

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2004, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, John W. Jones, Jr., William B. Weisiger, H. Judson Lambert

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, Patrol Officer Chris Irvin, Stephanie Porter-Nichols with Wytheville Enterprise, Agnes Eades, Liza Field

RE: CALL TO ORDER, QUORUM, INVOCATION, PLEDGE

In the absence of Mayor Crewe, Vice-Mayor King called the meeting to order and established that a quorum of Council members was present. The invocation was given by Councilman Lambert followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Weisiger. Vice-Mayor King remarked that Mayor Crewe will be present at the meeting, but will arrive late.

RE: CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Mayor King presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of October 11, 2004, and the request of the Virginia Cooperative Extension for waiver of fee for use of the Community Center Bingo Room for an awards banquet on December 7, 2004. A motion was made by Councilman Weisiger and seconded by Councilman Lambert to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of October 11, 2004, and the request of the Virginia Cooperative Extension for waiver of fee for use of the Community Center Bingo Room for an awards banquet on December 7, 2004. Vice-Mayor King 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: Jacqueline K. King, John W. Jones, Jr., William B. Weisiger, H. Judson Lambert. Against: None. Mayor Crewe was absent during the voting on the consent agenda.

RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD

Vice-Mayor King inquired if there are persons present who wish to address the Council during Citizens' Period.

Ms. Liza Field was recognized and stated she is supposed to be at the radio station, so she and Mr. Danny Gordon have switched places. She remarked that she is usually working Monday nights at the radio station, so she was hoping she could bring up a couple of issues at the same time, since they are connected in her mind. Ms. Field stated that one is the burning of the yard debris. She remarked that she knows Town Manager Sutherland told her not to mention it because it would upset people. Town Manager Sutherland interjected that he said not to state that she desired to do away with it. Ms. Field remarked that everyone does not want to do away with it and they want to keep doing it, but she still wants to talk about it. She noted the only reason she is attending the meeting is she heard that the Town already brought it up and inquired if that is correct and if the Council discussed it. Town Manager Sutherland answered only that Ms. Field made the comment, and no discussions have been held about it. Ms. Field indicated that she had heard some information from people in town one day this summer. She advised that Director of Public Works Dennis Hackler does a great job of picking the correct day to do this, and he does not really have any choice at this point about what to do with the debris that people are raking off their yards, the limbs that fall or are cut for pruning, and the Christmas trees. Ms. Field stated there is a lot of volume of debris, and she knows the Public Works Department has enough trouble picking it up, getting it over to the old Town farm, and dealing with people calling and complaining because the Town burned on the correct day. She remarked that she thinks it is an opportunity for the Town to look at a different way of doing this, and she would propose getting Town residents to help. Ms. Field stated her perception of how the Town is run over the years kind of has fallen into the image of almost like they are in the position of babysitters, and the Town residents are trouble causing, but they do not mean to be, but they complain, and that is all the Town ever hears. She remarked that there is a barrier, and so the Town administration gets overburdened with things to do, and all of these responsibilities with everything from the fireworks to the busted sewer pipes. Ms. Field noted that meanwhile, the residents do not know that they could be helping. She stated that no one ever asks for help. Ms. Field indicated the last time she remembered this happening was when the landfill filled up, and the Town had to figure out what to do. She remarked that a task force came together and figured out what to do, and the people came from Salem and talked about their system, and

