

May 29, 2025

A Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Grottoes was held on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Plaster called the special meeting of May 29, 2025, Grottoes Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Plaster asked for a roll call.

ATTENDANCE: Members present: Mayor Jo Plaster, Vice Mayor David Raynes, Eddie Chittum, Joshua Bailey, Jim Justis, Michael Kohl, Maite Taylor.

Other Town Officials present: Town Manager Kyle O'Brien, Assistant Town Manager Tara Morris, Deputy Clerk Crystal Ortiz, Police Chief Jason Sullivan.

Council member Bailey opened discussion about Council setting detailed procedures on the PETITIONS & CLAIMS portion of meetings (PUBLIC COMMENT). He would like more guidance as to time and subject matter that may be presented. He feels there should be set time limits and that the rules should be spelled out. Council member Taylor would like to have a clock or timer that is visible. Council members Justis & Kohl discussed the existing policy and Justis suggests having a statement printed and/or read in to the agenda. Mayor Plaster asked about adoption of a policy; Bailey asked about comments being repetitive and that there should not be debate. Town Manager O'Brien stated that guidelines could be published that could be formally adopted. Taylor suggested that also publishing the guidelines to the Council section of the website could be helpful. Mayor Plaster then spoke about Council responding to public comments after speakers have finished. Justis clarified that responses should be general statements about the subject and not a response to individuals. Bailey agreed that it would show transparency for Council to respond. Kohl feels that blatant falsehoods that are stated should be addressed and not give the impression that the accusations made are true. Chittum added it is needed for the Council to be able to respond. Mayor Plaster says she will speak to any facts that need corrected. Bailey spoke about how context can be misconstrued or summarized. He questioned whether money should be budgeted to live stream or record to post meetings online. Kohl stated he's been advocating for over a year for this and reiterated that Council should have the right to defend itself. Bailey agreed.

On a motion by Council member Justis, seconded by Council member Taylor and carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS-AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; TAYLOR – AYE, that Town Staff will create guidelines for Petitions & Claims / Public Comment.

Council member Bailey made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to section 2.2-3711A(1) pertaining to personnel. Council member Justis seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; TAYLOR – AYE; Town Manager O'Brien was asked to join the closed session.

At 6:46 pm the Council returned from closed session. Council Member Bailey made a motion, Council Member Raynes seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of 6-0, voting recorded as follows: CHITTUM – AYE; BAILEY – AYE; JUSTIS – AYE; RAYNES - AYE; KOHL – AYE; TAYLOR – AYE, that the council return to open session.

Mayor Plaster read the certification that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed; and only such public business matters that were identified in the motion convening this closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Town Council. Deputy Clerk Ortiz took a roll call, Council member Chittum; so certified, Council member Bailey; so certified, Council member Justis; so certified, Mayor Plaster; so certified, Council member Raynes; so certified, Council member Kohl; so certified, Council member Taylor, so certified.

At 6:47 PM. Mayor Plaster adjourned the special meeting.

ATTEST:

Mayor

Deputy Clerk