

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2003, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, John W. Jones, Jr., William B. Weisiger, Charles G. Crockett

Members absent: None

Others present: Town Manager C. Wayne Sutherland, Jr., Assistant Town Manager Stephen A. Moore, Town Clerk Sharon P. Hackler, Stephanie Porter-Nichols with Wytheville Enterprise, Patrol Officer John Humphrey, Frankie Scott, Louise Crockett, Bettye C. Campbell, Agnes Eades

**RE: CALL TO ORDER, QUORUM, INVOCATION, PLEDGE**

Mayor Crewe called the meeting to order and established that a quorum of Council members was present. The invocation was given by Vice-Mayor King followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Jones.

**RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Crewe presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 24, 2003; the request of the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the Virginia Department of State Police Community Advisory Council, to conduct a parade on Saturday, May 17, 2003; the request of the Virginia Municipal League Insurance Programs for waiver of fees for use of the Community Center; and, the request of Scott Memorial Elementary School for a raffle permit. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilman Weisiger to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 24, 2003; the request of the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the Virginia Department of State Police Community Advisory Council, to conduct a parade on Saturday, May 17, 2003; the request of the Virginia Municipal League Insurance Programs for waiver of fees for use of the Community Center; and, the request of Scott Memorial Elementary School for a raffle permit. Mayor Crewe inquired if there is any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, John W. Jones, Jr., William B. Weisiger, Charles G. Crockett. Against: None.

**RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD**

Mayor Crewe stated the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. He inquired if there are persons present who wish to address Council during Citizens' Period.

Mr. Frankie Scott was recognized, and noted he thinks most of the Council knows him. He advised that he does not know if any of the Council members have been to the Town of Salem, Virginia, but as a person enters any part of Salem, they have recognized all of their sporting programs and the success the teams have achieved in every sport. Mr. Scott noted it is breathtaking to go to Salem and see this as a person drives into the different entrances. He stated he is attending the meeting to request that not only due to the success of football, but other sports programs throughout the last 20 years, that possibly the Town could erect a sign at the entrances into Town, as they have done at Salem, recognizing each sports program. Mr. Scott remarked that he has been the head wrestling coach for George Wythe High School for the past five years, along with Mr. Eddie Moore, and they have had success. He advised that he was successful at George Wythe High School, and his team was the regional wrestling champions. Mr. Scott noted he is attending the meeting to request these signs for every sporting program and not just football. He stated that Salem has a blue sign with lattice work behind it, and it states, for example, "1981 Regional Wrestling Champions," and "Girls Volleyball." He noted the Salem Girls Volleyball Team has won the State championship five times, so the sign states, for example, "1984, 1985, 1986,.....State Volleyball Champions." Mr. Scott remarked that it is really impressive to go into a town and see this. He pointed out that it makes a person feel good about the town and about themselves, if he/she participated in those programs. Town Manager Sutherland inquired if the signs can be read from a vehicle or if it is necessary to get out of the vehicle to read the sign. Mr. Scott answered that the signs are legible from a vehicle, and the signs are very impressive. Vice-Mayor King advised that Mr. Scott stated he is in the area quite often, and inquired if he would take his camera and obtain a picture of the sign. Mr. Scott remarked that he will take a picture of the sign, and noted it is very impressive. He noted when people enter the Town of Salem, it makes them feel really good. Mr. Scott advised that people who are thinking about locating in the area would definitely remember the sign. He noted at the Wal-Mart exit, the sign could be placed where the other social signs are located such as

