

**TOWN OF GROTTUES  
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSESSION AGENDA  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER – MAYOR PLASTER**

1. Grottoes Little League Lease and Utilities
2. Town Council Retreat

**TOWN OF GROTTOS**  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**  
**February 12, 2024**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER – MAYOR PLASTER**

**ROLL CALLING –CLERK MORRIS**

**WELCOME CITIZENS**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FROM THE MEETINGS OF JANUARY 8, 2024.**

**PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS (PUBLIC COMMENT)**

**REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES:**

1. Finance – Council member Raynes, Chair
  - a. ACTION - Approval of Financial Reports
2. Water and Sewer – Council member Bailey, Chair
3. Ordinance, Health, and Property – Council member Kohl, Chair
4. Streets and Street Lights – Council member Justis, Chair
5. Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities – Council member Chittum, Chair
6. Special Events - Council member Leeth, Chair
7. Personnel, Fire and Police Protection – Mayor Plaster, Chair

**STAFF REPORTS:**

1. Town Manager
2. Town Attorney
3. Treasurer
4. Assistant to Town Manager
5. Police Chief
6. Public Works Director

7. Parks and Tourism Director

**NEW BUSINESS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**ADJOURN**

January 8, 2024

A joint public hearing and the regular session of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Monday, January 8, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Plaster called the joint public hearing of the Grottoes Town Council and the Grottoes Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. on January 8, 2024.

**ATTENDANCE:** Planning Commission Members present: Chairman Dylan Nicely, Brooke Haas, Jean Stoll, Maite Taylor, and Michael Kohl. Absent: Rene Ehlenfeldt and Darrel Baker.

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

Mayor Plaster said the reason for the public hearing is to hear citizen comments on a request for a Conditional Use Permit at 402 Augusta Avenue for a Child Day Care in a B-1 zoning.

Speaking for the request – Ashleigh Muttai stated that she was here tonight to answer any questions on the council or planning commission may have on her request for the child day care.

Speaking against the request – none.

There was no discussion from Council or Planning Commission.

Mayor Plaster closed the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. and turned the meeting over to the Planning Commission.

Chairman Nicely asked the Commission if they had any comments or if they were prepared to make a recommendation.

On a motion from Commission member Stoll, seconded by Commission member Taylor, and carried by a 5-0 vote, voting as follows: HAAS – AYE; STOLL – AYE; NICELY- AYE; TAYLOR – AYE; KOHL – AYE, to recommend the approval of the Conditional Use Permit at 402 Augusta Avenue for a child day care in the B-1 zoning.

Chairman Nicely adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Plaster called the regular session of January 8, 2024, of the Grottoes Town Council to order at 7:06 p.m. Mayor Plaster asked Clerk Morris for a roll call.

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

Other Town Officials present: Attorney Michael Helm, Clerk Tara Morris, Town Manager Stefanie McAlister, Treasurer Rhonda Danner, Parks/Tourism 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 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE; the Council approved the minutes of the December 11, 2023 meetings as presented.

### **PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND CLAIMS (public comment)**

Gleamer Sullivan addressed the council about previous emails she had sent to them and did not receive a response or did not receive any resolution of her concerns. She said as a citizen this leaves her frustrated and upset with the lack of responsiveness from the town governance. Ms. Sullivan said that number three under New Business on tonight's agenda is consideration - Code of Conduct and Ethics for the members of the Grottoes Town Council. She said if the council approves this, she is hoping that the town council and mayor will resolve to work toward being in line with the guidelines they agree upon. She feels if this is done more citizens will become involved with the town because they will feel welcomed, heard, and included.

Mary Robertson commented about the repaving of Edgewood Street. She said for the first time the road is smooth. Ms. Robertson said she is concerned with the ditch at the end of Edgewood and Augusta Avenue. She said it is a big ditch with not many reflectors there and asked if the town would consider adding more reflectors along the ditch. Ms. Robertson also asked if some dirt could be brought in to help with the drop off the shoulder from the road being repaved.

### **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; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE; to approve the financial reports for the month of December.

**WATER AND SEWER** – no report

**ORDINANCE, HEALTH, AND PROPERTY** – Council member Kohl made a motion, seconded by Council member Justis. The vote carried 6-0, voting as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE; to approve the Conditional Use Permit at 402 Augusta Avenue for the child day care in the B-1 zoning.

**STREET AND STREET LIGHTS – no report**

**PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES – no report**

**SPECIAL EVENTS – no report**

**PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION –** Mayor Plaster said we have the list of the 2024 Officers for the Grottoes Volunteer Fire Department that was submitted for approval. On a motion by Council member Justis, seconded by Council member Leeth, and carried by a vote of 5-0-1, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – ABSTAIN; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE, to approve the 2024 officers for the Grottoes Volunteer Fire Department.

