

Town of Hot Springs
Board of Alderman Meeting
August 7, 2023

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Vaughn Barnett
Alderman Jeanne Gentry
Alderman Jimmy Moore
Town Attorney Ron Moore
EMS – Dan Myers

Entertainment Committee – Wendy Stancil
Fire Chief – Josh Norton
Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham
Police Chief – David Shelton
Tax Department – Laura Holloway

Mayor Norton called the Town meeting to order at 6:00pm

Mayor Norton requested all in attendance to read the public charge that was made available for all.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to approve the July 3, 2023, Board meeting minutes. Alderman Barnett made a motion to approve; Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Ammons

People are parking in no parking areas and larger vehicles are parking in compact parking spaces. These areas are in front of her house. Her fence has been knocked down 4 times within the past year. She has done what she can to repair and enforce posts in concrete and people have even backed into those.

Alderman Moore asked if the Town could put concrete posts/piers on Ms. Ammons' property. Alderman Gentry suggests that the posts/piers be painted white to match Ms. Ammons' fence.

Mayor Norton feels that the last parking spot be eliminated as even though marked for compact cars, larger vehicles will park there and makes passing hard. Mayor Norton asks that Jeremy Trantham check into getting the concrete posts/piers. Alderman Moore suggests that the concrete posts/piers be placed on both sides of Ms. Ammons' driveway.

Glenda Dolbear

Asks if anything can be done about the deer in town. Said she heard that the Town would have to ask the wildlife people could come and get them out (cull). Mr. Trantham told Ms. Dolbear that she could get a permit from the Wildlife Resource Commissioner (WRC), but she'd have to prove damage. MaryHelen Adamson asked if the deer would just be shot. Alderman Moore told Ms. Dolbear that she couldn't fire a weapon within the Town Limits. She asked if a crossbow could be used.

Fire Chief Josh Norton said he thought that the use of a crossbow would also have to be requested for use through the WRC, too. Alderman Moore said that there would be a potential for people, in town, to shoot each other with crossbows – not a good solution.

DEPARTMENTS

Laura Holloway – Tax Department

In the prior meeting Ms. Holloway requested the release of a duplicate charge from Randall Perry's 2021 tax bill. The Board had requested Ms. Holloway to contact Debbie Ponder to find out when Mr. Perry sold his truck. Ms. Ponder advised that Mr. Perry sold his truck in February 2021. According to the County, since Mr. Perry owned the truck on January 1, 2021, he is responsible for paying the 2021 taxes.

Ms. Holloway requested that the Board agree to release duplicate 2021 charge of \$72.00. The Board agreed to the release of the duplicate charge.

Jeremy Trantham – Maintenance

There have been a couple issues at Red Bridge; parts are in and should take care of the issues.

Wendy Stancil – Entertainment Committee

Next event is a Halloween Parade. They are hoping to have a Christmas Parade, too, but they need to get with Chief Shelton. Mayor Norton asked Ms. Stancil to get with Chief Shelton this month.

Mayor Norton said Nancy Thomas, Town Clerk, sent the banking paperwork to First Horizon on Friday, August 4th, for the Entertainment Committee's account. Ms. Stancil told the Board that the Entertainment Committee received \$4,000 from TVA for this year's activities.

Josh Norton – Fire Department

The Fire Department has had 158 locals calls so far this year. The average is 170 calls per year. Last year they had over 220 calls and may reach that again this year.

We have a neighboring department that has helped us out due to the Town not having coverage during the day. Chief Shelton is looking at the numbers of how many calls the Hot Springs Voluntary Fire Department (HSVFD) has not had anyone available and other departments have had to cover for HSVFD. The other department has had 106 calls within the past 12 months. Chief Norton is gathering data. Chief Shelton is aware of several calls in which the HSVFD phones have been notified twice, and on the third notification the Country Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) is dispatched. With these specific calls, both fire departments have shown up to the scene. These calls should have been cancelled with CVFD once HSVFD has let dispatch know they are on the call. Alderman Gentry confirmed with Chief Norton that he is working on getting the number of calls CVFD are assisting with the Hot Spring calls. Chief Norton said he has identified

six, so far, in which HSVFD responded to the call and dispatch had not canceled CVFD – so both departments were on the call.

Chief Norton said due to the close proximity of HSVFD and CVFD, each department can count each other's people for the State's inspection. Being able to count each department will allow CVFD people to join HSVFD and vice versa. With this the volunteer fireman/women would be able to use the truck/equipment in the area the emergency is in.

Alderman Gentry asked Chief Norton how many calls, this year, County has assisted the Town in responding to emergencies. Chief Norton indicated there have been 9 out of 106 calls according to EOC.

Chief Norton and Alderman Gentry has both heard that CVFD is wanting to be reimbursed for gasoline on calls made to the Town. They both had also heard that someone representing CVFD will be attending a Hot Springs Board meeting to make this request. Alderman Gentry asked Chief Norton if he had spoken with the Country's Board. Chief Norton said he has not, and he is not willing to barge in on one of their meetings.

