

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, MARCH 24, 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, Town Attorney Robert P. Kaase, Director of Public Information Rosa Lee Jude, Danny Gordon with WYVE/WXBX, Stephanie Porter-Nichols with Wytheville Enterprise, Patrol Officer Chastity Russell, Samantha Richardson, Sheila Blankenship, Bettye Campbell, Louise Crockett, Ashley Hodge, Monica Blessing, Carol Umberger, Johnny Hodge, Agnes Eades, Dennis Throckmorton, Grant Throckmorton, Darlene Hoback, Amy Hoback, Amanda Gordon

RE: CALL TO ORDER, QUORUM, INVOCATION, PLEDGE

On behalf of Mayor Crewe, Mr. Grant Throckmorton called the meeting to order and established that a quorum of Council members was present. The invocation was given by Councilman Crockett followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Weisiger.

RE: CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Throckmorton, on behalf of Mayor Crewe, presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of March 10, 2003, and the request of the After Prom Committee for a special exception facility use permit for use of the Community Center. A motion was made by Ms. Amanda Gordon, on behalf of Vice-Mayor King, and seconded by Councilman Weisiger to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of March 10, 2003, and the request of the After Prom Committee for a special exception facility use permit for use of the Community Center. Mr. Throckmorton 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

Mr. Throckmorton, on behalf of 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. There being none, Mr. Throckmorton proceeded with the agenda.

RE: OLD BUSINESS

Under Old Business, Ms. Samantha Richardson, on behalf Town Manager Sutherland, reported the following:

1. In February, the Budget and Finance Committee reported on a presentation it had on the Virginia Wireless E-911 Services Board. In their report, they noted that there was State funding available for the implementation of equipment in the operation of responding to wireless E-911 phone calls. After hearing the presentation, the Committee authorized Town staff to proceed with application for these funds. The Town has now received confirmation from the Commonwealth that the funding for fiscal year 2003 is \$51,412. This amount of funding will be credited to the current fiscal year budget, and, next year, the Town will be eligible to receive additional funding anticipated to be in the range of \$80,000. Currently, the Town is pleased to have received these funds because it will aid in the Town's implementation of these mandated programs.
2. The Joint Governing Bodies will meet on March 31 at 7:00 p.m. in the General District Courtroom of the Wytheville Courthouse. Prior to the meeting of the Joint Governing Bodies, the Joint Industrial Development Authority will make a presentation to all three governing bodies concerning their budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year. This session will tentatively start at 6:00 p.m. and will be in the County Administration Building conference room. Town staff will advise the Council if the time or location changes.

3. Tomorrow morning, at 8:30 a.m., the Town will have the annual awards ceremony for the attendance and longevity of employees. The Town has been doing these awards ceremonies each year since 1995. Attendance awards are for those employees who have used no sick leave days during the previous year. There are 16 employees to receive this award this year. Longevity awards recognize various years of service to the Town. This year, employees will receive certificates for service ranging from five to twenty five years.

RE: BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Amanda Gordon, on behalf of Vice-Mayor King, reporting for the Budget and Finance Committee, stated that as the Committee has reported previously, they have been reviewing premium renewal information for health care coverage provided the Town's employees by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. She advised that as the Committee has noted before, the Town's health insurance program is through the Local Choice Health Benefits Program offered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Ms. Gordon indicated that because of the Town's claims experience during the last year, the Town's rates for renewing the same level of health care coverage for Town employees would increase by approximately 22 percent. She stated that currently, the Town's employees have two alternatives for health insurance coverage. Ms. Gordon noted one program that is available to employees is called "Key Advantage." She explained that the other program is known as "Cost Alliance." Ms. Gordon indicated that the programs are similar in nature with exception that the health coverage provided by the Cost Alliance Program has slightly different co-pays and restricts employees to the use of physicians and hospitals in the Virginia network. She stated the Key Advantage program allows employees to use health networks in other states. Ms. Gordon explained that currently, the Town is paying 95 percent of the employees' portion of the health care coverage for the Key Advantage Program. She noted to maintain this program, under the rate renewals, the additional cost to the Town of Wytheville per year would be \$94,392. Ms. Gordon stated that given the significance of this increase, the Committee considered a number of other alternatives. She advised the alternatives that they considered ranged from changing the program to increasing the employees' share of the premium to 10 percent. Ms. Gordon noted that after reviewing all of the information they had available, the Committee thinks the most equitable decision is for the Town to pay 95 percent of the employees' premium for the Cost Alliance alternative. She advised that this division will mean that the Town's benchmark for health insurance will be the Cost Alliance Program, and the total increase in expenses to the Town for the coming year will be \$37,351. Ms. Gordon indicated that employees who currently have Key Advantage will see a \$1.24 per month increase for the new premium, while employees who currently have Cost Alliance will see an increase of \$15.60 per month. She advised that the Committee would note that employees who desire can pay the additional monthly fee and continue in the Key Advantage Program. Ms. Gordon stated, therefore, it is the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Town renew its health insurance program through Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Virginia, and that the Town provide employees 95 percent of the premium cost of the Cost Alliance Program. She noted that the Committee also recommends that the Town Manager be authorized to execute any documents associated with the renewal process. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilman Jones that the Town renew its health insurance program through Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and that the Town provide employees 95 percent of the premium cost of the Cost Alliance Program, and that the Town Manager be authorized to execute any documents associated with the renewal process. 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.