the Lion's Club, etc. Mr. Scott reiterated that the signs are very impressive. Mayor Crewe advised that this sign is slightly different than the sign the Town has been working on for the Booster Club, the School Board, and George Wythe High School. He noted that the request the Town received was for a sign for state champions only. Mayor Crewe explained that they had talked about Scott School previously having a championship. Mr. Scott noted that he thinks Scott School should also be recognized. Mayor Crewe remarked that the request that the Town received was for a sign for state championships, and state championships are more limited than regional or district championships. Mr. Scott advised that a sign for state championships would be acceptable, and he thinks a sign at the entrances into Town that would recognize the students would be great. Town Manager Sutherland inquired if Mr. Scott is referring to also recognizing single students who have won, for example, a wrestling championship. Mr. Scott answered that he is only requesting that entire teams be recognized and not individual students. He noted if any of the Council members travel to Salem, they will see the sign, and advised it is nice. Vice-Mayor King stated that she thinks it would be helpful to the Council to see the type of sign to which Mr. Scott is referring. Mayor Crewe indicated that the Town has been working on a sign for several months, and they have proposals and designs that the school and the Booster Club are reviewing, and they are trying to figure out what to include on the sign. He noted that no one has been able to bring in an example of the sign. Mayor Crewe advised that if Mr. Scott is in Salem and could take a picture, it would be helpful. Mr. Scott inquired if the Council would prefer a video. Mayor Crewe stated that a picture or a video would be acceptable. Mr. Scott advised that the Town of Salem has planted shrubbery around the signs and made them look decorative, and it is impressive. Mr. Jones stated that the signs are impressive, and he has seen them. Councilman Crockett inquired if Mr. Scott is envisioning the sign for only state champions or district champions. Mr. Scott remarked that whatever decision the Council makes is acceptable to him. He noted that the Council may be correct in that the sign would be overwhelmed with district champions. Mr. Scott noted if the district champions are recognized, the sign could state, for example, that the basketball team won the Hogoheegee District in 1984, and noted that the team has won the championship several years. He remarked that the sign could list district championships, regional championships, and state championships. Mr. Scott advised, for example, if it is the football team, the sign would state the year that the football team won the state championships. He noted the title of the championships pyramids up or down the sign. Mr. Scott stated he will obtain a picture of the sign and submit it to the Council. He noted he thinks it would be very nice if the Town of Wytheville had one of these signs, and he would like for the sign to be erected. Mr. Scott advised that he thinks since the football team just won the state championship, it would be a good time to erect the sign. Councilman Crockett indicated that he has seen these types of signs other places, and he thinks they are very impressive and help to commend the young people for their hard work in the sports programs. Mr. Scott reiterated that the signs are impressive, and noted if a student moves away, for example, for 10 years, and comes back and sees that the Town has recognized them, he thinks it is good public relations. Mayor Crewe advised that the Town has reviewed a sign from Galax that is similar to the one Mr. Scott is describing, but the Town of Salem has more championships. Mr. Scott advised that Salem's signs are impressive, and they have a lot of championships. Mayor Crewe noted the Town has discussed this but has never erected the sign. Vice-Mayor King inquired if the City of Radford has any signs similar to this. Mayor Crewe remarked that he did not think the City of Radford has any signs like the one being described. Mr. Scott noted he has talked to Councilman Weisiger about this sign, and he was talking about the sign being located on the right of way. He indicated that all of these signs are on the town's right of way, and the signs are not located on major fairways such as I-81, but they are located on highways such as when you come into the town limits. Councilman Weisiger noted that Mr. Danny Gordon was talking about placing the signs on the highway just as a person is entering the town. Mayor Crewe stated this is one request the Town received a year or so ago, but it never came to fruition. He noted the Town has been working with the Booster Club and the George Wythe High School on a sign. Mr. Scott noted he thinks it would be good to place a sign where people can see it as they come into the town, such as when a person turns at the Country Club, and every team that comes into the town will see the sign. He advised that the sign is an intimidating factor, and when the other team sees the sign, they will have been on a long bus ride, and they see the sign going to the George Wythe High School, or, for example, Rural Retreat High School, and see what sporting events they have won. Mr. Scott remarked that the signs are impressive, and they are also intimidating to the other teams when they see them. Mayor Crewe thanked Mr. Scott for bringing the request before the Council, and noted that they will continue to work on this sign. Mr. Scott advised that he will obtain a picture of the sign. Town Manager Sutherland advised that a picture would be helpful. Mayor Crewe thanked Mr. Scott for his comments.