Chief Norton said that at one point he and the CVFD had an agreement that they would cover each other's area because they were both so short staffed. He said it is getting harder to get people to help in the fire departments. Business hours are even tougher. People work at paying jobs and can't take off. Alderman Gentry noted that Jeremy Trantham is cleared, by the Town, to assist with emergencies.

Business

Mayor Norton told the Board that Big Pillow has a request to extend music from 6:00pm until 9:00pm on Sunday, September 3, 2023, for the Labor Day weekend. Alderman Gentry made the motion to approve the request; Alderman Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Next order of business was to open the sealed bids for the sale of the Dump Truck, Trailer, and Side-by-Side:

1) John Johnson	Side-by-Side	\$ 400.00
2) Donnie Waldrup	Side-by-Side	\$ 505.00
3) Jeffery Chandler	Dump Truck	\$2,050.00
4) Michael Boyd	Trailer	\$2,555.00
5) Michael Boyd	Dump Truck	\$1,855.00
6) Ricker's	Dump Truck	\$1,187.00
7) Ricker's	Side-by-Side	\$ 328.00
8) Rickers	Trailer	\$2,213.00
9) Coty Norton	Dump Truck	\$1,551.00 (updated amt)
10) Tony Steels	Side-by-Side	\$ 400.00
11) Coty Norton	Trailer	\$1,501.00
12) Carol Askew	Side-by-Side	\$ 347.00
13) Carol Askew	Dump Truck	\$1,538.00

Alderman Moore announced the highest bidders for the equipment:

Dump Truck	Jeffery Chandler	\$2,050.00
Side-by-Side	Donnie Waldroup	\$ 505.00
Trailer	Ricker's	\$2,213.00 ←(incorrect high bidder)

Mayor Norton had an Amendment to the Budget Ordinance. Amendment to the General Fund: Police Department Account increase by \$20,516.00. Alderman Gentry told meeting attendees that the amendment was to pull money from the fund balance, money in the bank, that is not yet budgeted. This amendment is for a Retirement Supplement,

for full time Law Enforcement Officers. This should have been paid since 2012, and the Board found out about this in 2022. Mayor Norton has been working on this since the Board was notified. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve the Amendment to the Budget; Aldermen Barnett and Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Alderman Gentry explained that each month, the Town will pay into the Retirement Supplement fund. The Retirement Supplement fund is a State requirement. Mayor Norton said the fund can debit the General Fund through ACH instead of us having to write a check each month.

Mayor Norton said the Welcome Center's lot needs a survey. Alderman Barnett said the lot has been surveyed; he told the Board where the survey pins were. He was present when the property was surveyed but didn't know if the survey was registered with the County. Mayor Norton stated that the survey cannot be located. Alderman Barnett said it was his understanding that the phone company owned the property and gave it to the town. Alderman Moore and Attorney Moore said that the Town only has 2/3rd interest in the property.

Alderman Gentry told the Board that we've received two proposals for a survey; she suggests that we accept the \$850.00 proposal. Alderman Moore suggested that the Board look into how to acquire the 1/3rd interest in the property. He asked if the people who have the 1/3rd shouldn't be paying taxes on the property. Attorney Moore agreed that the party owning 1/3rd of the Welcome Center property should be paying taxes as the Town is exempt, but they would not be. Mayor Norton told Attorney Moore that she would let him investigate who owns a 1/3rd of the property.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to accept the Dry Ridge Survey quote. Alderman Gentry made the motion; Alderman Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton had provided a copy of the Approval of Individual 401 Water Quality Certification. She said McGill needed to get approval from the State and Corp of Engineers to obtain a permit to work on the sewer that runs under the Spring Creek bridge. We have one approval; McGill has to send to the State for their approval. McGill will request bids after both approvals have been received.

Jeanne Gentry

The pool policy has been updated. This is mainly for the Spring Creek and Country fire departments. The update is to make the policy easier to understand and due to increased cost of water. A limit of 8,500 gallons has been put in the policy as well as limiting the water for non-profit companies to fill pools.

Ms. Adamson asked if it would be better for a household to fill their pool up or to have the fire department fill the pool. Alderman Gentry said that the Town's people can fill their own pool – the updated policy is more for people outside of the Town. Alderman Moore said a fire truck could fill the pool in one day, or the person could take two or three days to fill their pool. Ms. Adamson was just wanting to make sure their pool fill wasn't putting a strain on the Town's equipment.

Alderman Moore made a motion to accept the updated pool policy; Aldermen Barnett and Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked if the Board wanted to move the September meeting to the 2nd Monday or hold the meeting on the Tuesday after Labor Day: September 5th. The Board agreed to have the September 2023 meeting on Tuesday, the 5th. Ms. Adamson asked if the meetings would remain at 6:00pm, year-round. Board said meetings are at 6:00pm year-round.

Jimmy Moore

Asks that Ms. Holloway call and have the pole and light set up, at the school, set up across from the monument. Chief Shelton is working on getting the final cost of the cameras. Alderman Moore said he has all the estimates for the monument. Once he has everything together, he will take to the donors who are wanting to pay to have the stolen monument replaced. Alderman Moore asked Mr. Trantham to get a price to fence around the monument. Ms. Adamson asked what the replacement monument would be. Alderman Moore explained the replacement would be an exact replica of the stolen monument. Alderman Gentry told the public that the Board had not yet voted on everything at the time of the meeting.

