

Town of Hurt Meeting Minutes
November 2nd, 2021
Hurt, Virginia

The Town of Hurt Council members held its monthly business meeting on Tuesday, November 2nd, 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. Shirley Barksdale-Hill, Mr. Gary Poindexter, Mr. Donney Johnson, Mrs. Kathy Keesee, and Mrs. Rainy Clay

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. Poindexter Second: Mr. Johnson Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:00 PM.

Council exited closed session approximately 6:50 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. Barksdale-Hill Second: Mr. Adams Passage: Unanimous

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mr. Poindexter

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Hodnett.

Altavista Race Sponsor

Mayor states we did a questionnaire over email about sponsoring the Altavista Giblet Race, the choices were \$250 or \$500. Mayor states that Mrs. Clay or Mrs. Barksdale-Hill did not vote. Everyone else voted to sponsor \$500, we need a motion to approve the \$500.

A motion was made to donate \$500 to Altavista on Track for their Giblet jog.

Motion: Mr. Adams Second: Mr. Johnson Passage: Unanimous

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked what this money was used for? Mayor Hodnett responded for \$500 we get 6 packets for the race and our new Town logo sponsored on the back of the shirt. Mr. Adams stated that Regina is a member of the Altavista on track and he knows they sponsor quite a few events, like the beer bourbon and BBQ, Attorney Eller states they sponsor the cruise inn with the antique cars, the giblest race, and the scarecrow stroll, they are trying to promote new business in Altavista. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill states as long as they return the favor, Mayor Hodnett states we need to have something for them to sponsor to start with.

Backflow Preventers

Mayor Hodnett states that we found out with his new round of water meters due to liability issues we should probably put in setter box and backflow preventers to keep from any contamination in the water system because at this point in time our water meters have no back flow preventers going into our main line and we could have problem with cross contamination. Mayor states he has talked with some people at the state, and it is not by law required to do this, but it is highly recommended that we do because of liability issues. While we are putting in new water meters it would be best to put in the setter boxes with these 360 meters. This will probably cost us at least the same as we paid for the meters, but the labor will probably be more because of how each box is different. The depth of the box and the way the pipes are ran in each meter box. A rough cost that this job may require is \$125k to \$150k. Mayor asked Tom Fore if he has any input on this? Tom states that he agrees with the cost of this job, once they have an idea of what they will be putting in they will have a better idea of cost. From a standpoint of why you would want to put in a cross contamination is my understanding that the meters you have installed now are showing back usage through the meter now. If you have a major fire where you have a lot of water going out of one portion of the system especially the lower part, you have the higher meters up on top of the hill and they are not able to meet the demand, for example when Roanoke county had that major fire, they hooked up to the fire hydrant and the hose sucked all that chlorine right into the water main line which got a lot of people sick. Mayor Hodnett states bad news for us, when we start putting in these new setter boxes with back flow prevention, we will have to send out a letter to all residents that they may see a problem with their hot water heaters. Tom states what happens when you do close off with the check valve that is on the meter setter when water is normally going into the house, every time they close the valve, they are in a high pressure zone sometimes it will cause the hot water heater to pop off. Right before the hot water heater they install a bladder tank, it is small, and it is there to absorb that valve from cutting off and on. Mayor Hodnett stated so we will send that letter out advising them to do it, but the town does not pay for it, it is optional to the homeowner whether they want to do it or not, if they have the letter and choose not to do it and they have a problem then it is the homeowner responsibility. Mr. Johnson asked if a tankless heater had to have one too? Mr. Tom Fore responded if the tankless hot water heater has a thermal expansion bladder in them, then no they do not need one. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked how much extra would this cost the homeowners? Mr. Fore said you can buy that tank for less than \$30 and to have a plumber installs it then you're probably looking at another \$60-\$80 dollar. Mayor Hodnett stated that he had a water leak and looked all over and couldn't find it, he found it 2 days ago and it was the hot water heater, he put in a new hot water heater, and it had the very thing Tom is talking about on it and he doesn't have to come back and put it in. The good news is our system is batting 1000 at finding water leaks. Mr. Adams asked if the cost of this was being paid by the money, we got during covid? Mayor Hodnett replied all of it will be paid for by that. All that money will be eaten up by that than what we anticipated, so the streetscape will probably not be a project. Mrs. Clay stated she had a water heater replaced 3 years ago, is it a possibility that one was already installed on it? Mr. Fore stated no, the bladder is usually in there when you have a backflow preventer. Tom stated on all new homes it is a building code requirement that you have a backflow preventer on the home, so if a locality already chooses to put one in the setter of the meter box, then the homeowner as they are building a house, they don't have to put it on it. But if it is a new house that the locality does not have a back flow preventer then that new home must have it on there, then you can see the bladder