**STAFF REPORTS**

TOWN MANAGER. Manager McAlister informed the council that we have entered into an agreement with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission for updating the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. She stated that they will hold a kickoff meeting at the planning commissions meeting on January 30, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. She said they will go over all the steps it takes to update the plan. Manager McAlister asked the council to mark their calendars and join the planning commission at this meeting.

ATTORNEY. Nothing to 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 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.

PARKS AND TOURISM DIRECTOR. Director Shank gave an update on Subterranean Sound Concert Series saying that all shows sold out within a couple days, and several sold out within a couple hours. He said there have been five groups that have offered to do an additional show and those tickets will go on sale January 13th. Director Shanks said he feels these tickets will sale just as fast.

**NEW BUSINESS –**

**ELECTION OF VICE MAYOR.**

Mayor Plaster said Council member Raynes currently serves as vice-mayor and asked if he was interested in continuing to serve. Council member Raynes stated that he would continue to serve as vice-mayor. Council member Kohl made a motion for Council member Raynes to continue as vice-mayor, 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; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE.

#### **SETTING OF DATE AND TIME OF MEETING.**

Council member Leeth made a motion to approve the schedule for the council meetings and the inclement weather policy. Seconded by Council member Kohl, the vote carried 6 to 0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE.

#### **RESOLUTION #20240108-01**

#### **ORDINANCE AND RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH THE DATES AND TIMES OF THE WORK SESSIONS AND REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GROTTUES, VIRGINIA, FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2024**

**WHEREAS** the Charter of the Town of Grottoes, Virginia (the “Town”) requires the Town Council (the “Council”) of the Town approve an ordinance to set forth the regular meeting times of the Council; and

**WHEREAS** Va. Code § 15.2-1416 requires the Council to pass a resolution establishing such regular meeting times at the organizational meeting of the Council following the election of the new members thereof.

**THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GROTTUES, VIRGINIA, to-wit:**

1. A) Meeting Date and Times for 2024. In accordance with the Town Charter, beginning January 8, 2024, and the second Monday of each month thereafter, the meeting of the Council shall commence with a work session at 6:00 p.m., followed at 7:00 p.m. by the regular meeting, with the following exception: the meeting in October shall be held on Wednesday, October 16, 2024, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

B) Inclement Weather Policy for Council Meetings for 2024. If a meeting cannot be held due to inclement weather or for any reason as determined by the Mayor or the Vice-Mayor if the mayor is not available, the meeting will be held at the scheduled time on the following Monday, unless otherwise determined by the Council.

Town of Grottoes  
2024 Meeting Dates

	Work Session 6:00pm	Town Council 7:00 pm	Planning Commission 6:00pm
Jan	8	8	30
Feb	12	12	
Mar	11	11	26
Apr	8	8	
May	13	13	28
Jun	10	10	
Jul	8	8	30
Aug	12	12	
Sept	9	9	24
Oct	16*Wednesday	16	
Nov	11	11	26
Dec	9	9	

Unless otherwise posted all Council meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall. Work session meetings will be held at 6:00 pm. Planning Commission will meet at 6:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please call the Town Office at 540-249-5896.

#### **2024 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS.**

Mayor Plaster asked if anyone had any comments on the proposed committee assignments for 2024. She stated the only change she made was she moved David Raynes from Water and Sewer to the Personnel, Fire and Police Protection and moved Eddie Chittum from Personnel, Fire and Police Protection to the Water and Sewer Committee.



On a motion by Council member Leeth, seconded by Council member Justis, 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 approved the 2024 committee assignments.

### **2024 Committee Assignments**

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** David Raynes  
Jo Plaster  
Tim Leeth

#### **PERSONNEL, FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** Jo Plaster  
David Raynes  
Michael Kohl

#### **ORDINANCE, HEALTH AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** Michael Kohl - Planning Commission Liaison  
Joshua Bailey  
Eddie Chittum

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** Tim Leeth  
James Justis  
Jo Plaster

#### **WATER & SEWER COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** Joshua Bailey  
Eddie Chittum  
Tim Leeth

#### **PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

Chair: Eddie Chittum  
Jim Justis  
Michael Kohl

**STREETS AND STREET LIGHTS COMMITTEE**

Chair: Jim Justis  
Joshua Bailey  
David Raynes

**CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS.**

Council member Leeth made a motion, seconded by Council member Kohl. Council member Bailey stated that he has never agreed with signing this resolution and feels it is something that should come with the position. He said we adopt something that we are not following, and we should be, which was pointed out by Ms. Sullivan. Council member Chittum said he agrees and said the council is voted in by the citizens but feels this is belittling and holding them to a different standard. The vote carried by a vote of 6 to 0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES – AYE; LEETH – AYE; KOHL – AYE; Council approved Resolution #20240108-02 reaffirming and readopting a Code of Conduct and Ethics for the Members of the Grottoes Town Council, as follows:

