



Council Chatter

Town of Grottoes, January 2025

Mayor's Corner

Inside this issue:

Town Manager's Message	2
Library News	2
Grottoes Police Dept	2
Grottoes Fire Dept	3
Park Place	3
Informational	4
Town Officials	4

Hello everyone and HaPpY New Year! It's 2025! Can you believe it? I thought when I was a kid, that when it got to be the year 2025, we'd all be ancient and living like the Jetson's! I'm glad to know we are not, and our small town still feels like a Hall-mark movie!

Although this Holiday season seems to be fleeting, I hope you all were able to have a very Merry Christmas that included all that you love! Our Country Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony was bigger and lasted longer than years past! Thanks to all who participated and made this event more special.

I want to thank you all for my re-election as Mayor, it truly is an honor to serve this community. I would also like to congratulate and welcome our newly elected Councilor, Maite Taylor and

re-elected Councilors, Michael Kohl, and Eddie Chitum. I also want to extend my many thanks to former Councilman Tim Leeth for his 8 years of service to the Town of Grottoes and our citizens. It has been wonderful to work along side Councilman Leeth and although he may have "left us for the band," he'll still be around, and he hasn't left town!

It is also my pleasure to announce and welcome our new Town Manager, Kyle O'Brien. His tenure began December 2, 2024, and he has hit the ground running! Kyle first started his career right here, back in 1997, and he says he is here to stay. We will be collaborating alongside one another to ensure that we are on track and thriving for years to come.

Over the course of this year, we plan to accomplish the many projects that have been on the books for some time now. Our Public Works Department and our partnering engineering firms will be installing, repairing, and upgrading our water lines and sewage treatment plant. The Town's "Welcome" signs at our entry points will be updated and constructed to mirror the one that is located at John E. Painter Park

in design. This new signage comes from a grant received from the County for beautification projects. We also plan to complete the First Responders Memorial at Town Hall this spring. Both projects will be constructed by R&L Construction and the town will hold a special event to commemorate the completion of the First Responders Memorial!

The final stages of completion to the Town's Comprehensive Plan with the aid of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) are also underway.

Lastly, we closed December 2024 with several applicant submissions to serve on the Planning Commission. Council will begin reviewing applications and the interview process will begin within the coming weeks.

As always, if you have questions or there is anything you wish to share with me and/or council, please don't hesitate to reach out.

My Best to You and Yours in 2025!

Your Mayor,

Jo Plaster

“
Year's end is
neither an end nor
a beginning but
a going on, with all
the wisdom
that experience can
instill in us.”

Hal Borland

GH

THURSDAY * FEBRUARY 13TH * 5:00 P.M. BINGO AT SOUTH RIVER ELEMENTARY

South River Elementary School is hosting a Bingo Night on Thursday, February 13 from 6-8pm sponsored by the SRES PTO. Doors will open around 5:00pm. The Bingo Night will raise funds to offset the costs for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade chartered field trips to Richmond and Jamestown. Please come support our SRES Rangers and help lower the costs of our upcoming spring field trips.



Town Manager's Message

I hope everyone's New Year is off to a great start and that you all had a happy holiday season!

I am very happy to be back in Grottoes and working for all of you to continue to make Grottoes one of the best communities in the Valley. The Mayor, Town Council and staff are a terrific group to work with and continue to work hard for the Town every day.

A bit about me – I was raised here in the Valley and have lived most of my adult life in the eastern part of Rockingham County, not too far from Grottoes. I began my local government career in Grottoes in 1997 before going to Broadway as

the town manager there for 24 years. Being back in Grottoes feels like coming back home and I look forward to being here for years to come.

As the Mayor mentioned in her article, there are exciting projects slated to kick off in Grottoes in 2025, as well as others that are underway that will be completed.

Grottoes has so much to offer, whether it be the Cavens, the beautiful landscape of the Blue Ridge Mountains as a backdrop, the recreational opportunities of the Town's parks, the safe and quiet living of the Town's residential spaces, as well as the commercial offerings that the Town's businesses provide. I look forward to



being a small part of continuing to cultivate these assets as well as identifying others that we can bring to Town to make Grottoes an even better place to live and work.

