

Town of Hurt Meeting Minutes
June 1st, 2021
Hurt, Virginia

The Town of Hurt Council members held a meeting on Tuesday, June 1st, 2021, at Hurt Town Hall. The meeting opened at 6:00 PM by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

Roll Call

Member's present were Mrs. Rainy Clay, Mr. Steve Watson, and Mr. Donney Johnson. Mrs. Shirley Barksdale-Hill was present via a phone call.

A motion was made to enter closed session to discuss personnel, prospective business, and real estate, as authorized by VA FOIA § 2.2-3711 A (1)(3)(5).

Motion: Mr. Johnson Second: Mrs. Clay Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:15 PM.

Council exited closed session approximately 7:00 PM.

A motion was made that only personnel and prospective business matters were discussed during closed session, as required by VA FOIA § 2.2-3712 (D).

Motion: Mrs. Clay Second: Mr. Johnson Passage: Unanimous

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mr. Watson

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Hodnett.

Open Remarks

Mayor Hodnett thanked everyone for all the hard work that everyone did for the Memorial Saturday Event. Over 200 plus people showed up, Mayor states he has not heard one negative comment about the event but has heard that the community would love for more events like this to take place.

Consent Agenda

Mayor stated that everyone should have had time to look over the minutes and if we could approve the May 4th minutes. No corrections needed to be made.

A motion was made to approve the May 4th minutes as is.

Motion: Mr. Watson Second: Mrs. Clay Passage: Unanimous

Hearing of Citizens/Public Comment Period

Mayor stated since there were no citizens, we could move on to Report from Legal Counsel.

Report from Legal Counsel-Attorney Eller

Attorney Eller reports that Norfolk Southern Railroad sent an agreement stating that anyone who wants to help paint the underpass must agree that the railroad will not be sued or make any kind of claim against the railroad if someone gets hurt. The underpass is the railroads, so if the Town wants to paint it, then we must go along with their agreement, and everyone must sign it.

Chief Lovelace states we will have to shut the road down and that it is probably in the Town's best interest to allow Town staff and Council to paint, that way we prevent people getting hurt. Mrs. Clay ask if the county jail will allow inmates to come paint? Lovelace states due to covid they are still not allowing the inmates to come out. The town must supply all the materials that are needed for this paint project, the railroad is not supplying materials, they are just allowing us to paint on their property. Chief Lovelace states that we should not paint the whole underpass, we should only paint high enough to eliminate the graffiti on it.

Mayor Hodnett asked if they would let us paint the outside of the underpass, Chief states he thinks it would look much better if we did. He also states that Norfolk Southern Railroad will have someone on site while painting.

A Motion was made that we paint the under pass to eliminate graffiti.

Motion: Mrs. Clay

Second: Mr. Watson

Passage: Unanimous

Attorney Eller states that at the last meeting it was discussed to hire an expert on Solar Laws, so that we can have someone review our contracts. We have an engagement letter with Jeffery Locke the attorney in Roanoke and they have a guy named John Cuback who is an expert on solar, and we can hire him for on call. We can have him there in case we have something that needs to be looked at. We have this letter of engagement and would like to get councils approval. Mr. Cuback states that he is going to get \$350 an hour, so we will not be calling on him unless we truly need him. He will not be on the clock unless we call him. Attorney Eller states he will only call and use him if we absolutely must have him.

A motion was made we proceed with using Gentry Locke Attorney is to help us as needed with solar projects.

Motion: Mr. Watson

Second: Mr. Johnson

Passage: Unanimous

Reports from Staff

Administrative: Ellen Brumfield, Treasurer reported the amount in the General Funds at the First National Bank. She states she is in the process of reviewing and looking over the proposed coverage and cost for the VRSA contract for next year. She states we paid \$13,589.00 last year, this year the cost is \$12,534.00. We will save \$1,055.00 from last year. Ellen states that Local Choice is who the state of Virginia utilizes and their services are with the insurance carrier-Anthem. The proposed date to go to Cardinal is November 2021.

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if this was delayed, she thought they were changing this during the summer? Ellen replies that they are doing it in November, she states as of June we just started. She states it is due to covid, that people were working from home, and are now getting back in the office. If everything goes as scheduled, they are shooting for this fall, November. It will be Cardinal in the future.