**RESOLUTION  
20240108-02**

**A RESOLUTION TO REAFFIRM AND ADOPT A CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS  
FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE GROTTUES TOWN COUNCIL**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Grottoes Council has previously determined that the adoption of a Code of Conduct and Ethics is important to emphasize the imperatives of integrity, fairness, and accountability in local government.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Grottoes Town Council this 9th day of January 2023, the following Code of Conduct and Ethics, including Conduct and Ethical Standards, are hereby reaffirmed, and adopted:

**GROTTUES TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS PREAMBLE.**

The citizens of Grottoes are entitled to fair, ethical, accountable, and effective local government. Such a government requires that public officials:

- Comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws, ordinances, and policies affecting government.
- Be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions.
- Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain.
- Conduct public deliberations and processes openly.
- Act with respect and civility.

To this end, the Grottoes Town Council has adopted this Code of Conduct and Ethics to emphasize the imperatives of integrity, fairness, and accountability in local government.

### **1. Act in the Public Interest**

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, Council Members shall work for the common good of the people of Grottoes and not for any private or personal interest. They will treat all persons, claims, and transactions in a fair and equitable manner.

### **2. Conduct of Members**

Council Members shall at all times restrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Town Council, boards, commissions, committees, staff, or the public.

### **3. Respect for Process**

Council Member duties shall be performed in accordance with the processes and rules established by the Town Council. A Council Member shall respect a decision once it has been made by the majority of Council.

### **4. Communication**

It is the responsibility of Council Members to share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration that they have received from sources outside of the decision-making process with all other Council Members.

Council Members shall interact with one another honestly, forthrightly, and respectfully. Discussions shall focus on issues, policies, and other substantive matters relating to the function of Town government.

### **5. Confidential Information**

Council Members shall respect and preserve the confidentiality of information provided to them concerning the matters of the Town. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization nor use such information to advance their personal, financial, or private interests.

## **6. Advocacy**

To the best of their ability, Council Members shall represent the official policies and positions of the Town Council. When presenting their personal opinions or positions, members shall explicitly state that they do not represent the Council or the Town.

## **7. Positive Work Environment**

Council Members shall support and maintain a positive and constructive environment for residents, businesses, Town employees, and others involved in Town activities.

## **8. Compliance**

The Grottoes Town Council Code of Conduct and Ethics expresses standards of ethical conduct expected of Members of the Grottoes Town Council.

Members of the Council have the primary responsibility to ensure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of the Town Council.

# **TOWN OF GROTTUES, VIRGINIA**

## **Conduct and Ethical Standards Guidelines and Suggestions to Maintain Good Working Relationships**

### **1. Relationships with other Council Members**

A Council Member wants to be a success in getting certain policies approved and carried out. The most important factor in determining whether this will happen is the attitude of other Council Members. They are a crucial audience.

Questions you need to ask yourself:

- Do you act in a way that suggests you are concerned primarily with your own benefit (or a select group)? Or does your behavior convince your colleagues that you are acting in the best interest of the entire town?
- Do you help your colleagues obtain the information they need to participate effectively? Or do you try to look good at their expense?

- Do you try to get everyone trying to agree on an issue? Or are you satisfied once you know the majority is achieved?
- In short: Do you compete or cooperate?

A Council Member will be respected by colleagues if the Member behaves in a way that is seen as fair as well as effective. Knowing and understanding your colleagues is central to establishing, building, and maintaining effective relationships.

Keys to working well together:

- Be willing to listen to others.
- Respect others' skills and attitudes.
- Keep an open mind.
- Disclose yourself to others openly and freely. Express your opinion and let colleagues learn why you think the way you do on issues.
- Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
- Offer criticism of colleagues only in private meetings with appropriate individuals or in closed meeting.
- **ADHERE TO THE ESTABLISHED CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

## **2. Remember the Rule of Four!**

When it comes to adopting policy or getting any item approved in our community, you need to remember the Rule of Four. A simple question you need to ask is, "How many citizens does it take to get any policy or action item approved?" The answer is four. The point is the three additional citizens you convince have to currently share a position with you on the Council or one of them be the Mayor. Obviously, your own mind is made up on an issue, if you persuade three other Council Members or two and the Mayor (in case of ties) in your favor, then the motion will pass. So, although the citizens are very important in what we do, when it comes to approving policy and items at hand, you need to convince your colleagues. It is easier to accomplish this by working with them instead of alienating them.

