

June 12, 2023

A work session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Monday, June 12, 2023 at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the work session of June 12, 2023, of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

Mayor Plaster said the first item on the agenda is R-7 zoning request. Clerk Morris said we received a request for a 6-unit apartment complex to be located at the corner of Aspen Avenue and 11th Street. She stated that staff reviewed the request and made some minor changes. She said the Planning Commission reviewed the request at their meeting on Tuesday, May 30, 2023 and moved to recommend the request to the Town Council. Clerk Morris stated that this is a permitted use by plan for the R7 zoning. Council member Sterling asked if we should keep allowing these multi family units to be built since we need to upgrade our infrastructure. Attorney Miller said if our infrastructure cannot support it, we can deny it, but we would not be able to allow other development. Manager McAlister said that the developer would have to extend the road to the far property line. She said they would have to run water and sewer and they will be running an 8" water main from the area next to the 12th Street Townhouses. Mayor Plaster said this item is under new business on the regular agenda.

Mayor Plaster said the next item is a land purchase request. Manager McAlister said we received a letter from Ms. Smith wanting to purchase a parcel of land just west of the Dollar General that the Town owns. She said this property is zoned Conservation and would have to be rezoned depending on what use Ms. Smith is wanting the property for. Council asked Manager McAlister to reach out to Ms. Smith to see what her intentions are for the property before any decision is made.

Mayor Plaster said the next item on the agenda is Park and Tourism fund project reassignment. Director Shank said he is asking the council to consider the use of residual departmental funds before the close of this year's budget. He said there is \$30,807.73 remaining in the line items for part time pool wages and pool chemicals. He said staff has used these residual funds in a grant application with Augusta County Economic Development to acquire an additional \$10,000.00 for an initial phase of renovating the retail space at the Stone Lodge. Director Shank said he has

also negotiated a heavily discounted price with Mill Cabinet Shop in Bridgewater to craft original aesthetic furniture that was found inside the historic Stone Lodge. He said if the grant is received, they will use that money towards refinishing the original wooden floors, trim and molding. Director Shank said if this project is approved it will be completed no later than January 31, 2024. Council member Kohl said he doesn't feel that we should be taking left over money from the pool and using it elsewhere. He said he feels it should be put back for the pool. Council member Justis said we have not made any decisions regarding the pool and that using this money elsewhere is what we should do to help with improvements around the park. Council member Leeth said the park is our source of money and if we have budgeted money remaining we should use it for park improvements. Mayor Plaster said this will come up in Austin's staff report during the regular meeting.

Mayor Plaster asked if anyone had any other business. Manager McAlister informed the Council that she has put together a packet of information that includes everything she could find on the pool from 2019 to present. She said she has copies for all council members to review.

Council member Justis said he has mentioned this before and feels we need to prepare for the electrical grid to go out. He said if the electrical grid goes out, they are saying it would be 30 days before it would be restored. Council member Justis said that we need to get generators for our well and wastewater treatment plant so we can keep them operating. He said we have one generator now that we shuffled back and forth when we lost power for 4 days, but we cannot do that for 30 days. Council member Justis said that the Army gets rid of their equipment every seven years at no cost through the General Services Administration. He said the only cost the town would incur is for transportation and to interface the generators. Manager McAlister said that staff will look into this program.

Mayor Plaster adjourned the work session at 6:33 p.m.

June 12, 2023

A regular session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Monday, June 12, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the regular session of June 12, 2023, of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Plaster asked for a roll call.

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

Other Town Officials present: Attorney Nathan Miller, Town Manager Stefanie McAlister, Clerk Tara Morris, Parks Director Austin Shank, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Public Works Director AJ Hummel 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 6-0, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; STERLING – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, LEETH – AYE; the Council approved the minutes of the meeting on May 8, 2023, the meetings on May 16, 2023 and the special called meeting on May 31, 2023 as presented.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS (public comment)

Scott Sacra addressed the Council stating that he is opposed to the town selling the land west of the Dollar General or any land the town owns. He stated that the infrastructures need improvement, and we should not add anymore than we need to until that is done. Mr. Sacra spoke regarding the quiet zone and stated that he doesn't feel the town could afford the risk. He said the traffic has increased so much.

Gleamer Sullivan addressed the Council asking why it is mandatory for residents to use the Waste Management services in town. She said she feels this should be an option for residents and not a requirement. Ms. Sullivan also asked if more events and information could be on the town's website such as when the brush site will be open and when there is an event in the park. She said this can be put on the calendar page. Ms. Sullivan also mentioned a how to page to be included on the website which could explain that you must sign in at the meeting before it starts to be able to talk to council.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE:

FINANCE – Council member Raynes made a motion, seconded by Council member Leeth, and carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – AYE;

STERLING – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE, to approve the financial reports for the month of May.