this is the system the Town has currently. Ms. Field indicated that with this, she thinks it is worth trying to ask for help and ideas because other municipalities and towns are doing it a different way. She explained that the City of Roanoke has done it different ways for the past few years. Ms. Field noted, for instance, and advised she did not know when they stopped doing this, but they did put the leaves up on Mill Mountain. She stated this was not the most ecological move in her mind, but still it was a way to restore the soil, and they were not wasting all of that organic matter. Ms. Field indicated that currently, the City of Roanoke is taking the leaves over to Mr. David Willis, and he is a gentleman that she and Mr. Andy Kegley went to school with, and he lives in Roanoke and has quarries. She noted they mix the leaves with some element they cannot use that comes out of the quarry. She reiterated that they mix it with all of the city leaves every year, and they turn it into what they call "black gold." Ms. Field stated that not only is it very profitable for them, but it is good for the soil. She stated this accomplishes two things. Ms. Field advised that people need to know that the soil gets depleted, and every time people rake away everything and do not put anything back but chemicals, the organic matter is gone. She stated that the town is losing its topsoil, and she pointed out that this is just not in Wytheville, but everywhere. Ms. Field remarked that this is an educational opportunity. She noted people just put down nitrogen, and they get their information from Chem Lawn, and what people believe is what they see on a commercial or from the Chem Lawn company. She indicated that people put down all of these chemicals, and it gets back into the groundwater when it washes off, and it does not restore the soil. Ms. Field noted that this is just one example of an educational opportunity. She remarked that the other thing is the air quality. Ms. Field noted to Mayor Crewe that she is talking about the burning of the debris. She stated that regarding the air quality, one day this summer there was a lot of temperature inversion, so all of this stayed in the air for about 24 hours including overnight. Ms. Field indicated that it was summertime, and people could not open their windows. She advised that they noticed it over at the college because they have Governor's School at the college, and they like to have a lot of their classes outside. Ms. Field noted that more and more children today have allergies, asthma, and respiratory conditions, and they had to move their class inside. She stated that the students were coughing. Ms. Field advised that one lady who is not with the Governor's School, but she is an artist in town, stated that her 13-year old daughter was in the County Camp Program, and she came home with a splitting headache, nauseated, and could not eat supper that night. She explained that the air quality is a problem. Ms. Field noted that most of it is a problem because the Town of Wytheville gets the drift from acid from the coal burning plants. She indicated that anything the Town could do to improve it would be good. Ms. Field stated that finally, the last thing, is about what is being burned. She explained that it is not just organic matter, but the Town is burning the grass clippings already in the plastic bags, and they do not take the clippings out of the bags. Ms. Field stated that the Town is burning plastic, busted up rafters with insulation nailed on it, and things that she did not know if it is right for the Town to burn these items. She noted that, again, she thinks the Town could get some help with this, and could possibly set up a committee. Ms. Field noted that the Council could even put it in the Town newsletter, and advised that people do not even know that this is what the Town is doing. She stated she was talking to Mrs. Pendleton after church, and noted she cannot remember how the topic came up about quarries, and she was telling Mrs. Pendleton about what they are doing in Roanoke, and Mrs. Pendleton advised that she did not know the Town was burning. She noted that she explained to Mrs. Pendleton that everything people put on their curb is being burned. Ms. Field advised that Mrs. Pendleton stated she did not think people knew this. She indicated that possibly in the newsletter, instead of making up something like "please do not cause any trouble," the Town could state to the citizens that this is what the Town is doing and inquire if anyone has any ideas. Ms. Field remarked that if someone has any ideas, they could e-mail Town staff, or notify the Town if they would like to serve on a committee to come up with some solutions. She noted she talked to Ms. Ann Masters with the Clean Valley Council in Roanoke, and she stated there are lots of resources, and possibly RC&D could help the Town obtain a grant for a chipper and start a composting program. Ms. Field indicated that she knows Town Manager Sutherland advised that it is more complicated than it seems, and noted she appreciates that, and she thinks that it probably is. She stated the next thing is regarding asking for help. Ms. Field remarked that she is a little worried about the Millwald Theater, and advised that Mayor Crewe is aware of this. She stated this is not something that the Town can do publicly to help this private business, but when she is looking at Main Street and she is seeing that the Community Center is now going to be out at the College, it is like the great dispersion, and everything is going out in the peripheries of the town. Ms. Field pointed out that there is all of this action at the Jackson farm, which is great, and it is nice to have that, but the thought of putting an art museum out there, she kind of wonders if the Town cannot think about using a building that already exists. She noted that possibly it could connect with the Millwald Theater, and everyone could try to think of some creative ideas. Ms. Field stated that, again, this is something that residents could possibly help to come up with some ideas. She advised that the Town could put Mr. Richard Herring on a committee and think of how the Town could use the Millwald Theater to get some traffic flowing in there and onto Main Street. Ms. Field indicated that possibly, there could be a gallery during the day and show the films, get the high school

