

Town of Hurt, Virginia
Council Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2023

Hurt Town Council held its monthly business meeting Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at the Hurt Volunteer Fire Department. The meeting opened at 6:04 pm by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

Roll Call

Members present: Mr. Gary Poindexter, Mr. Bob Majure, Mr. Jeremiah Knowles, Mr. Pierre Richard, Mr. Glenn Mitchell, and Mrs. Kathy Keesee via phone call.

Closed Session

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

Motion: Mr. Poindexter Second: Mr. Mitchell Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:05 pm and exited closed session at approximately 7:00 pm.

A motion was made to return to open session and to certify that only HR, real estate, contract negotiations, personnel, and prospective business matters were discussed during closed session as required by VA FOIA § 2.2-3712 (D).

Motion: Mr. Poindexter Second: Mr. Mitchell Passage: Unanimous

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mr. Poindexter

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Gary Hodnett

Welcome/Opening Remarks

Mayor Hodnett states thank you guys for coming. I just want to mention one thing, I don't know if you guys read the Star Tribune or not, but at our last meeting they said we had 50 people from the town, it was 15 because we counted them. I called the editor. Mr. Knowles stated I don't remember anybody from the Star Tribune here. Mayor Hodnett replied yea it was, but from 15 to 50, I don't know how you get that. They have a new person that is going to be joining us at our next meeting. I have asked the Star Tribune to go back and do a correction on it. Mr. Majure stated there are only 26 seats here.

Public Comment

No Comment

New Business

Phase II Project update Peed & Bortz: Mayor Hodnett stated you guys heard the presentation from Peed & Bortz, correct me if I am wrong, but you guys want to go through the full project as it sits right now? Mr. Poindexter stated I am in full agreement. I don't yet see that we can justify not doing so. Mayor Hodnett stated I have some extra really good news, and I will let Mr. Fore and Joe Smith tell us about the little project they have been working on with the state. Mr. Fore stated of course you know with the EPA put down because of what happened in Flint Michigan, the lead and copper inventory list has to be

done. Joe and I gathered information together and filled out probably about a 25 page document grant application for \$250,000 to be able to hire someone to come in and fill our gaps. We have an Excel spreadsheet, where you have to gather information on the incoming side from our main to our meter and then from the meter into the house. Virginia, unlike other states, really began asking a lot more questions about the type of material that it is, whether there's any lead copper fittings in the home. Some of those questions can be answered as unknown but if you can gather that information, it helps them to select where Joe's next set of lead copper samples will be collected from. It is a \$250,000 loan business, we put together an RFP to solicit firms to interview and try to get the best price out of them and just do competitive negotiation with them. Once we get all of those back in, Joe, the mayor and myself will sit down and pick the negotiated company to do that work. It is \$250,000, Altavista also picked up that same \$250,000 so between the loan forgiveness that Hurt has got and the loan forgiveness that Altavista has got on their two big loans and projects, our sedimentation project was a \$2.434 million loan forgiveness. Y'all had a \$1.3 million loan forgiveness on your loan and this \$500,000 between myself and Joe, we've been able to communicate to the health department how much it was needed and it saved both localities nearly 5 million.

Mayor Hodnett stated that's the value of grants. I know at the last meeting I think some people don't understand why we push and go after them so hard. That right there is why every penny that we get in the grant is a penny we don't have to spend and we're going after them anywhere. Mike Jones just about every other day sends one that is out there and available. We apply for everyone that we can get. Thank you guys, good job. As usual Joe and Tom, y'all do excellent work. Mr. Knowles asked where's the demark point into the county watering hole grip? Tom replied the demarcation point is right there at the pump station. He has a vault that is probably about 200 feet above the pump station and that line goes from there on into Grit. That is their line right after that vault. Mr. Knowles asked, "Is that all we have to report on is up to that vault? Tom replied yes sir. Mr. Knowles asked if we had to deal with any of this stuff up in the park, the old Klopman area? Joe replied just what is out front. You'll see our fire hydrants that are silver. Mr. Fore stated he will have to do some additional work with the public school right here and also Faith Christian as it moves forward because there is a requirement in the EPA guidance that directs water utilities to help the schools out. Joe stated I will be pulling five samples a year from each school from five different locations in the school.