## **3. Management of Conflict**

Council Members who don't think and act as part of a team, who are difficult to get along with, most often become ineffective. They are left out of the decision-making process, which is a loss to the entire Council. Disagreements among Council Members are inevitable, and a normal part of any decision-making process. It is important that disagreements do not interfere with cooperative processes. The most serious paralysis a Council can have is the inability of Members to work with one another. This inability becomes visible to the community and reduces the Council's political authority within the community. The interests of individual Members become personal and apparently more important than the interests of

other citizens. To manage conflict constructively may require that ground rules be established, so that an atmosphere can be created where differences can be raised, and respectful dialogue can occur.

#### **4. Relationships with Town Staff**

Staff bashing is tempting for a Council Member who wants to look good to those who are complaining. But the local government pays a heavy price for such behavior. The morale of town employees is likely to decline if the Council expects the laws to be enforced, but then publicly jumps on those responsible for enforcement. Therefore, Council Members should be careful about how they deal with specific complaints about staff expressed at a public meeting.

Things to remember about staff relationships:

- Treat all employees with courtesy and respect.
- Avoid publicly criticizing any employee in any way that reflects on the competence and integrity of the employee.
- Don't try to resolve controversies during a public meeting.
- Make clear to a citizen that the complaint will be addressed and ask the Town Manager to appoint a staff member to contact the citizen.
- Don't let the staff be blamed for major policies, since those are the responsibility of the Council.
- Remember that the success of every policy depends on its implementation by an effective staff.
- If there is a problem with a staff person, resolve it in private rather than at a public meeting (or the press). Raise concerns about employees with the Town Manager, and concerns about the Town Manager with the Mayor.

#### **Town Manager- Council Relationships**

- Council Members must understand that their role is to develop policy, not get involved in administration. Such activity can erode the manager's authority with staff members and often lead to morale and productivity problems within the staff.
- Council Members should maintain consistent positions in both their public declarations and their private discussions with the Town Manager. Our actions can increase or minimize the quality of work by our Town Manager and Staff.
- All dealings with town staff should be handled via the Town Manager, unless he or she prescribes otherwise.

#### **5. Relationships with the Media (Print, Radio, TV, Websites)**

- When talking with the media, avoid attacking others, even if they attacked you. Don't let an aggressive reporter or citizen lure you into battle. Fighting with a citizen, staff member, or fellow Council person can make you look small minded and divert attention from what you were elected to do. Resist the urge to be vindictive.
- While Facebook, blogs, wikis and other forms of online discourse are individual interactions, please remember that to our citizens, you are always a representative of the Town of Grottoes. We have an official Town website and Face book page for our town and that content is controlled by Town Staff
- Please refrain from conducting any town related business on personal websites. If you receive questions via personal websites, please direct people to our official Town website or Facebook page to find information and/or post comments.

#### **6. Relations with the Public (Citizens)**

- Avoid a private lifestyle that casts public doubt upon the integrity and competence of the town government
- Pay all taxes due to the county, state, or national government.
- Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
- Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views.
- Be respectful and attentive. Avoid comments, body language or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect for the presentations from citizens, personnel or colleagues.
- When making comments, make sure you clarify when you are speaking individually and not for the Council as a whole.
- There will be times when we are asked to speak at public meetings, with the media, post comments on websites, etc. If you are sharing your personal thoughts and/or opinions, you need to make this clear to your audience by stating your comments do not represent the Council as a whole.
- Reflect on your comments before you speak to make sure they cannot be misinterpreted. Comments based on fact and forethought will hopefully eliminate any possible misunderstandings.
- Serious issues should be discussed as a whole (Council and Staff) before public comments are made.
- Remember that even though you are an individual, in the eyes of the public and media, you represent the Council and our community. Choose your words wisely and make decisions

appropriately.

Mayor Plaster asked council to check their calendars to see when they would be available near the end of February to schedule a retreat. Mayor Plaster said she has asked Attorney Helm to review Robert's Rules and discuss and answer any questions that may come up.

**OLD BUSINESS** – none

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Plaster declared the meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Attest

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Mayor

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Clerk





## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council  
**FROM:** Stefanie McAlister, Town Manager  
**DATE:** 9 February 2024  
**SUBJECT:** Staff Report

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### 1. Comprehensive Plan Update

On January 30, 2024, at 7PM, during the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission, staff from the CSPDC gave a presentation/training on the Grottoes Comprehensive Plan Update. The presentation included information on what a comprehensive plan is and what it is not, how to develop one through proactive planning, and what our update process will be. The full planning commission, the mayor, the town manager and clerk of council were in attendance along with a few community members. As the process moves forward regular updates will be provided to council. Please plan to be engaged in the process.

