

Town of Hurt Meeting Minutes

January 5, 2021

Hurt, Virginia

The Town of Hurt council members held a meeting on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at Hurt Town Hall. The meeting opened at 5:56 PM by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

Roll Call

Members present were Mr. Stave Watson, Mrs. Rainy Clay, Mr. Collin Adams, Mrs. Shirley Barksdale-Hill, Mr. Jeff Bowling, and Mrs. Kathy Keesee via 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. Watson

Second: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:00PM and concluded at 7:40PM.

A motion was made that only personnel, and prospective business matters were discussed during closed session, as required by VA FOIA § 2.2-3711A (1)(3)(5).

Motion: Mr. Watson

Second: Mrs. Clay

Passage: Unanimous

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mr. Watson

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Hodnett.

Outcomes of Closed Session

There was nothing from closed session coming out to be presented in open session.

Mayor:

Mayor Hodnett thanked guest for coming to the meeting and asked if they wanted to say anything. Guest responded with; they were here to listen.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made to accept the Town of Hurt business meeting minutes for December 1, 2020.

Motion: Mrs. Clay

Second: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Passage: Unanimous

Hearing of Citizens/Public Comment

No comment

Legal

Attorney John Eller reported that he is working on crafting a solar ordinance, and he hoped to have it ready for the council to look at by the February or March meeting. Mr. Eller stated that in case anyone wanted to have a solar farm in town, the Town needed to have rules and regulations in place for this. Mr. Eller had also finished the Vendor List for people to bid on jobs around the Town. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked the question of what about the sealed bids for the Crown Vic vehicle, Mayor stated that we

have not yet advertised it. Mayor Hodnett stated that Mr. Lovelace bought up the question of whether the Crown Vic Vehicle was purchased with Grant Money. The vehicle was purchased in 2008, Eller stated that after 12 year it would not be any call back, how we would know and how would they know. Eller states that we can go ahead and sell it.

Administrative Staff

Kelsie Sligh is reporting on tax collections and delinquencies. Ms. Sligh reports that our tax collections for year 2020 was 84.36%. Mayor stated we are ahead of last year in collections and are getting ready to send out late notices to everyone that has not paid.

Finance Committee

Steve Watson has nothing to report currently for finance.

Public Safety

Chief Jones reports that as usual covid-19 continues and we prove that we can beat covid-19 and run the town. We have had to evaluate the Town and get a plan in place should it get worse. We can do this and run the Town at the same time.

He stated that the month of December had a reduced call for service load. We had one sexual assault case that occurred years ago and has just been reported, that will probably not move further due to no interest of prosecution. There was a credit card felony larceny that occurred, in this case we cleared it due to no prosecution. One of the drawbacks to community policing is that we listen to everyone and this why we get these complaint's they are not criminal but are recriminations. Evidence has shown that the more you talk to people the more you build good will.

We have a Community Message Board that has been purchased through Care Funds and it will be very useful to the Town. Chief Jones stated that he has received more calls about speeding, and states using the Community Message Board is very positive way to remind people to slow down. He states we have addressed road checks and we have a plan for speeders. Also, Police applicants have been discussed.

*****Chief Jones announced he will be giving a presentation the end of this month at Faith Christian Academy on Chapter 4 security and Covid-19 issues. He states we have the lockbox completed, police mutual aid is still in place and running well, although the surrounding departments are getting low on staff due to illness, annual leave, and covid-19.

Chief Jones states there is a link to Corporal Lovelace's, soon to be Chief Lovelace's schedule on the electronic schedule every week in case a council member needs to know what Jason is doing. Any changes unless it is an emergency, will be on the schedule.

Chief Jones stated that he would be getting to the Town, the policy changes that we must make. One of these is to Federal Discretion Funding, which states that we will not use choke holds unless it is a life-threatening situation. Define use of force reasonable, to objectively reasonable. It also allows the police officer throughout the United States to use warning shots, Chief Jones states that he is not doing that, warning shots are dangerous, and most chiefs are not using them. The other policy is the Escalation and Warning Policy, and what that means is any of our police officers are working with another police officer and they start to use to much force, then we must intervene. Jason would have to notify Chief Jones, and Chief Jones would have to notify the other Chiefs, this is a process that is mandatory. Chief reported that next month he would be bringing the Civilian Review Board option for review. The last policy is the

Social Media and Internet Policy, he encourages the Town Council to read this. This the type of thing that Town Hall needs to have strict control of to manage the message. He has had several people to say we want our community to have access to our website and social media, chief states that yes, we want our community to be involved, but we do not want this to turn into a message board because then we cannot control the message. He has had someone express "well this is just a church picnic" he said well we have guidelines, and we have our set policy, and he wants our Attorney John Eller to look over them and see if any corrections need to be made.

