

Town of Hurt Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2020

Hurt, Virginia

The Town of Hurt councilmembers held a meeting on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at Hurt Town Hall. The meeting opened at 6:03 PM by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

Roll Call

Members present were Mrs. Shirley Barksdale-Hill, Mr. Jeff Bowling, Mr. Colin Adams, Mr. Steve Watson, Mrs. Rainy Clay, 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. Watson Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:04 PM and concluded at 7:07 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. Watson Passage: Unanimous

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mrs. Keesee

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.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made to accept the Town of Hurt business meeting minutes for November 9, 2020.

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

Mayor

Mayor Hodnett thanked guests for coming to the meeting.

Hearing of Citizens/Public Comment

Former Mayor Gary Poindexter greeted everyone with good evening and stated that it was good to see everyone. He is happy to see the town moving forward with new vehicles, new police uniforms, new website, and SR-RIFA. Which he has a special passion for and wants to see activity continues. He is now trying out another interest of Free Lance Journalism, to let the public know what is happening. He loves to write and let him know if he can be of any help. Good to be here.

Councilmembers welcomed him and thanked him for coming.

Legal

Attorney John Eller reported that he had a form of ordinance to implement OptoTraffic speed enforcement for school zones. The contract is completed, and we should approve the form. Motion was made to approve the form to get an ordinance in place.

Motion: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Second: Mr. Adams

Passage: Unanimous

Administrative Staff

Mrs. Clay reported that Holly Saunders has given her notice that she will be leaving the Clerk position. We have a couple more applicants to interview and will get with the other Administrative Committee members, Mr. Bowling and Mrs. Barksdale-Hill.

Finance Committee

Mr. Steve Watson reported that SR-RIFA meeting today was all very positive with things happening behind the scenes that we cannot discuss at this time. COVID slowed the process a lot with permits, DEQ, government office shut down, etc., but we are still going forward as supposed to. We are progressing well and expecting groundbreaking in a few months.

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill also stated that the meeting was very encouraging and positive.

Public Safety

Chief Mike Jones reported an update from CDC with concern about the new surges on top of surges in COVID-19. We must continue to practice social distancing, wearing mask and hand sanitation.

He stated that the month of November was quite eventful with Corporal Lovelace quarantined for COVID-19. He was assigned administrative and telephone duties at home, to keep the police department active and available for our citizens.

Community policing efforts continues with several contacts for questions about disputes that were primarily civil in nature. One shoplifting petit larceny arrest.

Corporal Lovelace responded from home and spoke to a complainant to address a reckless driving in a residential neighborhood just before the holiday weekend.

There was an identity theft that led to credit card fraud arrest.

The variable message sign is scheduled to ship soon. All town departments can utilize the sign for public messaging needs.

Corp. Lovelace is scheduled to complete the FBI LEEDA trilogy this month. (Law Enforcement Executive Development Association). This is quite the impressive achievement.

Overall crime and traffic incidents are down.

Traffic Complaints: Police will continue to address traffic complaints as follows:

Speeding – Advertise the fact that we will be conducting radar enforcement at designated locations weekly. Enforcement policy will be as follows: speeding 1-5 MPH over the limit will be discretionary in the issuance of a summons; speeding over 5 MPH – a summons will be issued with no exceptions. We will notify the community via our FB page and by placing a sign with the words “Speed Zone Ahead –

Radar Enforced" in the area that we are working. We also ask that council members who use social media put out these same notices as soon as we give you the dates and locations.

Drunk Driving – We will be setting up DUI road checks on selected dates at night – we will coordinate this with the Sheriff and the VA State Police. We will notify our community the same as with speeding. From prior complaints about speeding Cpl. Lovelace has contacted the alleged speeders. He advised them about the speeding concerns in the areas that we have seen the most complaints. He also spoke with the complaints about what the Police Department is doing to help resolve this problem.

Cpl. Lovelace attended training on the Bola wrap system for less lethal use of force. This was put on by Campbell County Sheriff's Office, it was just another tool to try to help reduce our agency's liability. It is a very effective tool that can capture a dangerous person without having to use deadly force.

Cpl. Lovelace has sent the tuning forks for our mobile radar units to the factory for tuning. This is important as it effects the legal criteria for accurate speed collection data.

Police applicants – Chief Jones & Cpl. Lovelace are still seeking quality police applicants. The barriers that we are facing are as follows:

Lowest comparative salary in the area due to recent retention raises for other departments.

No incentives for college education, no hiring bonus, and no take home car.

Overall shortage of staff means that back-up assistance is less available. Chief Jones is inquiring into the use of current police officers from other jurisdictions to serve as part time – hourly police officers for the Town of Hurt. This is a short-term solution for our staffing shortage.

Sheriff Taylor and Chief Jones are finalizing details for the county to manage our evidence and records function.

Faith Christian Academy – Chief Jones to give a school & holiday crime prevention and school security presentation to them in the next three weeks pending COVID-19 exposure issues.