### 2. 2024 Work Plan

Following is a list of major projects that will be the primary focus of the town manager through this calendar year:

- Employee Evaluations – Complete
- FY2024-25 Budget – Prep Feb - March, council review April - May, approval June
- Comprehensive Plan Update Oversight – January through December
- Radio Read Water Meters - Conversion and system integration
- Third Well Integration into Municipal Water System
- Finalize ARPA-SLFRF Obligations
- First Responders Tribute Area and Town Entryway Signs

### 3. Dominion Energy Transmission Rebuild Project

Dominion Energy is currently in the planning stages of a transmission line rebuild project. This includes upgrades to towers, poles and lines from Harrisonburg to Grottoes (Phase 1) and then from Grottoes to Doods (Phase 2). In the coming weeks Dominion will be sending out a mailer that explains the project. There will be a community meeting on March 12 at South River Elementary School where questions can be asked to and answered by Dominion Energy representatives. A decision on whether to move forward with the project will happen in the beginning of 2025 and, if approved, the construction phase will occur in 2026.

**Audit**

The FY20 audit has been completed. We are currently pulling samples and answering standard procedure questions for the FY21 audit. I will keep you updated on the progress.

**Maximum Investment Sweep Account**

For the month of January, we have earned \$8,387.48 in interest. The interest rate was 2.40%.

**Taxes**

We have had a very successful January and February with collected tax revenue. The ability to pay online and in-house with a card has been a factor in this increase in paying on time and past due balances. There were over 600 payments made online January through February 7<sup>th</sup>. Tax second notices will be sent February 12<sup>th</sup>.

The revenue totals below are as of February 7<sup>th</sup>.

- Real Estate: \$283,000 Budgeted: 103% Collected \$290,173
- Personal Property: \$87,908 Budgeted: 94% Collected \$82,379
- Vehicle License Fee: \$45,000 Budgeted: 96% Collected \$43,192

**Virginia Resource Authority**

Our 18<sup>th</sup> loan payment with VRA was made this month in the amount of \$64,679.61. Our balance is now \$1,230,813.87 at an interest rate of 2.4%. This loan will be paid in full 2/1/2035.

**Donations**

We will be processing the Fire Department and Rescue Squad annual donation checks in the coming month. Each will receive \$9,500 and will have their utility bills refunded from the previous year on the same check. We will also be processing the Grottoes Cardinals check for \$1,800, Bluegrass in the park for \$1,500 and the VA Soil and Water Conservation for \$375.00.

**Utility Billing**

There were 212 second notices sent for delinquent utility accounts. Utility cut-offs will be February 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Accounts Payable**

- Date: January 2024
- Number of Checks: 83
- Total January AP Expense: \$197,072.19



## Land Development Staff Report February 2024

### Zoning Permits issued (January 2024)

- 5 Permits
- 2 Single-Family
- 0 Town houses
- 2 Additions
- 1 Remodel

### 2024 total to date

- 5 Total Permits
- 2023 Total Dwellings**
- 2 Single-Family
- 0 Townhouse units

**Forest Station - (21<sup>st</sup> Street)** – Construction of the first group of six townhouses continues.

**Cherry Street Townhouses** - Construction of the Cherry Street Townhouses continues.

**R-7 Zoned area east of Cherry Avenue** – Single family residential development continues. The developers are running all service lines and constructing the roads to state standards. This development is not considered a subdivision since the streets are already platted and the developer is following the town code for zoning and land use. The Town has an agreement with Rockingham County that they provide all erosion and sediment control (E&S) and storm water management oversight for development in the town. County staff members have been in contact with the developer about this project. Based on DEQ regulations, which the county enforces when development is occurring, this project will likely be considered a common plan of development. Therefore, the county may require that the developer submit site plans and apply for E&S and DEQ permits and approvals for all current and future development in this area. The costs for engineering and permits is currently unknown and an unplanned expense for the developer.

**Shady Creek** – The developer is working on a contractual agreement with Ryan Homes. If this agreement happens construction on the next phase will begin spring of 2024.

**402 Augusta Avenue - Conditional Use Permit** – Ms. Muttai informed staff that due to some undisclosed information regarding the building they have decided not to proceed forward with the child day care at that location. They are looking vigorously in and around town for a new location.

**700 Dogwood Avenue** – Construction has started at 700 Dogwood Avenue. There is an approved conditional use permit allowing for a building containing a commercial store front with a two-family residential back.

Respectfully submitted:  
Tara Morris, Assistant to Town Manager

# Grottoes Police Department

## Staff Report

### February 2024

#### Staffing

	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Filled</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
Chief	1	1	0
Sergeant	1	1	0
Officer	4	1	3

Chief Sullivan and Sgt. Knight continues to cover open shifts that have been created by vacant positions and shifts that part-time officers are not able to cover.