Lastly Ellen reported that she was working on the audit and reconciliation for the Hybrid 457 Retirement Plan with the state of Virginia.

Administrative: Kelsie Sligh was absent from this meeting. Treasurer Ellen gave the report for her. Ellen states that she is working on collecting the water bills. She states it has been a steady flow with the collection. She states we are still working on collecting the delinquent taxes.

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill ask how the abatements for taxes were coming along? Mayor Hodnett replies she has done very well with cleaning those up. Mayor states she has been working with the Commissioner of Revenue, Robin Goard from the County on those, but Robin is out on medical leave, so that has slowed the process down a little.

Mrs. Clay asked about house numbers and not everyone having those, can we as a town, for those who do not have house numbers on the home purchase numbers and put them on the mailbox? Mayor Hodnett states that the county ordinance request the numbers must be on the home near the front door. Mrs. Clay stated do we have an idea of how many people in the town do not have numbers? Mayor states that it is probably 50% that do not. Mrs. Clay states that the numbers are not expensive and that we can include that house numbers are required when we send out the water bills. Colleen stated that she did mention that on the last billing, that house numbers were required.

Mr. Watson asked if we could find out the homes without house numbers, can we ask the County to step in and enforce them? Mayor stated that we probably can. Attorney Eller states we do not have an ordinance on this, but it is a 911 requirement. Mike Jones states he will make some calls and get something going on that.

Public Works

Public Works: Colleen McGrath reported that the water bills were mailed out on 5/14/21, with a steady collection. She states we have already collected 47% in two weeks. We have more people using PSN during this billing cycle which is good. Colleen also mentioned that half of the meters are installed, and everything is going well with those. In a few weeks we will be working with Beacon on training with the new software that was merged into our southern software. She states that the one thing she has been able to look at while using Beacon is the leaks. She states that it will show if someone has a leak in their home and these new meters update every 15 minutes. Colleen stated that the meters show exactly how much water is being used and the time it is being used.

Mr. Watson asked if this software alerts you when something is going wrong because it is no way to sit around all day looking at each meter. Colleen stated yes it will notify us for different things as well, and it allows us to zero in on which meter has the issue. She stated just last week someone had an issue with

a leak in their home and we were able to look at it through Beacon and find the leak and stop it. This will help save the homeowner money. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill stated this will be very helpful.

Police Department Report

Chief Jason Lovelace reported that the call for service:

Civil Complaints-2, Suspicious Person-3, Public Service-12, Vandalism/Destruction of Property-0, Larceny-0, Suspicious Vehicle-0, Arrest-0, Alarms-0, Assist other Agencies-0, Mutual Aid (LE)-0, Mental Subject-1, Animal Case-4, Simple Assault-1, Traffic Stops-0, All other offenses-2.

Other: Miles Driven-388, Training-0

Assist other Town Departments-2

Use of Force-0

Department/Officer Complaints-0

Department Updates: Interviews have started for the vacant PD position. An article should soon be coming out in the paper about HPD, I am working with Mr. Poindexter on this. The underpass on West Hurt, will now be painted after the council approved. Also, I have got littering signs prices per Mr. Adams request.

Public Safety/ Assistant Town Manager- Mike Jones

Deputy TM Mike Jones

Report on Public Safety – May 2021

- 1) Staunton River Plaza – roadway collapse hazard was inspected, and it was discovered that the substrata that is supporting our large 12” sewer line is being eroded away. This is a potential hazard that, if left unrepaired, will likely lead to the breaking of the sewer line and causing a hazardous material incident along with a disruption of wastewater services. The owner has been advised of the nature of the situation and that the Town has blocked off the roadway to protect the public.
- 2) American Recovery Act – fund amounts are still being processed.
- 3) Police applications are dropping significantly across Virginia. There is a statewide loss of veteran police officers with retirements and resignations increasing by 400% statewide in anticipation of qualified immunity being removed from the protections offered. In response to this and other challenges, police departments across the nation are offering increases in compensation and benefits.
- 4) The School Speed Zone System is going through VDOT and Dominion Power for highway right of way approvals and power connections. We should be ready for the Fall opening of schools. This will give us an opportunity to educate the public about these two locations – Hurt Elementary and Faith Christian Academy – to ensure that our citizens will KNOW that if you speed through these zones during school hours, you will receive a civil traffic citation. This will help ensure the safety of our school children. We will be the 1st jurisdiction in the Commonwealth to do this.