Chief states that we had a quite month this month. We had a lot of citizens talk to us and make favorable comments, which is good and the way we want to keep it.

Rainy Clay asked the question of how the clean up going on the Cox's property? Chief Jones expressed that he had talked to Pete and it has not sold yet, also noting someone had broken into his barge, so Pete had called him. Pete had expressed to Chief that he was in the process of getting everything turned back on at the property and that he was not leaving Hurt for any reason, he was just leaving Hurt because it was time for him to go. Steve Watson asked if the insurance would pay on that barge, Chief stated no because nothing appeared stolen. Mayor Hodnett ask how the barge was going to fit into the sale of the property, Hodnett said I am sure there is a title on it that states it belongs to Pete. Chief stated that Pete was selling everything as is where is. Collin Adams expressed that if Pete is selling everything as is then the barge needs to be signed over to whomever purchases the property and that maybe we could work around it and get rid of it. Chief stated, exactly, and that he is not at liberty to say whose buying it because that is private, but it was not an individual. Mrs. Clay reported that it looked like a real estate sign out there in the front yard that she had saw, and Jones stated yes, it could be the company that is trying to resell it. Chief Reported that Pete did request that at the next council meeting (January 5th meeting) to say thank you to all for what you have done, and for working with him. Chief reported that he thinks we will finally get a closure to this chapter. Mrs. Clay stated what if the property does not sell for another 6 months to a year, are we still stuck with that piece of metal that is on the property? Jones stated yes, but we have the ordinances that prohibit it and the only way we can handle it is if there are no more oils in it, and all the oils have been removed. The only thing that could get in it, is water which will cause mosquitos and the property owner would have to follow our ordinances on that. Chief Jones expressed that when he comes in next week he is going to ride by and follow up and see how it is going, he expressed that Pete has been working to clean it all up, and that he wanted to leave Hurt on good terms. Mayor Hodnett expressed that it was a huge difference in the property already. Chief Jones stated that he did try to convince him to get it towed down to waste side park and give it to the county. Mrs. Clay suggested to tell Pete to take it down to Walter McCormick's. Mr. Adams expressed to Chief Jones to address it with Pete to see if he is going to relinquish ownership with it so that when he leaves there or sells it to somebody, that maybe the Town can work out something with the new owner. Chief states that he has an open line of communication with Pete, and that Pete just wants it gone.

Public Works

Ms. Colleen McGrath reported that she had found all the water meters but one, and that she was ready to go in February for the next reading. The one meter that had not been found was the Methodist Church. Mrs. Keesee stated that she was going to call one of the former Pastors to see if he would know where the water meter was. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if any new construction was there and maybe had been built over the meter? Ms. McGrath expressed that they had been in bushes and shrubs trying to

find it, Mayor Hodnett stated if Mrs. Keesee would please check on it. Mr. Adams asked Ms. McGrath how many meters she had trouble finding? Ms. McGrath and Mr. Jeff Bowling stated that it was a bunch of meters that they struggled trying to find and that multiple trips were made to the same properties. Mr. Bowling stated that former employee Ed, told him that there was a meter behind the Methodist church, but never told him where it was exactly. Mr. Adams expressed that he thought there was something made to pick up water lines in the ground, Mayor Hodnett stated that they have been out there with metal detectors. Corporal Lovelace stated that he was using something that Ed had ordered, a locator rod. Mr. Adams asked if it would pick up water lines, and Lovelace stated that he did not think so because it did not have any metal settings. Chief Jones expressed that we needed a ground penetrating radar, and that Dewberry Engineering may have one. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if we could rent one from equipment rentals, Jones stated that he did not think we could around here, that he thought maybe around Charlottesville or Greensboro or possibility find an engineering firm that may have one. Jones expressed that he would ask around and see who has one that might be willing to help or even call it a favor. Mr. Watson expressed that the Dewberry Engineering is working out here and may be able to do something free of charge. Chief Jones said that English's may have something too. Mayor Hodnett stated we will check into it.

Colleen reported that she would like to know the town ordinances regarding the debris, grass, and leaves covering water meter lids, she expressed that it caused a lot more unnecessary time trying to find meters due to that. Ms. McGrath would like for meters to be kept clean and visible, John Eller asked what ordinances she was asking about. Colleen stated the ordinances around at least the water meter, Mayor Hodnett stated to keep the meter lid clean and all around it so that it is not grass and debris growing all up on it. John Eller stated that he did not think that it was in there was anything in the water ordinance now but that we could certainly add a prevision to it that says that. Mayor Hodnett stated so we can add one to make it the homeowner's responsibility to keep the water meter location clean and clear of debris, grass, and leaves. Chief Jones expressed that we should use the grass ordinances, because that way if we put all the yard debris in all one ordinance, it makes it easier to down the road. Chief Jones expressed that we have a good ordinance now that was just submitted stating that all utility connections to the property must be kept clean and free of debris and maintained by the homeowner. John Eller stated that we might put that in both, the water, and the grass ordinance.

