

## Town of Hurt Meeting Minutes

September 1, 2020

Hurt, Virginia

The Town of Hurt councilmembers held its regular scheduled meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at Hurt Town Hall. The meeting opened at 6:01 PM by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

### **Roll Call**

Members present were Mrs. Shirley Barksdale-Hill (joined remotely on phone), Mr. Steve Watson, Mrs. Rainy Clay, Mr. Collin Adams, Mr. Jeff Bowling, and Mrs. Kathy Keesee.

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. Barksdale-Hill

Second: Mr. Adams

Passage: unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:03 PM and concluded at 7:02 PM.

A Motion was made that only personnel matters were discussed during closed session, as required by VA FOIA § 2.2-3712 D.

Motion: Mrs. Clay

Second: Mr. Watson

Passage: unanimous

### **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Invocation: Mr. Watson

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Interim Mayor Gary Hodnett

### **Outcomes from Closed Session**

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

### **Consent Agenda**

A motion was made to approve minutes from August 18, August 14, August 4, 2020 and Budget vs Actual accounting reports.

Motion: Mr. Watson

Second: Mr. Adams

Passage: unanimous

### **Hearing of Citizens / Public Comment**

Nothing to report.

### **Legal**

Nothing to report.

### **Administrative**

Mayor Hodnett reported that we are moving along with Southern Software and we have a lot of people signing up to make water payments online. We have already taken about 33% of payments for the billing cycle. Ed even received a payment from a citizen while he was at the post office. Billing with envelopes instead of notecards allow us to add messages and instructions to pay online. Several citizens like this better.

Rainey reported that a citizen wanted to pay in installments but had no computer. He was instructed on the choices and other options that he still has.

Mayor Hodnett stated that we can help him set that up.

### **Public Safety**

Chief Mike Jones reported that Corporal Jason Lovelace's uncle passed away, no further details yet.

In August Corporal Lovelace attended new state mandated training, taking an hour of his time each week. There are five different mandates for the state of Virginia. He will be attending verbal conflict training this month. He has been accepted into FBI training and he will be attending de-escalation training which will be the first time for an officer in the history of the Town of Hurt. He will be attending police executive leadership in troubling times course in January.

The police department has a new bereavement policy, which is needed for the Town of Hurt also. A copy has been sent to the Administrative Committee for the Town of Hurt. A daily report policy has been put into place and a quality of life policy is now in place.

There is a minimum of standard training requirements for Hurt officers no matter where they came from. Jason's Field Training has been approved and just need to interview with Administrative Committee.

Traffic violation standards have been updated and set for fairness.

High grass complaints have gone out and follow ups confirmed that some grass has been cut. ATV's on the roadway complaint has been followed up with speaking with the leader to let him know they will be ticketed. Still getting some complaints and still working on it.

Crime is down and hope it stays down.

Applicant Jimmy Lacy is interested in coming back for police officer job.

Corporal Lovelace has completed all requirements for Sergeant except an interview with Mayor and Administrative Committee.

We had a meeting with the Hurt Fire Department to help develop a better relationship. There will be a meeting with the railroad next week about railroad cargo coming through the Town of Hurt. Also, there will be a meeting with Smith Mount Lake representatives to discuss emergency preparedness.

The cameras in Town Hall is going back online in the office with video and audio. Audio will be for emergency use only which is standard in electronic surveillances. The office of clerk / treasurer with have cameras on 24 / 7 / 365 and exterior surveillances also. Changes will be made in policies if needed.

School speed check system is still pending and being negotiated.

On September 18<sup>th</sup> the Moore Act, Marijuana Legalization will be voted upon.

### **Public Works**

Ed Hodges reported that the Consent Order is to be sent certified mail tomorrow. Plan B to get us started with action plan for consent.

Mayor Hodnett went out to Pump Station help with water samples. THM and HAA5 water samples on Prospect Rd are in violation of standards and letters will be sent out soon to citizens.

Have not heard from funding yet.

Ed reported that the auditor left a list of people that we owe money to, with about \$1,746.64 being from deposits. Many had the incorrect address or no forwarding address, mostly rental properties. Rental deposits are \$150.00, and homeowners are \$50.00. Council members will look at the list to see if they know the people.

Ed reported a list of 14 pages with \$20,000 of unpaid water bills. Ed stated that the addresses were wrong on some, he corrected the addresses and then sent them back out. The water bill notice is sent out 30 days before it is due, a late charge of 10% is added after the 15<sup>th</sup>, then the water is turned off at the end of the month due. This is following the policy to turn off water if delinquent payment for 30 days.

There is a \$50.00 fee to turn water back on. Adjustments to bills and contracts for payments will be in writing. A payment contract agreement will be written by Attorney John Eller, agreements are approved by council and Mayor. If in violation of agreement, water will be turned off.

Mayor Hodnett requested that the location of all water meters be recorded with latitude and longitude. Mr. Jeff Bowling was asked to be manager of this project and he accepted. Ed stated that the radio read meters would do this, but Mayor Hodnett stated that we needed to have this information to enter into the Southern Software system sooner than we can get the radio read meters. He already used the locator on his phone for meters and hydrants, and it was very quick and easy to get locations.



## REPORTS FROM MEMBERSHIP, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

### Administrative

Mrs. Clay had nothing to report except that she knows where some of the people live that are on Ed's list.

### Community Development and Public Relations

Mrs. Keesee reported that she contacted another agency in the Pittsylvania Co area that has examples in Martinsville for the website.

Mayor Hodnett recommended Civic Plus which is used by Pittsylvania County and she will contact them tomorrow. Cares Act Funding may cover and establish continuity between the Town of Hurt and Pittsylvania County. This was suggested by David Smitherman since they use this company, more app to approve funding and establish continuity between the two areas.

