

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Vaughn Barnett
Alderman Jeanne Gentry
Alderman Wendy Stancil
Alderman Dan Myers
Attorney – Ron Moore

EMS – Dan Myers
Entertainment Committee – Wendy Stancil
Fire Department – Chief Josh Norton
Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham
Tax Department – Laura Holloway

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

Mayor Norton read the public charge.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to approve the November 6, 2023, Board meeting minutes.
Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Barnett seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton presented Alderman Barnett with a Certificate of Appreciation for his time on the Town Board of Alderman. Mayor Norton also presented Alderman Barnett with gift certificates from the Smokey Mountain Diner and the Hillbilly Market.

Mayor Norton announced that the new Board members will now be sworn in. Town Clerk, Nancy Thomas, swore in Mayor, Abigail Norton. Mayor Norton swore in Aldermen Jeanne Gentry, Wendy Stancil, and Dan Myers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

Mayor Norton

Vote to Reappoint and Retain Employees

Mayor Norton called for a vote, from the Board of Aldermen to reappoint and retain all the Hot Springs employees. Alderman Gentry made a motion to reappoint and retain the Town's employees; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ordinance for the Christmas Parade

Order to close the street for the Christmas Parade. The order is from 4:00pm until 5:00pm, Saturday, December 9, 2023. Alderman Myers made a motion to accept the Ordinance; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Amendment to the Budget Ordinance

Financing for a Utility Truck for the Maintenance Truck. Amendment increases the Street's capital outlay by \$45,000.00; and increase the loan proceeds by \$45,000.00. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor. Attorney Moore explained to all that the Town's budget starts on July 1st of each fiscal year. When the budget is amended, there has to be an explanation of where the money is coming from and where it will be applied.

Mayor Norton presented a resolution authorizing filing an application for a financing agreement. Currently, the only financing company contacted is Ford credit for municipal finance. Their interest is 9.39%; the loan would be \$45,000.00 for a term of 5-years; Payments would be yearly. Alderman Gentry feels that this interest rate is too high. Alderman Myers agrees. Alderman Gentry suggests we obtain 2 – 3 additional quotes for financing. The subject will be tabled and discussed in a special meeting.

Resolution for Approving Town of Hot Springs Local Water Supply Plan

Mayor Norton had provided the Board with the information, prior to this evening's meeting, for their review. Mayor Norton asked for a motion to approve the plan. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Request for Qualifications

An advertisement has been placed on the Town's website. We are requesting engineering services for the IHTWWFP \$4,000,000.00 grant the Town received. Anyone who turns in bid must meet all of the qualifications.

Community Center Roof

A structural engineer looked at the Community Center roof. The engineer sent his analysis to Keith Webb, with McGill. The analysis gives more information than just replacing the tin. We will obtain a couple more bids if the Board wants to follow the structural engineer's recommendations. Alderman Gentry said she thinks we should do what the engineer recommends. Alderman Myers noted that it would be a good idea to have multiple options. Mayor Norton bill put the advertisement back out. Alderman Gentry asked Ben Houser if he had an opportunity to review the analysis. He has received the information but has not had an opportunity to review.

Water Tank Maintenance

We need to see if we can obtain any available grants. Maintenance on the water tank needs to be done. Exterior on the 200gal tank is \$18,500.00 and the interior is \$70,500. The 500gal tank, the exterior is \$27,000.00 and the interior is \$101,500.00. We need to also generate inspection reports. We will receive reports and forward them on to the Rural Water. Per Mr. Jeremy Trantham, the inspection requires that we have inspections every 5 years. We have no records of prior inspections, but moving forward we will have documentation of the inspections. The inspection report fee is \$1,250.00.

DEPARTMENTS

Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham

Lead and Copper Survey

Mr. Trantham provided the Board with a handout of the bullet points discussed in a lead and copper survey meeting he had attended. The survey must be completed by October 16th, 2024. The Town has to have an inventory of all the lead and copper water service lines; this is about 350 lines. This also includes lines past the meter and to the residence. This is a state requirement. The survey has approx. 34 check boxes for each service line. This will take a lot of time. The reporting is asking for historical data, building permit data, date that we may not have. The state has money the EPA has given to help with the survey costs. Mr. Trantham has provided Mayor Norton with a copy of the application for the EPA money. Mr. Trantham asks that the Board meet on this matter with the Maintenance Team to get a plan set up to accumulate the necessary reports. Alderman Myers asked Mr. Trantham if all of the replacement of lead lines had to be completed by October 16, 2024. Mr. Trantham advised that only the reporting is due by the October 16, 2024 date. After the reporting period, there may be additional monies to help replace the lead lines.

Actuator Valve

The actuator valve that switches water between tanks has been having problems. This has been worked on. It is now working well. The value is an Alma Valve. Alma makes a surge protector for their valves. The Maintenance Team would like to have one of the surge protectors put in. They are getting a price for this. Alderman Gentry asked if Mr. Trantham has spoke with Keith Webb [McGill] about this. Mr. Trantham said he'd reach out to Mr. Webb to discuss.

Backflow Policy for All Businesses

The Town needs to have a backflow policy for all businesses. Currently, most of the restaurants have a backflow. Maintenance is requesting that all businesses also be required to have a backflow. Mr. Trantham requests we come up with a policy as it is hard to enforce anything without a policy in place. He is requesting that all businesses have a backflow device; the business would have to maintain the backflow. The state requires the backflow be service tested once a year and provide the town with a copy of the service test. This is up to the business to put in. The backflow is to keep contaminated water from being syphoned into the water system and getting into a residence water line. This isn't a major cost to have set up, but it does require that a certified person, not just anyone, put the backflow device in.