Officer T. Dean's last shift with the police department will be on Feb.27, 2024. He and his family will be moving out of state.

Background investigations have started for applicants who are uncertified officers to attend the 20-week Basic Law Enforcement Academy that will begin in July 2024.

The Police Department is still accepting applications for Virginia Certified Police Officers.

#### **Training:**

Police Administrative Assistant Jeanell Thomas completed a 40-hour Crisis Intervention training. That consisted of classroom instruction and role-playing scenarios. This training will help her identify citizens who may be suffering a mental crisis when speaking with them on the phone or walk-in complaints at the police department. The training also instructed the attendees on resources that are available to citizens who may have family or other acquaintances who may be suffering a mental crisis.

Respectfully submitted:  
Jason Sullivan  
Chief of Police.



February 2024

## PUBLIC WORKS STAFF REPORT

Staffing	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
Public Works Director	1	1	0
Asst. Public Works Director	1	1	0
Public Works Crew Leader	1	1	0
Maintenance/Utilities Tech	4	3	1
Wastewater Treatment Operator	1	1	0
Part-Time Seasonal Laborer	3	1	2

Continued development in town will mean more roads that will be brought into our system that will need to be maintained, plowed of snow, paved, etc. Maintaining sufficient staffing levels is critical and should be evaluated periodically. Jesse Peychev left to pursue a job with the Town of Dayton. He will be missed, and we wish him well for his future.

### STREETS

Our salt inventory is at a reasonable capacity and should last through several storms. Snow removal equipment has been prepared and serviced. The roadway on Cary St. needs patching due to the water leak that occurred on 1/11/2024. Staff will repair that area as soon as the pavement plant reopens, there is a significant amount of pavement that will need removed and replaced.

### WATER AND SEWER

#### Septic Tanks

Staff are working a rotating schedule to get the septic tank pumping back on a consistent schedule. In the future, we will be pumping businesses in town with higher sewer usage (i.e., restaurants and convenience stores) more frequently, once a year, at a minimum. Currently there are 1,107 septic tanks in town. Besides working on a consistent rotating schedule of pumping, staff also pump tanks as requested by citizens. Of that total number of tanks, 335 (33%) have not been pumped in the last 10 years and are our priority. The EPA suggests that septic tanks should be pumped every 5 years. Since our system is designed differently than a typical residential septic tank and drain field system, pumping should not be necessary that frequently. However, the staff is working to ensure that all tanks are inspected at a minimum every 5 years, and a log citing the condition of the tank is kept.

## Wastewater Plant

Currently the WWTP operates at about 75% - 80% of its operating capacity. There is a need to begin planning for the dredging of Lagoon A. Over the years sludge accumulates in lagoons and should be periodically removed. Our understanding is that this has not happened in Lagoon A. As sludge builds the capacity of the lagoon diminishes and makes the processing less tolerant of infiltration. There is much involved with a lagoon dredging project especially considering that this is a clay lined lagoon. Staff will continue to investigate how to move forward with this project.

Mr. Wolverton does great work for the town in running, complying, and maintaining the WWTP.

A.J. met with Rob Mangrum at the WWTP and they began discussing ways to make the plant run more efficiently and to look at ways to upgrade the plant in the future. Staff is in the process of getting quotes for a manhole install on Holly Ave. to place a totalizer to read the inflow of sewage. This will let us keep a record of wet and dry events and I&I issues.

## Water

Town staff in the coming months will be busy getting 2" and 8" main line valves installed to help isolate for leak repairs.

Our staff is updating the GIS map of the utilities whenever a new asset is found or is worked on.

Core and Main was the chosen contractor to install the new team valve at the well lot on 1/31/2024 to replace a leaking valve that needs to be removed. This was accomplished with no interruption to the water service, and it went extremely well.

The staff is working with SLM Enterprises to install a totalizer in the elevated tank to read the tank level. The access point has been installed on the water tank for the probe. This will allow the pumps to cut on using tank level. They are currently cut on by line pressure which fluctuates and is hard to adjust. We will also be able to keep the tanks fuller.

## New construction

The Public Works Department conducts inspections for all new water, sewer, and street installations throughout town. As we all know there is a lot of construction around town. The town staff is always looking and trying to plan on the water and sewer service increases. Glo fiber is in the process of running conduit in the alley ways around town which in turn is keeping the Town staff busy marking utilities. R&L construction is also in full swing of building houses on 16<sup>th</sup>.St. Kenny May is in the process of construction on 14<sup>th</sup>. St.

## VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

The department supplies preventative maintenance for the Town's equipment and vehicles, including the police department.