- 5) Coordination with VDGIF was made along with Altavista PD on our Bear sightings by Chief Lovelace and me. Please be careful when dealing with bears.
- 6) Please review your Information Security Policy to ensure compliance with all things "Information". As economic development matters increase, interest in the Town is increasing. As a Town, we want to ensure those businesses who are seeking to come to our town are entitled to privacy during the economic development period.
- 7) The Town Emergency Action Plan is still being renovated.
- 8) The Railroad will be placing Hurt PD on its notification list for special shipments and hazard issues.
- 9) The Norfolk Southern RR sent Chief Lovelace an indemnification agreement for people who will be painting the underpass. County Inmates are still under COVID 19 restrictions and cannot be utilized at this time. Anti-graffiti coating will be considered to spray over the painting.

END OF REPORT

Reports from Membership, Boards, and Commissions

Administrative: Kathy Keesee was absent during this meeting.

Community Development- Mrs. Clay reported that the Memorial Saturday had a great turn out and that for future events Audie Meadows would love to perform again that he really enjoyed doing it.

Finance: Mr. Watson reports that no one came out to discuss the budget so that he was ready to make a motion on approving the budget and the water rate increase starting July 1, 2021.

A motion was made to accept the budget as is, with the few changes that were made from the last meeting and the new water rates presented as July 1, 2021.

Motion: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Second: Mr. Watson

Passage: Unanimous

Attorney Eller states that we must come back and confirm the budget, with a very short meeting, and it must be done by the end of the month. Mayor Hodnett states we will plan for another meeting for Tuesday June 15th.

Public Works & Planning/Zoning Commission: Collin Adams was absent during this meeting which the report falls to Mrs. Barksdale-Hill and Mr. Johnson. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill stated she was absent from the last meeting and that Mr. Johnson probably knows more about this, but ask if we did choose someone going forward with the water project? Mr. Johnson stated yes.

Mayor Hodnett stated that we received a letter in the mail from the VDH stating the authorization of awarding the contract but realize this is not the final say. They are agreeing to the loan, but it is not the final. Hodnett adds that Blue Fusion is a company that has a product for the mixing and ventilation system for the tank to take out the THM. They are going to give a presentation this Thursday at 3:00PM via zoom meeting. They have presented their system to Peed and Bortz. They think its worthwhile to look at, so they will be attending the zoom meeting as well. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if she could get the link to that. Mayor Hodnett stated yes.

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill also asked if Mayor Hodnett has heard anything else from the care act plan on possibly getting more money? Hodnett stated that we are getting more money, we are waiting to see how this will get disturbed. The Town is waiting for a big chunk of money right now, and we called to verify if this number was correct. Mayor Hodnett stated that he thinks this is the loan going towards the water project.

Report from Mayor Hodnett

Mayor Hodnett reported that he wants the Council to start thinking about a couple of projects that the Town can take on, one is a farmers' market that would be a large-scale project. This can be something that the community does not have that we can add to our town. Hodnett states that he would also like to close in the stage out back of Town Hall for our entertainers. This way we can have a better venue for our musicians. Mayor stated he would like this summer to start having something monthly down here at town hall for the community. He would like to see 200 plus people momentum keep going. Hodnett stated that he heard a lot of residents stated that we do not do this enough, so he would like to keep doing it. Mr. Johnson stated that from the past Saturday a lot of handicap people struggled getting down the hill. We need to investigate something that is easier for our handicap residents, Hodnett stated that the only thing we could do is dig into the bank and put stairs going down. Hodnett stated this was a huge concern of ours when planning the Memorial Saturday for our handicap residents. We will investigate something for our future events.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:32PM.

Kelsie Sligh
Clerk

Gary Hodnett
Mayor