being installed on there. Mr. Adams asked Tom if the houses in Town that have had high pressure issues, they are the ones that will probably going to have the bladder? Tom replies yes.

Mayor Hodnett states we are going to install the backflow preventers with the 360 new radio read meters we have due to all liability issues. Mrs. Clay stated we must send the letters first to all residents, correct? Mayor Hodnett stated no, we are just going to tell them we are doing it, and this is what they need to do. Mr. Poindexter stated now they money we are talking about, is that for all 580 meters or is this just for the 360? Mayor Hodnett states just for the 360. Attorney Eller asked if the inside bladder would be paid for by the town? Mayor replied no, homeowner. Attorney stated they will have to pay \$100, Mayor stated that some will, and some won't. Attorney Eller stated so if we put the backflow preventer in then you will not need the bladder, correct? Mayor stated in most cases correct. Attorney Eller stated it is a good thing to have it, but we are asking homeowners to spend \$100, Tom stated yes. Attorney Eller asked what is the worst thing that can happen if that pops off? Tom stated the worst thing that can happen is that pop off valve opens and get stuck and start blowing water out the top of the water heater and it will keep on coming up as long as you have cold water to keep filling that tank, it can flood your basement or even your whole house. Attorney Eller states you better have it on there then. Tom states therefore they put the bladders on, and it is a high recommendation to have it.

A motion was made that the next 360 meters that are installed we will install backflow preventers.

Motion: Mr. Adams

Second: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Passage: Unanimous

Mayor states thank you; he thinks this is a very smart decision.

Dogwood Trailer Park:

Mayor Hodnett states the Dogwood Trailer Park has been sold and he needs to reach out to the new owners. We plan to move forward with the meter that was voted on a while back project. What we are going to do is turn over the infrastructure to the owners of the trailer park, so they will own the pipes, fittings, and the lines and everything past the new meter. We will bill the owner of the park for that, one bill, and they will decide how they want to distribute the bills if they want to independently bill or just an increase by unit. I will have this conversation with them this week, but this is the plan.

Request to cut down the Pines coming along the Plaza

Mayor Hodnett states we had a request that the pines over here by the plaza as you are coming up main street and the post office on the side of the road, a request to cut those down. I talked with the state, and they will not cut down trees that are healthy even though they are that close to the road, but if we wanted to do it, it is up to us or anyone else that wanted to pay for having those pines being cut down. Mayor Hodnett asked council if someone was hired to come in and cut them down does council want to let them cut them down? Mr. Adams stated no cost to us? Mayor stated no cost to us. Attorney Eller states what is going to happen if they cut them, and they fall on somebody? Mayor stated they must have someone ensured to cut it. Attorney Eller states well if we ok them to do it and they hurt someone we will be part of it, is it on our right way? Mayor states no it's on the states right away. Attorney Eller states well it is our say so to do it, Mayor Hodnett stated the state they don't care who cuts them if we want them cut, they just don't cut down healthy trees. Attorney Eller states if someone wants to cut