Mrs. Keesee reported the Hurt United Methodist Church received a water bill for \$552.88 due to a bathroom commode running because the stopper flap was stuck. They fixed it themselves on 8/3/2020 and want to know what can be done about the bill. The normal bill is about \$60.00. Mr. Watson instructed her to use the formula to calculate the adjustment using the policy we have in place, for adjustments due to water leaks, which will be sent to her.

Mrs. Clay asked about grass needing cutting at a house near the church and Ed reported that Jason sent a letter.

### Finance

Mr. Watson reported uncollected real estate taxes, personal property taxes, and water bills.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Real Estate Taxes:	\$258	\$216	\$825	\$1,595	\$1,707	\$3,037	\$8,400	\$16,037
Personal Property:	\$4,218	\$2,961	\$3,867	\$4,178	\$4,884	\$5,924	\$14,270	\$40,302
Water Bills unpaid as of the end of June 2020.....								\$47,464
Total uncollected bills.....								\$103,803

Mr. Watson stated each year uncollected bills have gotten larger and now it should be high priority to collect. We need to start turning off water if bills are not paid.

Mayor Hodnett reported that we have Lori Goad looking at each individual person in the incorrect location and to be sure bills are correct. Some are listed in Hurt and should not be. Not all abatements were entered for years. Auditors assess about the same amount of uncollected bills as our calculations.

Mr. Bowling stated that PO Box from county residents may have been billed in Hurt.

Mayor Hodnett reported that Lori is tracking addresses even using google maps. Robin Goad from the County is helping her tremendously.

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill asked if we are getting an invoice from the Fire Department for the \$2500, since it was mentioned that we are two quarters behind in payments.

Mayor Hodnett reported that it was part grant and part of a deal for donations from the Town of Hurt, and he needed to get with the fire department treasurer to get more information.

### Public Works

Mr. Adams reported that Ed Hodges had already reported water updates.

Mr. Adams reported that citizens walking on the sidewalks were complaining about trees hanging over the sidewalk, grass growing up in the cracks, and grass clipping blown on the sidewalks. He asked if someone could spray the sidewalks.

Ed reported that the sidewalks do not belong to the Town, VDOT does the spraying and he already talked to them. He was not certified to spray the sidewalks.

Mr. Adams asked him if he sprayed roundup at his own house.

Mrs. Clay reported that some property had weeds on the telephone lines and trees hanging over the sidewalks on her street.

Mr. Adams asked if we should have a committee that handle properties and give notices every 2 or 3 months for nuisances. He read the ordinances and suggest getting someone to mow and clean up the building. He asked Attorney Eller if we have something that you can fine them for.

Attorney Eller stated he doesn't see a need for another committee and that you could file a civil penalty if property not corrected and \$500 worth of mowing and clean up has been completed on property by the end of the year.

Mayor Hodnett asked if Town would be liable if damage to property occurred during mowing?

Attorney Eller stated, yes, and we should hire an insured contractor.

Mr. Adams stated the Hussamy house is a mess. We sent letters but need to start being tougher on town nuisances. Need a bushhog for Cox place.

Mrs. Clay asked if we could go on Pete Cox's place. The dredge is lending over. Stated that when he was confronted in the past, he used bad language. Attorney Eller stated that he used the F word.

Mrs. Keesee stated that she was tired of looking at trashy houses and that Ed Dalton would roll over in his grave if he knew what the Cox place looked like. Ed Dalton was the previous owner of Cox place.

Mr. Adams stated that the leaning dredge could fall on a child. This is a safety hazard. Once a boat, jet ski, and stuff has been setting for years, how many years before it is considered junk? He suggested we read the minutes to find out how we can avoid the same mistakes made by the previous agreement.

Attorney Eller stated that the overgrowth is a public nuisance. A drone can be used to look at Cox property.

Mayor Hodnett suggested soil samples be taken to test for chemicals and rust in the soil.

Attorney Eller suggested to go over the whole property, take pictures, go over policy, send concerns and people will usually respond. Last time Mr. Cox met with council and council made a deal with him, but the deal has been broken. He suggests pictures be taken and sent to Mr. Cox along with a copy of the ordinance, then have him come to council meeting to respond. Then an Inspection Warrant can be issued if needed. A list of all the worst properties in town should be addressed.

Mr. Adams want to be clear that Corporal Lovelace will do his job and not throw him under the bus about letters to the properties. Stated that this is not just a Collin project.

Mr. Watson stated that this is a council project not just a Collin project.

Attorney Eller asked Chief Jones if he would be sure the problem with Corporal Lovelace and Mr. Adams be addressed, since Collin is a little uncomfortable with Jason.

Chief Jones stated that was before he came on board. Corporal Lovelace has been reformed and cooperative. This did not happen under his watch and he would get evidence for next meeting.

Mr. Adams stated he has tried to clean this town up for years, to no avail.

### **Mayors Report**

Mayor Hodnett reported that more ideas were given to him by Smitherman for Cares Funding and he is following up.

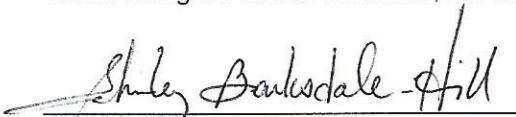
He will be calling Opto-traffic regarding school zone speed check project soon.

He is working with Les Adams and talking to Richmond contacts about what can be done about the Plaza.

Chief Jones reported that John Catlett passed away, who was a former Hurt police officer.

Mrs. Clay stated she would clean the Town Hall building.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

  
Shirley Barksdale-Hill – Vice-Mayor

  
Gary Hodnett – Mayor