

Town of Hurt Meeting Minutes
May 4th, 2021
Hurt, Virginia

The Town of Hurt Council members held a meeting on Tuesday, May 4th, 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 Mr. Collin Adams, Mrs. Kathy Keesee, Mrs. Rainy Clay, Mr. Steve Watson, and Mr. Donney Johnson.

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: Mrs. Keesee Second: Mr. Watson Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:03 PM.

Council exited closed session approximately 6:45 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. Keesee Second: Mr. Watson Passage: Unanimous

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mrs. Keesee

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Hodnett.

Open Remarks

Mayor Hodnett thanked everyone for attending.

Consent Agenda

Mayor stated that everyone should have had time to look over the minutes and if we could approve the April 6th minutes. No corrections needed to be made.

A motion was made to approve the April 6th minutes as is.

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

Hearing of Citizens/Public Comment Period

Gary 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 Jason had mentioned the weeds ordinance and the implantation of it, Eller states he has reviewed it and that it is clear to follow the points described in there. Once you find

someone that looks like they are in violation, you send them a notice of 5 days to get it cut. If the resident has extenuating circumstances, they can be granted another 5 days, if they do not cut it, they will get a \$75 administrative fee for the grass to get cut for them. Attorney Eller states he has made some adjustments to the ordinance, the most important thing that is new, is intending to say that a lot of letters had to be sent. The second page subgraph E at the top, it describes how the notice is sent, the last sentence now says the purpose of this revision, one written notice per growing season to the other of record of the property should be considered reasonable notice, so after it is sent one time and they get it, after that they will have to cut it. This is permitted by state code, it is legal for us to make that provision, it is up to the council to decide if we want to send them a notice every single time their grass gets tall, or if we want to use this provision and the first notice we will send will state that this is the last one for the year, and from now on if it gets too tall we will be cutting your grass and charging you for it. Eller states that this might be a good idea to advertise this, so that the residents know and have the one time to see the provision and know that this is how its going to be.

Mr. Adams states we should go ahead and advertise this, that this is fair and will cut down paperwork.

Mr. Watson states that he would not have a problem making a curiosity call to the person, just to warn them that their grass is getting tall. Eller states well you would have to call every single person every single time to tell them their grass is too tall.

Mr. Adams states that we need to give them a written notice that states that this is your only warning this season, and make it perfectly clear, these people know that their grass needs to be cut.

Eller states so if we have a motion to get this advertised for the next meeting, he will get that done.

A motion was made to advertise it in the paper.

Motion: Mr. Adams

Second: Mrs. Clay

Passage: Unanimous

Attorney Eller reports that in the last meeting, April 6th we had discussed about the owner of a home being responsible for the water billing, and the billing be in the owner's name instead of the tenant, but we must go through the tenant. We must get the tenant to pay, but we can now charge up to 5 months deposit, this means you can protect yourself, if you do not protect yourself, you cannot get the landlord.

Mr. Watson asked the question about the trailer park, where all the water is on one meter, Eller states it is not clear about that and he will have to look more into it.

We determine this by the average water residential bill. Mayor Hodnett states that we need to decide on a flat fee, Eller states that this must be based on 5 months of service. One months' worth of service multiplied by 5.

Mr. Watson stated that based on the average gallons, it is running about 35. We charge \$150 now, it would increase to about \$170. Mayor Hodnett states we cannot just set it, until we have proper calculations. Attorney Eller states that this is the plan that they have laid out, you get a form that the

property owner and the tenant must sign, and they must pay the deposit. If they do not pay then you must give them a notice, and then you can cut them off after 60 days.

Mr. Adams states he has something he wants to add regarding people mowing their yards, if we implement people cutting their grass when it gets out of hand, it does not mean that they can throw grass all on the sidewalks or in the road.

Reports from Staff

Administrative: Ellen Brumfield, Treasurer reported that the \$200,000 transferred from the General Fund to the LGIP, we moved \$32,800 into the LGIP General Fund for the RD Police Car Grant. Brumfield reports that the 1st quarter reporting process has been completed and filed with the Federal 941 and VEC. The Census reporting on the Revenue and Expenditures has been completed. "Local Choice" is who we deal with for our Insurance. Anthem medical and dental renewal data has been completed for renewal. Brumfield reports that we have working with the Auditors yesterday and today, and Scott gave us a report at the end that we were very pleased with. We still have some things to work on, but overall, we were very pleased with the report.

Mayor Hodnett states that they left us with a few things we had not thought of like, safety precautions and procedures with that, but they were in reason so we will certainly implement them, Hodnett states he asked Scott what he thought about where we are at, Scott stated we are a work in progress, considering the amount of turnover we have encountered, but he was amazed with where we are, he was happy with where we are. Hodnett states that we have our priorities set and we will keep working toward our goals every day.