them, they need to give us a professional contract and licenses. Mayor Hodnett states they must have a bonded license. Mr. Poindexter asked how are those trees bugging someone that bad? Mayor Hodnett replied that Mr. Walthall, the owner of the funeral home has put a lot of work into the funeral home, and he feels that they are blocking the view of the funeral home. Attorney Eller states if he gets a professional tree cutter to do it then fine. Mrs. Clay said can't we just tell Mr. Walthall that VDOT said they can't do it but if he wants to have it done then he can and that takes the blame off the town? Mayor Hodnett states yea. Mayor Hodnett stated he just wanted to put that out there incase council did not want them cut down. Mr. Poindexter states he doesn't care either way just does not want the liability to be on the Town. Council is okay either way.

Engineers

Mayor Hodnett states we have talked briefly about the engineer work that Tom is working on for us, as well as the contractors that are going to be coming in doing the work, setting up everybody and putting them in place. Tom has worked on an agreement that the Town will have with these people, and he did a good job on it, and we will move forward with that as soon as possible.

Parts inventory for Public Works

Mayor Hodnett states we are working on a parts inventory for water and the Town. The last few break downs we have had, a lot of the water people that came in wanted to know if we had the parts, so that they didn't have to run around trying to find them. Parts are a little scarce now, so we want to build up an inventory here for everything we need. Tom and Joe are both working on that, we just want to advise you so that you know we will be spending some money on the parts inventory for the water system and repairs. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if we already had an order in? Mayor Hodnett stated no, we are getting the list together. Mr. Smith stated we are getting the list together of what we need and see what they cost, Mayor Hodnett added we are going to take bids on it. Mayor Hodnett stated also I told you all about the Town specification sheet Tom is working on for the new residential or industrial construction coming into Town.

Nuisance Violation

We have also had one respond to the nuisance violation, and they would like to come down to a council meeting and talk to council about it. We are working to set up a time, they have been offered two time slots and it would be a special meeting we would do Monday or Wednesday next week, but it doesn't appear that they have a lot of interest in that, I am waiting to hear back. I have asked them to give us a time if they can not do that, but we will see what happens, but we will have someone coming forward to talk to you guys about the violations that they received. Mr. Adams asked if we give a citizen a violation letter and give them a date to come plead their case and they keep stating that they can't come that day, what can we do? Attorney Eller states we will tell them you have to come this day and if they don't come then we will move forward. We want to be cooperative the best we can but at some point, we must draw the line and say that this is it, if we give you a time and day and you don't show up then we move forward. Mayor Hodnett states we want to give them every opportunity.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Hodnett ask if we can move forward with accepting the October minutes and this month's expenditures?

Mr. Poindexter stated he had a question on page 3 about the Fire Department Fund? Mayor Hodnett stated we put in for the \$10,000 that we traditionally give the fire department, and the fire grant for this year authorized \$15,000 to the fire department so they sent us a check for \$15,000 instead of the \$10,000. Mr. Poindexter stated he figured it was something like that, Mayor Hodnett stated we also found out that if the fire department were ever to be audited and find out they are not using that money as it should be and are using it differently than what the state allocates it for, then the fire department is not responsible for the repayment of that money, the Town is. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if that puts us in a position that we can watch what they are doing? Mayor Hodnett states yes. Mike Jones states we can send a letter requiring what that \$15,000 is spent on. Mrs. Brumfield states that the last time Scott Wickham was here and was doing the audit report we had to reach out to them and get receipts for the money that they had spent.

A motion was made to accept the consent agenda.