Lock Box installed outside front entrance to Town Hall for employee use ONLY. Each employee will have a code to enter the key box that they cannot share with ANY non-employee. If you are locked out of Town Hall, use the key as you leave the building. This will ensure that all staff can enter Town Hall when they are required to.

Police Mutual Aid continues to fill in when we have no officer on duty. Shortages of personnel continues to plague local police/sheriff's offices.

State of Virginia Vaccination Plan includes vaccine available for local officials.

Mr. Adams stated that he knows Cpl. Lovelace works a lot of overtime but we need more police present in our town and he does not know what the answer is. Mrs. Keesee stated that we want more police help from the county and state police.

Chief Jones has asked and state police are doing a ride through when they have the time and has a mutual aid agreement. The shortage that we are experiencing is everywhere. Jason's work schedule is available for elected officials and should never be shared because it shows hours that he is not on the street.

Public Works

Colleen McGrath reported that the first 3-weeks have been quite exciting. Approximately 588 bills were mailed out. Approximately 20 meters still need to be read due to meter issues. This was a disaster due to debris, leaves, trees, landscaping, ground covering, etc., hiding the meters. Thanks to Jeff, Billy, Gary, Jason, Collin, and citizens for their help in locating meters. In some cases, locating houses was a problem because no numbers were visible, and this could be a safety issue. Flagging meters and marking locations were also accomplished using google maps and metal detectors. There were houses that were not on the meter sheet and quite a few addresses were added to the house address books.

Mrs. Barksdale-Hill stated the house numbers were required when she moved to the Town of Hurt. The US mail remind you when your numbers need to be replaced on your mailbox but there appear to be no follow up on house numbers.

Mayor Hodnett stated that two or three meters were running backwards.

Chief Jones stated that the code says E911 requires house numbers, a county and municipal code or ordinance.

Mr. Adams stated that when he went out with Colleen it was raining and she was soaking wet but kept right on working. She is truly a hard worker. He also stated that meter reading should be more accurate now. Colleen thanked him. She enjoys her work. Mayor Hodnett states she does a good job.

Mayor Hodnett stated when we go to cellular read meters, coming soon, that billing will be a lot better and we may see some increase in bills.

Mr. Bowling stated that some meter caps had to be busted off to read them. Mrs. Barksdale-Hill suggested that they may have been estimated and not read.

In the case of a meter running backwards which produced a \$81,000.00 water bill, the daily usage is monitored daily and calculated to produce an accurate bill, then the meter is replaced.

Administration

Mrs. Rainy Clay had nothing to report.

Public Relations/Community Development

Mrs. Kathy Keesee reported all pieces are completed for the website and they allow 50 pages per community. Minutes and agendas each count as a page, so we need to adjust pages, maybe implement a policy with 6 months of pages for each. A training session will take place Wed, Dec 9th, with Kelsie and Colleen for about an hour and a half. We are on track to be up running and live on time on Dec 15, 2020.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Gary Hodnett reported that a meter box for the parsonage for Hurt United Methodist church was not found and they looked all over for the meter.

Mr. Adams questioned that he thought the meters were supposed to have been located before Ed left as part of this final job and appears not to have been completed.

Mayor Hodnett reported that Cares Act Funding paid for everything including cleaning Town Hall and the police car (\$3,200.00). New Public Works truck covered and to be delivered next week. We are keeping the old truck. Cellular Read Meters extended deadline with company about two weeks due to COVID. New composite meter caps are here, and Colleen shows one to everyone. Cares Act Funding paying for 260 meters. Ed talked about drilling holes in the old meter caps, but the new composite caps saved over \$10,000.00. The antenna drops and seals with a more accurate reading. Installation starts in about 30 days and the remainder will be installed in the spring. Mr. Watson suggested we save the old metal meter caps to recycle the metal.

The extra funds saved on the truck, \$16,000.00, will be used toward the water system improvement project.

Questions were discussed about getting rid of the old Crown Vic police car.

Attorney Eller stated he would advertise seal bids for the sale of the car and needed a motion for the activity.

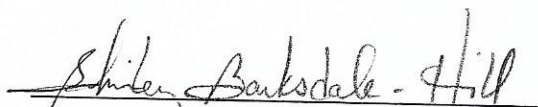
Motion: Mrs. Clay

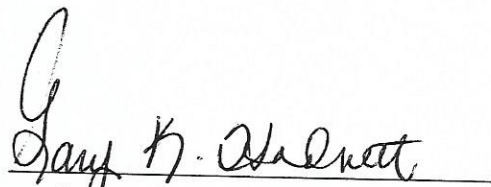
Second: Mrs. Barksdale-Hill

Passage: Unanimous

Mrs. Keesee to decorate Town Hall for Christmas.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.


Shirley Barksdale-Hill – Vice Mayor


Gary Hodnett - Mayor