Ms. McGrath reports that we have done a very good job on collecting past due water and tax bills, and that we had stated in the bill that if "anyone having any hardships to contact the Town Hall and that we would work with them". She reported that we have had at least 15 people come in and fill out contracts and we are working with them depending on what works best for their budgets. Colleen reported that the contracts were working well and that we have even had some that have paid in full.

Ms. McGrath reported that for the remaining past due balances, she ran a 30-60-90-day report, and it was total of \$43,160.00 outstanding and \$21,600 of that is past delinquent balances. She states there is still a lot of money to collect, which leads Colleen to her next question, stating "what the best route is towards collecting this money?" Mayor Hodnett asks Attorney John Eller can we cut water off? John Eller states that cutting people's water off can be a health issue with the COVID-19 involved. Eller states that we would have to check the latest executive order and see what that states, if cutting water off is something that a prior customer owes, we can not do that. In cutting someone's water off it would be to be their bill. Eller ask who owes \$43,000 worth of bills, he said it can not all be current. McGrath reports that it was a total 90 days plus, and that it was a 30-60-90-day report and that the total delinquent was

\$43,000 and the current active residents and of that \$43,000, \$21,600 is past due, in the past the 90 days. Mr. Adams states what leverage do you have but to cut the water off, McGrath states that there are people that have not paid all year. Chief Jones reports that the only time water can be cut off is unpaid bills begin to affect the utility sovereignty of the town, but that can only be done by the locality petitioning the state to receive an exception. Mayor Hodnett states on these frequent flyers, as we install our new radio read meters throughout town, we can put in the control meters on the frequent flyers and dial back the water usage up to 90% allowing only 10% of the water to flow through and they will still have water coming in. This is easy to control from Town Hall via the software we have installed. Meaning it cannot be tampered with at the meter box. Eller states that they must have a useful amount, and that it is something we will have to look in to according to the executive orders and see what the language is there. Eller also states that cutting back the flow of the water very well may be the same thing as cutting the water off, if we cut it back 50% then they have enough to wash their clothes and flush the toilet, then maybe its no longer considered a health issue. This is something that we can investigate and again if we would have that capability it is something that most localities do not have, Eller states we can look into and as long as we aren't taking away their basic functions to keep them clean. Mayor Hodnett states that this is going to eliminate delinquent accounts from getting \$1200 to \$1400 in the hole to the Town. We have several of these accounts right now that are just getting deeper and deeper in the hole. John Eller expresses once we get out of this that we can sue them for the money.

Colleen asked the question of posting a list of delinquents and past due accounts in the newspaper, Eller states that there is a statute that permits the publication of delinquent real estate and personal property taxes, but he was not aware of one for delinquent water bills, and that he would look it up to see if there was such a thing. He expressed that there was one for taxes. Mayor Hodnett asked if Eller would check on the water for us. Mayor Hodnett also expressed that Kelsie called today to see what we needed to do to implement the DMV STOP Program that puts a stop on individual's vehicle registrations when PP Taxes have not been paid to the Town to how we can start participating. Kelsie also investigated the State Offset Program for Real Estate Taxes that will allow the Town to get part of any Tax Return money due to an individual that owes the Town delinquent Real Estate Taxes, and we are now moving forward it. Eller stated that he thought we already had something in our code allowing us to publish the list and that we just stopped doing it, he stated at one time we did participate in that. Eller states that he will investigate publishing the water delinquents, he expressed that he did not think he was going to find the authority to publish a list of delinquent water bills, but he was certainly going to look.

Reports from Membership, Boards, and Commissions

Mrs. Clay reported that they did interviews yesterday January 4th for the Clerks Treasurer position and that we have hired someone. We will have a new Clerk Treasurer in the office in 2 weeks.

Mrs. Keesee reported that she was very thankful that we had Kelsie because she does not have to call her and tell her what needs to be changed or added to the Town Website that she did it on her own. Mrs. Keesee also stated that she had some things coming up that she was going to need all our participation in to start making a schedule to get head shots of everyone and short paragraph of each Council Members and Mayor. She expressed that some things of the website needed to be adjusted eventually, for example the fire department tab and the police department tab, we needed to get up to

date information for the website regarding that. Mrs. Keesee expressed that she thinks the website is very easy to use and not only attractive she thinks it coincides with the Pittsylvania website as well.