to make some films, and advised she did not know, but it could be something creative. She stated that one of the problems with having everything dispersed in different directions is there is no connecting factor except via vehicle. Ms. Field explained that she has worked with a lot of people who do not have cars, and they never will have a car. She noted that when she thinks of community and Wytheville, she thinks of IGA. Ms. Field advised that she thinks of people at Withers Park. She noted that Withers Park was a great, brilliant idea, and this is where people hang out, and also at the swimming pool. Ms. Field indicated that people go to Dillon's IGA and that is where a person meets everyone from the crack house people to, for example, Town Manager Sutherland. She remarked that everyone is there. Ms. Field noted that another place is King's Produce where they have one little church pew, and inquired as to how many people does the Council see sitting there having an ice cream cone and catching up, or as she has previously stated, on the benches at Withers Park. Ms. Field noted regarding the ability to be mobile without a car that there are older citizens who walk to the Millwald Theater, and they do not have to drive at night. She advised this is something to think about. Ms. Field stated that they have discussed a greenway, and Assistant Town Manager Moore knows every year that she comes to him and asks if this is the year to work on a greenway to connect the Jackson farm all of the way through the back of the hospital property down through the alleys, King's Produce alley, Millwald Theater alley, through Elizabeth Brown Park, on down to Reed Creek and down to the old farm. Ms. Field remarked that every year, Assistant Town Manager Moore indicates to ask him next year because there are too many "irons in the fire." She noted that they went to RC&D, and Mr. Gary Boring obtained a grant, and Virginia Tech did the feasibility study, and it is all done. Ms. Field advised there are many maps, and it is finished, and the greenway is laid out. She noted that she went to Assistant Town Manager Moore, and he said for her to ask him in three years. Ms. Field noted this is something the Town does not have to take action on at this moment, but it is something the Town needs to start talking about. She advised that she is throwing out the ideas so when the Council members are out walking, driving, or over at the Jackson farm, possibly they could be thinking about it or they could be talking to someone who seems to have some interest in a bike path or something. Ms. Field noted that possibly, the Town can progress on this. She stated that all the Town has to do is ask for help when it is distributing the newsletters. Ms. Field advised that she thinks there should be possibly two Town meetings every year to ask people to come, like the Town did at the Presbyterian Church when there were so many people wanting Wal-Mart, and they had to move the meeting to the church. She noted the Council could invite people to a Town meeting and see what happens and possibly get some help. Ms. Field thanked the Council for allowing her to speak. Vice-Mayor King thanked Ms. Field for her comments. Ms. Field inquired if there are any questions. Vice-Mayor King advised that the Council appreciates Ms. Field's ideas.

RE: OLD BUSINESS

Under Old Business, Town Manager Sutherland reported the following:

1. To follow up on some of Ms. Field's comments, the Town anticipates that they are going to start collecting leaves in approximately two weeks. The Town has done some limited amounts of leaf collection thus far, but the Town has not started regularly vacuuming leaves because the leaves are not off the trees. The Town will give a public announcement when they commence the leaf collection, but it will be several weeks before the leaf collection program begins. Vice-Mayor King advised that the citizens are raking the leaves onto the streets. Town Manager Sutherland noted that there has not been a frost, and soon it will frost, and the leaves will start falling. Mayor Crewe noted it would be good if there was a huge hole in which to dump the leaves.
2. About a year ago, the Town Council approved a project where the Town would erect a sign or multiple signs, as the case may warrant, to give notice of a rezoning hearing and/or subsequent action by the Council. This program, last year, was created on the condition that it be reviewed one year later to see if the Council wanted to continue the program. Town Manager Sutherland advised that Mr. Jones can address the Planning Commission's thoughts on this matter. Mr. Jones advised that the signs are a good idea. Councilman Weisiger advised that he thinks the signs have worked great. Vice-Mayor King stated she agreed. Councilman Lambert asked that the Council please continue using these signs. It was the consensus of the Council to continue erecting the signs to give notice of rezonings, etc. Councilman Jones indicated that using these types of signs was one of the things mentioned at the Planning Commissioner's Institute and some other localities also use these signs. Town Manager Sutherland stated they were discussing this earlier, and he thinks it is important to take the signs down in a timely fashion, too. He noted there is one in Pulaski County that has been erected for approximately three years. Councilman Weisiger indicated that he had a complaint about a political sign being erected on Town right of way and inquired if the Town is taking these signs down. Town Manager Sutherland advised that Town staff removes

