

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Town of Grottoes Town Council held a workshop meeting on Monday, May 13, 2019, at 5:45 p.m., with Mayor Holloway presiding.

**ATTENDANCE:** Council Members present were: Emily Holloway, David Raynes, Tim Leeth, Jo Plaster, Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, and C.W. Stephenson.

**Other Town Officials present were:** Town Manager Nathan Garrison, Town Clerk Tara Morris, Town Attorney Nathan Miller, Town Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Public Works Director A.J. Hummel, Tourism and Parks Director Ashley Collier, and Police Sergeant Wes Baugher.

Mayor Holloway stated that we will begin with the discussion of the Grand Caverns Pool. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the Parks Committee has met several times discussing what it will take to repair the pool. He stated that they have also looked at new features to help attract and make the pool more enjoyable. He stated that they have broken it down into three phases. Nathan stated that phase one is what they are talking about right now. He stated this phase has the needed repairs along with adding pool lanes for the swim team, a beach entry and the ADA lift. He stated that this phase would also include a new chlorination system for the pool. He stated that the second phase could be putting in a slide and other amenities to enhance the pool. Councilman Tim Leeth asked if this work could be done in time to open the pool next year. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the plan is to bid this project out and have the work begin late summer to early fall. Mayor Holloway asked if we feel that we will see a return on this expense. She stated that there was a survey done on how many Town residents use the pool. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that we determined that 50% of the people using the pool are Town residents. He stated that the pool does not make a profit for the park but he stated that the park committee still feels that we need this for our community. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked how many kids are involved with the swim team. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated the last he heard was around 50 or more. Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that since our pool has been outdated, after our renovation, we will see those numbers increase over time. Councilwoman Jo Plaster made a motion to advance the bid process for the pool renovation. Councilman C.W. Stephenson seconded the motion. Council members David Raynes, Tim Leeth, Jo Plaster, Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, and C.W. Stephenson voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Mayor Holloway stated that the next item on the agenda is the little league. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated that he has been approached by citizens and we had several people speak last meeting regarding not

being allowed to use the little league fields. He stated that if you read the current agreement it does not protect the best interest of the citizens of the Town. He stated the agreement needs to be voided and a new one reached that will allow our citizens to have access to the fields. Mayor Holloway asked if they have met with the little league board. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated we have and according to their policy, you have to contact a certain person to get use of the field and what we are being told is that this person doesn't respond to requests to use the fields. He stated that he didn't feel that we made any progress in our meeting with them. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated that his recommendation would be to terminate the current lease and renegotiate a new one. Mayor Holloway stated that we have to give them a 60 day notice so if we notified them now it still would not affect anything this year. Councilman C.W. Stephenson made a motion to terminate the current little league agreement effective November 24, 2019. Councilman Joshua Bailey moved to amend the motion to notify them immediately that we are terminating the current lease agreement on November 24, 2019. Councilman Mark Keeler seconded the motion. Councilman Tim Leeth asked that we make it known that will still have their season and that our biggest concern is after the season. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that the reason he wants to let them know now so that we can start negotiating and they can provide feedback and can maybe get this worked out by the time the other one terminates. Mayor Holloway asked if they had any more meetings lined up. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that he did not know. He stated that they do not let him know anything. He stated that we may need to appoint someone else as the liaison because he doesn't think they want Josh Bailey. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that we value the little league and this has no representation on the children that are there. Council members David Raynes, Tim Leeth, Jo Plaster, Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, and C.W. Stephenson voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Mayor Holloway stated that the next item for discussion is the Shady Creek Townhouse dumpster request. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that they originally contacted Waste Management themselves and they were going to deliver them. He stated that he found out about it and contacted the HOA and told them that the contract is with the Town and that the Town Council would have to make the decision from totes to dumpsters. He stated that he wrote a letter and hung on the doors of the townhouses. He said he has heard from 9 households 6 wanting the dumpster and 3 do not, and the others have not responded. He stated that the HOA would like to move forward with the dumpster. Town Manager Nathan Garrison said he talked with Waste Management and there would not be an additional cost to the Town for the dumpster and that