Motion: Mrs. Clay

Second: Mr. Poindexter

Passage: Unanimous

Hearing of Citizens/Public Comment Period

No Comment

Report from Legal Counsel-Attorney Eller

Attorney Eller is reporting for Mrs. Barksdale-Hill, we have been working on the town codes and making sure they are updated. We are concentrating on the most heavily used chapters first; zoning is the first one we have been working on. We will not have these ready by the next meeting but hopefully by January. We will be working on the licenses, taxes, and water and work our way down. We must go through the state codes see the changes that have been made in the authorizing statues and make sure that we have that in our code. There some of the sections that are not current and might have to be changed. The number of parking spaces for retail buildings and the signs, and the height of signs, we need to look at those and update them. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill stated that these codes are on the website, and they are incomplete, for example the zoning ordinance has about 60 actual pages, but 20 pages are missing on the website so if someone were to pull it up on the website, they may not be able to find what they are looking for. We are trying our best to make sure everything gets on there. Mr. Poindexter when the solar stuff went in, it didn't cross over. Attorney Eller states it is in my book but its not on the website. Mayor Hodnett states he can ensure him that every page he has sent us has been put in the book at Town Hall. Mr. Poindexter states he appreciates them updating the ordinances that this has been needing updating for years.

Mr. Adams stated he has updated election results, we only have two people running for the two spots, Mr. Johnson 244 votes and Mr. Poindexter 253 votes. Attorney Eller states Congratulations.

Reports from Staff

Administrative: Ellen Brumfield, Treasurer reported the current General Fund amount. Brumfield reports that the new badger radio read meters were paid on 10/25/21 in the amount of \$64,000. This was paid with the ARPA/Covid Recovery Fund, and the remaining amount is \$236,549. We have applied for 2 grants. She states that one of the grants was for public safety and health consulting for Mike Jones Services. Brumfield reported that she sat in on a FOIA webinar on access to public records Virginia freedom of information act. She stated that this was very informative and would encourage anybody to take advantage of it, she states it was a lot of help information. Mike Jones states that this webinar is a requirement for all council and the certificate must be turned in to the town clerk and signed off on to be filed. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if it was only good for a year? Mike Jones states yes. Mrs. Brumfield also stated to Mrs. Barksdale-Hill that you do get credits for it and how informative it is. Brumfield reported that the state corporation commission (SCC) 2021 Real Estate invoices have been mailed. She also wanted to remind everyone of December 5th being the Christmas tree lighting, and that we need volunteers. Brumfield states that we need a budget for this event to be approved. Brumfield states that the mayor sent out an email stating that we needed \$1200 for this event and that Mrs. Keesee is the only one who okayed it.

A motion was made to approve the \$1200 for the Christmas tree lighting event.

Motion: Mrs. Keesee

Second: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Passage: Unanimous

Administrative: Kelsie Sligh reported that she had sent out the Real Estate Tax Bills a month early to give residents extra time to get those paid, as they are due December 8th. The tax collection on this so far is 16.05% which is \$25,000. Sligh reports that she is waiting to hear back from southern software about the Personal Property Taxes. They were mapping in all Personal Property for the Town, so waiting to hear a follow up from them. The new fall slideshow is out on the website. Lastly Sligh reports that this past water billing we have collected 100%, leaving only delinquent accounts owing \$20,000. Attorney Eller states what a turn around.

Public Works

Joseph Smith reports that he met with Core and Main about supplies we will need; they sent a fax sheet about the list of parts we are going to need and the pricing. Smith reports he went out and fixed about 15 of the meters that we were not reading out of the 360. He states he replaced the covers and put the rest of the parts in place, so all the meters are reading now. Smith states he got in 258 meters, and they are downstairs, he states that he will probably have to order a few more of those parts that he had to borrow to fix the other meters. He states he got 50 of the small oblong covers for the meter boxes and I have already replaced 15 of those. He states he is waiting of the rest of the order of the regular round size lids, we have not received them or heard anything on them. Lastly, we are in the process of reading meters now, the only meter left to read is the Grit pit. We have entered in all readings in southern and billing should be going out on time. Smith states he has been watering the flowers, but he had stopped recently because of the cold weather, and changed out the flower beds in front of Town Hall and replaced it with new soil. Mayor Hodnett states that Joe is doing an outstanding job and is working

closely with Tom. Mayor states he is studying for his license and once he gets the first one out of the way he will go ahead and get the next one done, he states he is doing very well.

