

Hurt, Virginia

July 30, 2019

Town Council met July 30, 2019 at Town Hall in Council Chamber in continuation of its July 16 meeting. Call to Order was at 6:00 PM with a quorum present.

Roll Call

Members present: Adams, Clay, Watson, Doss, Johnson.

Note: Barksdale-Hill arrived approximately 6:30.

A motion was made to enter closed session to discuss personnel and prospective business as authorized by VA FOIA § 2.2-3711 A (1) (3).

Motion: Watson Second: Johnson Passage: Unanimous

Closed session began at 6:05 and concluded at 6:57.

A motion was made to return to open session and to certify that only matters of personnel and prospective business were discussed in closed session as required by § 2.2-3712 (D).

Motion: Watson Second: Clay Passage: Unanimous

Mr. Eller has spoken with an AT&T attorney concerning a cell phone tower structure not being OSHA compliant. The AT&T person in charge of the project, Mr. Arthur Pelser, recognized that it is indeed not built to OSHA standards, and he referred Mr. Eller to their attorney. Mr. Pelser then contacted Mr. Eller and suggested that they repair their corral (built in 2006) and asked for rent abatement. Mr. Eller advised them Hurt would not pay for their repairs. Mr. Eller continued that we would not renew the lease until this matter is resolved, as the lease states that the tenant is to pay. Mr. Scottie Wilkerson, who has specifications for the structure, will get with Mr. Pelser. Mr. Hodges said that AT&T has pallets of boxed equipment at the gate that are obstructing the entrance to and mowing around the water tank. Mr. Eller will keep council informed on this matter.

Mayor Poindexter stated that he has met with representatives from Tekabyte, an IT company who will soon provide an estimate on managed services for council to consider.

The part-time clerical position has been advertised in The Star Tribune and The Altavista Journal and on the town website. Mr. Adams said it would be a good idea to run the ad in the Danville and the Lynchburg paper as well. After Mr. Watson suggested advertising on an online service, Mrs Barksdale-Hill will check on advertising on the Indeed website.

Council asked Mr. Hodges to select a color of shingles for roof replacement at town hall and RLM Park. Work is to begin mid September. Mr. Hodges stated that Ricky Roach gave a bid of \$4,175 for tree trimming work, and Wisecarver gave a bid of \$2,550 for the same job. A motion was made to accept Wisecarver's bid. Mr. Watson noted that their insurance certificate would need to be provided before work is done.

Motion: Watson Second: Adams Passage: Unanimous

Mr. Hodges reported that after meeting with Bernie Proctor of VDH, they have a scope of work for a water system improvement project. It will be sent to Peed & Bortz Engineers for Scott Bortz's approval. The funds are earmarked for our grant application.

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Council’s attention then turned to a workshop dedicated to water rate restructuring. Mayor Poindexter indicated he had spoken with the accounting software company and that they do not anticipate issues in making this change on their end. They do need considerable lead time for setup and testing of the system. He thanked the concerned citizen who had submitted a similar proposal for consideration. He then gave council members a spreadsheet showing three scenarios: current rates, the 2018-19 budget projection as-is, and the proposed alternative. Each column showed varying amounts of water usage and corresponding billing amounts.

Much discussion ensued as council considered the options more closely. Cost per gallon was considered at \$0.0125, \$0.0105, and \$0.0073. Mr. Watson advocated a minimum charge. Customers are already used to a minimum for this as well as other utilities such as electric and landline phones. The minimum would help cover the cost of having the service, paying public works salaries, and system maintenance.

Mr. Walter McCormick expressed concern over his business (Hair Show) having a large bill increase. Mayor Poindexter referred him to an example on the information sheet. Mr. Adams advocated for bill-by-gallon only. He stated that we are already 20 years too late in accumulating funds for breakdowns, and that if we do not go with the proposed rate structure then we will need to raise taxes later to cover maintenance costs.

Mr. Hodges stated that the minimum that a meter reads is 10 gallons, so the least amount billed will be at a 10-gallon amount. He further stated that there are 24 homes (meters) in town that use less than 200 gallons per quarterly billing cycle. Mayor Poindexter then reminded council that even though Altavista is going up 8% to Hurt, no one will actually have an exact 8% bill increase simply due to the mathematics of the rate structure and the effective date of Altavista’s rate increase until the midpoint of the new fiscal year. Mayor Poindexter asked about a hybrid solution with both a minimum and a per-gallon rate, and idea that Mr. Watson had previously mentioned. Mr. Eller noted that Altavista went to a minimum in order to gain more money for capital improvements. Mr. Hodges stated there is a VDH engineering study pending that is approximately \$35,000.00. Council was also reminded that this new proposal does not include how PCSA’s rate would be structured. Mr. Watson stated that we need to consider the future, as Altavista will continue to increase their rates to us over the next two years at 10% per year. After further discussion over varying rates per gallon and the net result of each, Mr. Watson suggested \$0.01075/gallon be considered for advertisement and public hearing. There was a general consensus among council that they would likely support advertisement of the proposal at the next meeting August 20.

There being no further business, council adjourned at 9:07.

Note: Mr. Doss left at 8:10 due to illness, and Mr. Eller at 8:50 due to personal business.

Dixie S. Poindexter

Dixie S. Poindexter, Volunteer

Gary Poindexter

Gary Poindexter, Mayor