



Town of Marshville Town Council Work Session

February 21, 2022 7:00 PM

**Marshville Town Hall, 118 East Union St., Marshville, NC
28103**

Present: Mayor Larry Smith; Mayor Pro tem Ernestine Staton; Council Members Margaret Bivens, Paulette Blakeney, Monaca Marshall, and Gary Huntley

Absent: None

Staff Present: Franklin Deese, Town Manager; Michael Garrison, Interim Town Clerk; Lakeysha Medlin, Community Engagement & Events Coordinator; Matt Tarlton, Chief of Police

Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance:

Mayor Smith called the Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Everyone stood and gave the Pledge of Allegiance. Council Member Huntley gave the opening prayer.

Reading of Public Comments Received by Email:

No public comments were submitted.

Adoption of Agenda:

Mayor Smith requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Council Member Staton requested to add a discussion regarding the reopening of Town Hall to the public. Manager Deese suggested it be added as item six. Mayor Smith asked if there were any more modifications to the agenda. There were none. Mayor Smith then entertained a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Council Member Bivens made motion, Council Member Huntley seconded. All Ayes. Motion passes unanimously.

Update from Local ABC Commission:

The floor was given to Bob Morgan and Stephanie Baumer for the annual report regarding the ABC Store. Mr. Morgan reported that the ABC Board has paid \$86,750 in rent to the town and has given \$10,201.40 to the Marshville Police Department in the last three months. Mr. Morgan explained that there has been no staff turnover and no laws have been broken by the staff. Mr. Morgan further explained that the ABC Board does not get paid and is purely volunteer based.

Mr. Morgan and Ms. Buaumer went on to explain that December 2021 was the first month that the Marshville ABC Store outsold Wingate's store and there has been a 60 to 70% growth over the previous year. Mr. Morgan then stated projections are ahead of what original projections show.

Mayor Smith stated he gets a lot of good comments about good customer experiences people have had at this store.

Mr. Morgan explained that the goal of the ABC Board is to keep the money and property taxes here in town. If more restaurants come to town and decide to serve alcohol, then they have to purchase it from the closest geographical store which would be the Marshville ABC store. Marshville Police Department delegates alcohol related law enforcement duties to the ABC Board and the ABC Board allocates money to the town police department and this hand-in-hand relationship helps everyone's budget. Later on when the ABC Board pays off its mortgage, then the distributions will go to the town's general fund.

Mayor Smith thanked Ms. Baumer and Mr. Morgan for their presentation.

Budget Session:

Department Heads: Manager Deese introduced Lakeysha Medlin the Community Engagement & Events Coordinator. Ms. Medlin gave a listing of events the town is having starting in the next fiscal year of July 1st and asked the Council if they had any questions or suggestions.

Mayor Pro tem Staton asked about doing a cleanup day for Marshville and participation from the residents is needed.

Ms. Medlin stated that she is planning to stop by local businesses and churches with a list of "this is where we need help" and said that she will add this cleanup day to the list.

Mayor Smith congratulated Ms. Medlin on all the hard work she has been doing and also stated that the town has done a great job communicating things to the citizens through the new website and utilization of Facebook and how the town has come such a long way since COVID-19 upended things, but stated the top complaint he gets is that the town does not have a local newspaper. Mayor Smith stated that this is a problem facing many small communities and figuring out how to keep the citizens informed of everything going on is a difficult task. Mayor Smith went on to state that while technology is great and all, there is a large demographic of town that is older and not tech-savvy and keeping them informed is a challenge.

Manager Deese asked if he should put money in the budget to bring back the paper copies of the newsletter that were included in the utility bills.

Mayor Smith replied not yet as this is still a challenge figuring out a good way to keep the citizens of Marshville informed of what all is going on. Mayor Smith asked how much it cost the town to print the newsletters and include them in the bills.