Trash Truck

Mr. Trantham asks that while the Board is researching grant money, to please keep in mind, the Town is in need of a trash truck. The one we currently have is drinking oil and anti-freeze.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Josh Norton

Gifting of Unused Equipment to Double Island in Yancy County
Upper Hominy has given the Hot Springs Fire Department (HSFD) a mini pumper. The HSFD had previously been given some equipment that had been used as/with a brush truck. With the mini pumper, the department no longer need the brush truck equipment and wishes to gifts the unused equipment on to a department in Yancy County that is in need of this equipment. There is no money involved, the department would just be passing on equipment that had been gifted to the HSFD. Chief Norton is seeking approval from the Board to pass the equipment on. Mayor Norton asked who gave he equipment to the HSFD. Chief Norton said Broad River Fire Department gave the equipment to HSFD, the equipment was not governmental surplus.

Mayor Norton asked for discussion by the Board. Alderman Myers said he felt gifting the equipment to another Fire Department is a good idea. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve the gifting of the equipment; Aldermen Gentry and Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Putting Two Unused Trucks Up for Bid

The HSFD has two trucks that had previously been approved to gift to a Fire Department in Kentucky/West Virginia. The Kentucky/West Virginia Fire Department has had a couple of years to come get the trucks, but the trucks are still here in Hot Springs. Chief Norton now asks that the town now put the trucks up for bid. The Town purchased the trucks; one truck purchased from Woodfin for about \$5,000; the other truck was received from Skyland and the town paid \$750.00 for repair of the brakes.

The HSFD has now had 222 calls. Any additional calls received [at the point of the evening's BOA meeting] will exceed the most the department has ever received. The department has a few more members that are involved in the HSFD, Alderman Myers being one of the members. Alderman Myers noted that Issac from Ricker's has been a huge help. Ricker's has a scanner and they listen to calls and are helpful to the town as the HSFD is shortanded during week day hours.

Tax Department – Laura Holloway

Tax Release Requests

Requests for release from tax billing due to person no longer having property in or running a business in the Town of Hot Springs. All releases have been confirmed with the County:

1. Gary Clifton Gentry 2007 Peterbilt Truck \$120.00
Alderman Gentry made a motion to release; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

2. Larry Jarrett 2003 FRHT Trailer \$ 72.00
Alderman Gentry made a motion to release; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

3. Canon Financial Services Business Personal Property (BPP) \$ 11.41
Alderman Stancil made a motion to release; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

4. Scott Cauthen 2022 & 2023 BPP \$108.09
Alderman Gentry made a motion to release; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

5. Gwyn Ingram 2022 & 2023 Personal Property \$ 14.54
Alderman Myers made a motion to release; Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

2023 Property Tax Payments Collected
From mailing date of November 9, 2023 to close of business today, the Town has collected 37.41% of the 2023 Property taxes.

Events Committee – Alderman Wendy Stancil

Christmas Parade & Festivities
Parade will be held the coming Saturday (December 9, 2023). There will also be the tree and luminary lighting after the parade, on the lawn at the Alpine Court. There will also be a Christmas decorating contest. The details will be on the Town's Facebook page.

BUSINESS

Mayor Norton

Town Employee and Volunteer Christmas Dinner
This year's Christmas dinner will be held on Monday, December 11, 2023 at 5:30. The dinner will be at the Smokey Mountain Diner. The dinner will be for the employee, plus one.

Attorney Ron Moore asked if the Board had voted on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Professional Engineering for the \$4,000,000.00 grant. Mayor Norton responded that there had not been a vote. Mr. Moore suggests that a formal vote should be made. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approval to advertise for a RFQ for the \$4,000,000.00 grant; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Alderman Dany Myers

Fire and Emergency Radios

He is looking into radios for the new volunteers for the Fire and Rescue Teams. The Department needs to retrieve a couple of radios from prior members. Emergency Management will be providing a couple of radios, but he is looking into more options for additional radios.

Rescue 3 and Truck 3

Mayor Norton asked about Rescue 3's truck bed. Alderman Myers advised that Rescue 3 is currently not running. The Department will hold off on working on the bed until Rescue 3 is up and running again.

Alderman Myers let the Board know that Truck 3 is back in operation for medical calls. He also advised that Truck 3 can assist with some needs that Rescue 3 has handled. Fire Chief Norton mentioned that Rescue 3 may have to be towed – he is concerned that the slave cylinder may need to be bled. This part is in the transmission. The Department will check and see if Ricker's could do the repairs. If not, the vehicle will need to be towed elsewhere for repair. Chief Norton said he will call around, speak with mechanics and go from there.

Grants for Rescue Trucks?

Mayor Norton asked if there were grants for rescue trucks. Chief Norton said he will write to FEMA, again, to see if they have anything available. The state may have \$30,000.00 available, but his current plan is to get things in order to start collecting taxes for service out of town limits. This would include setting up a substation in Fire Fly. People are willing to help build these structures, land has already been donated, but the agreement with the build is that the HSFD will pursue the tax for service outside of town limits. Several people are ready to sign the partition, but there are some concerns from permanent residents; there are some issues regarding the County's fire tax district map.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Gentry made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.

3-3
Approved
Mayor Abigail Norton

Date
1-9-24
Other