**MINUTES**

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023**

**TOWN HALL-6:00 P.M.**

Council Members Present: Others Present

Ken Holbrook-Mayor Chad Monday-Town Manager

Carey Watkins Wendee Jones-Treasurer

Greg Bailey Earl Carter-Public Works Director

Josh Sawyers Jonathan Johnson-Police Chief

Matt Jordan Brigham Jessee-Police Sergeant

Geoffrey Hensley-Absent Bob Harrison-IDA Chairman

Julie Hensley-Attorney

Jeff Langley

Bob Salyers

Harry Kelly

Wes Lawson-Fire Department

Chris Mullins-The Lane Group

Gloria Meade

Mayor Holbrook convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and established a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

The Treasurer asked to add the Auditor as item number one. Councilman Bailey asked to add Kiwana’s Christmas Parade as item number six. A motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Requests/Presentations

Wesley Lawson, St. Paul Fire Department, passed invitations out to the council and town employees for the Fire Department Christmas dinner.

Council Comments

Councilman Wallace-Councilman Wallace expressed his gratitude to the street department for their work on Christmas decorations throughout the town.

Councilman Jordan-Councilman Jordan acknowledged Wesley Lawson for working on the upcoming Polar Express event to be held at the Lyric Theater.

Councilman Sawyers-None

Councilman Bailey-None

Councilwoman Watkins-Councilwoman Watkins reminded the council of the upcoming Holiday Market on Saturday, November 18, at the Lyric Theater. She also thanked the participants at the chili cookoff.

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Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the October 9, 2023, regular council minutes was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Watkins. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda Items

Councilman Jordan asked Town Manager Monday if there has been any update on the grants applied for referenced in the town manager’s report. Town Manager Monday said there has been no word yet.

Councilwoman Watkins asked if VDOT has responded regarding the new signs. Town Manager Monday said there has been no response from VDOT.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda items was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Automobiles Driving on Sidewalks

Councilman Wallace said Chris Mullins with The Lane Group is working on the plat. A motion to table the item was made by Councilman Wallace. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

Alley Abandonment

Councilman Wallace said the code change needs to be addressed. Councilman Wallace made a motion to table the item. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. Under discussion, Councilman Sawyers said all actions regarding this issue needed to be addressed and finished before the next council meeting. Mayor Holbrook called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Hamilton Request

Mayor Holbrook asked to address the Hamilton request in closed session. A motion to move the item to closed session was made by Councilman Wallace. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sawyers. The motion passed unanimously.

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Auditor

The Treasurer has spoken with Debora Baca about the fiscal year 2021-2022 audit. Ms. Baca was contacted by our current auditing firm, Rodefer and Moss, last week. The audit has been pushed back again. Tamera Greear, with Rodefer and Moss, said she can now give no definite date on the audit. Ms. Greear said even though the town is under contract, we should contact another firm to complete the audit. The treasurer and Ms. Baca request that the council permit them to contact Brown Edwards to do the fiscal year 2021-2022 audit. Councilman Wallace made a motion to authorize the treasurer and Ms. Baca to contact Brown Edwards to do the 2021-2022 audit. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sawyers. The motion passed unanimously.

Fourth Avenue Water Line

Town Manager Monday said the project has approximately $139,000 left in contingency. Town Manager Monday and Chris Mullins, with The Lane Group, recommend using those funds on Broad Street. If that project is not eligible, the next suggestion is to use it on Buchanan Street. Mr. Mullins asked for the council’s permission to move forward in asking VDH to do the Broad Street project. Mr. Mullins said we could start immediately, construction being contingent on getting asphalt. He said he felt that VDH would give grace due to the weather. He also informed the council that Little B would honor the price per linear foot given with the original bid. A motion to allow Town Manager Monday and Chris Mullins to proceed with the Broad Street project was made by Councilman Jordan. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sawyers. Mayor Holbrook called for discussion on the motion. There was no discussion. Mayor Holbrook called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Police Department Vehicles

Sergeant Brigham Jessee addressed the council about possibly purchasing two new patrol cars. He told the council $49,000 has been budgeted for one vehicle and equipment. Since the prices are now higher, he would like to take a portion of the funds already allocated to use as a down payment on two police cars and use the remaining funds to equip the new patrol vehicles. He gave the council a list of equipment needed for the new vehicles including, but not limited to the following: light bar, exterior lights, rear cage, push bumper, center console, siren, spotlight, radio, storage bed, and dog cages.

Sergeant Jessee received quotes from three banks on a $95,000 loan. The rates and banks are as follows: Miner's Exchange Bank: 5.75% for three years and 5.95% for five years; Trupoint Bank: no figures can be given unless the loan goes through an underwriting process but the rate usually falls between 7.65-8%; First Bank and Trust: 7.99% for three years and 8.25% for 5 years.

Councilman Sawyers asked Sergeant Jessee if the loan amount included both vehicles with Sergeant Jessee responding yes. Councilwoman Watkins asked how much the price increased. Sergeant Jessee said the price of one vehicle increased by about $8,000.

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Councilman Jordan asked what the normal lifespan of a police vehicle was. Sergeant Jessee said the vehicles typically last five to seven years. Councilman Jordan asked what happens when police vehicles are taken out of service. Mr. Jessee said the vehicles may potentially be purchased by the St. Paul Volunteer Fire Department.

Councilman Sawyers asked Police Chief Johnson how long it would take to get the new vehicles. Chief Johnson said the Ford F150 will take three to six months for delivery and the Ford Explorer will take six to eight months for delivery. He said the prices quoted at present are as follows: Explorer: Morgan McClure $44,665; Empire Ford $43,300; State Bid-not eligible; F150: State Bid $49,400; Morgan McClure $50,850; Empire Ford $47,852.