they would dump it once a week. Councilwoman Jo Plaster asked if we can get that it won't be a charge to the Town for the dumpster in writing. Nathan stated that we can. Councilman Tim Leeth asked if we have a place to put the dumpster that wouldn't be an eyesore. Mayor Holloway stated that the cans and trash itself that is up there is an eyesore. She stated that a dumpster may be a good solution for this area. Councilman Tim Leeth made a motion to allow the HOA to replace the trash cans with a dumpster with the understanding that any extra incurred waste fees beyond that single dumpster be absorbed by the HOA and not the entire Town. Councilman Joshua Bailey seconded the motion. Council members David Raynes, Tim Leeth, Jo Plaster, Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, and C.W. Stephenson voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Mayor Holloway stated that the next item on the agenda is the FY2020 budget update. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that there are only two changes that have come up since we last met. The retirement changes will decrease throughout the budget. The other change is an update to a Microsoft subscription to keep the computers updated. He stated that this is the recommendation from our IT support. He stated that the Microsoft office that we are using is outdated and not supported any longer. Also our email is outdated and the security is outdated as well and it is allowing a lot of spam to come through. Mayor Holloway asked if anyone had any questions on the budget. Councilman C.W. Stephenson said he has a couple questions that he would like to get clarified since this is his first budget process. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated that every budget has \$2,000.00 in it for cell phones. He asked how many cell phones we have. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that basically every fulltime person with the Town has a cell phone paid for by the Town. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated his other question is about the gas and diesel and making it more proportional. He asked if it is logged when everyone gets gas. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that was correct. Councilman C.W. Stephenson asked if we are using that log and comparing to what we are purchasing to see if we are on point gallon wise. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that we have not been comparing those. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that when he redistributed the gas between the funds he didn't use the gas logs to do that. He stated that he felt 80% of the gas coming from the police budget was too high when some of the other funds receive money that can be used towards the gas bill. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated that he wants to make sure if our logs were saying we used blank number of gallons, then we were actually purchasing close to that amount in gallons. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that we can do a better job of checking that. Mayor Holloway asked if they have to

put in anything when they get gas like a code or anything. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated you have to go get the key and log sheet and you write down the current meter when you get gas so you can compare it to the previous reading. Sergeant Wes Baugher commented that there are mistakes on it. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked what we are currently paying per gallon. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that he doesn't look at the gas tickets so he doesn't know. Treasurer Rhonda Danner went to get a copy of the gas ticket. Town Treasurer Rhonda Danner stated that the unit price is \$3.009 for premium diesel and for 89 plus gas it is \$3.119. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that we can get gas at Herby's cheaper than that. Councilman Tim Leeth stated that we need to check some prices because this seems high. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that he didn't feel this was going to be an accurate figure for the budget. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the reason he distributed the amounts the way he did was because essentially there was \$23,000.00 coming out of the general fund and the state gives us money for other funds so he reallocated more money to those funds. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that if Council doesn't like how this was proportioned, he can change it before we vote on it next month. Mayor Holloway asked if anyone had any other questions on the budget. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked if he was going to make a motion to amend the budget, does it have to be tonight. Town Attorney Nathan Miller stated that you can make a motion to amend the budget tonight or in June but it has to be on public record.

Mayor Holloway stated that it's not on the agenda but if any committee has an update they can do it now.

Mayor Holloway stated that the deadline to submit an application for the Chief of Police position was today at 5:00 p.m. She stated that we received seven applications and we will be moving forward with the first round of interviews this Friday. She stated that she will keep everyone informed as they move forward because they weren't going to wait until the next Council meeting to proceed. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked how she was going to inform them. She stated that she will send out an email to set up a special meeting so she asked everyone to look at their schedules to see when they will be available to meet in the next couple weeks. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked Counsel Nathan Miller the difference in a special meeting verses a workshop. Nathan Miller stated that a workshop has already been advertised so it is just like a Council meeting and a special meeting is called to discuss a certain topic not general discussion.

Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that the streets committee had a meeting and they met with AJ and he feels that he needs another full-

time maintenance person. She stated that it's her understanding that when Woody retired we would evaluate to see if we needed someone. She stated now with his current staff they cannot keep up. Public Works Director AJ Hummel stated that he has the same list as he had before of things that he would like to do but can't do them because they can't keep up with everything now. He stated that we haven't been able to stay on the schedule for septic tanks. He hasn't been able to do any of the valve maintenance. AJ stated that all the mowing didn't get done last week. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that when Woody retired we knew that we would be getting people back from not having to collect trash but what we didn't know was we would lose some very experienced people and now he is dealing with inexperienced people. He stated nothing against them but it just takes time to learn and more time to train people. Councilwoman Jo Plaster made a motion to hire a full-time maintenance position and amend the budget as necessary. Councilman C.W. Stephenson seconded the motion. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked where this money is coming from. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated a good portion will come from highway and the rest will be split between the other funds capital. Council members David Raynes, Tim Leeth, Jo Plaster, Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, and C.W. Stephenson voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

With no further discussion Mayor Holloway adjourned the workshop meeting.