political signs placed on Town right of way. Councilman Weisiger noted that he informed the citizen that the Town would take down political signs erected on Town right of way. Mayor Crewe inquired if the Town received any complaints this weekend about all of the K-Mart signs, but advised he did not see any on the Town right of way, but there must have been 300 signs placed up and down the hillside. Vice-Mayor King indicated that she thinks the signs were back far enough that they were not on the right of way. Mayor Crewe noted that he did not see any signs on the right of way. Councilman Jones advised that this is the second time K-Mart has done this. He noted that also, on Saturday when he got on I-77 North at Exit 19, there were signs for the Bass Outlet closing.

RE: BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Councilman Jones, reporting for the Budget and Finance Committee, stated that this spring, when the Town went through the process of preparing the budget for fiscal year 2004-2005, the Council imposed a 3 percent per year water/sewer rate increase to be implemented over the upcoming five years. He advised that the total proposed increase over this period was 15 percent. Councilman Jones stated that during the last fiscal year and the current fiscal year, the Town has made a number of significant improvements to the water and wastewater systems. He noted that these improvements have been both to the water and sewer treatment facilities as well as to the water distribution system and the sewage collection system. Councilman Jones remarked that all of these projects have been expensive and have resulted in more system expenses than revenue being generated. He noted that the Committee is currently reviewing the proposed rate increase schedule and the Committee thinks it may be worthwhile to consider revising it somewhat. Councilman Jones stated that one scenario that is being considered is that the Town revise the rate increase schedule to have a larger increase during the first year with smaller increases in the four subsequent years, all of which total the original 15 percent rate increase over the five year period that the Council had previously adopted. He remarked that in addition, the Committee is also looking at connection fees for water and sewer. Councilman Jones stated the Town's fees, which are currently \$750 each for water and sewer connections, are relatively modest compared to most water systems and may well need to be increased somewhat. He advised that also, there is the proposal that the Town consider creating a new type of fee known as an "availability fee" where multiple family dwellings would be assessed fees for additional connections beyond one. Councilman Jones noted that the Committee hopes they will have a recommendation available for the Council by the next meeting. He indicated that the Town wants to keep the water and sewer charges at the lowest rate possible, though it is becoming increasingly apparent that additional revenues are needed to support the system.

Councilman Jones also reported that the Committee thought it may be helpful to give an update on the Community Center project. He stated the project plans and specifications were completed about two months ago, and, subsequently, the Town was authorized by Rural Development to advertise the project for bid. Councilman Jones advised that the pre-bid conference was held October 15th where interested contractors had the opportunity to discuss the project with the architects and engineers. He noted that the bids on the construction of the Community Center are scheduled to be received on Wednesday, November 17th, and opened on Thursday, November 18th. Councilman Jones remarked that after bids are received, they will be reviewed by the Town's architects and submitted to Rural Development for their review. He stated that assuming the project bids are within the scope that was anticipated, the Town will then proceed with going to the loan closing with Rural Development. Councilman Jones explained that this closing process and the award of a contract will probably take 45 to 60 days after bid opening. He advised that in other related items, it now appears that American Electric Power has acquired from the Emerson Electric Company an easement needed to relocate an electric line that will serve the new Community Center. Councilman Jones indicated that with this issue resolved, the grading contractor can now complete the site excavation, which will permit the building contractor to proceed. He stated the Committee would anticipate that they would have a bid tabulation and other related items to present to the Council at their November 22nd meeting. Councilman Weisiger inquired if the grading contractor has been charging the Town for all of the time he has been idle. Town Manager Sutherland answered that there have been some change orders, but noted that they were not time related, and, therefore, the grading contractor has not been charging the Town for the time he has not been working. Councilman Weisiger inquired if the grading contractor has been able to stay busy. It was noted that is correct. A copy of the Budget and Finance Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes. ([Attachment](#)).

