

WISE TOWN COUNCIL
Tuesday, June 27, 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
Robin Dotson
Caynor Smith, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INVOCATION:

Councilman Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance. Adrian Dale, Town of Wise Street Superintendent, provided the invocation.

AGENDA CHANGES:

Town Manager Laura Roberts advised that due to a clerical error, the Closed Meeting Resolution on the night's agenda had been numbered incorrectly and was changed to Closed Meeting Resolution #13, 2023. Jeffery Dotson made a motion to accept the agenda change. Caynor Smith, Jr. seconded the motion that carried 5-0.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the consent calendar, which included the minutes of the May 23, 2023 regular Council meeting, the May 31, 2023 special-called Council meeting, the June 1, 2023 continued special-called Council meeting, and the June 14, 2023 special-called Council meeting, the May 2023 Police, Water Plant, and Fire Department Reports, and the June 2023 Recreation Specialist, Planning Department, and Special Events Reports. Councilman Robin Dotson seconded the motion that passed 5-0.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

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

DISCUSSION OF DEPARTMENT HEAD REQUESTS:

Town Planner Reagan Walsh informed the deadline for commitment to the National Fitness Campaign project to install a Fitness Court at the Town of Wise Sports Complex was approaching. She stated Council's authorization was needed to either proceed or withdraw from the program with no penalty by July 7, 2023. Walsh added the Town had secured grant funding for the project in the amount of \$30,000 from the National Fitness Campaign and \$50,000 from the Rapha Foundation, leaving a total of \$165,000 left to raise or for the Town to absorb from the FY23-24 budget. Councilman Smith expressed his support to continue both the project and fundraising efforts. Vice-Mayor Conway and Councilman Jeffery Dotson also voiced support for the National Fitness Campaign project. Town Attorney Leonard Rogers advised Mayor Adkins that a motion was not needed to authorize the continuation of the project.

Special Events Coordinator Natasha Proulex informed that Boy Scout Gabe Ringley, of Troop #630 - Wise, requested Council's permission to install a sign language board in Arrowhead Park as part of his Eagle Scout project. She added that Street Superintendent Adrian Dale would be consulted regarding the proper placement of the sign. Council concurred with Ringley's request.

Natasha Proulex, Special Events Coordinator, informed the Town of Wise would be hosting the Virginia State Cal Ripken baseball tournament at the Town of Wise Sports Complex July 6, 2023-July 10, 2023. She requested permission to include day passes to the Town of Wise Municipal Pool in bags containing Town of Wise promotional merchandise to be distributed to all baseball players during registration. Council concurred with Proulex's request.

Special Events Coordinator Natasha Proulex requested permission to close a portion of Main Street for a car show to be held during the concert scheduled for September 16, 2023 at Big Glades. Council approved the closure of Main Street for the event.

PROCLAMATION #7, 2023:

Town Manager Laura Roberts expressed gratitude to the Town's Water Treatment Plant staff. Councilman Robin Dotson moved to adopt "A PROCLAMATION BY THE MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA DESIGNATING JUNE 30, 2023 AS "DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER PROFESSIONALS' DAY". Ben Conway seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

Mayor Adkins presented the Proclamation to Caleb Ramsey, Chief Operator of the Water Treatment Plant.

ORDINANCE #5, 2023:

Jeffery Dotson moved to adopt "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA ADOPTING NO CHANGE IN THE TAX RATE FOR REAL PROPERTY AND REIMPOSING AT THE PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED RATES, THE TAX RATE FOR REAL ESTATE AND TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY, SETTING THE PERCENTAGE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AT A LEVEL ANTICIPATED TO FULLY EXHAUST FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE PROGRAM, AND RE-IMPOSING, RE-ESTABLISHING, AND LEVYING AT THE PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED RATES A TAX LEVY FOR BUSINESS LICENSES, BANK STOCK, UTILITIES, EXCISE TAXES, AND ALL OTHER TAXES, LEVIES, FEES, AND CHARGES AT THE SAME RATE AS PREVIOUSLY IMPOSED BY THE TOWN WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WATER AND SEWER RATES FOR IN TOWN, OUT OF TOWN, AND WHOLESALE CUSTOMERS AND INCREASES IN CERTAIN ZONING PERMITS AND APPLICATION FEES". Ben Conway seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

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

ORDINANCE #6, 2023:

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to adopt "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF WISE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024 AND PROVIDING EMPLOYEE BONUSES FOR SAID MUNICIPALITY". Robin Dotson seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

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

ORDINANCE #7, 2023:

Councilman Robin Dotson moved to adopt "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR ALL CONTEMPLATED EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024". Councilman Smith seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

RESOLUTION #30, 2023:

Town Manager Laura Roberts explained 599 Funds are State aid to localities with Police Departments and eligibility certifications must be submitted to receive said funding. There being no further discussion, Jeffery Dotson made a motion to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS FOR STATE AID (599 FUNDS) TO LOCALITIES WITH POLICE DEPARTMENTS". Robin Dotson seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

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

RESOLUTIONS #31-37, 2023:

Mayor Teresa Adkins thanked all individuals who agreed to serve on the Town of Wise Economic Development Authority. Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to adopt Resolutions #31-37, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA APPOINTING A MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE TOWN OF WISE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY":

RESOLUTION #31, 2023: Rachel Helton
RESOLUTION #32, 2023: Bonnie Aker
RESOLUTION #33, 2023: Valerie Lawson
RESOLUTION #34, 2023: Brandi Cox
RESOLUTION #35, 2023: Bill Thompson
RESOLUTION #36, 2023: Cory Dotson
RESOLUTION #37, 2023: Jennifer Sturgill Mullins