Ms. Medline stated that she started the employee newsletter to see how it goes and flows and then try to move on to the actual newsletter for the town. The issue is that we do not have everyone's email to send out a copy of the newsletter and this is something we could use for the new software that is coming. Also, we would need a way to mail it out to the citizens that want the newsletter but do not have a computer or do email or social media.

Mayor Pro tem Staton stated that she was going to suggest that we budget some money to get the newsletter stated again. She stated that she has a lot of citizens coming to her asking why we stopped putting the newsletter in with the bills and why the town stopped informing them of what all is going on.

Ms. Medlin stated that she spoke to Mr. Garrison who use to put the newsletter together about how much it cost and the process it takes to getting the newsletter sent out with the utility bills.

Mr. Garrison explained that it cost the town about \$120 to \$130 a month to include a black & white, two-page newsletter in with the bills. Mr. Garrison further explained that in order to include the newsletter in with the bills, then a finalized proof needs to be sent to Mailpros and approved at least 72 hours prior to approving the utility bill proofs or else we run the risk of the newsletter not getting included in with the utility bills.

Mayor Smith asked if there was a way for people to opt out of paperless billing and opt for all digital utility bills and news announcements.

Manager Deese explained that with the current system, it is not possible, but with the new billing system coming in paperless billing will be possible and the staff is currently training on that now.

Manager Deese then turned the floor over to Chief Tarlton who Manager Deese explained is also filling in as the public works director and Bivens Steele.

Chief Tarlton explained that the town is currently having work done to the water tower; having it cleaned, sandblasted, and painted and it'll take about ten days for it to cure. The low pressure situation from over the weekend should be fixed now.

Chief Tarlton further explained they have been tightening up the sewer system so the town will be sending out less unwater out which will result in the town paying a little less in sewer usage to Anson and Union Counties. He also stated there are other areas they are trying to fix and improve in the town sewer system. Chief Tarlton also stated that they have had some new hires in the Public Works Department and they are currently being trained.

Manager Deese then explained that the town has received a \$140,000 grant to continue the work on the sewer system.

Mayor Smith asked how the town's equipment is holding up.

Chief Tarlton explained that the backhoe is in good shape, the dump truck needs to be replaced soon as it is an early 90s model. Chief Tarlton said they may try and put into the budget some money to purchase a Toro Dingo which is a walk-behind unit which will allow for small landscaping jobs and it will have a bore attachment which will allow Public Works to bore under the road to put in water lines instead of tearing up the road and that should save the town \$3,000-3,500 for patching the road. Chief Tarlton has explained that people have been buying up lots and building on them and requesting water and sewer services and they have put in at least 15 taps this year and this tool will be helpful to have.

Mayor Smith then asked how everything is with leaf vacuuming.

Chief Tarlton explained that the leaf vacuum is in pretty good shape right now. We just had some work done on it, including putting a new hose on it. However, the dump truck that hauls the leaf vacuum is old and that is something the town may need to replace in the near future. Chief Tarlton said he is glad leaf vacuuming was brought up because he and Manager Deese have been discussing this issue and the town charges around \$5.00 a month for leaf and limb pickup and he doesn't think the town has increased this price in at least the past 10 to 20 years and we may be losing money on this.

Mayor Smith asked if this fee is across the board and everyone pays this fee.

Chief Tarlton stated that everyone pays this as part of their fees.

Mr. Steel further explained that it takes two guys at least three days each week during leaf season to try and get all the leafs vacuumed up, and there are only 5 or 6 employees in Public Works and that is a 3rd of Public Works trying to get leafs picked up.

Council Member Bivens asked if Public Works also picks up limbs when picking up leafs.

Chief Tarlton explained that the town does pick up limbs, but they need to be in a separate pile from the leaf pile as the limbs can break the hose on the leaf vacuum. Chief Tarlton explained that the limbs need to be less than 6ft in length and if someone hires a tree company to cut their limbs then the tree company is responsible for hauling off the limbs, but if it just the homeowner cleaning limbs out of their yard then the town can pick them up. He said there are a lot of limbs that are picked up each week and at least two guys spend all day picking up limbs. Chief Tarlton also stated that the current garbage contractor does pick up bagged leaves as long as they are in clear plastic bags and sat out by the road. Nobody seems to want to go that route, but that service is available. This is something to think about because Public Works spends significant time and money on and charge very minimal.

