

February 12, 2024

A work session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Monday, February 12, 2024, at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the work session of February 12, 2024, of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Council Members present: Mayor Jo Plaster, David Raynes, Joshua Bailey, Jim Justis, Eddie Chittum and Michael Kohl. Absent Tim Leeth

Other Town Officials present were: Town Attorney Michael Helm, Town Manager Stefanie McAlister, Clerk Tara Morris, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Public Works Director AJ Hummel, Parks Director Austin Shank and Police Chief Jason Sullivan.

Mayor Plaster said the first item for discussion is the Grottoes Little League lease and utilities. Manager McAlister stated that staff has been working with the little league on the lease. The league is asking the town to pay all utilities. She informed Council that the league will not receive bills for town utilities. Discussion regarding the lease agreement ensued. Manager McAlister noted that in years past, based on lease agreements that were reviewed, the little league maintained and repaired the buildings on the property associated with the fields they utilize. Council member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Council member Justis, and carried by a vote of 4-0-1, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – ABSTAIN; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, to add back into the lease that the little league will maintain and repair the buildings, council will make an annual \$500.00 per year donation toward the electric bill, and that the council liaison will serve as the point of contact with the little league. Council member Chittum abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Council member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Council member Justis, and carried by a vote of 4-0-1, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – ABSTAIN; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, to approve the sub-lease of the concession stand to Goodness Gracious LLC. Council member Chittum abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Council member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Council member Kohl, and carried by a vote of 4-0-1, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – ABSTAIN; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, to approve the replacement of the yellow corrugated tube with a safer red padding around the outfield fences. Council member Chittum abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Mayor Plaster said the next item on the agenda is to set a Council Retreat. She said at the retreat they will be discussing their part with the comprehensive plan, training for FOIA/COIA,

reviewing Roberts rules, and discussing what next year will carry. After discussion the Retreat was set for March 20, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. and will conclude by 8:30 p.m.

Mayor Plaster adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

February 12, 2024

A regular session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Monday, February 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the regular session of February 12, 2024, of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Plaster asked for a roll call.

ATTENDANCE: Council Members present: Eddie Chittum, Joshua Bailey, Jim Justis, Mayor Jo Plaster, David Raynes, and Michael Kohl. Absent Tim Leeth.

Other Town Officials present: Attorney Michael Helm, Town Manager Stefanie McAlister, Clerk Tara Morris, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Public Works Director A.J. Hummel, Park Director Austin Shank, and Police Chief Jason Sullivan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion by Council member Raynes, seconded by Council member Justis, and carried by a vote of 5-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, the Council approved the minutes of the January 8, 2024, meetings as presented.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS (public comment)

Mary Robertson said she was here tonight to say thank you for the work you do. She said she wanted to thank A.J. and his staff for edging along Edgewood Street after the street paving. She said the public works did a great job. Ms. Robertson said years ago her husband attended the Planning Commissioners course and has the books from the course if the town would like them. She also asked that next year when we post the winners of the home decorating contest if we could put them on the sign out front. She said when they read it in the council chatter the decorations were already down and they missed seeing them decorated. Ms. Robertson said speaking of the council chatter she would like to see more town information on what staff have been doing. She feels citizens need to know what a good job staff is doing for the town.

John and Nancy Dinges addressed the council with an issue in the 500 Block of 14th Street. He said the property owner at 506 14th Street has at least 11 cats that are roaming free around the neighborhood and two dogs, one of which is tied in the yard. He said the cats are digging in the neighbor's flower gardens and using the bathroom on the welcome mats at their front door. He asked if the town could enforce the town code 48-1(F) which limits the number of dogs and cats a person can have to three of each. Mr. Dinges said the state code states all cats and dogs should have tags and none of these cats do. He said his daughter got scratched on their property by one of the free roaming cats. He was advised by the officer to contact animal control or that he could

live trap them and take them to the SPCA or Cats Cradle. Mr. Dinges said a council member in the neighborhood knows about this and that he had to put up a privacy fence to keep the cats from using his kids sandbox as a litter box. April Thornton said she is concerned if these cats have their vaccines and that they keep reproducing. Mayor Plaster thanked them for coming tonight and said we will look into this matter.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE:

FINANCE – Council member Raynes made a motion, seconded by Council member Kohl, and carried by a vote of 5-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE, to approve the financial reports for the month of January.

WATER AND SEWER – Council member Bailey thanked the public works staff for all the hard work repairing the water leaks with minimal interruption in service

ORDINANCE, HEALTH, AND PROPERTY – no report

STREET AND STREET LIGHTS – no report

PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES – no report

SPECIAL EVENTS – no report

PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION – no report

STAFF REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER. Manager McAlister gave a quick review of her staff report. She pointed out that the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission met with the Planning Commission and has begun the first steps for the comprehensive plan update. Manager McAlister said she has also compiled a list of major projects that she will be working on this year. She said the last item is Dominion Energy will be upgrading the transmission lines from Harrisonburg to Grottoes then from Grottoes to Doods. She said Dominion Energy will be sending out a mailer and holding a meeting at South River to explain the project. This project construction is expected to start in 2026.

ATTORNEY. No report.

TREASURER. Treasurer Danner informed the council that the budget verses actual will be emailed out tomorrow. Manager McAlister said the 2020 audit is complete and they have started the 2021 audit.

ASSISTANT TO TOWN MANAGER. A written report was provided. There were no additional comments from staff and no questions or comments from Council members.

POLICE CHIEF. A written report was provided. There were no additional comments from staff and no questions or comments from Council members.

PUBLIC WORKS. Manager McAlister said that they have successfully replaced the leaking valve at the well lot and will be inserting more valves throughout the town to be able to minimize the number of citizens disrupted when major leaks occur.

RECREATION AND TOURISM DIRECTOR. A written report was provided. There were no additional comments from staff and no questions or comments from Council members.

Mayor Plaster declared the meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.