Room B of the Wytheville Municipal Building.
2. The Wytheville Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, August 12, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers.
3. The next Council Work Session will be held on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, at 7:00 a.m., in the Council Conference Room.

#### **RE: APPOINTMENTS - WYTHEVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the reappointment of Ms. Ellen McDaniel to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (term expires September 8, 2021 ). Mayor Taylor noted that Ms. McDaniel is eligible for reappointment and has indicated a willingness to serve again, if reappointed. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Pattison and seconded by Councilman Bloomfield to reappoint Ms. Ellen McDaniel to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a four year term, which expires September 8, 2025. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to reappoint Ms. McDaniel. 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: APPOINTMENTS - WYTHEVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the reappointment of Mr. Connie "Jack" Quesenberry to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (term expires September 8, 2021 ). Mayor Taylor noted that Mr. Quesenberry is eligible for reappointment and has indicated

a willingness to serve again, if reappointed. A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Councilwoman Atkins to reappoint Mr. Connie "Jack" Quesenberry to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a four year term, which expires September 8, 2025. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to reappoint Mr. Quesenberry. 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: APPOINTMENTS - BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the reappointment of Mr. John Matthews to the Wytheville Board of Zoning Appeals (term expires September 10, 2021). A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Councilman Bloomfield to make a recommendation to the Wythe County Circuit Court to reappoint Mr. John Matthews to the Wytheville Board of Zoning Appeals for a five year term, which expires September 10, 2026. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. 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: PROPOSED REVISION TO CEMETERIES SECTION OF TOWN CODE**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to set a public hearing to consider an amendment to Chapter 5, Cemeteries, Section 5-6. Monument Work and Markers, of the Town Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia. Mayor Taylor noted that two Council members were absent from the last meeting, and the Council requested some additional information regarding this matter, therefore, the matter was tabled until this Council meeting. She inquired if Councilman Gillman had any additional information he would like to share with the Council regarding the proposed revision. Mayor Taylor advised that the topic can be tabled again and discussed at a future Work Session until all the information requested has been gathered. Councilman Gillman advised that, in his opinion, the requirement for a foundation for a monument being 30 inches is excessive. He remarked that years ago, people were buried in wooden boxes, and he can understand why this was a requirement because after approximately five to six years, the boxes would collapse, and the monuments would turn over. Councilman Gillman explained that, now, everyone is buried in a vault, and the monument companies state that if they can pour concrete to the top of the vault, then the monument will not go anywhere. Discussion continued regarding the proposed revision. Mayor Taylor inquired if the Council would like to set the public hearing or table the setting of the public hearing until all the requested information is gathered, and the Council has a chance to review it at the next Work Session. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Councilman Gillman to table indefinitely the setting of a public hearing to consider an amendment to Chapter 5, Cemeteries, Section 5-6. Monument Work and Markers, of the Town Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. 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: TOWN VEHICLE USE**

Councilwoman Atkins inquired if she could be educated on the use of Town vehicles. Mayor Taylor remarked that this topic is not on the Council agenda, therefore, she is not sure it is appropriate to discuss this at the Council meeting. Town Manager Freeman commented that there is a draft Vehicle Use Policy. Town Attorney Clayton explained that former Town Manager Moore had

worked on the draft Vehicle Use Policy before he left. Mayor Taylor remarked that the draft has been shared with all the Council. Councilwoman Atkins inquired of the Council if someone could share what has been discussed among the departments regarding the use of Town vehicles. Town Manager Freeman explained that another draft of the Vehicle Use Policy can be shared with the Council, and he can discuss what the policy is attempting to do. Councilwoman Atkins inquired of Town Manager Freeman as to what the current Town Vehicle Policy states. Town Manager Freeman advised that he cannot recite the policy without it being in front of him. Mayor Taylor inquired if maybe the Council could discuss this topic at a Work Session so that all the materials would be available to view. Discussion continued regarding the use of Town vehicles by Town employees. Councilwoman Atkins inquired of Town Manager Freeman if anyone is helping with the draft policy or if only a few individuals are helping. Town Manager Freeman advised that former Town Manager Moore is the only person who has worked on the draft policy. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she would like for the future policy to include that employees should not be allowed to use the vehicles for personal use for things such as haircuts, grocery pickups, children in vehicles, etc. She noted that employees have time off for things such as this, and she understands that some employees are considered on call 24/7, but maybe the Town needs to figure something out when it comes to using these vehicles for on call employees. She noted that for insurance purposes, it is not safe to have non-employees in Town vehicles. Councilwoman Atkins remarked that no matter what an employee's job title is, rules should apply to all employees the same, and no exceptions should apply to only a few employees because all employees should matter. She expressed that these are only a few of her concerns and questions. Mayor Taylor stated that they are all good thoughts and questions. Town Attorney Clayton commented that she, Human Resources Manager Shelton and Town Clerk Corvin have all been working on an updated Personnel Policy to replace the current Personnel Policy. She noted that she has discussed the Vehicle Use Policy with other localities and some places are really strict and other localities are more lenient. Councilwoman Atkins explained one of her concerns is the Town's insurance coverage, which only covers a non-employee of up to \$10,000. She noted that a Council Work Session would be a good starting point to discuss the draft policy. Councilwoman Atkins expressed that she could not imagine that if the current Town Personnel Policy states that an employee is not allowed to do certain things in a Town vehicle, that employees would actually do it. Town Manager Freeman commented that the draft policy is only a draft, and it is not the actual policy, but only the future, potential policy. She stated that it seems unethical to her to assume that it is fine to use a Town vehicle for personal use. Councilman Bloomfield remarked that prior management may have given permission to the employees, whether it was right or wrong.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting (7:34 p.m.).

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Beth A. Taylor, Mayor

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Brandi N. Jones, Chief Deputy Clerk