The new septic tank body has been installed and works great. The pressure washer still needs to be installed due to fabrication of mounting it. so, it will have to go back to Thermo King for installation.

## PARKS AND FACILITIES

Public works staff are working with Parks & Tourism staff to get projects at both parks completed. With the hiring of Park Ranger 2s, we will be working on training these staff members to ensure that they're up to date on procedures and safety information.



1/2/2024	Homeowner	604 8th.St.	TB,JP	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/2/2024	Homeowner	66 Cary St.	JP,BK	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/2/2023	Homeowner	1437 Mandolin Ave.	JP,BK	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/3/2024	Homeowner	803A Dogwood Ave.	DS,JP	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/4/2024	Scheduled	201 20th.St.	JS,LR	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/4/2024	Scheduled	204 19th. St.	JS,LR	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/4/2024	Scheduled	305 19th. St.	JS,LR	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/7/2024	Homeowner	606 9th. St.	JS,LR	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/11/2024	Maintenance	Cary St.	LR,DS,TB,BK	8" Water main leak	Repaired 8" main	Water	12 Hrs
1/20/2024	Maintenance	Aspen Ave.	LR,TB,JS,JP, LK	8" Water main leak	Repaired 8" main	Water	9 Hrs
1/22/2024	Homeowner	307 2nd. St.	JP,DS	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs
1/23/2024	Maintenance	6th. St.	DS,JP,BK	Remove snowflakes	Removed snowflakes	Streets	1 Hr
1/23/2024	Maintenance	300 11th. St.	DS,JP,BK	Water leak 2" main	Repaired 2" main	Water	3 Hrs
1/24/2024	Maintenance	1702 Dogwood Ave.	BK,LR,JS	Water leak 2" main	Repaired 2" main	Water	2 Hrs
1/24/2024	Maintenance	1900 Dogwood Ave.	BK,LR,JS	Water leak 2" main	Repaired 2" main	Water	2 Hrs
1/29/2024	Maintenance	Well Lot	DS,LR,JS,BK,JP	Install 8" Team Insert Valve	Installed 8" Team Valve	Water	10 Hrs
1/31/2024	Homeowner	308 6th. St.	DS,JP	Pump septic tank	Pumped septic tank	Sewer	2 Hrs

## Parks & Tourism Staff Report February 2024

Staffing:	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
Parks & Tourism Director	1	1	0
Parks & Tourism Assistant Director	1	1	0
Parks Coordinator	1	1	0
Park Ranger II	2	2	0
Park Ranger I	-	9	-
Park Aide	-	0	-

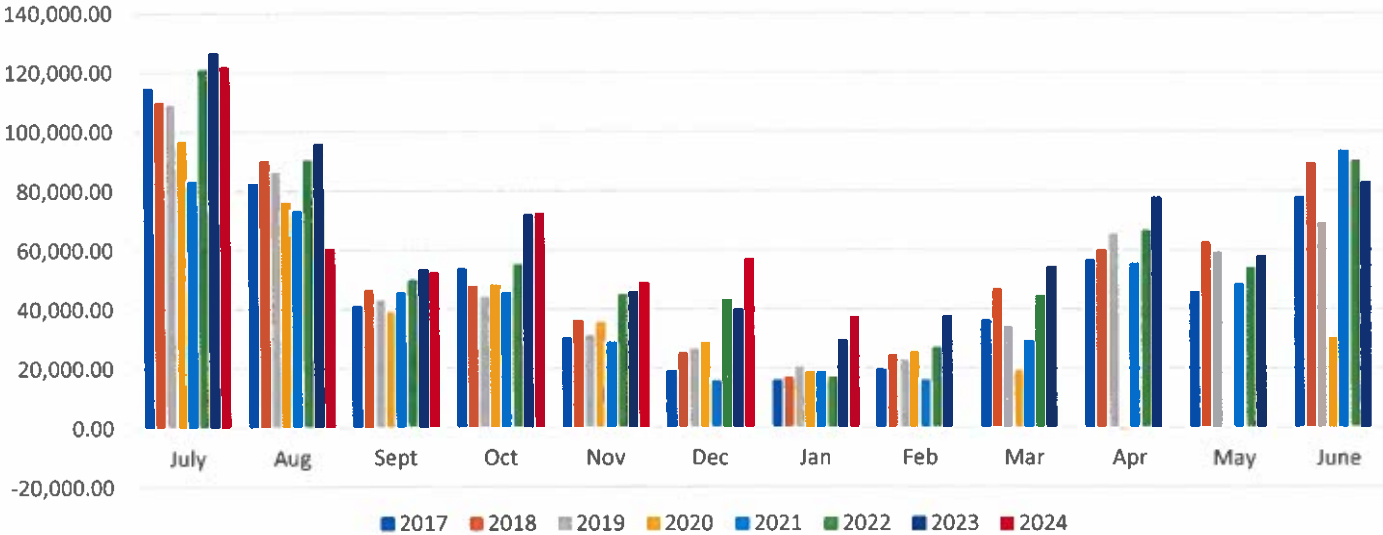
- Park Aide and Park Ranger I positions replace the prior terminology of Tour Guide. Previously, there were 21 authorized tour guide positions. Staff will determine employee numbers once each position type is filled. With this improved staffing structure, we anticipate needing fewer overall employees.

