



The Mayor's Corner

By Mayor Beth A. Taylor

Fellow Citizens,

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our Vice-Mayor Jackie King. Jackie's twenty-eight years of service on Wytheville Town Council are a testament to her dedication to our community. At the April 27, 2020 Council meeting, we honored Jackie with a resolution recognizing her many years of service. The list of contributions she made to our town is endless.

Jackie took me under her wing, not only as a friend and mentor, but as someone who she could train to continue to help the town be successful. There are so many things that she wanted me to know. By sharing with me, she was trusting me to help carry on the work she had done. She conveyed to me the history behind many Council decisions and town projects to help me understand and guide me with decisions in the future. She told me things that she thought were very important going forward. Jackie had a steadfast loyalty and dedication to her family, her friends, her church family, her community and the citizens of Wytheville and Wythe County. She worked tirelessly to make everything she touched better.

Serving on Council was not work to her, she was passionate about everything she did on behalf of the town. She was a true ambassador for the Town of Wytheville. It was a lifestyle for her. It was who she was. I will build on the passionate legacy she has left me and honor her with my work. Keeping her passion alive, keeping her headstrong commitment in the forefront in the years to come.

COVID-19

Jackie was insistent that we work hard to keep our numbers down so that we would be ready to open back up as soon as possible and get back to normal life. We must not let down our guard in this battle. We have identified and are working hard on some of our challenges. For the most part, staying home and social distancing is being practiced. I thank you for that. Do not become complacent. We need to continue to abide by these practices to keep our community spread under control. Please try to avoid crowded stores or other places. If you must go out, practice social distancing and wear a mask. In my opinion "masks are a must." We continue to face the unforeseen certainty regarding the degree and duration of both our health and economic future. This will continue to be a stay at home community effort. We must all work together to help each other. There are so many people, groups, and agencies that are working behind the scenes that I hesitate to mention by name for fear of leaving someone out. These people are working very hard for all of us, whether it be on the front line or behind the scenes, and I thank them. We are #WythevilleStrong and we will emerge from this stronger, more resilient and poised for even greater success.

Wytheville Fire & Rescue Department – Message from Fire Chief Marc Brade

Fire Hydrants: Many citizens have fire hydrants located on or near their property. These hydrants need to be visible and not covered by flowers or bushes, etc. There should not be anything within three feet of a hydrant that would obstruct its operation. This includes fencing, decorations, rocks, etc. It is imperative that fast access can be utilized in the event of a fire. Please clear any obstructions that may have been added.

Wytheville Police Department – Message from Deputy Chief Joel Hash

We live in a constantly moving society that is always on the go. With the shortage of sanitizers, toilet paper, and other personal supplies, the stores are overwhelmed with people that may feel fine. As each day goes by, we tend to get more relaxed to what is really going on and tend to ignore the safeguards around us. My advice is don't get too relaxed in today's times. We are fighting a battle that shows no signs of sickness until it is too late. Our infected numbers are low currently, but they are steadily climbing. People that are infected, do not know that they are infected, which makes it scary. Continue to wash your hands often, use your personal protection equipment, (face mask, gloves, hand sanitizer) at all times when out in the public. BE SMART. BE WISE. AND, PLEASE BE SAFE.

Museums

After classes were suspended, in order to continue providing Wythe County School students with the educational benefits of the Museums innovative learning activities, the Museum staff developed virtual learning programs on topics originally scheduled to be presented in the classrooms in March, April, May, as well as additional topics relating to Wythe County's cultural and material heritage. Education staff has created eleven virtual learning programs online that children can do by themselves or with their parents. Two additional programs are scheduled to be posted on April 28 and May 5. Check them out at <https://www.wytheville.org/museums/virtual-learning.php>

Public Works

Wytheville's Community Garden: Spaces are available. Plots are 10 feet x 20 feet. Because of all the hardships people are facing during the COVID19 pandemic, this season the price has been reduced to \$10 per plot. The Town as plowed and staked plots, water will be available. YOU are responsible for planting, weeding, watering (please bring your own water container), picking and enjoying. Call 276-223-3505 to reserve a plot. Please remember to practice social distancing.

Town of Wytheville's Brush collection:

Upcoming dates for the next several months are April 27-May 1, May 26-29, June 22-26, July 27-31 and August 24-28.

- Please remember trees and leaf removal conducted by a contractor should be disposed of by the contractor.
- Town will not pick up more than a dump truck load per household.
- Do not place anything in the travel lane of the street or block sidewalks.
- Do not put other items with the brush pile.
- Please do not put anything on water meters, sewer cleanouts, guidewires or fire hydrants.
- Take time to refresh yourself with the information on the Public Works section of the Town of Wytheville website at <https://www.wytheville.org/townoffice/publicworks.php>.

Tourism

The Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (the Town's Tourism Department) is maintaining lists of local restaurants with phone numbers to utilize for takeout, curbside, and delivery options. Menus are also being posted, if available. This information is on the Visit Wytheville Facebook page and at <http://VisitWytheville.com>.

Also, on this website, you can also find a downloadable version of Wytheville's Historic Walking Tour. (It's also available on the main page of <http://wytheville.org>.) The printed brochure is also available at the rack located outside of the front door of the Municipal Building and in a box at the front door of the Visitors Center on Tazewell Street. This is a great way to get some exercise and learn about the history of our town.

Town Actions

- Council has adopted a policy giving businesses an extra 90 days to pay the fees associated with the Professional and Occupational License, also known as the business license. All reports related to the business license tax are due by June 1, 2020. All business license fees must be paid by July 31, 2020.
- Council has suspended grant programs and other incentives related to the Downtown District (B-2 DT) including the façade program, sign improvements, elevator, and upper story improvements.
- Ordinance No. 1379: During the budget adoption process, the Town modified the rate for business license fees. While this was, in fact, adopted as part of the budgetary process, it was never codified into the Town's Code. The Council considered an ordinance that amended the Town's Code to take care of this housekeeping matter.

Did You Know?

- The Town of Wytheville election date has been moved from May 5 to May 19. The last day for the Registrar's office to receive an absentee ballot application by mail is May 12, 2020. The Registrar's office will be open on Saturday, May 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for curbside voting. Please call the Registrar's office at 276-223-6038 for more information.
- It's not too late to complete your census. Wytheville is currently at a 57.0% response rate. We need to work together to drive these numbers up. The census can be completed online (go to <https://my2020census.gov/>), by mail or by phone. If you need assistance, ask a family member/friend /neighbor or town residents may call 276-223-3356 and leave me a message. If you have done your census, then check with friends or neighbors to see if they have completed theirs and offer to help. They would probably appreciate hearing from you. Help us shape our future. Let's all respond. The 2020 census is encouraging us, especially in these uncertain times, to all respond. The funds we receive from the state and feds depend on our population. Let's go team! The census is also still hiring! If you need some extra cash, they pay up to \$13.50 per hour. Contact them online at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html> or by phone, 1-855-JOB-2020.

Lastly, please remember that the Wytheville Municipal Building continues to be closed to the public. Staff may be reached by calling the main phone number at 276-223-3333 or searching for the particular department or staff directory at www.wytheville.org. You may also fax information to 276-223-3315. Please pay Town-related bills (taxes, water & sewer, other fees) online (<https://www.wytheville.org/townoffice/payments.php>), by phone (276-223-3333), via U.S. Mail, or by using the overnight deposit box outside the front of the building.

I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone at 223-3356 or via email at beth.taylor@wytheville.org.