RE: PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

Councilman Weisiger, reporting for the Public Works Committee, reported that Town forces have now completed a fairly significant project to relocate and widen the eastbound lanes on East Main Street from 11th Street to a point near the Smokers' Friend store. He advised that this work has involved moving the existing curbing along this portion of roadway and reconstructing it approximately eight feet behind what was the existing curb. Councilman Weisiger noted that the result of this work is twofold in that it eliminates a "dogleg" in the curbing on East Main Street, and, secondly, it also creates a center turning lane through this section of roadway. He remarked that this center turn lane now gives better access to those businesses located near the intersection of Main and 11th Streets. Councilman Weisiger stated that the Committee thinks this project will be beneficial to motorists as well as those affected businesses.

Councilman Weisiger also reported that the Committee has received two inquiries that are currently under review. He noted that the first request was that three-way stop situations be created on North Street between 11th Street and 1st Street. Councilman Weisiger advised that according to the citizen making the request, North Street is currently being used as a bypass by motorists to avoid the traffic signals on Monroe Street. He stated that the requester also noted that this traffic was traveling at excessive speeds and creating an unsafe situation. Councilman Weisiger advised that, also, with regard to North Street, the Committee has been requested to review elimination of parking along the south side of North Street and moving the permitted parking areas to the north side of North Street. He explained that the nature of this request is to increase the visibilities at the intersections at 1st, 5th, and 7th Streets. Councilman Weisiger stated that the Committee would anticipate that they would have a recommendation on this request by the next meeting of Council. Councilman Weisiger advised that secondly, the Town has been requested to review the potential to restrict parking on East Main Street between 5th and 7th Streets to 2-hour time limits. He advised that currently, the 2-hour parking restrictions on Main Street end at 5th Street. Councilman Weisiger noted that this request would be that the parking restrictions be extended to 7th Street. He indicated that this inquiry has been received before, and, previously, there was no concurrence among the various property owners in this block for the need of these restrictions. Councilman Weisiger stated that, likewise, the Committee has not reached a consensus on a recommendation, but would anticipate that they would have a recommendation by the next meeting. Councilman Weisiger inquired if the Town is enforcing 2-hour parking on Saturdays. He inquired if the Council discussed eliminating the 2-hour parking restriction on Saturdays. Councilman Jones advised that the 2-hour parking regulations are enforced until noon on Saturdays. Town Manager Sutherland advised that is correct. Mayor Crewe reiterated that the 2-hour parking regulations are enforced until noon, but not after noon. Town Manager Sutherland remarked that as the Council may recall, the concern was the Millwald Theater in terms of early afternoon matinees. A copy of the Public Works Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes. ([Attachment](#)).

RE: PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION – WILSON SPECIAL EXCEPTION PERMIT

Vice-Mayor King stated the next agenda item is the recommendation of the Planning Commission regarding the request of Mr. Ernest Wilson, representing Charles and Karen Parcell, for a special exception permit for an accessory structure on a lot without a primary residence at 450 Tremough Drive which is located on the south side of Tremough Drive between North Fourth Street and the end of Tremough Drive in an R-2 Residential District. She noted that the Council could conduct a public hearing on this matter at the November 22nd Council meeting. It was the consensus of the Council to hold a public hearing at the November 22, 2004, Council meeting to consider the request of Mr. Ernest Wilson, representing Charles and Karen Parcell, for a special exception permit for an accessory structure on a lot without a primary residence at 450 Tremough Drive which is located on the south side of Tremough Drive between North Fourth Street and the end of Tremough Drive in an R-2 Residential District.

Town Manager Sutherland advised that he is sure the Council will discuss this before the time, but the Capitol Christmas Tree will be arriving on November 22, 2004. Vice-Mayor King indicated that the celebration is scheduled from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Mayor Crewe noted that what Town Manager Sutherland is talking about is when the Council was talking about having some type of meeting in downtown on Main Street when the tree is in town. He stated if the Town advertises the public hearing, the Council is going to have to be in the Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Crewe noted that one of the things they had talked about was meeting at 6:30 p.m. or doing something differently, and this may affect how the Council advertises this public hearing for that meeting. Councilman Weisiger inquired if November 22nd is the quickest the Council could hold the public hearing. Mayor Crewe advised that November 22nd is the quickest the Council could hold the public hearing and meet the advertising requirements. He noted the Council needs to factor in Director of Public Information Jude's