Mr. Watson has nothing to report currently on finance.

Mr. Adams reports that the Care Funding is going to extend till the end of this year, so that we will be able to buy a lot more radio read meters. Mr. Adams hopes that with the care funding we will be able to pay for all the meters with that. Mayor Hodnett reports that we can purchase about 120 more under the CARE ACT which will put us at a little over half, which is about 60-65%. Mayor Hodnett also adds that he has something that he needs Mr. Adams help with, he would like for Mr. Adams and the committee to schedule a meeting when he gets the date. Elvin P, Bernie Proctor, and Ken Karnigay from Virginia Health Department are going to have a conference call video on the water project that we have the Consent Order on requesting an update from us on where we are at and how they want to move forward. As soon as Mayor Hodnett knows more he would like for the committee to schedule a meeting so that all of them can be present for it and understand what is going on.

Mr. Adams adds that we have touched on the 911 house numbers for houses in town. He states that we need to address everyone and send them a notice so that we can make sure we get those numbers on the homes in town. Mayor Hodnett asked the question to Attorney John Eller if there are some ordinances that requires a house number. Mr. Watson states that if the county has an ordinance on it then we should be able to have that within the Town. Mr. Adams states that we should send it out on the bill that we are following up on this as a requirement. We need to find out what the county ordinances say.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Hodnett reports on how we have kicked around the 811 Miss Utility situation, about our hiring the service to do that, he reports how him and John have communicated via emails, that representative has confirmed to him in an email that if we do the month to month that we are covered under their insurance. Mayor Hodnett states that based on that they would be good on moving forward. Then we can release Pittsylvania county and Reggie Harper from doing that work for us and hire these guys to do it, that way we have a professional organization handling this, they are the same people that work for City of Danville. John Eller states if we have it in the contract that the coverage is there. Mayor Hodnett states that he specifically asked him about the month to month and he said we are completely covered. Eller states we must have something in writing about it, Mayor Hodnett states he will go back and get it in writing.

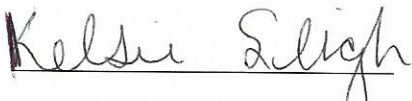
Another thing Hodnett reports on, he wants the Admin committee to update the Employee Handbook, we are hiring new people and unfortunately the only thing we have to give them is an outdated employee handbook. There are a lot of changes that need to be updated.


Mayor reports on another thing that the Town Hall will be implementing is what we call Code Red Phone System. This is going to tie into the county emergency telephone communication system and what we can do is notify everybody in the Town of Hurt with one phone call on any emergencies, or messages that we need to get out to them. This will be another way of communication with the Town. With Gary

Poindexter now working with the journal, we have a direct link with the paper, we have Facebook, the website, this will give us (4) ways to communicate with residents. Kelsie will be handling all of that, in the next couple of weeks Kelsie and Colleen will be going to Chatham to train on that so they will know how to implement the calls. Code Red will be put in place right away. Mrs. Keesee asked the question of if that included cell phones for people that do not have land line phones, Gary responded with any number that they give us.

Gary reports that we have several meters in the Town that need to be replaced, he has been going back and forth with Badger on the radio reads because he did not want to put in a manual meter and then come back 4 or 5 weeks later to replace it with a Radio Read meter. We are going to use the Radio Reads that we have in the basement right now to go ahead and put those in, we do not have to activate the system, we can read them manually for now. We can activate them anytime we need to, and they will upload the data to the Beacon System. We are going to start using these right away as replacement meters when needed. Chad Nichols worked on Oak Street line 2 weeks ago, he worked on a Saturday to fix a leak that was right off the main line and it was a big leak, and he will be on vacation in January until the 11th, which leaves us in a situation if we have another problem like what we had the other day, who do we call. Mr. Adams states that we find whoever we can, to fix it, we can get Walter to do it if necessary. Mayor Hodnett states that we need a procurement of service list. Mr. Adams states that unless we find another contractor to be willing to come in and do it, he was going to call Louis Compton, but they have closed and retired in Gretna. Hodnett states that when we have water running out in the road, we must make a decision. Mr. Watson states that we can call Altavista and contact them. Hodnett states we need someone for plumbing and electrical as well. Mr. Watson states that he will contact Jack Coles for electrical, that he uses them for commercial. Hodnett states that if the committee knows of anyone to have them contact Colleen, call them or email them. We have got to have a list. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill states that she knows of some people and she will have them call him. Mayor Hodnett stated we plan to advertise in the paper for interested contractors to contact Colleen.

Meeting adjourned at 8:29


Kelsie Sligh -Admin Assistant


Gary Hodnett -Mayor