Police Department Report

October 2021 Police Report

Calls for Service-

Civil Complaints- 5

Suspicious Person- 1

Public Service- 12

Vandalism/Destruction of Property- 1

Theft from a building- 2

Suspicious Vehicle- 3

Domestic- 1

False Pretenses- 1

Assist Other Agencies (Emergency Services)-

Animal complaint- 2

Mutual Aid (LE)- 1

Disabled vehicle- 1

Parking violation- 1

Traffic Stops- 1

All other offenses- 6

Disorderly Subject- 1

Other:

Miles Driven- 1648

Training- Both Officer Sawyer and myself attended Mental Health training for officer wellness.

Assist Other Town Departments- 0

Use of Force- 0

Department/Officer Complaints- 0

Department Updates-

Installation of speed monitoring camera should soon occur, VDOT has granted approval.

Goodie bags were given out to both FCA and HES students to all students up to grade 5 promoting positive interaction with LE and Halloween safety. We participated in Trunk or Treat at the Plaza with approx. 500 or more children. Installation of the new water line has been installed which is the first step to the Evidence room upgrade. I would like council to consider renovation of Town Hall and moving the PD to the basement. Directed patrol for Cemetery Road, see attached sheet. Tom and I attended 50th anniversary law enforcement appreciation lunch provided by Liberty University with other law enforcement agencies as well as Governor George Allen and Governor Bob McDonnell. Tom continues to be an assist to the TOH, and I am grateful that he is with us.

Mayor Hodnett states all those files downstairs, he had a guy look at it and see about putting it on a disc. Mayor Hodnett states the guy that is looking at doing it states he will sign an NDA to take home those files, instead of him having to drive everyday from Timberlake. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if he was

going to take it all at once and then just go through it at his convenience? Mayor Hodnett replied yes. He stated this is something to think about going forward.

Public Safety/ Assistant Town Manager- Mike Jones

Deputy Town Manager/Public Safety Director Report

November 5, 2021

1) Nuisance and Property Condition Inspections: I have inspected properties in Town and have decided on several properties that will be receiving violation notices. These notices will be sent in January of 2022. By that time, our regulatory ordinances will be amended to come into full compliance with Va. Code and our needs.

Notification to our residents and property owners will continue to be made via social media and by other means. The concept is to allow persons in violations time to inspect their own properties and bring them into voluntary compliance. The town would prefer voluntary compliance over enforcement activities.

2) Police Patrol/Response Coverage: Police coverage of the town has increased significantly. This has resulted in several favorable comments made to me by local law enforcement leaders as well as friends of mine who live in the area. Additional police activity will increase the activity numbers but that is to be expected.

3) Police Staffing: I performed a staffing study for towns our size and the result is that the optimum number of police staffing would be as follows: 1 Chief (Working Chief), 3 police officers – full time, 2 part time - on call police officers (hourly wage), 2 part time police aides.

4) A reminder for ALL council members and the mayor to review the training material on the VA FOIA as required by law within the next 45 days. Please submit a note to the Town Clerk attesting to your review of the Virginia FOIA Act.

5) Consider a ride-along with our police when you get a few spare moments.

6) Continuing to collaborate with the Mayor & Council on Economic Development opportunities.

7) Please note that the Police Dept schedule is available to all Council members and town employees. However, the schedule is NOT for public distribution. We do not want the times that we have no officer on patrol to be known. Altavista PD and Pittsylvania Co. Sheriffs' Office continues to supply mutual aid support.

8) Please remind your friends and neighbors of our drug take back box in front of town hall.

9) Please be aware that holiday frauds of all types are occurring and will continue throughout the holidays. Please let your constituents know and encourage them to contact the police department or myself if they have any questions. The most important thing that you can tell a citizen is to do NOTHING if they are suspicious and contact us for help and review.