Ms. Gordon, on behalf of Vice-Mayor King, also reported that later in the meeting, the Council will consider two ordinances, both of which the Committee has discussed previously in their reports. She explained that the first ordinance, Number 1155, will amend the Town's Code to provide that the fee charged by the Town for bad or returned checks will be set at \$25 effective immediately. Ms. Gordon advised that the receipt of bad checks costs the Town money in service charges from the bank and in time spent by the Treasurer's Office in collecting the amount due. She remarked that currently, the charge for giving the Town a bad check is \$10. Ms. Gordon noted that State law provides that the Town can charge up to \$25, and it is the recommendation of the Committee that the fee be increased to \$25. She indicated that secondly, for a number of months, the Committee has discussed an increase in the meals and lodging taxes to be a component of the financing for the new Community Center. Ms. Gordon stated that later in the meeting, the Council will consider on first reading Ordinance Number 1156, which increases the meals tax to six percent and the lodging tax to six percent, both effective September 1, 2003. She advised that these increases will generate approximately

\$849,800 more per year, which will be used to pay the debt service on the Town's new Community Center. Ms. Gordon indicated that if these increases are adopted by the Council, the Committee would also recommend that all additional revenues generated by these increases be held separately in a banking account to be used once payment on the debt service begins. She advised that additionally, the Committee would suggest, though it is not required, that the Council schedule a public hearing for April 14 to give citizens the opportunity to comment on these proposed increases. Ms. Gordon noted that when this matter comes up on the agenda, it would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the ordinance be adopted on first reading, and the Council schedule a public hearing and the second reading for April 14. Councilman Crockett stated he has a question in relation to Ordinance No. 1156. He inquired if normally the first year, the Town would only make interest payments on some of these loans, and noted he is not sure about this particular loan. Town Manager Sutherland advised that he would think this would be correct. Councilman Crockett indicated that the first year, the Town would not utilize nearly the amount of money that the Town would supposedly collect. Town Manager Sutherland stated that is correct, and noted that Town staff could find out the amount that would be paid the first year. He explained that the Town has a schedule from Rural Development regarding this loan, and Town staff could provide Councilman Crockett with a copy of this schedule. A copy of the Budget and Finance Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

RE: PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

Councilman Crockett, reporting for the Public Works Committee, stated that last week, representatives from the County of Wythe, Carroll County, and Wytheville met to discuss the creation of a regional water system. He advised that all three jurisdictions have appointed members to consider this concept. Councilman Crockett stated the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County have discussed the potential for the interconnection of their systems over the past several years, and, now, Carroll County has indicated its need and desire to be a part of this larger water system. He explained that currently, the Town has a treatment facility capable of producing four million gallons of water per day. Councilman Crockett noted that Wythe County is currently operating on a number of wells situated throughout the County, and will ultimately build a new water treatment facility on New River near Austinville. He indicated that the interconnection of the Town's and County's systems would provide the opportunity for Wythe County to utilize some of the Town's excess capacity for the short term, and, in the long term, the Town could acquire any deficiencies in its water system from the County of Wythe. Councilman Crockett remarked that Carroll County is currently operating on a system of wells, apparently, none of which are reliable for the long term. He stated the purpose of having these informational sessions is to make a determination if the three jurisdictions want to proceed with this regional water system concept. Councilman Crockett advised that the information they will review is only engineering and financial data. He noted the question of governance of the system has not yet been discussed. He stated that Carroll County and Wythe County will also be making presentations to their Boards in order that the Regional Water Study Committee can have another Committee meeting in early April to give an update on each of the government's willingness to proceed, or not.