Chief Shelton suggests adding a second pole and light to make the area well-lit to discourage anyone from vandalizing the monument and, also, for the cameras to be able to have good lighting.

Alderman Moore asked the Board if there was any update on the credit/debit card readers. Mayor Norton advised that she needed to go through the State and requested Attorney Moore's assistance. She said there is an agreement with the State, and we could possibly join the agreement.

Alderman Moore advised the Board of areas on Berry Wills Road in which the Town needs to add curbing to keep water running into yards and flooding the yards. Mr. Trantham said he would get with the company to come in, add the curbing at the time they are patching roads.

Mr. Phillip Solomon asked if the Town was responsible for the clearing on River Road. Alderman Barnett advised that the State cleared all the brush and trees, as River Road is a State road. Mr. Solomon said the clearing has made a huge difference in visibility. Alderman Moore said the brush and trees along the Town's streets need to be cut back, again. Mayor Norton asked if the Town was going to have someone take care of the brush and trees, again. Alderman Gentry asked Mr. Trantham to contact Skip Ricker, find out what he'd charge the Town to cut back anything over the roads and sidewalks. Alderman Moore asked if letters had gone out telling residents to keep their brush and trees off sidewalks and streets; advising the residents that if the Town had to have the foliage cut back, the charge would be passed on to the resident [property owner]. Alderman Gentry confirmed the letter had gone out. She also brought up that if the Town cut back residents' brush and trees, they wouldn't be too happy. Alderman Moore stated that if Town's stop sign(s) are covered by the foliage and someone is injured because they could not see the sign, the fault is on the Town. Mayor Norton agreed that keeping the stop signs visible is the Town's ultimate responsibility. Alderman Moore stated that the Town will have to cut the foliage way back if the property owner doesn't keep the stop signs clear. Ms. Adamson asked about the Henderson Drive and Hwy 209 area. She said it was hard to see coming off Henderson Drive on to Hwy 209. Alderman Moore advised the foliage has been cut way back; there is only one tree left. Ms. Adamson asked about having a concave mirror placed. Alderman Moore advised Hwy 209 is now visible in both directions when coming off Henderson Drive.

Mayor Norton asked Police Chief Shelton if he ever got a price for a concave mirror for N. Andrews Ave. and Bridge Street. He had looked into the matter at one time, but nothing was finalized. He will research again.

Chief Shelton suggested that signs for S. Andrews Ave. indicate no parking with arrows as people told him that they thought the no parking sign was for the one spot. Mr. Trantham said Maintenance may have some signs with arrows, he will check.

Alderman Moore asked Fire Chief Norton if the Fire Department and EMS had plans to put a sign out, similar to the Forest Service sign when they had occupied the property. Chief Norton said he needs to get things figured out. If a wooden sign is put up, there is continued maintenance. He said the plant [Peerless] is willing to make the signage for the Fire Department and EMS and finish it where the sign wouldn't rust. Chief Norton said he'd also like to have an American flag and North Carolina flag put up.

Chief Norton said he needed to speak with Dustin [Bradley] regarding a grant. Chief Norton asked the Board if the Town was limited in funds that could be received. He asked if the Town could receive any type of funding. He asked if the Town could take on any more financing as far as large bill payments. Mayor Norton asked Chief Norton if he was referencing the Town taking on loans. Alderman Gentry advised that loans now have to be approved by the State. Chief Norton advised that there is grant money for the VFD to be a part of the CWPP Program regarding hazardous fuel reduction. Property owners who want to be a part of the program – there would be no cost to them. The grant covers overhead, machinery, equipment rental, and whoever would come and do it [remove hazardous fuels]. But they [Mountain Valleys RC&D] would need to use the Town's Tax ID number and it [the grant] would be applied for under the Town of Hot Springs Fire Department. He [Mr. Bradley] will get the details to Chief Norton. Chief Norton said if this can't be done, he [Mr. Bradley] asked if a County wide grant could be

obtained under the HSVFD. This is all preliminary, but Chief Norton wanted the Board to be advised as to what was being discussed.

Mayor Norton told the public that the Town follows State guidelines regarding the purchase of equipment and any type of outside maintenance, under \$30,000.00, then the Town does not have to advertise for bids. The Town is beginning work on the Community Center. First will get heat and air then move on to roofing. She is in hopes of having these updates/repairs completed this year. The next project planned will be plumbing. Alderman Gentry indicated when heat and air are put in the electric will probably be looked at, too. She also noted that if the Town could get a grant to update the Community Center, the grant would be welcomed. Ms. Adamson suggested that a group of volunteers work on updating the inside of the Community Center.

The question was asked if the building was on the National Registry. Alderman Gentry said that the building is not on the National Registry as it had been renovated; the roof had been changed.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Moore made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Barnett seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:04pm.

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Approved
Abigail Norton

Mayor Abigail Norton

9-5-2023

Date

Other