Mayor Hodnett stated just to report Ellen Brumfield attended the VRS versa training for treasurers last Thursday and Friday in Williamsburg. Mr. Poindexter asked for a building update on Town Hall. Mayor Hodnett stated the bulletproof material is in, the doors have been hung, sheetrock has been sanded, and we are moving on to the painting phase and finishing up the electric, we are getting the recess lighting in place, got to finish out the counter glass, it is in place but the speak throughs the guy didn't bring them when he installed the glass so he will have to come back and do that. Mr. Majure asked if it was going to be an intercom system or just an opening? Mayor Hodnett replied I am glad you mentioned that, this is going to be up to you guys, because of the uproar about locking doors, I am not willing to make it by myself because I know what I would do, but now that we've got that complete that foyer when you walk into Town Hall is going to be completely sealed. Do you as council want to lock that door and keep it locked, you won't have free access to anywhere when you come in but the foyer because the next door is bulletproof and you can't get through that. The door to the police department and the clerk has been moved back to the main hallway, so there is no entry anywhere, so if somebody comes in they can't go anywhere but right there. It is going to be up to you guys whether you want to lock the

door and give them remote access to get in or do they just walk up and open the door and come in? Mr. Poindexter asked just to the foyer only, would they have to be admitted to anything else? Mayor Hodnett replied if they wanted to see Joe, they would tell Kelsie, she would call Joe, he would open the door and allow entry into his office. Mr. Majure stated it sounds like we are going to the same point we are at now, the foyer is like the outside where we are at now. Mayor Hodnett replied the biggest fault with it, and this is how I explained it to Pierre when he came in, he was a proponent of leaving it unlocked. The way I explained it to him, if you have somebody come in to pay the water bill, and they're one of these irate people that are just determined they are going to harm somebody, and you got a 24 year old girl in there with a two year old child running around her legs playing with her and she's trying to pay her water bill and they come in and see the set up and they know they can't do harm to the clerk, are these people crazy enough to do harm to the girl and her kid? The public will be at risk, not the staff, and that's how I explained it to Pierre, and I know what his answer was. He said lock it and let them in one at a time. Mr. Knowles stated my thought is we can put in the equipment to do it and if we change our mind later we can disable it. Mr. Pierre stated or we can leave it up to the discretion of the clerks whether they want to use it or not. Mr. Knowles stated it will stay locked if we leave it up to the clerk. Mayor Hodnett stated I would say to some degree unless she saw and knew the person getting out of the car. Mr. Poindexter stated I'm kind of on the fence about it, I see two sides to it. As far as security goes, I'm all about security. I want our people, both staff and customers, secure. There was no question about under the old arrangement that it needed to be locked, it didn't need to be, you know, just running in and out any old way. I mean, that was a real hazard with some of the personalities that come in there. If it's limited to where it's more like Altavista or maybe some other small town halls where the foyer is open, but nothing else is unless a person is admitted, then you still have a layer of security to protect the clerk and anyone else that's behind the glass. Mr. Knowles stated that takes care of your secured employees. Mayor Hodnett stated but it doesn't take care of Mrs. Jones with a kid or ourselves. Mr. Poindexter replied exactly that is why I am on the fence about it. I feel good about it now about the employees, but then there's still other things, so I'm kind of 50/50. Mayor Hodnett stated I think the danger of not locking it is if something happens, because you talked about it and made a conscious decision not to, which puts a resident at risk and that's the way I see it. Mr. Majure asked our policy right now is to lock it? Mayor Hodnett replied our policy was to keep it locked until we got this in place and then council would make a decision as to whether they wanted to unlock it. Mr. Knowles stated we have already budgeted to have the hardware put in. Mr. Majure stated it should definitely go in. Mr. Knowles stated and I think we should definitely put it in, whether or not we lock it, I don't know. Mr. Poindexter stated I am with Jeremiah, I don't see where there is anything to debate there. I mean, it's in the plan that ought to be in the place. It can be turned on and off as needed or as decided by council at the time. If there's a reason to change it from one way to the other, then that's something that could change at different times. Mr. Mitchell asked if the outside door was bulletproof? Mayor Hodnett replied yes all outside doors are bulletproof. Mr. Mitchell stated my opinion is to go with the locked door until you get someone griping about it. Mr. Knowles stated leave the policy as is until we have someone complain then we have to make another decision. Mr. Mitchell stated I am just one, but that is my opinion. Mr. Majure stated I prefer to leave the policy the same at this point in time, just because I mean, we're not inconveniencing people that much in the grand scheme of things and safety wise it's an improvement. Mr. Poindexter stated and I don't think that if just one or two complaints would be enough to justify changes, it would need to be a substantial number and have a pretty good argument for it. Not just somebody that thrives on complaining. Mayor Hodnett stated like everything else it is