My door is always open, so if I can be of assistance or if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Happy New Year,

Kyle D. O'Brien, Town Manager

Library News

Mon-Thurs 10am-6pm

Fri 10-2pm

540-434-4475 option 3

Happy New Year from the Grottoes Library!

The new year also brings NEW HOURS to the library. We now OPEN AT 10 AM, Monday through Friday, for your convenience.

The Big Read returns to the library this spring. Plan to stop by the library in February to pick up your FREE copy of *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi. Then join us for an open book discussion, in the town community room, on March 18, 2025, from 2 to 3 pm.

Weekly activities at the library. Stop by the library to pick up a reminder flyer to post at home.

CircleTime - story time fun for our youngest readers - Wednesday's at 10:00am (*new time!*)

Keva Lab - 1st Thursday 4-5pm **Board Games** - 2nd Thursday 4-5pm **Lego Club** - 3rd Thursday 4-5pm **Dogs2Read2** - 4th Thursday 4-5pm

Mostly Books - Adult book club - meets 1st Monday of each month at 10 am. Join us to share your favorite reads with other book enthusiasts.

January is **Puzzle Month** at the library. Come see us and pick up a free puzzle from our assorted mix and/or bring a puzzle to share with others. Come back for more as you finish each treasured puzzle. So much to explore.....so much to learn about.....we look forward to seeing you soon.

Here's to a blessed New Year, *Peggy Counts, Grottoes Branch Manager*



From the Chief's Desk...

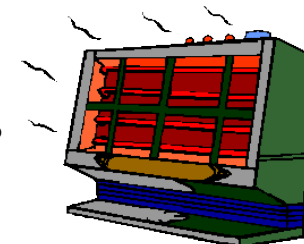
We at the police department hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As we enter the traditionally coldest months of the new year, please make sure your motor vehicle is ready for the cold temperatures. Important items to check are the battery, Antifreeze levels, heater and defrost, tires along with windshield wipers, and windshield washer fluid.

It is also a good idea to have an emergency kit in your vehicle if you must travel during inclement weather. FEMA recommends everyone carry at least a set of jumper cables, flares or reflective triangles, a cell phone, a cell phone charger, an ice scraper, a blanket, bottled water, and cat litter or sand for traction on snow or ice-covered surfaces.

If you must be out in the elements during cold temperatures remember to stay hydrated and dress in layers to stay warm.

If you use a space heater, or fuel heater such as kerosene or propane please follow these safety tips to avoid a fire or injury. Keep the heat source at least 3 feet from anything flammable. Don't leave it unattended. Keep out of reach of children and pets. If electric, plug directly into a wall outlet. Make sure to have a working smoke and carbon monoxide alarm. Check the device for malfunction. Don't use an outdoor heater indoors.



Grottoes Volunteer Fire Department

The Grottoes Volunteer Fire Dept. Members thank everyone for the ongoing support from this great community and wish everyone a **Safe & Healthy New Year!**

Watch for upcoming information regarding our annual Lawn Party, scheduled for May 29th – 31st, 2025 at the John E. Painter Park, and our Summer Bash Raffle, August 30, 2025.

Having a wedding, reception, banquet, graduation or birthday party? Consider renting our spacious Facility Hall for your special event. Contact Brent Powell (540-209-5408) for availability and rates.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JANUARY 19TH **SUNDAY LUNCH** \$13 PER MEAL; 11 AM – 1 PM (UNLESS SELL OUT EARLIER)
(FRIED TENDERLOIN, GRAVY, MASHED POTATOES, COLE SLAW, GREEN BEANS, ROLL, DESSERT, TEA OR COFFEE)

FEBRUARY 16TH **SUNDAY LUNCH** \$13 PER MEAL; 11 AM – 1 PM (UNLESS SELL OUT EARLIER)
(FRIED CUBED STEAK, GRAVY, MASHED POTATOES, COLE SLAW, GREEN BEANS, ROLL, DESSERT, TEA OR COFFEE)

MARCH 16TH **SUNDAY LUNCH** \$13 PER MEAL; 11 AM – 1 PM (UNLESS SELL OUT EARLIER) MENU TBD



2025 GVFD Officers

Chief - Andrew Holloway
Asst. Chief – Jeff Morris
Captain – Ben Brown
Lieutenant – Hunter Garrison
Lieutenant— Donald Simmons
EMS Officer—Mike Arbaugh

President – Linda Kegley
Vice President – Megan Roach
Secretary – Rebecca Acker
Treasurer – Lisa Ruhlman
Chaplain – Connie Morris
Historian – Jeanne Kirby



Park Place

A belated Happy Holidays to all!

