

October 11, 2023

A work session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Wednesday October 11, 2023, at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the work session of October 11, 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 Eddie Chittum.

Other Town Officials present were: Town Attorney Michael Helm, Town Manager Stefanie McAlister, Deputy Clerk Jennifer Whetzel, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Public Works Director AJ Hummel, and Parks Director Austin Shank.

The first item on the agenda was the Pay Structure Presentation. Town Manager Stefanie McAlister said a few words about Merit based pay and that some members of council had suggested that it be researched and how it could be implemented. Parks Director Austin Shank put together a presentation, handout and slide show detailing how each town conducts raises for their employees and how Merit based raises are not something that seems to work in a local government setting. Manager McAlister suggested possible incentives to employees going above and beyond. Council member Leeth believes there should be a metric system in place to determine raises, not just because. Council members Bailey and, believe that there should be a detailed reason behind raises. Mayor Plaster said that we are in a better place than we were a few years ago with competitive salaries, which has helped with the retention of employees, but we did have to do a steady climb.

Mayor Plaster said we will discuss Year End Financial Review which is the second item on the agenda. Manager McAlister and Treasurer Danner presented a handout on the Year End 2023 Financial Review. Manager McAlister went over the FY 23 Revenue and Expenses focusing on the charts without the ARPA money. The town's revenue for Admin came in over, at 118% mostly due to more revenue from personal property taxes, a grant from Rockingham County and highway money. Water Revenue came in under, at 72% and Sewer came in under at 83% mostly due to less water/sewer hook ups due to the halt in construction in the Shady Creek Subdivision. For the Parks Fund, we only brought in 96% or \$30,000 short, reasoning are the shortened pool season and supplies and things needed for the pool. The total shortfall for FY 23 came to about \$330,000 and again Manager McAlister pointed out this was mainly because of the lack of the water/sewer connections. Manager McAlister went over the towns FY23 expenses, pointing out the Street expenses at 162%, explaining this was due to increased rates by Dominion for streetlights. Manager McAlister stated that even with the overage, the town still came in under budget for the year. The remaining amount in the budget then goes into the town's capital account to be used for

capital projects as they come along. Manager McAlister touched on an item in her staff report. Stating that she and Treasurer Danner had a meeting recently with Atlantic Union Bank representatives. She spoke with them about the money that the town currently has in the bank and how it can gain interest. The bank's VP of treasury suggested the Maximum Investment Sweep. Manager McAlister stated that there would be roughly \$9,000.00 of positive interest that the Town's bank account would start to incur with Atlantic Union Bank.

Mayor Plaster said we will discuss item number three on the agenda; the Shendun Hills Plat Review. Manager McAlister informed the council that the Shendun Hills plat has been provided for consideration and approval. The reconfigured plat has 14 duplexes in the B3 zoned area and 4 single family houses on the north side, which is zoned R1. Manager McAlister says that the way the plat is drawn, will give them the ability to get the required lot sizes and road frontages for what they are proposing. Manager McAlister stated to council that she wanted to get the plat to them to see if they had any questions before it goes to the regular session of the Town Council Meeting.

Mayor Plaster said Council member Justis had something he would like to discuss. Council member Justis stated that the Street Committee is suggesting that there be a 4-way stop sign at the intersection of 14th Street and Forest Avenue. He stated that the Street Committee would like to purchase 4 sets of temporary warning strips and 4 solar powered flashing stop signs for this intersection. He stated that once the residents are accustomed to the change, the signs can be moved to a new location and permanent ones put in their place. Council member Justis also stated that the Street Committee is going to do a long-term study; approximately 3-6 months long for traffic pattern and signage.

Mayor Plaster adjourned the work session at 6:48 p.m.

October 11, 2023

A regular session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Wednesday, October 11th 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the regular session of October 11th 2023 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, Michael Kohl and Tim Leeth.

Other Town Officials present: Attorney Michael Helm, Town Manager Stefanie McAlister, Deputy Clerk Jennifer Whetzel, Parks Director Austin Shank, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, and Public Works Director AJ Hummel.

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; CHITTUM – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, LEETH – AYE; the Council approved the minutes from the meetings on September 11th 2023 and the special meeting on September 14th, 2023, as presented.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS (public comment)

No public comments

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; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE, CHITTUM – AYE, to approve the financial reports for the month of September 2023.

WATER AND SEWER – Council member Bailey said they would be setting up a meeting in the next few weeks.

ORDINANCE, HEALTH, AND PROPERTY – no report

STREET AND STREET LIGHTS – Council member Justis made a motion, seconded by council member Bailey, and carried by a vote of 5-1, recording as follows: JUSTIS—AYE, BAILEY—AYE, CHITTUM—NAY, RAYNES—AYE, KOHL—AYE, LEETH—AYE; to approve a 4-way stop at the intersection of 14th Street and Forest Avenue utilizing 4 solar powered flashing stop signs and 4 temporary warning strips with a total estimated cost of \$9200.00 and expenditure on the project not to exceed \$10,000.

PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES – no report

SPECIAL EVENTS – Council member Leeth announced the Senior Citizens Luncheon went very well with over 130 meals provided to town senior citizen residents.

PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION – Mayor Plaster announced that the Veterans Day ceremony is Saturday November 11th. She also thanked Public Works Director AJ Hummel and Public Works employees for all their hard work.

STAFF REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER. Manager McAlister pointed out from her staff report that the 7th Street and 13th Street water line replacement has improved the towns water loss since Atkins has completed the project.

ATTORNEY. No report.

TREASURER. Treasurer Rhonda Danner stated that the Towns new bill pay portal PSN Invoice Cloud is up and running. The town will now be able to accept credit card payments for utilities, taxes, and other miscellaneous payments. The town is currently utilizing a loaner credit card machine until the one purchased is delivered.

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.

PARK AND TOURISM DIRECTOR. Director Austin Shank said the GPR study was done on Grand Caverns Pool on 9/14/2023 and that the results should be in by the end of this week. He also mentioned that the Fall Festival and Haunted Cave are coming up on October 28th and 29th and volunteers are needed.

NEW BUSINESS – Council member Justis made a motion, seconded by Council member Leeth, and carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: JUSTIS – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, LEETH – AYE, CHITTUM--AYE; to approve the Planning Commission recommendation of the plat and subdivision of land for Shendun Hills Subdivision.

OLD BUSINESS – nothing to report.

Mayor Plaster declared the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.