Administrative: Kelsie Sligh, Clerk reported that she had done a few updates on the website, where she had some feed back from Attorney Eller, and Mrs. Keesee. Sligh reports that she has sent out most of the delinquents on real estate taxes and that the report for that has come back pretty good with collecting 89.37%. Sligh also reports that we have had quite a few people coming down asking if we could notarize documents. We have turned people away since no one at this point is a notary. Therefore I have started the process of becoming a notary.

Public Works

Public Works: Colleen McGrath was absent during this meeting and asked if Mayor Hodnett would report for her.

Mayor Hodnett reports that the water bills was at 73% collections so far, she is still improving on past due and getting water agreement contracts signed. 360 meters were installed and 10 of those were the flow control so we can cut back water flow. Hodnett reports that we received the 25 new trash cans. Hodnett states that Colleen wanted clarity on if we had a house sitting vacant, do we charge them still for a \$24 meter fee?

Mr. Watson states he does not think we should charge them if they are not using, but once the house is sold, we do charge them for occupancy. Mayor Hodnett states that water has been going through that meter.

Mr. Adams states that the meter is sitting up there on that road granted for water, then that should be worth something.

Mrs. Clay states what if people sell the house and have moved, do we have a forwarding address to send the bill to? Have we not been collecting anything on a house that is just sitting empty? Mayor Hodnett responds no. Hodnett states anytime we interact with someone in the town, now we are getting Driver's License and Social Security numbers. Mr. Adams states if a meter is there then there should be a meter fee.

A motion was made that we charge the \$24 fee to vacant homes.

Motion: Mr. Johnson

Second: Mrs. Clay

Passage: Unanimous

Mr. Watson asked what about the apartments, you can not charge someone for leaving the apartments? Hodnett states you can charge the landlord that owns the apartment or the mobile home. If the meter is sitting there on their property, they would owe that meter fee. When the new person moves in, they will get the fee, but while the home or apartment is vacant, the homeowner or landlord will get the fee.

Hodnett reports that we had a sewer line repair today over at English's parking lot, it has been leaking for almost a week now. Damblin out of Danville repaired it, the same guys that ran the camera through the sewer line at the Plaza, they also fixed the sewer line at Town Hall.

Police Department Report

Chief Jason Lovelace reported that the call for service:

Civil Complaints-0, Suspicious Person-1, Public Service-7, Vandalism/Destruction of Property-1, Larceny-0, Suspicious Vehicle-0, Arrest-0, Alarms-0, Assist other Agencies-2, Mutual Aid (LE)-1, Traffic Stops-0, Sex Offences-0, Motor Vehicle Accidents-1, Animal Complaints-1, Trespassing-0, Fraud-0, All other Offenses-1, Noise Complaint-2, and Disorderly subject-1.

Other: Miles Driven-1397, Training-I was able to attend training for Supervisory Liability, the class fee was originally \$350.00 but was able to attend it for free.

Assist other Town Departments-1

Use of Force-0

Department/Officer Complaints-0

Department Updates: I have completed all but one background, I am waiting on the other agency for documentation for completion. Therefore, Mike and I will soon be conducting interviews. I have created an employee handbook for the Police Department and will soon submit it for review and approval. We are now participating in teaching at the Police Academy which is part of our agreement with our academy. The Town of Hurt has not taught there in the past 10 years. I have been in contact through multiple emails with Norfolk Southern Railroad about graffiti in the underpass that is located on West Hurt Road. I advised them that the Town is trying to beautify our community and would be interested in

painting the tunnel to cover the graffiti. The railroad advised that they would allow us to paint the tunnel to cover the graffiti, but the Town will have to provide the materials. An Indemnification Agreement and Right of Entry will have to be signed before, the Railroad will also determine that the color will be grey and an oil-based paint. Railroad representatives will be on site at the time to brief on the potential hazards and assist with the work. I would like the council to consider investing in signage that would help deter future vandalism as well as purchasing cameras for installation in the area. The signs and post would be approximately \$200.00, the cameras have a wide range of cost from \$150.00 to over \$1,000.00.

Councilman Adams requested at the last meeting to see if signs could be obtained for litter, also notification for the speed limit in the school zone on School Road. I was able to reach out to VDOT and inquire about this. VDOT advised that since their policy has changed, they no longer will put up signs on secondary routes. If signs are on secondary roads, it was placed their long before policy change. VDOT representative will be submitting the School Road speed signage to Traffic Engineering for review. I also requested speed limit signage on another street in town which will be reviewed by Traffic Engineering. I have requested Main Street in front of Faith Christian Academy to be looked at for a school zone, this also will be reviewed by Traffic Engineering, if Main Street is approved to become a school zone Opto traffic can be installed their as well.

I have been getting quotes on updating our evidence room, the funding for the upgrade will come from out asset forfeiture fund that we have if the guidelines will allow. I contacted Tim Dudley about safety concerns that was brought to me about speeding in Wayside Park. Mr. Dudley advised that VDOT has been notified for assistance. A mission statement for the police department has been created. "We will protect the innocent while serving our community through respect, fairness, and equality for all".