Jeffery Dotson seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

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

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT:

Jeffery Dotson, Chair, summarized the meeting of the Public Safety Committee held to discuss a resident request to place No Parking signs along the public portion of Safenest Drive. Dotson stated a resident of Fernwood Lane expressed safety concerns due to vehicles being parked along both sides of Safenest Drive, making it difficult to see oncoming traffic on Main Street. He added that committee members visited the site and determined the parking to be related to a business located along the side of the road. Dotson informed the Public Safety Committee recommended No Parking signs be installed along the side of the public portion of Safenest Drive on which the business is located. There being no additional comments or questions, Vice-Mayor Ben Conway made a motion to accept the Public Safety Committee's report as presented. Robin Dotson seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Caynor Smith, Jr., Chair, summarized the meeting of the Public Works Committee held to discuss a request from a business owner for a reduction in two consecutive months water and sewer billings due to excessively high meter readings. Smith informed the customer had indicated no leaks were found on the premises. He added the Town had pulled the meter and shipped it to a testing

company to verify the accuracy of the readings. The test revealed the meter was reading with 100% accuracy. Smith further informed that the customer had removed faulty equipment from the premises that used circulating water to operate, resulting in the meter readings subsequently returning to normal, indicating the equipment was the likely leak source. Smith advised that following diligent review of the account, the Committee recommended granting utility adjustments to the customer's account in accordance with the Town of Wise Water and Sewer Ordinance, Section DD, #5, for the two high readings in question. There being no further discussion, Robin Dotson made a motion to approve the Public Works Committee recommendation as presented. Ben Conway seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

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

CLOSED SESSION:

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

***Personnel**– Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body as permitted by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1).*

OPEN SESSION:

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to reconvene in open session. Robin Dotson seconded the motion that carried 5-0.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION – CM RESOLUTION #13, 2023:

Sarina Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer, read Closed Meeting Resolution #13, 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”
Robin Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

RESOLUTION #38, 2023:

Vice-Mayor Ben Conway made a motion to adopt, with the official date for Kevin Yates to be administered the Oath of Office to be determined at a later date, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA APPOINTING KEVIN YATES TO PERFORM DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF POLICE CHIEF UNTIL THE CURRENT TERM OF APPOINTMENT IS COMPLETED AND AT THE WILL AND PLEASURE OF THE TOWN

COUNCIL". Jeffery Dotson seconded the motion. Mayor Adkins stated the selection of a candidate to fill a position was one of the most difficult decisions to be made as a Councilmember. She added that as a governing body, members of Council sometimes disagree, but are committed to working with the selected candidate in support of the Town. There being no additional comments, the vote was recorded by roll call:

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

Mayor Adkins congratulated Kevin Yates on his appointment as Police Chief following Danny French's retirement on June 30, 2023. Councilman Smith requested to read the following statement he had prepared:

"Wise, Virginia is a small town where everyone knows each other. We have a staff that knows each other and works together to make our town a better place to live, work and play. Our staff knows our town. When you come to work for the Town of Wise, putting in your time, dedication, and loyalty, you expect to get rewarded with increases in pay and promotions. In the past, the Wise Town Council has promoted Town Managers, Town Clerks, and past Chiefs of Police from within their respective departments.

These people know our town and know what our citizens and businesses need. We don't have a lot of crime in Wise and we don't have the reputation of harassing our citizens. Police departments are known to "protect and serve". I believe our department does that and probably with an emphasis on serving.

We had three officers within the Town of Wise Police Department that applied for the Chief position. Together they have over sixty-eight years of employment, dedication, and loyalty to our town.

Having been on the Wise Town Council for over 33 years, I've always supported our employees. I believe it's in the Town's best interest to continue developing and supporting our people to take leadership roles to move our town forward. It worked for us in the past and will continue to work for our town in the future.

This is mainly my reason for voting as I did and from this point forward, I will have no additional comments on the issue."

(Statement made part of minutes per Councilman Smith's request.)

Councilman Smith stated that he would support Council's decision and congratulated Kevin Yates on his appointment as Town of Wise Police Chief. Smith added that he looked forward to working with Yates.

COUNCIL COMMENT:

Robin Dotson welcomed Kevin Yates as a new employee with the Town.

Ben Conway congratulated Kevin Yates on his appointment as Police Chief.

Jeffery Dotson congratulated Kevin Yates and stated he looked forward to working with him. Dotson thanked all law enforcement officers in attendance, especially Danny French for his many years of service to the Town.

Mayor Adkins thanked all law enforcement officers in attendance for their service to Wise County and the Town of Wise. She expressed her gratitude to Chief French for his service to the Town.

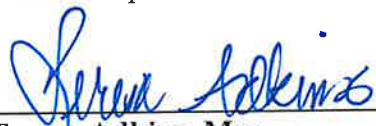
STAFF COMMENT:

Town Manager Laura Roberts advised a joint meeting with the Town of Wise Planning Commission may be necessary at the July 25th regular Council meeting to address a Conditional Use Permit Application for the L. F. Addington Middle School gym project.

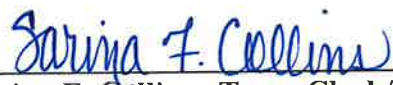
Police Chief Danny French thanked Council for their tremendous support over the years.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional discussion by the Wise Town Council, Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeffery Dotson seconded the motion that passed 5-0.



Teresa Adkins, Mayor



Sarina F. Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer