Town of Grottoes Workshop Meeting

CALL TO ORDER: The Town of Grottoes Town Council held a workshop meeting on Monday, September 23, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Holloway presiding.

ATTENDANCE: Council Members present were: Emily Holloway, David Raynes, Jo Plaster, Mark Keeler, Tim Leeth, 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, and Police Chief Thomas James.

Mayor Holloway stated that we will start with the personnel handbook. She stated that we were waiting to hear back from the attorney's office on a couple of items and asked Nathan Garrison is there was anything else. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that all the changes that have been made since the last draft are in red. He stated that Nathan Miller's office made a few changes and added a section to cover how the police department works. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that on page 15 is the recommendation from the attorney on the exempt employees. Mayor Holloway asked that everyone review the changes and asked that for this to be put on the agenda for October.

Mayor Holloway stated that the next item on the agenda is discussion on the outside shop. Public Works Director A.J. Hummel stated that he budgeted to close an additional bay on the shop and Chief James asked about closing in an another bay for the police. A.J. stated that he got three guotes to see what the difference would be and said Stoneburner was the cheapest at \$4,855.00. Public Works Director stated that he wants to close the bay into make it a warehouse to keep all the water and sewer supplies and parts in and Chief James asked if we were closing in one how much more would it be to close in two because we would like to have an additional enclosed bay. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that we had the cost of closing one bay in the budget, but we held off to see what the cost would be to close an additional bay. He stated that Stoneburner's price was much cheaper than other competitors. Councilman C.W. Stephenson asked how much of this project can we do ourselves. Public Work Director A.J. Hummel stated that he can check about framing up the walls, but the concrete would have to be poured, the garage doors installed, and siding put up on the outside. Councilwoman Jo Plaster asked where the additional

funding was going to come from. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that since this will be shared it could come out of highway or it could come out of Admin reserve which ever the Council prefers. Councilwoman Jo Plaster made a motion to approve the additional cost of \$4,855.00 for Stoneburner to close in an additional bay. Councilman Mark Keeler seconded the motion. Council members David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, Joshua Bailey, Tim Leeth, Mark Keeler and Jo Plaster voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Mayor Holloway stated that next is discussion on employee cell phones. Town Manager Nathan Garrison asked that everyone look at the staff report. He said there has been some questions on who has them and what they cost. He stated that this is all broken down on his report and explained that smartphones are \$50.69 and flip phones are \$31.08 monthly and pretty much all full-time employees have some type of phone. He stated that for some reason Bob Smith at our treatment plant does not have a phone and if we continue with phones, he should get one. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that he wasn't here when the phones were given to the employees but was told that they were given in a year that they couldn't give the raises and it was no more cost to the Town but would benefit the employee. Councilman C.W. Stephenson asked how long ago that was. Town Clerk Tara Morris replied about eight years ago. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that if we keep the phones as is with everyone having one the amount will need to go up to include our newest maintenance employee and our wastewater operator. Councilman C.W. Stephenson asked if all of maintenance was on call or could we have one phone and whoever is on call that weekend take it home. Councilman C.W. Stephenson said that the phones were given as a raise about eight years ago so basically that would have been to Rhonda Danner and Tara Morris. Mayor Holloway stated that would have included Wes Baugher and A.J. Johnson and not sure about Greq Coffman. Councilman Tim Leeth asked if it would change the rate per line. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that he was told it would not since we are on government contract. Mayor Holloway stated that she always felt the police officers needed phones for evidence or taking pictures at accidents and these things shouldn't be on their personal phones. Chief James stated that a phone had now basically took the place of a note pad and whatever they do on these government phones to be careful because they can be FOIA requested. He stated that he has his work phone and his own personal phone and said he understood that the town issued phones were given and could be used as their personal phone, but he recommends having separate phones. Mayor Holloway stated that we need to move forward with how we want to proceed with the cellphones. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated that we need 6 for the law enforcement and the department heads. He stated

that the four that were here which two are in the police department but the other two if we took their phone, we would be taking their raise. Mayor Holloway stated that Rhonda and Tara are department heads. She stated that Shelby is not and works for the police department but is not an officer so asked how that would work. Chief James stated that she is not on call and already has a personal cellphone. Councilman C.W. Stephenson made a motion to keep cellphones for the police officers and department heads only. Councilman Joshua Bailey asked that it be clarified by name of who will have cellphones. Mayor Holloway stated that would be Nathan Garrison, A.J. Hummel, Rhonda Danner, Tara Morris, Ashley Collier, Tommy James, Wes Baugher, Brittany Dean, Dakota Foster, A.J. Johnson, Jason Sullivan, and Bobby Smith. Councilwoman Jo Plaster said that Tracey and Shelby would no longer have phones. Mayor Holloway said the maintenance staff and mayor would lose their phones. Councilman Joshua Bailey seconded the motion. Councilman Tim Leeth asked if we needed one flip phone for maintenance on call or do you have an alternate way of getting in touch with people. Public Works Director A.J. Hummel stated that he can reach them if needed. Mayor Holloway stated that with taking these phones one thing that needs to be considered is allowing people enough time to get new phones. Councilman Tim Leeth asked about the mayor's phone he stated that the mayor deals with a lot of town business and questions if she should keep her phone. Mayor Holloway stated that she is fine with giving up her phone but will not give out her personal phone number and will direct calls to the Town Office. Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that with the direction and technology we are moving to with our maintenance department such as the GIS of all our lines. She stated that smart phones are becoming a necessity not a luxury. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that the only person in maintenance with a smart phone is keeping theirs. Councilman Mark Keeler stated that he agreed with Jo on the direction of technology but stated that reason this has bothered him in the past is the lack of separation between professional and personal. He stated that he appreciates Tommy's line with the police officers and feels as we move forward it needs to be conveyed to all employees with a phone. Mayor Holloway stated that we still need to set a time to allow people to get a new phone. Councilman C.W. Stephenson amended his motion to a give them until January 1, 2020 to get a new phone. Councilman Joshua Bailey seconded the motion. Mayor Holloway stated that a motion was made a properly seconded that by January 1, 2020 the only people who will have phones will be the police officers and department heads. Council members David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, Joshua Bailey, Tim Leeth, Mark Keeler and Jo Plaster voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Mayor Holloway stated that the next item is B-2 zoning. Town Manager Nathan stated that the Planning Commission has been looking over the zoning and recently rezoned 6th Street and have been looking at other areas that could benefit from being rezoned. He stated that they have been looking at Dogwood Avenue. He stated on the west side everything from 3rd Street to 12th Street and on the east side everything from 3rd Street to 10th Street is zoned B-1. He stated that the Commission wants to keep our business lots for future businesses but also wants to recognize that there are houses in this zoning. He stated that the Commission is recommending changing the zoning from B-1 to B-2 and stated that B-2 is a planned business zoning. He stated that they would also like to amend the B-2 zoning to allow businesses from B-1 zoning which is already what is there and to include one and two family dwellings as a conditional use, which would have to be approved by the Planning Commission and Town Council. He stated that the residential requirement would be the same as in the B-3 district as far as setbacks. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that essentially what the Planning Commission is wanting to do is allow for the houses that are already there to be able to use their property but also to be able to protect the business lots that we currently have. Town Clerk Tara Morris stated that we will have to have a Joint Public Hearing and doesn't think we will have enough time to advertise and notify everyone for the October Meeting. Mayor Holloway agreed and suggested setting the Joint Public Hearing in November.

Mayor Holloway stated the next item is revisions to Chapter 134. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that concerns were brought up about the dump site and the maintenance department has been looking into how other town's operate with brush pick-up. He stated that one of the main changes is in section 134-11 which states the brush must be in bundles and gives the size requirements for the bundles. He said the planning commission reviewed this chapter and there are some things still in there that doesn't pertain to how we do business that they have suggested to take out. Councilman Mark Keeler stated for this change we do not have to have a public hearing only a first and second reading. Town Clerk Tara Morris stated that this was not put on the agenda so we can amend the agenda to do the first reading tonight and stated that changes can still be made between the first and second reading just not after that. Councilman Mark Keeler made a motion to amend the agenda to include the first reading to amend chapter 134 Solid Waste and Weeds. Councilman Tim Leeth seconded the motion. Council members David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, Joshua Bailey, Tim Leeth, Mark Keeler and Jo Plaster voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Mayor Holloway stated next is committee updates. She stated that she would start with Personnel Committee. She said everyone got the final draft of the personnel handbook and we will put that on the agenda in October for approval.

Councilman David Raynes stated that the finance committee met with the police department. He stated at the last meeting they approved in the budget to purchase a new vehicle. Since then they have come back to us requesting to purchase two more vehicles. Councilman David Raynes stated that the finance committee discussed it and has decided to propose to the council the purchase of one more vehicle. He stated we looked at the financing of these vehicles and decided instead of financing it and paying seven percent interest that they would take the money out of savings and pay ourselves back. Mayor Holloway stated that means we would be paying for both vehicles upfront. She stated that we still want to sell all the vehicles we had discussed. Mayor Holloway stated the following year after we can look at what we have and decide if we can get another one but this way we don't have to do any financing. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that we are also paying \$55,000.00 in computers for the police cars and next year we won't be having to pay that out either. Councilman David Raynes made a motion to purchase a second Ford SUV paid for out of our budget and we will pay ourselves back. Councilman C.W. Stephenson seconded the motion. Council members David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, Joshua Bailey, Tim Leeth, Mark Keeler and Jo Plaster voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Councilman C.W. Stephenson reminded Council of the Haunted Cave on October 29th, 30th, & 31st and the anniversary ball on October 19th. Mayor Holloway asked if we had a date set with the little league to meet about the lease agreement. Councilman C.W. Stephenson said he spoke to Kara Irving the other day and she stated that all the dates that Nathan sent her does not work for her.

Councilman Jo Plaster stated that the street committee is working on finalizing the paving schedule and looking at projects for next year. Mayor Holloway stated that she keeps getting calls about Dogwood Avenue. Councilwoman Jo Plaster stated that is the first one on the list.

Councilman Joshua Bailey asked is Nathan has heard anymore on the septic. Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that he has not, and he has not purchased the lot. Town Manager Nathan Garrison did mention that the GIS company has our maps. Councilman Mark Keeler stated that the B-2 zoning will give the Council much more say on the development of Dogwood Avenue. He also thanked Nathan Miller and Nathan Garrison for their work on getting these changes made.

Councilman Tim Leeth stated that we have the senior citizens dinner on October 12th and traditionally we have as many council members and their spouses help serve this meal. He said to let him, or Tara know by the middle of next week.

Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated about three or four month ago he brought up about gas and thought we were looking into it. He stated that our last bill we are paying \$3.27 per gallon. He stated that we can go get it at the store for a lot less. Councilman C.W. Stephenson stated that the cost of diesel on the last bill was \$3.07 per gallon. He said he talked with the fire department and they are paying \$2.61 for a gallon of gas and \$2.48 for ethanol free gas from Quarles. He stated that he feels this is something that we need to look into because we are wasting a lot of money. He said we can either get fuel cards to get gas or changes providers. Councilman Tim Leeth stated that he agreed we need do something. Councilman C.W. Stephenson said if these are Southern States tanks then he is good with getting rid of them because of the way they are wired up looks dangerous. Councilman Tim Leeth asked Town Manager Nathan Garrison to get us some information to look at for the next workshop meeting.

Mayor Holloway adjourned the meeting.

Mayor Emily Holloway called the Town Council Public Hearing to order on Monday, September 23, 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, and Police Chief Thomas James.

Mayor Holloway stated that the public hearing tonight is to hear citizen comments regarding a request to purchase a vacant portion of Second Street between Aspen Avenue and Park Avenue.

Town Manager Nathan Garrison stated that he spoke with Jim Justis and he wished he could be here tonight but is out of town for work. He stated that Mr. Justis has already purchased the other 30x100 section of Second Street and is still very interested in purchasing this 30x100 section of Second Street.

Mayor Holloway stated that we have no one signed up to speak either for or against the request.

Mayor Holloway asked Council if they have any questions on this request. Councilman C.W. Stephenson asked if we can retain an easement incase we need to extend a water line. Town Attorney stated that we could set that as a condition on selling the property and suggested that we do retain a utility easement for the future. He stated most utility easements are 10 feet.

With no further questions Mayor Holloway adjourned the Public Hearing.

Mayor Holloway called the Town Council Meeting for September 23, 2019 to order and welcomed guests. Town Clerk Tara Morris called the roll. Mark Keeler, Joshua Bailey, Jo Plaster, Emily Holloway, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth were present. Also present were Town Clerk Tara Morris, Town Attorney Nathan Miller, Town Manager Nathan Garrison, Public Works Director AJ Hummel, and Police Chief Thomas James.

Mayor Holloway welcomed the citizens here tonight and also welcomed our Board of Supervisors Representative Rick Chandler here and asked if he had anything to share tonight. Mr. Chandler stated that he has had a couple comments made about how rough and rutted Dogwood Avenue has gotten near Route 256. He stated that the main thing he wanted to bring up tonight was he walks a lot at the park and speaking with people there the biggest concern he has notice is there is no parking for the dog park. He stated that since the parking is so far away people have been parking along 20th Street and walking over to the dog park. Mr. Chandler stated that the dog park is well used but wanted to make us aware of concerns that have been expressed to him. Mayor Holloway thanked him coming tonight.

Councilman Mark Keeler made a motion to amend the agenda under personnel to add a closed session under section 2.2-3711(A)1 of the Code of Virginia to discuss matters relating to personnel for the purpose of considering such persons assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation.Councilman David Raynes seconded the motion. Council members Mark Keeler, Jo Plaster, Joshua Bailey, David Raynes, C.W. Stephenson, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, motion carried.

Councilman David Raynes made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Councilwoman Jo Plaster 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. Councilman Tim Leeth 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 pay the bills as of September 9, 2019 and the remaining bills for the month of August totaling \$148,635.67. Councilman Tim Leeth 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.

ORDINANCE HEALTH AND PROPERTY

Councilman Mark Keeler made a motion to approve the request from Jim Justis to purchase the vacant portion of Second Street for \$2,000.00 as recommended by the Planning Commission with the stipulation of the Town retaining an easement right of 10 feet. Councilwoman Jo Plaster seconded the motion. Councilman Joshua Bailey stated that he does not agree with selling this property or any other town owned property. Council members Mark Keeler, Jo Plaster, David Raynes, and Tim Leeth voted in favor of the motion, Council members Joshua Bailey and C.W. Stephenson voted against the motion, motion carried.

Councilman Mark Keeler made a motion to set a joint public hearing for Tuesday, November 12th at 7:00 pm for rezoning Dogwood Avenue and amending the B-2 zoning. Councilman David Raynes 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 Mark Keeler announced the first reading to amend Chapter 134 Solid Waste and Weeds.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Councilman Tim Leeth stated that we had our End of Summer Celebration on September 14th. He stated that it was well attended and feels that it is starting to grow. He said the fire department ran out of chicken fairly quickly which was good for them. Councilman Tim Leeth stated that on September 27th we have the Grand Caverns 5K Race starting at 6:00 pm. Then on October 5th the Grottoes Methodist Church will be having a Community BBQ, on October 11th the South River Elementary PTO will be having Bingo at the fire department, and on October 12th we will be having our Senior Citizens Luncheon at noon at the fire department.

PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION

Mayor Holloway stated that we are going to table the approval of the revised personnel handbook until the next meeting.

Councilman Tim Leeth made a motion to convene into closed session closed session under section 2.2-3711(A)1 of the Code of Virginia to discuss matters relating to personnel for the purpose of considering such persons assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation. 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.

Councilman Mark Keeler made a motion to adjourn the closed session. Councilman David Raynes 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.

Mayor Holloway read the certification of the closed meeting to the best of our knowledge that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under section 2.2-3711(A)1 of the Code of Virginia and only such public business matters that were identified in the motion by which a closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the meeting. Town Clerk Tara Morris called roll for certification. M. Keeler, so certify; J. Bailey, so certify; J. Plaster, so certify; E. Holloway, so certify; D. Raynes, so certify; C. Stephenson, so certify; T. Leeth, so certify.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mayor Holloway stated we received a request from the Daughter of the American Revolution to recognize September 17-23 as Constitution Week. She stated that this was on the agenda for September 9th but due to the power outage we were not able to meet. She stated that she realizes this is the last day but feels we still need to address the request. Councilwoman Jo Plaster made a motion to acknowledge and celebrate Constitution Week. Councilman Tim Leeth 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.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS

Jennifer Garrison addressed the Council and stated that she is a lifelong resident in this little town and wanted to address some concerns that have come up recently. She stated that first was an auction she attended on June 21st for the estate of Lerttie Mace on Riverside Avenue. She stated that Mr. Mace was a longtime resident and businessman of this town. She said when they asked about having the auction, they were given the run

around as to if they could have an auction on their property and was told there may be a fee and may refuse it if there is not enough parking. She stated that the Mace family did provide parking in their backyard the best they could. She said she attended the auction and observed two officers showing up at different times through the sale asking people to move their cars because their tires were on the streets. She stated that this was an interruption to the auction because the auctioneer had to stop and announce for people to move their cars. She stated there was a lot of people at the auction who asked if this was all the police department had to do was harass a family trying to have an auction on their property. She stated that this family was under enough stress having their loved one's property spread out across the front yard without having to deal with unfounded parking issues. Mrs. Garrison stated what an embarrassment. She stated that the officers said they were only doing what they had been instructed. Mrs. Garrison said auctions have been going on in this town all my life and have never been a problem until lately. She stated that she understands that safety as to be considered and parking is sometimes a problem, but Riverside is not a high traffic area. She feels that the Town should be willing to work with these people more. She stated that there are several occasions and events were safety and parking are concerns such as yard sales, parades, Halloween, Street Dances. Mrs. Garrison stated that it doesn't set well when you start telling people what they can and can't do on their own property. She said talking safety there are quite a few basketball goals up against the streets where kids are playing in the streets. She said not only is this a safety concern it is a distraction for drivers. She stated that her last suggestion is if the Town Manager is not sure of a license requirement, fee requirement, ordinance, code issue instead of making a quick judgement call and to avoid confusion it would be best if they consulted with the Town Attorney first. Mrs. Garrison thanked the Council for their time listening and for their service to the Town.

Shirley Taylor addressed the Council and stated that she had two concerns tonight. She stated first was the dogs across the street from her at 700 Gum Avenue. She said they are always in her yard barking at her and using the bathroom. She said she don't know if these dogs will bite or not but stated that her grandchildren are moving in next door and she does not want these dogs coming over. She stated that she knows there is an ordinance that you have to keep your dog on your own property and not on other peoples property and not in the road. She stated that her next concern is about the trash cans. She said Mary Wonderley lived at 701 Gum Avenue she is 95 years old and came up here and asked for a smaller trash can. Mrs. Taylor said her husband called twice and talked to Tara about a smaller trash can, she said this went on for four months. Mrs. Taylor said that Mary told them that she had talked to Emily and that Emily told her she would take care of getting her one. Mayor Holloway said she had not talked to Mary. Mrs. Taylor said that's what Mary came home and told them but anyway she never got the smaller can. She said that when an elderly person requests a smaller trash can they shouldn't have to wait four months.

Sandra Mace addressed the Council and said Jennifer covered the auction which was also a concern of hers. She said another concern she had was she needed a copy of an agreement her father had with the Town to build a garage in 8th Street which had been closed. She said he had a 25-year agreement which had ran out and when he passed away, she couldn't find an update paper about it. She said she came up here and talked with Nathan and they couldn't find anything on it either. She said Nathan told her he could give her a letter stating that it was okay for the building to be there. Ms. Mace said they were getting ready to sell the house and the realtor wanted it to give a copy to the potential buyers, but she couldn't get it. She said she called the previous mayor, who was mayor at the time, and he remembered it being brought up and who voted for it and who opposed it. Ms. Mace said she gave Nathan that information hoping they could find this paper, but she never got it. Ms. Mace said then she had all the mess with auction. She also stated the Monday after the Auction Nathan contacted her to get her the letter she needed and to also apologize for the police stepping over their bounds, but Ms. Mace said that the police told them that day that they were just following direct orders. Ms. Mace said that other concerns that have been brought up are Miller's Run being overgrown and not being able to tell there is a creek there. She

said someone mentioned to her that the railroad ties at the park are rotting away and the support rods are coming out which is a safety concern because there have been kids playing on them. She stated that they sold the property to a couple out of New Jersey and she certainly hopes they will be happy here. Ms. Mace stated that the other couple that was here tonight, they left, but they were going to address people not stopping at stop signs. Ms. Mace stated some of these are other peoples concerns but thanked the Council for listening.

Glenn Hughes addressed the Council and stated that he is the pastor of the Church of God here in Grottoes. He stated that his concern is the upkeep of the ditch between the church and the fire department. He said he talked to Mr. Nicely about three years ago and found out this was Town property. He said Mr. Nicely told him he would have that mowed. He said about a month went by and he informed Mr. Nicely that the property still hadn't been mowed. He said since then the fire department mows half and weed eats all the ditch and his church takes care of the other half. Mr. Hughes stated that his other concern is more of a safety issue. He said about three weeks ago he cam down and met with the new police chief, he stated that he is impressed with him. He said that the townhouses beside the church is driving over the curb and flying through their parking lot. He said he was coming out of church on day when a car came off 3^{rd} Street so fast he didn't know what it was, but they were driving over the curb, so they didn't have to drive around the front of the building. He stated that he was told he should come to a council meeting, so here I am. Mr. Hughes said he would like to put a fence up to stop cars from coming over the curb into their parking lot. He said the tenants there are constantly dumping trash in their yard and on the fire department property and he is constantly picking it up.

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