Councilman Sawyers asked if the bank would be willing to work with the time gap in receiving the vehicles. Chief Johnson said he would contact the banks to find out.

Sergeant Jessee also approached the council on the theory of allowing officers to take work vehicles home. He said there were benefits to this such as lessening response time to police calls and would be an added incentive for new officers. Councilwoman Watkins asked if the protocol for take-home vehicles has been established. Chief Johnson said the details are currently being worked on.

Councilman Wallace asked what the proposed mile radius was for officer take-home vehicles. Sergeant Jessee said the officer would have to live in the state of Virginia. The mileage has not been determined yet.

Mayor Holbrook asked if they would like to take action. Councilman Sawyers made a motion to buy two police vehicles on a three-year loan through Miner’s Exchange Bank with the vehicles to be purchased at Morgan McClure. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to formulate a police vehicle take-home policy was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wallace. The motion passed unanimously.

Records Destruction

The Treasurer presented the council with a list of records and their codes to be submitted to the Library of Virginia to be shredded. A motion to authorize the Treasurer to proceed with records destruction was made by Councilman Jordan. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sawyers. The motion passed unanimously.

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Street Light

Councilman Bailey requested a new street light be installed on Wise Street/Sixth Avenue. He said the utility pole was already there and asked that the light be added to that pole. A motion to add a street light to the Wise Street/Sixth Avenue pole was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wallace. The motion passed unanimously.

Christmas Events

Councilman Jordan asked the town employees present at the council meeting if the holiday events had been planned. The Town Manager said all events have been planned and organized. Mayor Holbrook said Principal Karen Dickenson asked that the children performing at the Tree Lighting be moved to the front of the bank and if possible, block the children off during their performance. No motion was made on this agenda item.

Kiwanis Club Christmas Parade

Councilman Bailey asked Chief Johnson if the parade could be done on the same route as last year. He also asked that backpack handouts be set up at Trupoint Bank. Chief Johnson said the parade route is scheduled for the same route and he will make sure the backpack handout is set up at Trupoint Bank. No motion was made on this agenda item.

Policy Committee Meeting

Councilman Sawyers said quite a few agenda items have been referred to the policy committee. There has been no committee meeting as of yet. He said the committee needs to meet as soon as possible to address the agenda items and bring them back to the council. No motion was made on this agenda item.

Wise County/Russell County Department of Social Services Donation Request

Councilman Jordan made a motion to donate $150 to the Wise County Department of Social Services Adult program; $150 to the Wise County Department of Social Services Foster Care Christmas program; and $150 to the Russell County Department of Social Services White Christmas program. The motion was seconded by Councilman Sawyers. The motion passed unanimously.

Castlewood Youth Basketball Donation Request

Councilman Jordan was approached by the Castlewood Youth Basketball Program for a donation. He said the number has increased from 54 children last year to 114 children this year. The program includes students from Castlewood and St. Paul elementary schools.

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A motion to donate $250 to the Castlewood Youth Basketball Program was made by Councilman Jordan. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bailey. The motion passed unanimously.

Water Interconnect

Town Manager Monday included a Resolution in the council packets for review concerning the Wise County PSA, Russell County PSA, and Town of St. Paul water interconnections. There was a meeting with the town, Russell County PSA, and Wise County PSA.

This resolution is needed to begin a feasibility study for the water interconnections between the parties involved. Russell County PSA needs to provide water to the Copper Ridge area supplying 400 to 600 customers. The Town of St. Paul can supply this area and the county would be used as a secondary source. Chris Mullins with the Lane Group said sales and rates need to be addressed with legal counsel of the involved parties.

Councilman Sawyers asked what amount of overtime is being looked at for the town for this service. Town Manager Monday said that will be addressed with legal counsel of the involved parties. Public Works Director Earl Carter informed Councilman Sawyers the new customers would put our capacity at about 70%. If we hit the 80% range VDH will require the town to upgrade systems. Chris Mullins said Russell County PSA ultimately needs the water service from the town to grow.

Councilman Sawyers asked if Russell County PSA ever responded to the meeting request regarding bulk water rate changes. The Treasurer said there has been no response from Russell County PSA addressing the rate change. Councilman Sawyers said if we are to enter into a new agreement with Russell County PSA, these rate changes need to be addressed and a contract needs to be signed first. Mr. Mullins informed Councilman Sawyers the project would be Wise County PSA's project, not the town's.

A motion to take the agenda item into closed session to discuss under Contracts was made by Councilman Jordan. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Watkins. The motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session

A motion to enter closed session to discuss Personnel under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), Legal Matters under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7), Public Finance under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(6), Acquisition and Disposition of Property under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3), and Contracts under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(30) was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

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A motion to enter into open session was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Sawyers made a motion to certify only Personnel under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), Legal Matters under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7), Public Finance under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(6), Acquisition and Disposition of Property under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3), and Contracts under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(30) were discussed in Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wallace. A Poll Vote was taken: Watkins-Aye; Bailey-Aye; Sawyers-Aye; Jordan-Aye; Wallace-Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to table the Water Interconnect Resolution was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

New Police Officer

A motion to hire Alexander Qualls at a rate between $18.50 per hour to $19.00 per hour with an option to hire Ethan Nunley as a backup uncertified officer at a rate of $15.00 per hour if Mr. Qualls does not accept the position was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Watkins. The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing RFP

A motion to award the marketing RFP to Letter Press and discuss the schedule was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wallace. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to request settlement and release documents from the Hamiltons and authorize compensation payment once those documents are provided of up to $500 was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Watkins. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Sawyers. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Watkins. The motion passed unanimously.

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Mayor

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Town Clerk