

December 11, 2023

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the work session of December 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, Eddie Chittum and Michael Kohl.

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

Council member Leeth made a motion to amend the agenda to change the order of the items for discussion. He wants to move the pool committee update and discussion before the discussion of a pool lease agreement. Council member Justis second the motion. The vote carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE.

Mayor Plaster said the first item on the agenda is the comprehensive plan agreement update. Manager McAlister said that Gleamer Sullivan and herself met with Director, Bonnie Riedesel and staff members from the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) on November 30, 2023. She said they discussed what needs to be done to update the Town's comprehensive plan. She said they drafted an agreement based on the work that needs to be done to complete the update. Manager McAlister said the CSPDC will be taking the lead on updating the plan. She said the CSPDC first item would be a training session for the planning commission and town council on how all this will work. She said the planning commission has a comprehensive plan committee but with this update we will use all planning commission members to get this project completed. Manager McAlister said she just needs to know if the council is ready to move forward on the agreement with the CSPDC. Council agreed to move forward with the agreement and with updating the plan. Mayor Plaster stated that she will also serve as a Comprehensive Plan Committee member.

Mayor Plaster said the next item on the agenda is the Council's Citizen Pool Committee update and discussion. Council member Kohl said the pool committee met and he brought up the suggestion of the town leasing the pool to the committee to operate. He said that at this time, the committee is not prepared to do that. He said they have many ideas on raising money to repair the pool, but they need to make sure council agrees to reopen the pool if the funds are raised for the repairs. Council member Kohl asked pool committee chair Maite Taylor to give council an

update of the previous committee meetings. Maite Taylor informed the council that the committee has filed all the paperwork required for the nonprofit status. She said the committee explored the idea of leasing the pool, but they feel it exceeds their current organizational capabilities. She did say this is maybe something they would consider in the future. Ms. Taylor said the engineering report shows there are no catastrophic or concerning voids that would deem the pool unsafe. She asked the council to commit to reopening the pool if the committee raises the funds for the repairs. Ms. Taylor said they have sponsors that are willing to help them financially, but they need a commitment from council before sponsors will donate money towards the repairs. She requested the council to consider raising a motion to commit to the repair and reopening of the Grand Caverns pool, contingent on the Grottoes Pool Preservation Foundation successfully raising the funds for the repairs. Ms. Taylor said she feels this will solidify the community's commitment and allows the non-profit to continue their corporate sponsorship fundraising efforts. Council member Kohl said he feels this is a great partnership for years to come to also assist with upgrades around the pool area. Council member Leeth asked if the committee was going to raise money to help offset what the pool loses. Mayor Plaster said if we are going to allow the organization to raise money, we have to agree to open it. Manager McAlister said the pool would have to be added back into the budget. She also suggested having a phased site plan with a cost estimate completed. She noted that a project of this scope and contingent on funds raised, weather and contractor availability would take a couple years to fully complete. Council member Kohl made a motion, seconded by Council member Justis, and carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE that if sufficient funds are raised the town will commit to repairing the pool and have it operational at the next available season.

Mayor Plaster adjourned the work session at 6:58 p.m.

December 11, 2023

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the regular session of December 11, 2023, of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 7:06 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, Clerk Tara Morris, Parks Director Austin Shank, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Public Works Assistant Director Tyler Breeden and Police Chief Jason Sullivan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion by Council member Raynes, seconded by Council member Leeth, and carried by a vote of 5-0-1, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – ABSTAIN; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE, LEETH – AYE; the Council approved the minutes from the meetings on November 13, 2023, as presented.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS (public comment)

Barry Gibson addressed the council concerning the pool and stating that the citizens committee cannot move forward if the council does not commit to opening the pool if the committee raises the money to repair the pool. After reading his statement Mayor Plaster informed Mr. Gibson that the council just had discussion with the pool committee and that Council voted unanimously to open the pool, at the next pool season, once the money was raised and the repairs are completed.

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: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE, to approve the financial reports for the month of November.

WATER AND SEWER – no report

ORDINANCE, HEALTH, AND PROPERTY – no report

STREET AND STREET LIGHTS – no report

PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES – Council member Chittum stated that he was glad council agreed to get the pool open but would still like the committee to explore the idea of leasing the pool from the town.

Council member Kohl thanked the council for the support to open the pool if the funds are raised.

SPECIAL EVENTS – Council member Leeth said the Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting was very successful and well attended. He said the home decorating contest is Monday, December 18th starting at 7:00 p.m.

PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION – Mayor Plaster reminded council of the staff employee luncheon on Friday, December 15, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.

STAFF REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER. Manager McAlister informed the council that Smith Paving will begin street milling and paving on December 18th along a portion of Dogwood Avenue.

ATTORNEY. no report.

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

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

POLICE CHIEF. A written report was provided. There were no additional comments or questions 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 they have completed two weekends of Caroling in the Caverns and there is one left to go. He said this is the last year of the Grottoes Ruritan's assisting with this event and that the caverns staff will continue to hold the event. Director Shank said the next item he is excited about is a new event that the staff is hosting for nine weeks in the cave called Subterranean Sound. He said this will require advance ticket purchase and only 75 tickets will be sold for each event. Director Shank said he feels this will be a good revenue source during the slower time at the cave. He thanked the council for supporting his new employee model which allows them to host these events to generate more money without having to depend on other departments or volunteers to help. Director Shank said they have received a good response for the Ranger II position, which he hopes to extend an offer within the next week. He also informed the council that the giftshop renovations will begin in January 2024.

NEW BUSINESS – Mayor Plaster said we have an application for conditional use permit. Clerk Morris said we received an application from Richard and Ashleigh Muttai for conditional use permit for a child day care at 402 Augusta Avenue. She stated that the property is zoned B-1 and a child day care is listed as a conditional use in the B-1 zoning. Clerk Morris said the planning commission reviewed the request and recommended council set a joint public hearing, which is the only action that needs to happen tonight. Mayor Plaster asked if the council was prepared to make a motion to set a joint public hearing for the next council meeting. Council member Leeth replied so moved. Council member Justis seconded the motion. The vote carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE

OLD BUSINESS – none

CLOSED SESSION - On motion by Council member Bailey, seconded by Council member Leeth, and carried by a vote of 6 to 0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; KOHL – AYE; LEETH – AYE; the Council recessed the meeting from 7:28 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., for a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)1 of the Code of Virginia for matters relating to personnel.

On motion by Council member Leeth, seconded by Council member Bailey, and carried by a vote of 6 to 0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM - AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE; the Council returned to open session.

Mayor Plaster read the certification of the closed session – “to the best of your knowledge that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under section 2.2-3711(A)1 of the Code of Virginia, as only such public business matters that were identified in the motion by which a closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting”. Clerk Morris took a roll call. T. Leeth; so certified, M. Kohl; so certified, D. Raynes; so certified, J. Plaster; so certified, J. Justis; so certified, J. Bailey; so certified, E. Chittum, so certified.

Mayor Plaster declared the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