Mayor Smith asked when the solid waste contract is up.

Manager Deese stated that it is up this year and he is currently drafting a request for quote.

Mayor Pro tem Staton asked Chief Tarlton if the leaf pick up is around the same residences that the town picks up from or if it varies.

Chief Tarlton responded that there some residents that have it every week and then call the town demanding the leaves get picked up, but probably around half of the citizens in town limits use this service.

Chief Tarlton then explained that as far as the police budget goes, he is not going to ask for anything different than what was asked for last year. Chief Tarlton then explained that Union County recently gave county employee raises across the board, and would like at some point to give raises to the Marshville Police officers. Chief Tarlton stated that the town has a good group of officers and does not want Marshville to be just a training ground like it was years ago. He will run some numbers and present the to the Council at a later date.

Chief Tarlton stated if the Council has any ideas or suggestions for the Police Department, to let him know.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any other questions for Chief Tarlton. There were none.

Manager Deese next explained that the only other department head position is Parks and Rec and he is currently conducting interviews for a new Parks and Rec Director and hopes to have someone soon.

Manager Deese then discussed the budget goals with the Council.

Reopening of Town Hall:

Mayor Pro tem Staton stated that she is following the guidance of the CDC and Governor of NC but has concerns about the small size of Town Hall. She stated that she thinks people could come in and make their comments and leave and that Manager Deese is working on getting Council Member tablets so that they can better be heard over Zoom. Mayor Pro tem Staton stated she understands citizen frustrations, then asked everyone to look at how little space there was with

the department heads and two ABC Board members in the meeting room and there just isn't enough room to safely accommodate people. She thinks there needs to be more discussions about safely reopening. Mayor Pro tem Staton then recommended even after Town Hall fully reopens, we still leave the teller window there and continue to have citizens pay their utility bill that way.

Council Members Marshall and Huntely agreed with Mayor Pro tem Staton.

Manager's Report:

Manager Deese stated that he is looking at repairing the roof on the building on Elm & 74, the old Police Department, and is looking to make sure the town has the money to fix that roof. Manager Deese also stated he has a meeting next week with the CBDG to discuss the \$140,000 grant.

Council Comments:

Mayor pro tem Staton stated that she did not have any comments tonight and wished everyone a nice evening.

Council Member Bivens stated she was happy everyone came and wished everyone a lovely evening.

Council Member Blakeny said she was happy to see everyone and said all Town Hall employees were doing a wonderful job and stated she hopes everyone has a blessed week.

Mayor Comments:

Mayor Smith said he appreciated Public Works for working hard to get water services restored.

Closed Session:

Mayor Smith requested motion to move into closed session. Mayor Pro tem Morgan made motion. Council Member Blakeney seconded. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously. Council Meeting moves into closed session.

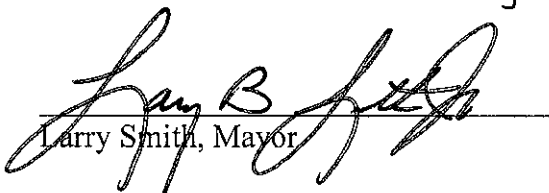
Come out of Closed Session:

Mayor Smith requested a motion to come out of closed session. Council Member Bivens made motion, Mayor Pro tem Staton seconded. All ayes. Council Meeting comes out of closed session at 8:43 pm. No action was taken.

Adjournment:

Mayor Smith requested a motion to adjourn. Council Member Huntley made motion, Council Member Blakeney seconded. All Ayes. Motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Approved this 4th day of August, 2022.


Larry Smith, Mayor

ATTEST:


Ann Sutton, Town Clerk