Council member Raynes made a motion, seconded by Council member Leeth, and carried by a vote of 5-1, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – NAY; STERLING – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE, to approve the FY23-24 Annual Budget and fee schedule. Council member Bailey stated that he does not feel that the budget represents what the council has listed as their primary goals, but instead focuses on the restructuring of personnel and non-incentivized pay increases.

REVENUES			
	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24
	Amended Budget	Approved Budget	Proposed Budget
General Fund			
Property Taxes	\$286,000	\$344,538	\$ 375,108
Other Local Taxes	\$514,200	\$589,000	\$ 632,500
Other Local Revenue	\$71,040	\$73,940	\$ 49,250
State Revenue	\$765,415	\$791,197	\$ 839,161
Federal Revenue	\$410,209	\$410,209	\$ -
Use of Reserve	\$-	\$-	
Total General Fund	\$2,046,864	\$2,208,884	\$ 1,896,019
Water Fund	\$836,200	\$1,103,069	\$ 419,800
Sewer Fund	\$591,900	\$865,769	\$ 757,750
Parks Fund	\$921,575	\$1,039,528	\$ 879,341
Refuse Fund	\$186,354	\$212,860	\$ 281,692
Total Revenues	\$4,582,893	\$5,430,110	\$ 4,234,602
EXPENDITURES			
	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24

	Amended Budget	Approved Budget	Proposed Budget
General Fund			
Administration	\$790,342	\$836,806	\$ 491,340
Public Works	\$33,110	\$36,534	\$ 44,583
Street Lights	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$ 11,915
Police	\$617,712	\$708,421	\$ 688,163
Street Maintenance	\$597,200	\$618,623	\$ 660,017
Total General Fund	\$2,046,864	\$2,208,883	\$ 1,896,019
Water Fund	\$836,200	\$1,103,069	\$ 419,800
Sewer Fund	\$591,900	\$865,769	\$ 757,750
Parks Fund	\$921,575	\$1,039,528	\$ 879,341
Refuse Fund	\$186,354	\$212,860	\$ 281,692
Total Expenditures	\$4,582,893	\$5,430,110	\$ 4,234,602

PROPOSED TAX RATES

Classification of Tax	Adopted 2023	Proposed 2024
Real Estate	\$.10	\$.10
Manufactured Home	\$.10	\$.10
Personal Property	\$.38	\$.38
Machinery & Tools	\$.38	\$.38
Farm Machinery	\$.38	\$.38

WATER AND SEWER – no report

ORDINANCE, HEALTH, AND PROPERTY – no report

STREET AND STREET LIGHTS – no report

PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES – no report

SPECIAL EVENTS – Council member Leeth announced the Party in the Park will be on June 24th at John Painter Park beginning at 2:00 p.m. He said the Push, Pedal, and Pull Parade will be on July 4th at 10:00 a.m. and bluegrass will be every Friday evening in July beginning at 7:00 p.m.

PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION –

STAFF REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER. Manager McAlister updated the Council saying that she spoke with Ms. Smith regarding her intended use of the land she is requesting to purchase. She said she wants to build a house on the property.

Manager McAlister said she reached out to the railroad inquiring about the quiet zone. She said she received an email back saying that we will need to complete the initiation form and pay fees for them to check the area and crossings before they will schedule to meet.

ATTORNEY. Attorney Miller stated that he has no issues to report.

TREASURER. Council member Kohl asked where we are with the audit process. Treasurer Danner said we are moving through FY20 and plan for it to be completed in July.

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

RECREATION AND TOURISM DIRECTOR. Director Shank said he has an action item on his staff report requesting funds from the current budget be reallocated for upgrades at the stone lodge. He said \$30,000.00 is remaining in the line items for part-time pool wages and pool chemicals and would like to use those funds to match a grant for renovations, furniture, and upgrades at the retail space of the stone lodge. Mayor Plaster said Austin has asked that we take action for the reallocation of funds. Council member Leeth replied so moved. Council member Justis seconded the motion. Council member Kohl said with the public's interest and the citizens committee meeting trying to raise funds he doesn't feel we should reallocate the funds away from the pool. Council member Justis said whether we use these funds or take from the reserve it's the same money and that the money will still be there. Mayor Plaster called for the vote. The vote was 4-2, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; STERLING – NAY; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – NAY, LEETH – AYE.

NEW BUSINESS – Council member Raynes made a motion, seconded by Council member Kohl, and carried by a vote of 5-1, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; STERLING – NAY; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, LEETH – AYE; to approve the R-7 zoning request for Aspen Avenue Apartments.

Council member Kohl made a motion to have staff explore video recordings of council meetings and what it would entail. Seconded by Council member Raynes. Council member Justis amended the motion to have that information back to the council by the September Council meeting. Council member Raynes accepted the amendment. The vote was 6–0, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; STERLING – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, LEETH – AYE.

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