Councilman Crockett also reported that one project the Town discussed at the Virginia Department of Transportation Pre-Allocation Hearing was the importance of the "Connector Road" serving the new Community Center to remain in the Six-Year Plan. He advised that the Town also noted to the Commonwealth Transportation Board members in attendance that the Town would like to assist in this project, including the potential to acquire the needed right-of-way for the project. Councilman Crockett stated that fortunately, one of the components of project costs that exceeded estimates was the expense associated with right-of-way acquisition. He noted that the State has now advised if the Town was able to acquire some or all of the needed right-of-way, the construction date for the project could most likely be expedited. Councilman Crockett remarked that representatives from the Urban Division of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will meet with the Committee next week to review what cooperative opportunities are available between the Town and the State in moving this project forward. He explained that the Connector Road project has been through all of the environmental review processes, and the public hearing needed to bring the project to construction has been conducted. Councilman Crockett noted, therefore, that the only task left is for the project to be advertised for construction. He stated this, of course, cannot happen until all of the right-of-way is obtained. Councilman Crockett advised that the Committee will share with the Council information they get from the VDOT representatives after they have met with them. Mayor Crewe advised that the Council looks forward to hearing more about this matter after the meeting with VDOT. Councilman Crockett stated that incidentally, and noted this is not part of the Public Works Committee Report, he attended a meeting at VDOT today concerning several projects that Dr. Alan Hawthorne and the JIDA have, and, of course, it always gets to

the bottom line that VDOT does not have any money, and noted this did not come as a surprise to anyone. He indicated that he does not know how all of this affects these projects, and the Council has been particularly talking about when the funding may be available for I-81 and how this will play into it. Councilman Crockett noted that apparently, VDOT is going to be short of money for a long time to come. He summarized that he did not know what impact this shortage of funds is going to have on various projects throughout the State. Councilman Crockett noted that as a side issue or comment, he thinks everyone wants to talk about acquiring new industries and economic development, and along with the way of economic development, a locality has to have infrastructure as well as highways. He stated it seems without money for highways, this is really crippling everyone's efforts in this area, as well as other places, in acquiring industries. Councilman Crockett indicated that it seems to him like, in many respects, the people's representatives in Richmond are "shooting them in the foot." Mayor Crewe pointed out that it does not appear that the shortage of funding is going to be short term, but it is going to last awhile. A copy of the Public Works Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

RE: RESOLUTION – GEORGE WYTHE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

Mayor Crewe stated the next agenda item is the consideration of a resolution honoring the George Wythe High School Basketball Team. He noted he thinks that Mr. Grant Throckmorton is the only member present from the basketball team. Mayor Crewe read the resolution to those attending the meeting. A motion was made by Councilman Crockett and seconded by Ms. Amanda Gordon, on behalf of Vice-Mayor King, to adopt the resolution honoring the George Wythe High School Basketball Team. 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. Mayor Crewe presented the resolution to Mr. Grant Throckmorton and noted that there are copies of the resolution for all of the basketball team members.

RE: RESOLUTION – GEORGE WYTHE LADY MAROONS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Mayor Crewe stated the next agenda item is the consideration of a resolution honoring the George Wythe Lady Maroons Volleyball Team. He read the resolution to those in attendance at the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Amanda Gordon, on behalf of Vice-Mayor King, to adopt the resolution honoring the George Wythe Lady Maroons Volleyball Team. The motion was seconded by Councilman Crockett. 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. Mayor Crewe congratulated the Volleyball Team members for their efforts, and noted the Council commends the team on a great season. Mayor Crewe noted that there is a copy of the resolution for each of the team members.

RE: RESOLUTION – APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

Mayor Crewe stated the next agenda item is the consideration of a resolution supporting the program and funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission. He read the resolution to those attending the meeting. He noted the Town is considering this resolution at the request of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and inquired if that is correct. Town Manager Sutherland stated that is correct. Mayor Crewe noted that this resolution will help to try to ensure their funding for the next fiscal year. A motion was made by Councilman Weisiger and seconded by Councilman Crockett to adopt the resolution supporting the program and funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission. 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: RESOLUTION – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Mayor Crewe stated the next agenda item is the consideration of a resolution authorizing the preparation and filing of an application for a Community Service Facility Grant through the Community Development Block Grant Program of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He noted the Town advertised and held the public hearing on March 20. Mayor Crewe remarked that this is the standard language in order to submit the application for \$700,000 in grant funds and \$351,112 in non-CDBG funds, for a total project cost of \$1,051,112. He advised that this application is in connection with the new Community Center for the Community College Child Development Center. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilman

Weisiger to adopt the resolution authorizing the preparation and filing of an application for a Community Service Facility Grant through the Community Development Block Grant Program of the Commonwealth of Virginia. 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: ORDINANCE NO. 1155

Mayor Crewe presented Ordinance No. 1155, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 2, Administration, Article I, In General, Section 2-2, Fees Charged for Uttering Bad Check, Etc., of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on first reading. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilman Jones to suspend the rules and adopt Ordinance No. 1155, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 2, Administration, Article I, In General, Section 2-2, Fees Charged for Uttering Bad Check, Etc., of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on first and final reading. Mayor Crewe advised that pursuant to State Code, this ordinance raises the fee for a returned check given to the Town from the current charge of \$10 to a new charge of \$25. He noted this ordinance will amend the Town Code to increase this fee. Mayor Crewe noted the motion on the floor is to suspend the rules and adopt Ordinance No. 1155 on first and final reading. He inquired if there is any discussion on the motion. Councilman Crockett noted that he is not entirely sure whether a \$25 figure, a \$10 figure, or whatever the figure amount, makes a lot of difference. Vice-Mayor King advised that the amount of the fee does make a difference when a person is in business. Mayor Crewe noted that the proposed fee will at least recoup the amount of the cost the bank charges the Town when a check is returned. Mayor Crewe inquired if there is any other 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

ABSTENTIONS: None.

Ordinance No. 1155 was adopted on first and final reading. Mayor Crewe advised that the ordinance has been adopted on first and final reading to become effective immediately.

RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1156

Mayor Crewe presented Ordinance No. 1156, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 14, Taxation, Article V. Meals Tax, Section 14-79, Levy of Tax and Article VI. Lodging Tax, Section 14-107, Amount of Levy, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on first reading. Mayor Crewe stated this ordinance comes as a recommendation from the Budget and Finance Committee. He explained that this ordinance will raise the meals tax from four percent to six percent and the lodging tax from three percent to six percent to be effective September 1, 2003, and noted it amends the various sections of the Town Code to do this. Mayor Crewe noted that the Budget and Finance Committee also recommended that a public hearing be held regarding this ordinance at the April 14, 2003, Council meeting. He explained that the third and final reading of the ordinance would be held at the April 28, 2003, meeting. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilman Jones to approve Ordinance No. 1156, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 14, Taxation, Article V. Meals Tax, Section 14-79, Levy of Tax and Article VI. Lodging Tax, Section 14-107, Amount of Levy, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on first, but not final, reading. 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

ABSTENTIONS: None.

Ordinance No. 1156 was approved on first, but not final, reading.

RE: STUDENT GOVERNMENT DAY

Mayor Crewe noted he would like to apologize to the students who participated in Student Government Day today because he was unable to attend due to being in court. Mayor Crewe stated he understands that a lively discussion was held at the mock Town Council meeting. He noted he hopes the students learned something when they toured some of the Town facilities that they did not know beforehand. Mayor Crewe indicated that the Town Council appreciates the students participating in Student Government Day and also attending the Town Council meeting, as well as participating in softball games, etc. He noted it was a full day for the students, and the Council appreciates their participation in Student Government Day.

RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1156

Town Manager Sutherland inquired if the Council will be conducting a public hearing on Ordinance No. 1156 at the April 14, 2003, meeting. Councilman Jones stated that is correct. Mayor Crewe advised that he understood that this was part of the motion from the Budget and Finance Committee. He noted that the Council did not actually vote on holding the public hearing since it was a separate matter. Mayor Crewe advised that by consensus, the Council is requesting that the public hearing be held at the April 14 Council meeting concerning the ordinance regarding the meals and lodging taxes. He noted he did not hear any dissent from any of the Council members, therefore, the Council will schedule the public hearing to consider Ordinance No. 1156 at the April 14, 2003, Council meeting.

RE: STUDENT GOVERNMENT DAY

Mayor Crewe inquired if any of the students would like to comment. He reiterated the Council's appreciation to the students for participating in Student Government Day. Ms. Amanda Gordon thanked the Council for permitting the students to participate in the meeting. Mayor Crewe invited the students to attend other Council meetings.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting (7:30 p.m.).

Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Mayor

Sharon P. Hackler, CMC, Clerk of Council

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