Mayor Emily Holloway called the Town Council Public Hearing to order on Monday, May 13, 2019 and welcomed the citizens. Town Clerk Tara Morris called the roll. Members present were Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, Emily Holloway, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth. Also present were Town Clerk Tara Morris, Town Attorney Nathan Miller, Town Manager Nathan Garrison, Tourism and Parks Director Ashley Collier, and Police Sergeant Wes Baugher.

Mayor Holloway stated that the public hearing tonight is to hear citizen comments regarding the proposed FY2020 Annual Budget.

Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that he would like to start off with some of the projects that we have completed in 2019. He stated that we have completed improvements to the maintenance shop, completed the 20<sup>th</sup> Street water line project that included an eight inch line and fire hydrant at the end of the line. He stated that we installed a playground fence at Mountain View Park and just completed the Mountain View Dog Park. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that we are still working on the Stone Lodge upstairs renovations. He stated that this will give much needed office space upstairs. He stated that all the Town Events were very well attended. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the FY2020 total budget is \$2,995,702.20 which is a decrease of 0.41% from the previous year. He stated that this will allow \$143,802.00 to be added into capital reserves. He stated that looking at the budget overview revenues and expenditures equal. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that looking at the revenue the general fund is up 1.51%, water fund is up 1.02%, sewer is up 1.07%, parks is down slightly - 7.45% partially due to the pool being closed this year and refuse stayed the same. He stated there is no proposed rate increase for real estate, personal property, cigarette or meals taxes. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the pie chart shows where our general fund revenue comes from. He stated the other pie chart shows our general fund expenditures. Town Manager Nathan Garrison went through department expenditures. He stated that the administration expenses include a new Microsoft office subscription, a decrease in retirement expense and over \$41,000 into capital reserves. He stated that the police expenditures increased 2.34% and some of those expenses include new computers for the police cruisers to include hardware and software. He stated that the fuel expense decreased due to proportionally weighting between other departments. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that over \$20,000.00 will go into capital reserve. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the highway

fund receives \$565,895.00 from the state for town street maintenance. He stated that expense under highway includes contracted services for street re-paving, a new truck with plow and the cost to enclose a 4<sup>th</sup> garage bay and install a vehicle lift. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated the water fund increased 1.02%. He stated that there was no base rate increase in water but the 1.9% increase to the per thousand gallon rate. He stated this rate went from \$1.97 to \$2.01 per 1000 gallons. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that the new online convenience fee of \$1.00 to cover the cost of offering online payments will be split between water and sewer. He stated that the water fund expenses include replacing a water line along Aspen Avenue and adding two fire hydrants. We increased the maintenance repairs budget due to all the water leaks. Other expenses include a portion of the Microsoft subscription and online payment expenses. He stated that over \$23,000.00 will go into capital reserve from the water fund. The sewer fund revenue increased 1.07%. He stated that there was no base rate increase in sewer but the 1.9% increase to the per thousand gallon rate. He stated this rate went from \$3.68 to \$3.75 per 1000 gallons. He stated that sewer sales are expected to increase by \$3,500.00. Town Manager Nathan Garrison went over the sewer expense fund stating there has been an increase in the electric bill due to having to discharge more with all the rain we have had. We need to replace UV Lamps and purchase an aerator pump. We are proposing to purchase an auto dialer and a sewer camera. He stated that a portion of the Microsoft subscription and online expenses are included in the sewer expenses still leaving over \$27,000.00 to go into capital reserve. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that there are no changes in the refuse fund. Refuse service will continue with Waste Management and there will be no changes in refuse rates. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated he projected a decrease in revenue in the park fund due to the pool being closed for 2019 season and no transfer from capital. He stated that the caverns continue to see an increase in visitation. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that park expenses include two new office computers, a new point of sale system, increased merchandise for the giftshop and not included in the budget is pool repairs, however we do expect the construction to be complete in this budget year. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that in regard to the Town Employee Compensation that there is no cost of living compensation for FY20. He stated that they did comparative and merit raises for various positions. He stated that the Town continues to pay 100% of the health insurance for full-time employees and 20% of the premium costs for those on family plan. He stated that the premium did not increase for FY20. Town Manager Nathan Garrison

stated that this concludes his presentation and asked if anyone had any questions.

Mayor Holloway asked for citizen input. No comments were made.

Mayor Holloway asked for Council comments. Councilman Mark Keeler asked if the expense for the police was what we budgeted last year and hadn't spent. Town Manager Nathan Garrison said that last year we had to purchase new police radios and this year it is computers for the police vehicles.

Mayor Holloway adjourned the public hearing.

Mayor Holloway called the regular meeting of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 7:18 p.m. on May 13, 2019.

Councilman David Raynes made a motion to approve the workshop and regular council meeting for the month of April. Councilman Joshua Bailey seconded the motion. Council members Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Councilman Joshua Bailey made a motion to approve the minutes from the special meeting on April 23, 2019. Councilman Mark Keeler seconded the motion. Council members Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

## **FINANCE**

Councilman David Raynes made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report for the month of April. Councilman C.W. Stephenson seconded the motion. Council members Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Councilman David Raynes made a motion to approve the bills as of May 13<sup>th</sup> and the remaining bills for April totaling \$174,595.62. Councilman Joshua Bailey seconded the motion. Council members Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Councilman David Raynes asked if anyone had any discussion on the FY20 budget.

## **STREETS AND STREET LIGHTS**

Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that the Streets Committee met on May 8<sup>th</sup> and discussed culverts, brush pick-up and unmanned dumping at Mountain View Park. She stated that we also received bids for the street paving project. She stated that we have had some issues with the installation of culverts so we have come up with an agreement that will have to be signed by our citizens before we will install a culvert. She stated that the Town's obligation is to install the culvert once the homeowner buys it and as far as adding excess dirt we don't have top soil or seeding so we will use the fill dirt that we have and grade it the best we can to create a fall as necessary for the culvert. She stated that if further excavation is needed it will be the homeowners responsibility. Councilman Joshua Bailey said number three says fill with Town's excess dirt or gravel it could have rocks, chunks asphalt or cement in it. He said so basically we can fill it with junk. Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that our fill dirt had those things in it which was one of the complaints. She stated that we don't sift the dirt and unless we did that those items could be in it. Mayor Holloway stated that there is no time frame for the property owner to complete the job should we include that. Councilman Tim Leeth stated that instead of saying we will put it on our schedule we should provide the homeowner a time frame. Mayor Holloway asked if we need to make a motion on this. Town Attorney Nathan Miller stated that we do need to make a motion before we enact it but we need to make the changes first and bring it back to next months meeting.

Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that with all the ice and storms we have had an excess of brush to pick up this year. She stated that this has become very cumbersome and will be cumbersome in the future if we don't put some provisions in place. She stated that in the committee meeting they discussed having 4x2 bundles of limbs and debris with twine, no more than 60 pounds, and limbs can be no larger than 6" in diameter because the chipper won't take them. She stated that we can't put these specifications in place now but would like to have them in place by next spring. She stated that we would have to put our specifications in the newsletter and on the website so everyone knows our specifications. Mayor Holloway asked what about the piles that don't meet our specifications. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that right now we don't really have specifications but once we set these we will have to stick to it so that everyone learns to follow the new specifications.

Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that we have gotten a lot of debris at the unmanned dump area that should be for grass clippings. She stated that we open the brush area up the first Saturday of the month from 8-12 and after that it's like a field day. Councilman Jo Plaster said they would like to push the opening back some and make it larger so when grass is dumped there it's not right up against the road. She stated that if we are only going to accept grass clipping and not brush then we will probably need more of a police presence down there to discourage unauthorized dumping. Councilman Jo Plaster asked Counsel if we can impose a fine if someone is caught dumping unauthorized materials there. He stated that you can but we may need to add it to an ordinance.

Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that we received two bids for the street paving project. She stated that one was from Smith Paving and the other from Weatherman-Collins. Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that Smith Paving's cost per ton was \$78.00 and Weatherman-Collins cost per ton was \$96.24. Councilwoman Jo Plaster made a motion to award the bid to Smith Paving. Councilman Mark Keeler seconded the motion. Council members Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Councilman Tim Leeth announced the Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. at the Town Hall. He also announced the Mountain View 10K on June 1<sup>st</sup> and Street Dance on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 - 10:00 p.m. on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Councilman Tim Leeth said looking a little further ahead June 19<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> is the Fire Department's Annual Lawn Party.

Rick Chandler commented on the brush problem and he stated that when he was manager in Dayton they enacted some stipulations like this and it made all the difference in the world. He asked if we have a day that we pick up appliances he said that also made the biggest difference. Mr. Chandler said that he walks at the park and the addition of the dog park is wonderful. He said that he sees that it is being used a lot.

Mr. Chandler stated that the big Merck expansion will be huge for Rockingham County. He stated that the county is pleased that they were able to balance the budget without any increases in taxes. He stated that this is the third year that the county has not imposed a tax increase.

Mayor Holloway announced that she has gotten several phone calls about the dog park and citizens seem pleased that it is done.

With no further business to discuss Mayor Holloway adjourned the meeting.

