

WISE TOWN COUNCIL
Tuesday, January 24, 2023; 7:00 P.M.
WISE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS
501 WEST MAIN STREET - WISE, VIRGINIA 24293

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor
Ben Conway
Jeffery Dotson
Caynor Smith, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Robin Dotson

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INVOCATION:

Duane Phillips, Fire Chief of the Wise Volunteer Fire Department, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Adrian Dale, Town of Wise Street Superintendent, provided the invocation.

AGENDA CHANGES:

Town Manager Laura Roberts advised that there were no changes to the agenda.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the consent calendar, which included the minutes of the November 22, 2022 regular Council meeting, minutes of the December 14, 2022 Special-Called meeting, minutes of the January 3, 2023 Special-Called meeting, minutes of the January 11, 2023 Organizational meeting, the November - December 2022 Police, Water Plant and Fire Department Reports, the 2022 Yearly Police Department Report, the December 2022 - January 2023 Planning Department and Recreation Specialist Reports, and the January 2023 Community Events Report. Vice-Mayor Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

There being no one from the public audience wishing to comment, Mayor Adkins closed public expression.

DISCUSSION OF DEPARTMENT HEAD REQUESTS:

Natasha Proulex, Special Event Coordinator, proposed that the Town of Wise facilitate the Wise Fall Fling in 2023 due to Bonnie Aker resigning from the Fall Fling Committee and stepping down as Chair of the event. Proulex suggested that the Town of Wise oversee a Fall Fling Committee to enable the assignment of tasks to individual Committee members in order to avoid taking a great deal of her time and effort away from other Town events. In addition, she stated that she preferred to handle all registrations because the Town had historically assigned spaces for vendors and continuing to do so would eliminate the need to involve other Committee members in the crucial task. Town Manager Laura Roberts informed Council that she and Proulex had met with Bonnie Aker, who was in agreement that having the Town as a facilitator was favorable to the event. Council concurred with the proposal for the Town of Wise to facilitate the Wise Fall Fling in 2023. Proulex advised she would begin working to form the Committee.

Reagan Walsh, Town Planner, requested Council's permission to create a Town of Wise Planning and Zoning Facebook page similar to the existing Facebook page for Special Events. Council concurred with the request.

DISCUSSION OF WISE FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST:

Duane Phillips, Wise Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) Fire Chief, requested assistance from the Town of Wise in the purchase of a new ladder truck with an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. Phillips provided statistics, including that the Department covers 70 square miles, with 3 square miles being within Town of Wise corporate limits. He stated that the WVFD does not currently possess a ladder truck and the acquisition of one would allow the Department to be able to respond to fire and rescue calls requiring a ladder without having to depend greatly on the aid of neighboring departments. Phillips informed Council that the National Fire Protection Association recommended fire trucks to be in service no more than 25 years, and the WVFD only had one truck that met the standards: a 2005 Rescue Pumper used for automobile accidents. He stated the Department also had two pumper trucks that are primarily used for structure fires, which are 1993 and 1996 models. Vice-Mayor Ben Conway inquired as to the mechanical condition of the existing fire trucks. Phillips advised that the trucks had various issues and require frequent maintenance, most of which result from extended idling periods while at fire scenes. He informed Council that private donors are willing to invest toward the total cost of a new fire truck if the localities will agree to invest as well, including the County of Wise. Mayor Adkins questioned if financing options are available to which Phillips replied affirmatively. Phillips added that the WVFD frequently received calls inquiring as to the Department's capabilities from insurance companies representing both residents and businesses considering moving to the area. Mayor Adkins asked for a number of calls from the previous year that were actually in the Town of Wise. Phillips responded that he would view the Department's records and provide the requested information, but estimated that 70% of calls were outside of Town limits and in Wise County. Mayor Adkins and Vice-Mayor Conway agreed that additional statistical information would be useful in considering the request. Council expressed the need for the WVFD to reach out to the County of Wise to inquire about funding as well. Councilman Jeff Dotson gave his support, stating that the cost will only continue to rise and a ladder truck was needed in order to manage possible fires in tall buildings throughout Town. Phillips stressed that it would take a minimum of two years from the date of order to receive a fire truck. Councilman Smith suggested the Department apply for grant funding, as well as the Town of Wise, in an effort to obtain funds for the purchase.

RESOLUTION #3, 2023

Town Planner Reagan Walsh explained the submittal of an application by the Town of Wise to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for the Exploring Main Street Program would open grant opportunities through DHCD and Virginia Main Street to create programs for the Town of Wise downtown area. There being no further discussion, Caynor Smith, Jr. moved to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF AN APPLICATION FOR THE EXPLORING MAIN STREET PROGRAM TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT". Jeff Dotson seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

RESOLUTION #4, 2023

Town Manager Laura Roberts explained the proposal from Engineering Services in the amount of \$12,320.00 for the foundation and wall design for the salt storage building adhered to the Town of Wise procurement policy. Vice-Mayor Ben Conway added his approval of the reasonable cost. There being no further discussion, Ben Conway made a motion to adopt “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA, APPROVING A PROPOSAL FROM ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR FOUNDATION AND WALL DESIGN TO INCLUDE BIDDING AND CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION SERVICES FOR A SALT STORAGE BUILDING”. Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

DISCUSSION OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUEST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Mayor Teresa Adkins informed Council of the possible need to add an Economic Development Committee due to a request that Town Planner Reagan Walsh would be making later in the meeting. The additional Committee was included in the presented Committee Assignments. Caynor Smith, Jr. moved to approve the Committee Assignments as presented. Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

DISCUSSION OF ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Reagan Walsh, Town Planner, informed Council that the purpose of an Economic Development Authority (EDA) is to promote business development through small business start-up planning, business mentorships, small business loan programs, and small business grant opportunities, which are the aspects that would be of most value to the goals of the Town of Wise. She added an EDA also has the power to acquire, lease, and sell property. Walsh explained that establishing an EDA for the Town of Wise would provide an exceptional resource to aid in business development, as well as in the acquisition and administration of grant programs. She suggested that Council assign the establishment of an EDA to the newly assigned committee which would research and develop a recommendation to formally present to Council as a whole. Town Attorney Leonard Rogers stated the Code of Virginia does provide for the formation of such an entity as an EDA but cautioned that he needed to be present at committee meetings to ensure compliance with various requirements and Codes when establishing the EDA. Council concurred that the process for the establishment of an EDA would begin with the Economic Development Committee.

DISCUSSION OF LETTER FROM THE VIRGINIA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS:

Town Manager Laura Roberts informed Council of the requirement to notify the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) regarding the delay of the Town's FY21-22 annual audit due to the extended illness of an auditor. Roberts stated that during her discussion with the Virginia APA, it was determined that the Town's population of 2,971, based on 2020 census data, fell below the required 3,500 threshold, providing for exclusion from the requirement of having annual audits under Virginia Code §15.2-2510. She cautioned Council that most funding agencies require some

form of an audit in order for the Town to qualify for grant funding. Roberts advised Council that staff recommended the Town continue to have full annual audits. Jeff Dotson opined the Town should continue to have audits in an effort to be accountable to its citizenry. Council concurred with the recommendation to continue annual audits.

RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS:
PROPOSED TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR USE OF TOWN OF WISE SPORTS COMPLEX -

Caynor Smith, Jr., Chair, summarized the meeting of the Recreation Committee held to discuss proposed Terms and Conditions for use of the Town of Wise Sports Complex for both the Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth League and the Wise Youth Soccer League. Smith stated that written Terms and Conditions would improve communications and allow for operations at the Complex to run smoother. There being no additional comments or questions, Councilman Jeff Dotson made a motion to accept the Recreation Committee's recommendation to approve the proposed Terms and Conditions for dispersal to the appropriate youth league representatives as presented. Councilman Smith seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

BATHROOMS AT SPORTS COMPLEX, PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, AND NATIONAL FITNESS CAMPAIGN-

Caynor Smith, Jr., Chair, provided a summary of the Recreation Committee meeting held to discuss the restrooms located at the Town of Wise Sports Complex, the purchase of playground equipment for Arrowhead Park, and the National Fitness Campaign.

-Smith noted the increase in activity at the Sports Complex created the need for additional restrooms. He stated the Bear Creek Reservoir trail that was under construction would bring additional visitors to the Sports Complex upon completion due to plans to extend the trail to the Complex. Smith advised Council of the Recreation Committee's recommendation that staff obtain pricing for portable temporary restrooms similar to those used by the Town for special events.

-Smith advised Council of the Recreation Committee's recommendation to authorize the purchase of new playground equipment for Arrowhead Park. He informed the equipment would be purchased at a discount of 45% and installed by Town employees, which would provide additional savings.

-Smith provided a brief description of an outdoor Fitness Court that the Recreation Committee recommended to be constructed at the Town of Wise Sports Complex. The Court would be partially funded with the National Fitness Campaign grant in the amount of \$30,000, with the remaining estimated costs of \$175,000 funded by local contributions consisting of other grant opportunities, partnerships with other local entities, sponsorships, and fundraising. Councilman Smith stated the structure would provide a great place for children and adults alike to get a good workout.

Jeff Dotson made a motion to accept the Recreation Committee Report as presented. Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

RESOLUTION #5, 2023

Town Planner Reagan Walsh provided a photo of playground equipment proposed for purchase for Arrowhead Park to councilmembers. Following a brief discussion, Jeff Dotson made a motion to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT FOR ARROWHEAD PARK USING THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT REVENUE REPLACEMENT FUNDS". Caynor Smith Jr. seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeff Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

RESOLUTION #6, 2023

Town Planner Reagan Walsh explained that the resolution under consideration would create an opportunity for a joint project among various organizations in Town that would offer free fitness to the community. There being no further discussion, Councilman Smith moved to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF A GRANT APPLICATION FOR A FITNESS AREA AT THE TOWN OF WISE SPORTS COMPLEX". Councilman Jeff Dotson seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeff Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT:

Ben Conway, Chair, briefly summarized the Public Utilities Committee's January 4th meeting to address a utility customer's complaint regarding the accuracy of water meter readings. Conway advised the customer presented readings to the Committee which indicated there could have been an error in the reading of the meter. He also informed that a meter accuracy test was performed by Town Water Department staff, which indicated the meter was functioning properly. Conway advised the Committee recommended granting a utility adjustment to the customer's account to remove all charges associated with the erroneous reading. There being no further discussion, Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the Public Utilities Committee recommendation as presented. Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

CLOSED SESSION:

On a motion made by Jeff Dotson and a second by Caynor Smith, Jr. the Wise Town Council moved to convene into closed meeting for the purpose of and including:

Real Property – Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, as permitted by Virginia Code §2.2-3711 (A)(3).

OPEN SESSION:

Vice-mayor Ben Conway made a motion to reconvene in open session. Jeff Dotson seconded the motion that carried 4-0.

Certification of Closed Session - CM Resolution #2, 2023:

Sarina Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer, read Closed Meeting Resolution #2, 2023, “Resolving and certifying that to the best of each member’s knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applied, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Town Council of the Town of Wise,” and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway, Vice-Mayor	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

ANNUAL REPORTS (Informational Purposes Only) - Acknowledgement of Receipt:

The Town of Wise Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals submitted annual reports for calendar year 2022 for Council review and acknowledgement of receipt. There being no questions or comments, Ben Conway made a motion acknowledging receipt of the annual reports. Jeff Dotson seconded the motion, which carried 4-0.

APPOINTEE REPORTS (Informational Purposes Only) - Acknowledgement of Receipt:

Jeff Dotson made a motion acknowledging receipt of the following appointee reports:

1. C-N-W Board's regular meeting from December 7, 2022
2. Cumberland's Airport Commission meeting from December 15, 2022
3. Cumberland's Airport Commission meeting from January 19, 2023

Ben Conway seconded the motion that carried 4-0.

ACCKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF GIFT TO TOWN OF WISE:

Laura Roberts, Town Manager, informed Council that the Town had been gifted a 65" television and wall mount from an anonymous donor to be placed in the conference room for the purpose of participating in virtual meetings. Caynor Smith Jr. made a motion to accept the gift. Ben Conway seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway, Vice-Mayor	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

COUNCIL COMMENT:

Caynor Smith, Jr. shared that he continued to receive compliments regarding the newly installed street lights along Norton Road.

Ben Conway informed that he had continued marking the area around Bear Creek Reservoir for the trail project. He also expressed the need for sidewalks to be constructed along Lake Street, adjacent to the Wise County School Board Office, and at the intersection of Lake, Hurricane, and Old Hurricane Roads in order to eliminate gaps and connect to existing sidewalks. Town Manager Laura Roberts advised that funds were allocated in the current budget for sidewalk construction, however, depending on the overall cost, bids may have to be obtained to comply with the Town's procurement policy. Street Superintendent Adrian Dale advised he had been working to obtain quotes for said sidewalks and would have more information by the next regular Council meeting.

Jeff Dotson stated he had also received compliments on the new lighting along Norton Rd. He added that two street lights needed to be installed on the sidewalk in front of Thompson & Litton, located at 103 East Main Street. The councilman also expressed his appreciation to fellow councilmembers and staff for their hard work in doing the best for the citizens of the Town of Wise.


STAFF/MANAGER COMMENT:

Town Attorney Leonard Rogers asked that Council name a member, in addition to Mayor Adkins, who would serve on the Economic Development Committee. Councilmembers agreed that Caynor Smith, Jr. would serve on the Committee.

Town Manager Laura Roberts reminded councilmembers about the Retreat for Council and Management scheduled for Saturday, January 28th. Roberts informed Council that paving bids would be opened in February. She also advised the advertisement for engineering services for the West Main Street Pedestrian Improvements Project was being prepared. Roberts informed Council the Wise Rescue Squad received a grant for the purchase of a new ambulance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional discussion by the Wise Town Council, Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.



Teresa Adkins, Mayor



Sarina F. Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer