

REGULAR MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of Weber City met in a regular meeting at **7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 15, 2022**. The meeting was held in the assembly room of the Weber City Town Hall. Mayor Christopher J. Powers called the meeting to order. Eileen Deckard led the council in prayer. Pledge of Allegiance by all in attendance.

PRESENT:

Mayor: Christopher J. Powers
Council Member: V. Eileen Deckard
Council Member: Robert P. Hammonds
Council Member: Gregory W. Smith
Council Member: Teresa A. Tilson
Council Member: Larry W. Wagner
Town Attorney: Michael Carrico

ABSENT:

Council Member: Justin M. Addington

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to accept the December 14, 2021 regular monthly meeting minutes was made by Robert Hammonds; Teresa Tilson seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

Motion to accept the November 2021 Financial Report was made by Teresa Tilson; Robert Hammonds seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

Public Presentations:

Michelle Brooks, 275 Tulip Popular Street, came to address the council concerning trash pickup. She and her husband, along with their two children, have lived in Weber City for a little over 20 years. She was told that the pretty significant tax increase was due to pay for the trash. The whole time that they have lived here, they would pick up two trashcans but that stopped in January. She would like to find out if there is something that could be done about that. She understands contracts but would be willing to pay extra to avoid having to take the extra trash off themselves or employ another company to pick it up. Mike Carrico told her that that was always the way that the contract was written but that they just started enforcing it. He also explained that we tried to find alternate companies to pick up the trash but that did not work out. Teresa Tilson stated that she rents a large can from Waste Management for \$5.00 per month and that it is billed on a quarterly basis. Teresa Tilson told Michelle Brooks that she could go to their website and look at the different sized trashcans that are available. Michelle Brooks asked if they would pick additional things up should they have more for an extra fee. Teresa Tilson stated that it is just recently that they quit. Christopher Powers stated that their bosses got onto them for picking up too much. Waste Management told him that they were enforcing it and even watching their employees to make sure that they did not pick up extra. Michelle Brooks said that her husband did talk to them and they told them only one could be picked up. Mike Carrico explained that we had a three year signed contract. Christopher Powers said that they did need to step up and make sure that everyone's trash is being picked up because some people's trash isn't even being picked up. Robert Hammonds mentioned that we were talking about using some of the ARPA funds to purchase 96-gallon trashcans for every resident and this would help eliminate the problem. Robert Hammonds said that having the cans would be a real plus. Michelle Brooks mentioned that some don't even put their trash in cans and animals get in it and make a huge mess. It is supposed to be in a can and not on the ground. Eileen Deckard stated that just because Michelle Brooks is willing to pay, that doesn't mean that everyone would be willing to do so. They would

feel like we were taking something away from them and wouldn't go over too well. Michelle Brooks realizes that some localities are using ARPA funds for trash trucks and cans but again, she would be willing to pay since Moccasin Gap is closed. They don't really have anywhere close to take trash. Mike Carrico agreed that they didn't bother to ask any of us about that and that they aren't putting it back. Gate City used it just as much as Weber City. Christopher Powers said that he talked to Billy Dingus about a recycling center but hasn't heard back from them. Michelle Brooks and Mike Carrico said that they had heard that it wouldn't be in that location. Eileen Deckard wanted to know why they weren't putting it back there and they said that VDOT refused. VDOT owns the land where the Moccasin Gap Solid Waste and Recycling Convenience Center was previously located. Michelle Brooks thanked the council for listening and she appreciates what they do. Mike Carrico asked her how she felt about zoning and she said that some good commonsense zoning would be great for the town.

Old Business:

Street Lighting: Greg Smith asked if he could incorporate the VDOT issue with the street lighting because it significantly affects the streetlights. He hoped that everyone had read the article from the Virginia Star that was included in his or her packets. VDOT is proposing to make significant changes in Weber City in the near future to our railroad crossings and many of our curb cuts and some of the turn lanes at the 23-58 intersection. Greg Smith was talking to one of the VDOT guys in the Wise office and he said that the change of the traffic would postpone the approval of streetlights until they know what they are doing and this could take a while. It is called the Project Pipeline. Greg Smith talked to a Cory Osborne from the Bristol office and he asked why we were not involved. He said that they had tried and never could get in touch with anyone here. Greg told him that he was the mayor then, and we have a town hall, and nobody came in or sent a letter to inform us. The guy was apologetic and Greg told said that we do need input before they go making major changes to our town. He said that they are willing to meet either with two or three people to discuss in the next couple of weeks, virtually or in person. They want to close Boone, Blanton, and McNutt Streets and have everything go out at Chapel Street, near where he lives. One crossing for the entire town is what their plan shows. Greg Smith said that this is very unsafe if we need fire, police or any kind of emergency response vehicle. If Chapel is blocked by a train, which it is quite often, no one could get across – in or out. Mike Carrico said that it is not wide enough for two-way traffic either. Greg Smith agreed and said McNutt Street is very steep and two cars cannot pass. Traffic would have to go up to the top of the hill and around and down. This needs to be reviewed and discussed soon. Greg Smith stated that a crossing at the old Hutchins Brothers would be good and it was said that there used to be one there. Matt Bishop said this would add to response times for fighting fires and for police protection to residents. Greg Smith said to provide times for a meeting. Mike Carrico said there could not be two and the mayor because that would be a quorum. Robert Hammonds and Larry Wagner are on the street committee but since Greg Smith is more familiar with VDOT and the situation, he and Robert Hammonds will meet with them. Mike Carrico stated that he could come because he does not count since he is not on the council. Greg Smith and Robert Hammonds will come up with a time and date and let Mike Carrico know when it will be. They will not know about streetlights until this Project Pipeline issue is handled.

American Rescue Fund Act aka ARPA: Discussion was tabled at this time.

Scott County Inspection Fees: Inspection fees from the county are more than last year per Greg Smith via Rhonda Neeley. Greg Smith does not understand why it is more. Greg Smith was told that fees had not been raised in over twenty years. Mike Carrico said that in their defense they said that they provide the inspections so we share in the cost of the inspector with Gate City. Greg Smith and Christopher Powers also talked about road signs and how we have to provide them and VDOT will do maintenance. They want us to purchase them but Greg Smith doesn't know why we are different from Nickelsville, Duffield, and Dungannon. Christopher Powers will talk to Danny Mann or has talked to him to see what is expected by maintenance.

Town Hall Renovation Contract Revision: Mike Carrico said to reaffirm that the quote for the Town Hall Renovation is still good with the lowest bidder because the contract has been approved. The Motion to reaffirm was made by Greg Smith; Robert Hammonds seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

New Business:

Committee Reports: Robert Hammonds stated that the maintenance committee addressed some issues at the firehouse. Teresa Tilson wants to start looking at the budget in depth to get everything in and digested since it is due by May. Greg Smith said that not a whole lot more money would be coming in other than the reassessment of properties. Mike Carrico said maybe there would be more meals tax as everything is higher. Teresa Tilson stated that we need to take into account that everything is more expensive.

Fire Department: No report

Mayor:

- a. Bicycle Trail – Bill Albright was including that as part of that project pipeline. Christopher Powers said that they talked about running parallel with the railroad and he said he doesn't see how that could be done. Mike Carrico said there is no way that he would ride a bicycle on Highway 23. Eileen Deckard stated that we needed turning lanes worse than that. Greg Smith stated that grants could be tied to the bicycle trail. People could be hurt attempting to ride a bicycle on 23. Greg Smith stated that he would talk to Bill Albright about it.
- b. Liquor by the Drink – Christopher Powers said that he talked to the ABC board and he talked to the local agent who said that we have it unless the charter said otherwise. He stated that a few of us has read through it and there is nothing in the charter that says we cannot have liquor by the drink or alcohol period. He said we are good to go if we want it and that is statewide. Mike Carrico said that he would have to look at it because when he looked at it two years ago a referendum of 10% of the population voting was required to put it on the ballot and the town itself voting to have it. Christopher Powers said that the agent said to give anyone his number who had any questions. This is good for all counties. A liquor license for the business is still required but a vote is not required. Christopher Powers stated that La Carreta had been notified but we have not heard back from them. Teresa Tilson would like to see it in writing to cover our bases so we will not get in trouble. Christopher Powers said that it might be online. Christopher Powers said that if there is a complaint or if the business turned into a bad place, their license could be revoked. Eileen Deckard stated that zoning could help that as well. Mike Carrico will get the number and investigate. Billy Dingus brought it to his attention and gave him the number to talk to the agent. Greg Smith stated this would check off one of the county requirements for bringing the Bray property into the town. Christopher Powers said that the Bray property should be business oriented with an entertainment focus and not industrial. A mini mall would be good in the TeleTech building. Eileen Deckard stated that a skating ring would be a good business for adults and children alike.
- c. Pandemic Policy – Mike Carrico said to follow the CDC guidelines since things had opened up and relaxed more in the last month.
- d. Rates – Business, Professional and Occupational Licenses – It is currently .05 across the board and Christopher Powers was wondering if we could match Gate City's somewhat to bring in some revenue for the town. Greg Smith said they could look at it when doing the budget and that a public hearing would be required.
- e. Rates: Real Property – Christopher Powers is going to do more research on this one since they were just raised. They were hoping to take it down a little but that is doubtful.
- f. Town Hall Heat Pump Replacement needed – Mike Carrico stated that three quotes were needed for both upstairs and downstairs. He stated that ARPA funds would most likely be able to be used since it

has to do with airflow. Teresa Tilson said that with an air filter, that should be the case. The Motion get three quotes for the heat pump repair/replacement was made by Teresa Tilson; Eileen Deckard seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

- g. Town Hall Office Position – Closed session required per Mike.
- h. Town Logo Design – Christopher Powers presented his mockup of the new town logo. He said it could be used on letterhead, the new trashcans and any other publicity for the town. He designed it at no cost to the town as he owns a sign company in Weber City.

Police Department: Chief Matt Bishop thanked the council members for all that they do from the police department since this is the first council meeting of the new year. The officers know that what the council does requires a lot of personal time and they appreciate that very much. Chief Bishop presented a revised report that was more efficient and would run the numbers from council meeting to council meeting rather than monthly. Each officer will turn it in and Chief Bishop will compile and distribute to the council. Austin Hensley is the officer of the quarter at the end of the year for his outstanding job. He is also considering offering Officer Harding a commendation for his DUI and DUID work. Chief Bishop has been working on the budget and will offer two or three options to be looked over by the council.

Christopher Powers brought up the quotes for the radios for the fire department that were discussed last month and Mike Carrico said that those were not in the budget. The fire department would donate their old radios to the police department. The fire department representative, Matt Ison, said that now the county is discussing going digital and this would result in the radios not working. Chief Bishop stated that the sheriff's department wants to get state accreditation and that is why they want to go digital. It is also speculated that the cost of going digital would be around \$3 million. Teresa Tilson made a motion to table the radios; Eileen Deckard seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

Project Pipeline: This was discussed with the streetlights.

Trash Cans & Trash Truck: We are still looking at and debating both. Christopher Powers has prices from someone in Abingdon and the truck is \$85K plus \$78K for the bed. Sourcewell is government organization that helps agencies get bids per Christopher Powers. It is less time consuming as we would tell them what we want and they would get the lowest bid. He does think it is better to use local as much as possible but this is a good resource when we cannot. Robert Hammonds asked if we had insured that we could use ARPA funds for this and for trashcans. Mike Carrico reminded the council that there are still two years remaining on the current contract. It was determined that some homes are inaccessible by Waste Management due to the size of their truck. Council was wondering if this constitutes a breach of contract because they are supposed to serve all of Weber City. Quotes for trashcans need be brought to the next town meeting; however, they also need to make sure that they are still valid.

Mike Carrico stated the town would need to discuss legal and personnel issues in closed session.

CLOSED SESSION: Motion to go into CLOSED SESSION to discuss personnel issues was made by Greg Smith; Teresa Tilson seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES; none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

Motion to go out of CLOSED SESSION and back into regular session was made by Teresa Tilson; Greg Smith seconded the motion; the motion passed with voting AYES; none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

CERTIFICATE OF CLOSED SESSION

The Mayor, Council members and the Town's Attorney entered closed session. After returning from closed session, the mayor and council members hereby certify that only lawfully exempt matters, for which the closed meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered in the meeting by the mayor, and Council members. Voting "AYE" were Christopher Powers, Eileen Deckard,

Robert Hammonds, Greg Smith, Teresa Tilson, Larry Wagner; and voting "NAY" were: NONE Justin Addington ABSENT.

Action from closed session: A motion to accept the Rhonda Neeley's resignation, advertise to fill the position, and begin interviews for Town Clerk was made by Teresa Tilson; Robert Hammonds seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: 0 voting NAY 1 ABSENT. Robert Hammonds made a motion that we accept the Bridwell contract for accounting services; Eileen Deckard seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: 0 voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Larry Wagner; Greg Smith seconded the motion; the motion passed with 5 voting AYES: none voting NAY 1 ABSENT.

Mayor: Christopher J. Powers

Interim Town Secretary: Pam Burke