

Hurt, Virginia

June 4, 2019

Town Council held its monthly business meeting in Council Chambers at Town Hall on Tuesday, June 4, 2019. The meeting opened at 7:02 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Roll Call

Members present: Watson, Clay, Adams, Johnson, and Barksdale-Hill

Absent: Doss

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Watson

Pledge of Allegiance: led by Mayor Poindexter

Consent Agenda

A motion was made to approve April 24 and May 7 meeting minutes, May financial reports, and proclaiming June 3-7 as Business Appreciation Week in the town of Hurt.

Motion: Watson Second: Johnson Passage: unanimous

Opening Remarks

Mayor Poindexter talked about the terrible storm that hit the town Friday, May 31, 2019. He thanked everyone for working together in assisting area residents and specifically thanked VDOT, Dominion, Southside, HVFD and surrounding fire departments. He added that he had been notified by Pittsylvania County that the landfill will waive tipping fees for storm-related debris to town residents with proof of address.

Hearing of Citizens

Mayor Poindexter reviewed the protocols for public hearings and comment periods.

Mr. Barry Farmer of West Spencer Road thanked the first responders for their help after the storm. He expressed his displeasure with how he felt the mayor handled the situation. Mr. Farmer felt the mayor should step down and let someone else fill the seat.

Mr. Glenn Mitchell of Darrell Lane stated he is concerned about the proposed increases in taxes, water rates, and IT expenditures. He does not feel the best decisions are being made or that less fortunate individuals can continue to pay these increasing rates.

Mr. Gary Hodnett of Darrell Lane stated that the social security cost-of-living raise was 2.8%. He had requested information about water usage in the town and determined that perhaps a five-tier billing plan would be fairer to everyone.

Public Hearings

The public hearing for the proposed fiscal year 2019-20 operating budget opened at 7:18 p.m. and closed at 7:21 p.m.

Ms. Lillian Gillespie of Darrell Lane expressed feelings that the various rate increases all in the same year are too much. She mentioned the large increase in the water reserves.

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Mayor Poindexter explained the singular event represented by this increase in the water reserve fund balance was due to a transfer of carryover money from several previous fiscal years that had been sitting in the operating fund (checking) over to reserves.

The public hearing for a proposal that Hurt adopt Pittsylvania County's animal control ordinance for the town opened at 7:21 p.m. and closed at 7:23 p.m.

Ms. Lillian Gillespie of Darrell Lane questioned that if owners keep their animals on their own properties, then why is a leash law needed? The costs to enforce are unnecessary.

Reports from Staff

Clerk-Treasurer: Mrs. Frazier updated everyone on the email migration. Mr. Scott Francis sent an email that the migration would begin towards the end of this week. She has collected \$5,708.83 in delinquent real estate taxes and \$2,931.05 in delinquent personal property taxes.

Chief of Police: Chief Rowland reported there were 141 calls for service in the month of May, 18% of which were traffic stops, and 10 summonses were issued. New police cars were delivered Monday, June 3, 2019. Radios have been transferred from the old cars and the new cars are now operational.

Public Works Coordinator: Mr. Hodges received three quotes for replacing a bay door in the basement: Mr. Joe Patterson (\$955), Lynchburg Garage Doors (\$825), and AGD (\$1,061 and \$1,116 with vinyl on both sides and insulation between). The public works truck had to have u-joints replaced, as one side had locked up and the other side was soon going to. Also, the shocks need to be replaced. He would like to leave the truck at a repair shop next week to have work done while he is on vacation. Mr. Hodges reported that right after the May 31 storm, most streets in town were impassable. He reached out to Pittsylvania County for resources, but no one showed up until Monday. Supervisor Elton Blackstock was in town all day Saturday to help with damage and cleanup. The field behind town hall is being used to deposit debris, with permission from the mayor. The fire department will assist burning it in the fall. Hodges also advised of an issue with the battery backup at the water tower, as the battery only has 12-hour life and he had to borrow a generator from the fire department. He suggested the town consider purchasing a portable generator to be prepared for future events. Lastly, Mr. Hodges spoke as a citizen of Pittsylvania County rather than as a town employee, stating that he was very disappointed with how the county responded to assist the town following the storm.