Caroling in the Caverns was a wonderful success, thanks to the musicians, volunteers, and staff that pulled off a lovely fundraising event. This event has generated a total of \$5,567.92 in revenue. Just as before, \$3,000 will be provided to the South River Boys & Girls Club. The remaining \$2,567.92 goes to the Grand Caverns Playground Fund.

The 2025 Subterranean Sound Concert Series is upon us. Tickets went on sale 12/18/2024, and starting with Larry & Joe on 1/11/25, Grand Caverns will host a new concert weekly until Strong Water closes the series on 3/15/2025. I'm writing this while tickets are on sale, feel free to check it out on the Event-Brite website under Grand Caverns.

Lastly, the Grand Caverns Community pool recently received an extensive repair to the expansion joint, courtesy of National Pools. The cost of which (\$35K) was covered by fundraising efforts of *Grottoes Pool Preservation Foundation*. It's nice to see this making progress.

I think this is all the space I have in Park Place. Stay tuned for more changes in the next newsletter!



Town of Grottoes

601 Dogwood Avenue
P.O. Box 146
Grottoes, VA 24441

Phone: 540-249-5896
Fax: 540-249-5726
www.townofgrottoes.com

Personal Property & Real Estate Taxes

are due by
February 5th
at 5:00 p.m.

*Check, cash, or money
order (no fees)*

Online and debit/
credit card payments
AVAILABLE.

(convenience fees apply)

www.townofgrottoes.com

24-dropbox adjacent to
Town Hall parking lot

Mail: PO Box 146,
Grottoes, VA 24441

Town Hall hours:
Mon - Fri, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.



"Best in Show" JUDGES CHOICE Winner:
Sharon Johnson & Friends Horseback Riders
Honorable Mention: Wandering Valley LLC

"A Country Mile" BEST WALKING GROUP
Winner: Mountain Heritage Cloggers
Honorable Mention: ERHS Marching Eagles

"Junior Best in Show" JUDGES Favorite
entry featuring kids Winner: Tom Weaver
Honorable Mention: Twirling Medallions

"Hats Off Salute" MOST ENTHUSIASTIC
Winner: Grottoes First Baptist Church
Honorable Mention: Life Christian Fellowship

"Horsepower Hauler" BEST FLOAT ENTRY
Winner: Town of Grottoes Admin Staff
Honorable Mention: Wandering Valley LLC

"Giddy Up" BEST MOTOR VEHICLE ENTRY
Winner: Jeepin' For Jesus Honorable Mention:
Town of Grottoes Public Works Dept.

**Thank you to everyone who participated
in and supported our parade!**

Brush Site Open

8:00 am - 12:00 noon

Jan. 4th & 8th

Feb. 1st & 5th

Mar. 1st & 5th

Christmas Trees
can be dropped off at
the Rockingham
County Recycle
site located on
20th St.



The Rockingham County Recreation Department **Senior Citizens BINGO** for the Grottoes area is held at the Grottoes Town Hall in the community room on the fourth Monday of each month from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.



2024 Winners of the

Home Decorating Contest

Elegance - 503 14th St.

Clark Griswold - 201 Cherry Ave.

Reason for the Season - 307 2nd St.

Thank you to everyone for participating and making our Town so festive!

Grottoes Town Officials

Town Council

Jo Plaster, Mayor
David Raynes
Michael Kohl
Jim Justis
Joshua Bailey
Eddie Chittum
Maite Taylor

Planning Commission

Dylan Nicely
Michael Kohl
Darrel Baker
René Ehlenfeldt
Brooke Haas
Vacancy—applications being reviewed
Vacancy—applications being reviewed

Board Of Zoning Appeals

Dylan Nicely
David Gorjup
Christa Hall
Richard Muttai
Mark Keeler

Town Council meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. A work session will begin at 6:00 p.m., if needed.

Planning Commission Meets the last Tuesday of the odd months at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

BZA meets the third Tuesday of the month, when needed, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.