Mr. Adams asked Chief Lovelace is any speeding tickets were being written? Lovelace stated he had eased up due to Covid-19, but he states he will go back to writing them. Mrs. Ruth Ferrell stated that she was very concerned about the speed on her road. She stated that she was afraid to go to her mailbox due to people speeding. Mrs. Ferrell stated the speed was a problem going both ways on the road and that it was seen more around 3 o clock. Chief Lovelace asked her if she mind him sitting in her driveway, she stated sure you can. Mrs. Ferrell stated she also wanted to talk about litter, she states going down the road towards Grit was awful. She asked when the next pick up would be, Mr. Watson stated we are working on getting cameras and signs in place for litter. Mayor Hodnett states we are unsure of the next trash pickup.

Public Safety/ Assistant Town Manager- Mike Jones

Mike Jones was absent of this meeting, nothing was reported.

Reports from Membership, Boards, and Commissions

Administrative: Kathy Keesee reported that she turned over some designs to Colleen regarding to the sign coming into Hurt after crossing the bridge. She also has some designs/ideas for the Hurt Memorial, she states that all of this is regarding the landscaping and the beautification for the Town. She also reports that she is in the process of taking more pictures for the Town, once she gets all those together,

she will turn those over to Kelsie so she can update our slideshow on the website. We have one now on the website now for springtime, we would like to have a slideshow for each season or when we have special events.

Mr. Adams asked Mrs. Keesee when the landscaping takes place will we be doing landscaping at the town sign across from wayside park? Mrs. Keesee stated yes, we will, she gave Colleen a drawing of what we can do. All the old landscaping will be replaced.

Community Development- Mrs. Clay reported that for the Memorial Saturday on the 29th of May to honor our Veterans that Audie Meadows will be doing the entertainment, he will be down here about 9:30am Saturday to get everything set up, music will start around 11am and he will be playing until 3pm. Mrs. Clay asked that she needed to know how many people we were anticipating it to be? Mayor Hodnett stated around 200-300 people. Mrs. Clay stated the only thing she needed help with was maybe some wives make coleslaw and chili, and that she was going to go to Sam's to get what was needed. Mrs. Keesee stated that she will help with going through and seeing what we have first in storage. Mrs. Keesee stated that we should put American Flags and Banners all around Town Hall and the gazebo. Mrs. Clay also states that we need to find a tarp to set up for the stage. Mayor Hodnett stated that Donney had worked with the Fire Department about getting a Fire truck down here.

Finance: Mr. Watson reports about the proposed budget, states that we don't have all the figures for the budget, that it could change some again. Steve reported that Mike Jones will be held at his current salary, and that it will be reevaluated at the end of November. Mr. Watson stated that the water rate will increase starting July 1. Our average water usage per month is 2,980 gallons, which will be \$8.64 increase per quarter.

A motion was made to go forward with the water increase figures he mentioned tonight and advertise the budget.

Motion: Mr. Watson

Second: Mr. Adams

Passage: Unanimous

Attorney Eller states that we can advertise the budget in the paper around the 19th of May. Hodnett states we will go forward with the budget that Steve has done with the assumption it is right and we will have another meeting addressing any corrections that need to be made. Hodnett states if we find out we are wrong with the figures we will meet again and get it straight will still enough time to advertise it in the paper.

Public Works & Planning/Zoning Commission: Collin Adams states he has nothing to report other than we have no bids for the water project, we have reposted it for them for this Friday at 2:00. Mayor states we have 4 companies that have expressed interest.

Report from Mayor Hodnett

Mayor Hodnett stated that the drawings for the Hurt sign have come in and that council needed to vote the top 2, he stated do not look at the back because he does not want the council to see what school they came from or who the person is. The contestants came from Hurt Elementary School and Faith

Christian Academy. Michael Blackstock is sponsoring the sign and will award the top 2 winners with a gift certificate to B & B Market. The 1st winners drawing will be sent off to a designer and they will clean the drawing up and that will be our sign for Town of Hurt as you cross the bridge coming into Town. Council voted the top 2 winners; 2nd place was Hurt Elementary student Kelsey Bowling and 1st place is Faith Christian Academy student Lexi Lowe. Mayor states that we have the anonymous report on our website, and that we had someone send us a report about someone littering, they gave us the vehicle color, model, and where it happened, and what they threw out on the road. Jason is going to take it to the homeowner and question it.

Mrs. Ferrell asked the question about the new funeral home coming to the Town of Hurt and wanted to know if that would contaminate the water? Mayor Hodnett responded no it will not bother the water.

Mrs. Clay stated that someone sent her a text message on her house phone asking if we were going to be hiring any police officers. Mrs. Clay asked if she could refer them to Jason, Jason stated yes. Mr. Watson stated that someone reached out to him asking about child protective services and that he would direct them to Jason as well.

Mayor stated thank you to all the residents who attended the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10

Kelsie Sligh
Clerk

Gary Hodnett
Mayor