END OF REPORT

Reports from Membership, Boards, and Commissions

Administrative: Kathy Keesee stated she just wanted to praise Jason and what a beautiful job he did on the landscaping free of cost of his labor, she states she knows he spent a lot of time working on it. She states she appreciates it so much and he saved us a lot of money. She states it encourages her to want to start working on the other sign. She states she would also like to thank Kelsie for putting up the new fall slideshow photos on the website, she states these photos include the new sign and the new

landscaping, she states to all council if they get a chance to go look at the photos on the website. Mrs. Keesee states she plans to meet with Ellen and Kelsie soon to talk about the Christmas event.

Community Development- Mrs. Rainy Clay stated the only thing she has is to give Audie a phone call tonight to get his invoice. Mrs. Clay states that she will send Jason, Audie's number, that he will be here Saturday about 9 o'clock to set up. Mrs. Clay states he will dress as Elvis this time. Mr. Adams asked if we were planning to have a Christmas Meal? Mrs. Clay states we didn't have one last year due to covid. Mr. Poindexter states we have gotten together in the past, staff members and council. Mayor Hodnett asked what did everyone want to do? Mrs. Clay states before the covid we have eaten at the colonial and downstairs. Mr. Adams asked what about J. T's? Mrs. Clay states he has a room to accommodate about 20 people, and he has gone up on some of his prices. Mr. Poindexter states we need to be mindful of social distancing and the size of the room. Mr. Adams states he would like it to be a private room where it is just us. Mrs. Clay asked how many would be interesting in going? She states 14 plus spouses. Mr. Adams stated Charlies has a nice big room. Mrs. Clay states if we decide to do something we need to make reservations. Mr. Fore states if we wanted to have it catered, Altavista might let us use the Train Station. Mr. Poindexter stated that's a good idea so that way people wouldn't have to drive 30-40 mins to Lynchburg. Mr. Adams stated catering might be cheaper and we could ask Judith Hedgepeth. Mayor Hodnett states if we get it catered, we don't have to drive anywhere. Mrs. Clay stated she will call Judith and see how much she charges, but she wasn't sure if she would do it during the weeknight due to school. Mrs. Clay states we can do December 11th, which is Saturday, at 5:30. She states she will call Judith and see if she can do that and what she charges. Mayor Hodnett asked if Mrs. Clay would just gather all the information and email everyone and let them know.

Finance: Mr. Poindexter stated that he is working on a project right now and updating all the Town's Forms. He states he is getting these updated with the new logo, and he made a template. Mayor Hodnett stated he is going to pass these around and let council take them with them and look over them and see if any changes need to be made. Mr. Poindexter stated this is partially finance because we found a mess with the meals tax form. Mr. Poindexter stated he has updated all 5 of the forms, and he wanted to suggest adopting these as our official new forms for office use and to be put on the website and clean out all the old ones that way we are all on the same page. Attorney Eller stated they all need the same font, Mr. Poindexter stated he will correct that. All council states they look good and very professional. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill stated she would like to see the revision date at the bottom of each form. Mr. Poindexter stated it is at the bottom in the center, that every document needs a revision form. Mr. Poindexter stated he would like to make a motion that we accept these forms as is with adding form numbers. Mr. Adams asked Attorney Eller if he has looked these over? Attorney Eller states he would like to have some time to look these over and make sure all the codes are correct. Mr. Adams states this will give us all time to look these over. Mr. Poindexter states he would like to withdraw the motion until next meeting.

Public Works & Planning/Zoning Commission: No report

Report from Mayor Hodnett

Mayor Hodnett states thank you all for coming, thank you staff for all that you do, he is proud of us all and this is the best group he has ever worked with, and this includes Jason and Tom, also Tom Fore.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23PM

Kelsie Sligh
Clerk

Gary Hodnett
Mayor