Chief Rowland thanked the town staff, Mr. Thad Barker, Mr. Walter McCormick and Officer Lovelace and all the adjacent fire departments for their extra help during the storm clean up.

Report from Legal Counsel

The corral on the town's water tower is in violation of OSHA requirements, according to Mr. Scottie Wilkins from Utility Services. It needs a gate to enter instead of having to

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crawl over the corral rail. The original lease agreement between AT&T and Hurt states that the town is responsible for building it. However, this is not a matter of building it but instead is a repair. There are differences of opinion at this point and there are no further updates due to those differences. Utility Services will not approve/pass the water tower inspection until appropriate repair work is completed.

Reports from Membership

Budget & Finance: None

Economic Development/Planning Commission: None

Human Resources/Legal/Police: None

Public Works & Relations: None

Mayor's Report

The VRWA/UNC utility rate study results are in. However, due to storm-related events over the weekend no presentation has been prepared. There was an increase of \$24,000 in water billing revenue with last year's increase in minimum charge from \$60 to \$70 per quarter. Current suggested changes to the rate structure are to: (1) increase the minimum from \$70 to \$73.50, (2) lower the 6,000-gallon overage threshold to 4,000 gallons, and (3) raise the overage rate itself from \$5.50 to \$6.00 per 1,000 gallons. There are several additional increases coming from the Town of Altavista over the next few years due to \$20 million in upgrades to their infrastructure and the cost having to be passed along. Vice-Mayor Watson noted the study group's advice that the town may just have to look at going into debt if major repairs are needed. Mayor Poindexter reminded everyone that the budget proposal in the meeting packet only contained the suggested changes listed above starting with the February 2020 utility billing cycle. There was much discussion about the water rate structure and the need for additional work prior to a final decision. A motion was made to pass the proposed budget as presented (preliminary approval), but with the understanding that utility rates are subject to change pending further review.

Motion: Johnson Second: Clay Passage: unanimous

Mr. Watson reported that he had attended a Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors work session, and that his takeaway from the meeting was that the county does not have enough money or staff to take on the enforcement of a leash law/dogs running at large ordinance in the Town of Hurt. Thus, the town would have to hire its own animal warden or reimburse the county for the cost of another one. They suggested the town adopting the same ordinance that the county has, which county officers are already familiar with. A motion was made to amend the town code by replacing the town's existing animal ordinance with that of the county.

Motion: Watson Second: Johnson Passage: unanimous

Standing Committees

A motion was made to approve renaming and areas of responsibility for the standing committees to: Administrative, Economic Development, Finance, and Public Works.

Motion: Watson Second: Clay Passage: unanimous

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Upcoming meetings for June/July were scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, June 18 at 7:00 p.m. (called council meeting/final budget approval)
- Tuesday, July 9 at 6:30 p.m. (public works committee)
- Thursday, July 11 at 6:30 p.m. (finance committee/end-of-fiscal-year review)
- Tuesday, July 16 (monthly business meeting rescheduled from July 2 due to Independence Holiday week)

Mayor Poindexter advised he had been contacted by Pittsylvania County asking if the Town of Hurt would like to take over the gas island behind Town Hall. Council agreed not to and to ask that the county remove it. He also reported that the County Waste refuse collection contract shows a CPI increase of 1.9% (\$0.14 per can) starting July 1, which will add an additional \$932 to that line item for the new budget year.

A motion was made to enter closed session to discuss personnel and real estate matters, pursuant to VA FOIA Sec. 2.2-3711(A)(1)(5)).

Closed session began at 9:14 p.m. and concluded at 10:09 p.m.

A motion was made to certify that only personnel and real estate matters were discussed during closed session, as authorized by VA FOIA Sec. 2.2-3712(D).

Motion: Watson Second: Clay Passage: unanimous

Mayor Poindexter advised there was no action or report from closed session.

There being no further business, council adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

Susan Frazier

Susan Frazier, Clerk

Gary Poindexter

Gary Poindexter, Mayor