celebration. Councilman Weisiger inquired if the public hearing could be deferred until the December 13th Council meeting. Town Manager Sutherland remarked that the public hearing could be advertised for 7:15 p.m. versus 7:00 p.m. Mayor Crewe requested Town staff to review what Director of Public Information Jude has scheduled. He stated that he has talked to her several times, and the celebration may not be over until 7:45 p.m., if he understands correctly. Mayor Crewe noted that it depends on what time the tree arrives. Vice-Mayor King noted that they were planning to be at the Moose Lodge by 7:00 p.m. to eat. Mayor Crewe explained that it will depend on what time the tree arrives, and it is not finalized at this time. He stated that whatever time the public hearing is scheduled, he would like to ensure that the Council does not have to be in two places at the same time. Vice-Mayor King inquired if the Council meeting could be moved to Tuesday, November 23rd. Mayor Crewe stated the Council meeting could be moved, but he did not think it would be necessary since the tree is not going to be in town that long. Councilman Lambert noted that in regard to this hearing, this request does not seem to be something that has any urgency about it. Town Manager Sutherland advised that he is unsure about the urgency, and he did not attend the Planning Commission meeting. He inquired if the Wilson family is anxious to have the special exception permit granted. Councilman Jones noted that he thinks the Commission reached an accord, but he did not think there is any great urgency. He stated the reason it was originally planned is no longer that urgent because the person who desired to purchase the Parcell house did not buy the property. Mayor Crewe noted that his suggestion would be that the Council schedule this request for a public hearing on November 22nd, but not yet set the hour until Town staff can confer with Director of Public Information Jude to see when the Capitol Christmas Tree celebration is going to be held. Mayor Crewe advised that everyone should know this in the next day or two. Town Manager Sutherland noted that Town staff can talk to Rosa Jude regarding the celebration time, and then choose a time accordingly, and noted, for example, the public hearing could be held at 7:30 p.m. Councilman Jones advised that the Council could change the meeting date to November 23rd. Mayor Crewe stated that is correct, but he did not know if it is necessary. He noted that the Council could see what Mrs. Rosa Jude states first, and his understanding is she should have the schedule finalized in the next day or two because the Capitol Christmas Tree coordinators are supposed to contact her.

RE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

Mayor Crewe stated he has been requested by the Virginia Department of Forestry to invite the Council to a fire wise demonstration tomorrow afternoon between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at 895 South Twentieth Street, which happens to be his house. He explained that the Virginia Department of Forestry came in four or five months ago, and noted this program has been in the works for probably 10 years, but they actually got the work done late this summer or early this fall cutting out trees, etc. Mayor Crewe noted that as most of the Council knows, his house is in the woods. He stated that he signed up for this program years ago, and they finally received a grant and performed the work. Mayor Crewe noted that they basically cleared 100 feet around his house of any kind of softwood trees, or what they call "lateral fuels." He stated it does not take two hours to see this, but they have a program for two hours, but a person can come anytime starting at 4:30 p.m. Mayor Crewe indicated that it takes about 20 minutes for the Virginia Department of Forestry to explain what they did, why they did it, how they did it, etc., and then a person can leave. He advised that the Department of Forestry asked him to make sure everyone is aware of the demonstration in case anyone wants to attend.

RE: CHRISTMAS PARADE

Vice-Mayor King advised that she, Director of Public Information Jude, and Visitor Services Coordinator Wood are working on the Christmas parade, and they want all of the Council members to be in the parade. Town Manager Sutherland stated they have several assignments for the Council members. Councilman Jones advised that he did not desire to participate. Vice-Mayor King indicated that they would like for Councilman Jones to be the character of a wise man in the parade.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to adjourn the meeting. (7:28 p.m.).

Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Mayor

Sharon P. Hackler, CMC, Clerk of Council

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

NOVEMBER 8, 2004

1. Recently, our Committee received an inquiry seeking to restrict parking on Main Street between 5th and 7th Streets to a 2-hour limit. Currently, the 2-hour parking limits on Main Street extend from 6th Street to 5th Street. We have reviewed this inquiry and find that virtually all of the commercial establishments on East Main Street between 5th and 7th Streets have off-street parking facilities. There are also several residences along Main Street who do not have any off-street parking. In reviewing the matter, we do not believe that current conditions warrant these new restrictions, and, therefore, it would be the recommendation of our Committee that we not restrict parking in this area at the present time. We do think, however, that commercial establishments in this area would be well served to install directional signs noting that they have off-street parking available to their customers.
2. At the last meeting of Council, a concerned citizen inquired about the practice of the Town to dispose of brush and leaves collected in the pick up programs by burning these materials at the old landfill. Our Committee has begun a review of our current practices and has, in fact, been making contacts with other communities to determine the procedures they use in the disposal of brush and leaves. Thus far, we have found that communities are doing a variety of things, though many communities continue to dispose of their brush by the use of fire. There are a number of alternatives available, such as

chipping the materials, mixing chippings with sewage sludge, creating mulch, etc., but all of these are relatively expensive to operate and would require additional equipment and labor. We also have been made aware of certain devices that are used where burning programs are conducted. This equipment essentially involves the use of a rather large fan unit that intensifies the burning of the brush to the point where it minimizes any smoke that is generated by the burning. We have asked our Public Works Department to gather information about this type of equipment. We would note, also, that we plan to contact other communities, but have found that some communities limit the amount of brush that they collect while some communities impose a charge for the collection of brush. We think our brush/leaf collection program is one of the most valued services to our citizens and would not want, in any way, to limit this program. In any event, our Committee will continue to study the alternatives that we have available for the disposal of brush and leaves.

William B. Weisiger

H. Judson Lambert

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

NOVEMBER 8, 2004

1. Over the past couple of months, our Committee has discussed our current water and sewer charges, particularly, with reference to our action during the budget development process where we noted our intent to impose a 3 percent per year water/sewer rate increase to be implemented over the upcoming five years. As we have noted several times in our recent reports, the improvements made to this system and the increase in operational expenses have resulted in lack of revenue to adequately support the system. To address this issue, we now believe that it is required that the rate increase to be effective January 1, 2005, must be more than the originally anticipated increase. As such, our Committee would recommend the following increases be approved by the Council. First, effective January 1, 2005, we would propose that charges for consumption of water and sewer be increased by 10 percent. We would hope that we can impose future rate increases so that we can continue to honor the anticipated 15 percent rate increase over the next five-year period. Obviously, we will have a better picture of revenue and expenses later in the budget year. Secondly, we would propose that all water and sewer connection fees be increased by \$750 for each of the categories within those schedules. These fees, of course, would only be applicable to new connections to the system. As a part of the connection fee, we also would recommend that for developments where multiple dwelling units will be

located that there be imposed a \$2,500 availability fee for each unit beyond the first dwelling unit. Under this arrangement, the developers will determine if they would prefer to install a master meter for the entire development project or if they would prefer to have individual meters to all dwelling units beyond one. These fees are equitable because an additional dwelling unit places the same burden on our system as does an individual household, and, necessarily, needs to contribute to the expenses associated with the system. We would recommend that the increases for connections and the imposition of the availability fee be made effective December 1, 2004. Thirdly, we would propose that fees for “off and on” charges be doubled. Very often, these off and on activities are conducted after normal working hours, and the current fees do not even cover the additional payroll involved for performing these activities. Likewise, we would recommend that these fees be increased on December 1, 2004.

We would note that we are desirous of maintaining our utility fees at the lowest cost possible. However, as everyone knows, the cost of construction, materials and labor continues to escalate, and, while we want to operate our system as frugally as possible, we must generate sufficient revenues to meet our expenses.

2. We have received a letter from the Agape Food Pantry seeking the Council to exonerate the real estate taxes for the building they occupy on West Main

Street. The Agape Food Pantry provides food items to needy families and operates almost completely on local donations. The building that they occupy is being donated for their use without any rental payments. We believe that the Agape Food Pantry serves a worthwhile purpose in the community, and it would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that we make a donation to the Agape Food Pantry in the amount equivalent to the real estate taxation. The amount of their real estate taxes for this year is \$76.95.

Jacqueline K. King

John W. Jones, Jr.

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