### Revenue:

Parks & Tourism generated \$37,149.92 in revenue for the month of January. To compare them with previous years please reference the charts at the end of this report.

1. **Subterranean Sound:** As a reminder, the promotion of this concert series began on 12/22<sup>nd</sup> with tickets going live at 8:30 am on 12/26<sup>th</sup>, the day after Christmas. At 75 seats each for a total of 8 concerts, 2 shows sold out in less than 2 hours, 6 shows were sold out within 8 hours, presently, 7 of the 8 shows are sold out. This marked the largest single day of sales in the Parks & Tourism Department's history; \$20,345.88 on 12/26/23. Since that time, it was decided that additional concerts be facilitated for the bands who are interested, which expanded our 8 concerts to 12. This development was announced to the public on Friday 1/5<sup>th</sup> with tickets going live on 1/13<sup>th</sup>. The subsequent 5 shows sold out within 3 hours, the first 2 selling out in 15 min and 20 min. This marked the second largest single day of sales at \$16,875.98 on 1/13<sup>th</sup>. With all 12 shows sold out, subsequently boosting December and January revenues, we're now anxious to see increased revenue in February and March due to drink and merchandise sales associated with the concert series.
2. **Giftshop Renovation.** A renovation project began during the week of 1/8 – 1/12<sup>th</sup>, for which, Grand Cavern daily operations closed. This project faced an initial snag which slowed the progress considerably, however, the project is nearing completion. The original hardwood floors had been re-carpeted more than once, resulting in an insurmountable amount of glue. Fortunately, the project continued with luxury vinyl planking throughout the 1500 sq/ft giftshop space which remains within budget. The new front desk and flooring have been completed with departmental staff only, which has saved considerable cost. Additionally, the custom-made retail furniture has also been delivered and installed. Minor changes are yet to be made including flooring transition strips, quarter round trim, and front desk/point of sale hardware modifications. These changes will be completed before the end of February.
3. **Cave Entrance Building Renovation.** In preparation for the Subterranean Sound concert series, departmental staff embarked on a renovation project that transformed an outdated exhibit space into a multi-use space. In so doing, staff exposed an original brick wall with art deco glass from its original construction. This space is being used as the "Cavern Tavern" during the concert series but will also be used as classroom space for our imminent grade-specific programming.

Revenue per Month by Fiscal Year								
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
July	114,666.02	109,906.75	109,049.62	96,790.05	83,045.02	121,183.39	126,333.08	121,896.53
August	82,400.00	90,052.60	86,369.02	75,955.14	73,099.04	90,498.86	95,857.62	60,252.18
September	40,864.00	46,500.01	42,753.13	39,037.34	45,294.81	49,867.95	53,129.49	52,043.89
October	53,621.00	47,728.97	44,111.49	48,171.93	45,446.76	55,187.46	71,849.43	72,362.94
November	29,960.14	35,864.01	31,040.05	35,719.21	28,575.92	45,122.38	45,510.93	48,813.49
December	19,065.81	25,078.17	26,501.92	28,439.56	15,788.80	43,131.17	39,826.13	56,869.12
January	15,989.60	16,933.85	20,391.97	18,631.61	18,618.06	17,038.43	29,243.19	37,149.92
February	19,589.22	24,394.21	22,570.37	25,357.98	16,009.96	27,089.55	37,269.68	
March	35,916.00	46,890.09	33,851.06	19,130.58	28,944.34	44,157.10	54,117.45	
April	56,393.64	59,677.04	65,301.31	-777.78	55,284.51	66,405.33	77,696.74	
May	45,428.42	62,606.36	58,972.15	50.60	48,287.55	53,997.59	57,678.58	
June	77,932.89	89,339.00	68,952.85	29,959.89	93,205.09	90,247.33	82,750.64	
<b>Total</b>	<b>591,826.74</b>	<b>654,971.06</b>	<b>609,864.94</b>	<b>416,466.11</b>	<b>551,599.86</b>	<b>703,926.54</b>	<b>771,272.96</b>	<b>449,388.07</b>



### Total Revenue