Mayor Crewe inquired if there are others who wish to address Council during Citizens' Period. Mayor Crewe advised that several regular attendees are present at this meeting and noted he would be glad to hear from them, and he appreciated them attending the meeting. Councilman Weisiger advised that Mr. Joe Sheffey is not present. Vice-Mayor King inquired if Mr. Sheffey is

sick. Mr. Jones advised that Mr. Sheffey is recovering from his operation. There being no one else to address Council during Citizens' Period, Mayor Crewe proceeded with the agenda.

### **RE: OLD BUSINESS**

Under Old Business, Town Manager Sutherland reported the following items:

1. Fortunately, last week, and the weather forecaster predicts that this week, the weather has moderated as spring is approaching, and this is good news. The Town is very close to depleting its supply of salt. In the event that there is another winter storm, the Town has some salt that can be used, but the amount available is going to limit the Town to only salting the main highways and streets, rather than every individual street as the Town has been previously salting. Director of Public Works Hackler attempted to buy salt, and there is no salt on the east coast that is available. Town Manager Sutherland advised that he wanted to alert the Council to this low supply of salt in the event that there is another winter storm. Even if there is another winter storm, the good news is that there will not be days after days of 15 degree or 18 degree weather. The temperature is moderating even if the town does receive another winter storm, and this is good. Mayor Crewe advised that he knows he speaks for all of Council when he states that the citizens are very proud of the way the Public Works Department moved the snow and what they did in all of those conditions. He noted it has been a harsh winter.
2. On Thursday of this week, Town Manager Sutherland and Councilman Crockett will be attending a meeting at the County Office Building regarding the Regional Water Study.
3. March 16 and March 23 will be the dates for the Scott School and Spiller School rededications. Mayor Crewe stated that is correct, and inquired if anyone received information in the mail regarding these rededications. Councilman Crockett answered that he received the information. Mayor Crewe noted that on March 16 at 3:00 p.m. is the Scott School rededication, and on March 23 at 3:00 p.m. is the Spiller School rededication. He advised that Mr. John Johnson is the keynote speaker for the Scott School rededication, and Dr. Bill Snyder is the keynote speaker for the Spiller School rededication. Mayor Crewe indicated that both of these rededications will be held in the school gymnasiums.

### **RE: BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councilman Jones, reporting for the Budget and Finance Committee, stated that at their last two Committee meetings, they have reviewed premium renewal information for healthcare coverage provided employees by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. He noted that the Town's health insurance program is through the Local Choice Health Benefits Program offered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Councilman Jones indicated that the information the Committee received describes the Town's claims experience for the past year, renewal rates for the coming year, and also describes certain amendments made to the programs that are offered. He stated that, unfortunately, during the last year, the Town's claims experience was worse than it had been in previous years, with medical expenses exceeding annual premiums by about \$47,000. Councilman Jones pointed out that obviously, when claims exceed premiums, renewal rates will necessarily be increased. He advised that the Committee might note that had the Town not been a part of a statewide, pooled rate, the Town's increase would have been higher than what is noted in the renewal notification. Councilman Jones stated that in any event, depending on the program that is chosen, the rates for the renewal of health coverage for Town employees will increase by approximately 22 percent. He advised that in the information that was submitted, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield has provided alternatives for Council to consider in choosing the plan under which the Town employees will be covered under the renewal. Councilman Jones indicated that also, there have been modifications to the program requirements, with the most significant being removal of getting a referral from a primary care physician in seeing a medical specialist. He stated the Committee is carefully reviewing the alternatives they have available. Councilman Jones remarked that there is no question that the cost of medical care continues to escalate in America, and, as medical costs rise, rates will also. He noted that the Council has always tried to provide the Town employees with a quality healthcare program, and they want to continue this benefit to the extent they can financially afford. Councilman Jones stated the choices that have to be reviewed include the percentage, currently at 5 percent, the employee pays for the health insurance, and what specific programs the Council makes available. He noted the Council will need to make a decision on this by April 1, and the Budget and Finance Committee will have a recommendation for the Council at its next meeting.