always risk versus reward and if you have an accident in there, you will never get past it. Mr. Mitchell stated from listening to the TV you don't have to do anything to be killed, especially when a sheriff's deputy gets shot and killed sitting in his car. Mayor Hodnett stated or one getting run over riding his bicycle. Mr. Mitchell stated you don't have to do anything or be threatening anybody, like you said a lady in there paying her bills, somebody just walks up there and starts shooting. I mean, nowadays, people don't need a reason to kill somebody. Mr. Poindexter stated it is the world we live in now. Mr. Majure stated it sounds like we want to leave it locked. Mr. Poindexter stated I think so. Mr. Mitchell stated we can always back up. Mayor Hodnett stated so we put the lock system in and see how it works. Mr. Majure asked is the speaker going to be a passthrough to talk to the clerk? Mayor Hodnett replied oh yea, right now the way it is set up, that whole countertop we took it all the way over to that front wall, so it's almost as big as this table right here. The slide through is in the center and then on each side of that there is a speak through. If you ever open it up, two people can be there and take two payments if you want. Mr. Majure asked but is it not an electronic speaker? Mayor Hodnett replied it is a level 4 bulletproof insert that goes into the glass, it is opened and does something with your voice. Mr. Majure stated oh so it is electronic? Mr. Poindexter stated it is a modulator then. Mayor Hodnett replied it is not electronic, but it has slots in it that carries your voice through. Mr. Fore stated something similar to what is in Altavista. Mr. Majure asked about the bathrooms? Mayor Hodnett replied the bathrooms are on the secured side. Mr. Majure asked if they were finished? Mayor Hodnett replied they haven't been painted. Mr. Majure stated I thought we were doing changes to those bathrooms? Mayor Hodnett replied we are leaving two, we talked at one time about making changes, but if we change the bathrooms we had to go to a handicap bathroom and that was going to run the price up \$15,000-\$16,000. Mr. Majure asked if the camera system has gone in? Mayor Hodnett replied they haven't started yet, but the purchase order has been given to them. We are waiting to get those. We talked to Creative Edge about vinyl wrapping the door and the price was just way out there, \$1,500 per door I think, but for \$150 we can get our Town logo and have that to put on the door, which will be pretty sharp looking. Is that something you guys want to do? Mr. Knowles stated I think that will be nice. Mr. Majure stated that is much more reasonable. Mrs. Dixie Poindexter asked if the foyer size was going to be the same size as the entrance hall now or is it going to be any bigger? Mayor Hodnett stated it will be the same size, maybe half a inch smaller. Dixie stated so there is no room for one customer at a time anyway. Mayor Hodnett stated we've had as many as four in there. Dixie replied yes that is too germy. It is nothing to do but to stand there, talk and breath on people anyway. Mayor Hodnett replied exactly, standing there talking and breathing on one another and even getting somebody's credit card number if they take it out of their pocket and lay it on the counter. I think it is the right decision to lock it. Mr. Poindexter stated let's stick with that at least for the foreseeable future.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

Mayor Hodnett opened the meeting back up at 7:28 pm due to a forgotten motion.

A motion was made to reconvene the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Poindexter

Second: Mrs. Keesee

Passage: Unanimous

A motion was made to move forward with the RFP's on the lead and copper inventory.

Motion: Mr. Mitchell

Second: Mr. Richard

Passage: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Kelsie Anderson
Kelsie Anderson-Clerk

Gary Hodnett
Gary Hodnett-Mayor