Councilman Jones also reported that over the past sixty days, the Town's staff has been preparing budgetary information to be used in the development of the fiscal year 2003-2004 budget. He stated, therefore, the Council is now in a position to start its review process of the funding requested by the various departments. Councilman Jones advised that the Committee would propose the following schedule of review and adoption. He noted the Committee would suggest that the Council have budget work sessions following the regular Council meetings on April 28 and May 12. He pointed out that the budget could be considered on first reading on May 27, with the second reading and the public hearing scheduled for June 9. Councilman Jones explained that the final reading and adoption of the budget would be scheduled for June 23. He stated in the event there were questions or problems with the budget, a special meeting could then be held on June 30. Councilman Jones noted that between now and the budget work sessions, both Committees of the Council will hear updates and review the various departmental budgets. He indicated that if this timetable is acceptable to the Council, they will implement this schedule. Mayor Crewe inquired if any member of Council has any problems with the proposed budget schedule. There being no one that expressed concerns, Mayor Crewe advised that the Council will implement this budget schedule, and continue the budget process that is underway. A copy of the Budget and Finance Committee Report is attached and made part of these minutes.

### **RE: PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councilman Weisiger, reporting for the Public Works Committee, stated the Commonwealth Transportation Board held the annual Six-Year Program update meeting for the Bristol construction district on Tuesday, March 4, at Virginia Highlands Community College. He advised that the purpose of these annual meetings is to give the public opportunity to identify transportation projects to be included in the Six-Year Program. He noted that Transportation Secretary Whitt Clement served as moderator for the meeting and gave an overview of the economic status of the Department based on the financial difficulties that Virginia is currently experiencing. Councilman Weisiger remarked that the Town submitted to the Transportation Board a listing of those projects that had been identified in prior years and determined by the Council to be important to Wytheville. He noted the Town has requested many of these projects for a number of years. Councilman Weisiger advised that the Town also emphasized to the Transportation Board the need for the construction of the new connector road that will serve the new Community Center. He stated that fortunately, this roadway continues to be identified in the Six-Year Study, though there are no funds currently available to proceed with construction. Councilman Weisiger indicated that in the Town's remarks, it was also noted that the Town encouraged the Transportation Board to carefully evaluate the Public-Private Transportation Act proposals that had been submitted to improve I-81 through Virginia. He advised that as the Town has stated before, there are pros and cons to each of these proposals, but the Committee feels that the ultimate cost of the project and the timeliness in which it can be completed should be critically evaluated. Councilman Weisiger stated that finally, the Committee would note that this year the Town also issued a statement of support for Wythe County to improvements to the interchange at exit number 77. He explained that this interchange does not adequately handle the current volumes of traffic, nor could it accommodate any additional traffic volumes for future economic development activities. Councilman Weisiger indicated that the Town has copies of the report submitted to the Commonwealth Transportation Board available if anyone would like to review them. Mayor Crewe noted that he hopes those things submitted in the Six-Year Plan will be considered, but it will be interesting to see what happens since VDOT has no money available.

Councilman Weisiger also reported that the Committee was contacted by an interested citizen from Sand Mountain who requested the Council to consider imposing certain regulations on the Town owned land on Sand Mountain with regard to deer management. He advised that under this type of program, restrictions would be imposed that would prohibit bucks without antlers of certain sizes from being harvested. Councilman Weisiger noted that, otherwise, regular game rules would apply. He stated the Town discussed this topic with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries last year, and, for a variety of reasons, did not follow through with proposing such a program. Councilman Weisiger remarked that as the Committee understands, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is also interested in a deer management program on Sand Mountain, and it does make sense for both the Department and the Town to impose the same regulations. He stated the Town is arranging a meeting with Ms. Betsy Stinson, the Regional Biologist for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, to gather some additional information. Councilman Weisiger advised that also, the Town wants to contact abutting property owners, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Ed Blankenship, to discuss the implications of such a program. He remarked that preliminarily, however, it does not seem that this program would significantly change any of the current hunting activities on the Mountain, nor does it appear that there will be any cost associated with the program's implementation. Councilman Weisiger

advised that the Committee will have more information for the Council at a future meeting. A copy of the Public Works Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting (7:20 p.m.).

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Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Mayor

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Sharon P. Hackler, CMC, Clerk of Council

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