

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman

Members absent: Holly E. Atkins

Others present: Town Manager Stephen A. Moore, Assistant Town Manager T. Brian Freeman, Town Clerk Sharon G. Corvin, Town Attorney Michelle Workman Clayton, Leonard Davis, Carolyn Young, Police Officer Chastity Russell

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

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order and established that a quorum of Council members was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Bloomfield. Mayor Taylor noted that Councilwoman Atkins would not be attending the Council meeting.

**RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 22, 2021, the request of the Wytheville Lions Club for waiver of business license fees and inspection fees for the Annual Charity Carnival scheduled for July 19-24, 2021, and, a request of the American Cancer Society to conduct their Relay for Life Southwest Virginia events in downtown on September 11, 2021, and to close Main Street from Fourth to First Streets from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. for these events. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented or to somehow be amended. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 22, 2021, and the request of the Wytheville Lions Club for waiver of business license fees and inspection fees for the Annual Charity Carnival scheduled for July 19-24, 2021, and to table action until a later meeting on the request of the American Cancer Society to conduct their Relay for Life Southwest Virginia events in downtown on September 11, 2021, and to close Main Street from Fourth to First Streets from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the consent agenda as amended. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None.

**RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. She noted that there is one citizen listed on the sign in sheet who would like to address the Council during Citizens' Period.

Mr. Leonard Davis was recognized and stated that he resides at 295 Cove Road in Wytheville. He continued to express his concerns regarding the Wytheville Planning Commission's minutes from the regular meeting of February 11, 2021, that he and other members of the Bethel AME Church attended. He advised that their church property was not listed in the report. Discussion ensued regarding Mr. Davis' concerns about the Planning Commission meeting minutes of February 11, 2021. Mr. Davis thanked the Council for allowing him to speak during Citizens' Period. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Davis for his comments. She inquired of Ms. Carolyn Young if she would like to address the Council during Citizens' Period. Ms. Young declined to speak

during Citizens' Period. Mayor Taylor advised that there are no more citizens attending the meeting listed on the sign in sheet who wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period, therefore, she would proceed with the agenda.

### **RE: OLD BUSINESS**

Under Old Business, Town Manager Moore reported the following:

1. An Employee Appreciation Day was held on Friday, March 5, 2021. Each department was asked to provide coffee, doughnuts and biscuits for their employees. Town Manager Moore noted that he thought this went well. He remarked that each department was notified that there would still be funding available for a Department Employee Luncheon, and they were requested to proceed with the planning of the luncheon before the end of the fiscal year.
2. The Memorandum of Agreement Clarification of Emergency Services Agreement between Wythe County and the Town of Wytheville regarding Agendacare Healthcare, PLLC has been signed.

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

Councilman Bloomfield reported for the Budget and Finance Committee. The Budget and Finance Committee report was entered into the record as follows: Over 20 years ago, the Town Council entered into an agreement with Cecil and Seawillow Jackson that sequentially granted ownership of the Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum property to the Town. Since the initial agreement, it has been governed by the Homestead Museum Advisory Board with the oversight and ultimate approval by the Wytheville Town Council. Recently, the Jacksons and the Town Council have agreed to some slight changes in the agreement. These include clarifying access to the property, revising the on-site parking restrictions and refining the tree and shrub trimming restrictions. Also, included was allowing all but the initial principal from the endowment to fund projects that have long term benefits for the development and future sustainability of the museums. The ability to use, govern and safely maintain the site will be greatly enhanced by the changes. The Advisory Board also revised its rules to allow a Jackson family descendant to serve on the Board with the approval of the Board and the Town Council. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the utilization of the site over the past year, and we hope that when visitation does begin to rebound later this year, all aspects of the museum operation will be greatly improved due to these changes. It would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Council authorize the Mayor to sign the revised Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Lease Agreement Amendment and that the Council, also, approve the revised Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Advisory Board Rules for Transaction of Business. Mayor Taylor advised it is with the her deepest sympathies that she shares with the Town citizens that Mr. Cecil Jackson passed away earlier in the day. She noted that the Town of Wytheville and Wytheville Town Council sends its sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Jackson, and, at the request of the Jackson family, the Town Council will move forward with the signing and approving of the revised Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Lease Agreement Amendment and Board Rules for Transaction of Business mentioned in the report. A motion was made by the Budget and Finance Committee, which does not require a second, to authorize the Mayor to sign the revised Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum Lease Agreement Amendment and to approve the revisions to the Homestead Museum Advisory Board Rules for Transaction of Business. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion.

There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None.

The Town of Wytheville health insurance pool, The Local Choice (TLC), provides for healthcare coverage for Town employees through Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. The premium for this coverage is generally based on the Town's healthcare costs over the past few years. With a very lean budget year projected, a substantial increase in premium is a significant concern. Last week, we learned that Anthem's increase for the upcoming year is eight percent, however, TLC was able to negotiate a rate increase for its members of only 3.7 percent. This is certainly good news, and we will be incorporating this amount into the preparation of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget. The Budget and Finance Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

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

Councilman Gillman reported for the Public Works Committee. The Public Works Committee report was entered into the record as follows: With the arrival of spring-like weather, the number of administered COVID-19 vaccines and the relaxation of Executive Orders, we anticipate that the use of Town parks will increase. We have already received requests that the park restrooms be opened. With that in mind, we feel that we should begin the process of reopening the public restrooms in Withers Park and Elizabeth Brown Memorial Park. The Public Works Department will begin preparing these facilities for opening and will plan to disinfect them on a daily schedule. For the initial openings, signs will be installed that remind users of social distancing and to wear a mask while in these facilities. We anticipate that all facilities will be available for use within the next two weeks.

The Town's Tree Advisory Committee has been reviewing mature trees on Withers Road and on Church Street, which are located under Appalachian Power's electric lines and that have been trimmed away from these lines for years. The constant trimming has impacted their health, and many contain limbs that have deteriorated to the point that they could be a hazard. The Tree Advisory Committee has recommended to the Town Council that these trees be removed, and Appalachian Power has agreed to remove them. Appalachian Power will replace them with new trees that are more appropriate for the location. We have studied the locations recommended by the Tree Advisory Committee, and we support the removal of these trees. However, we understand the dramatic impact the removal of these mature trees will have on our historic streets. It will take years to attain the shading and overall effect these trees have on the neighborhood. We ask that citizens understand the difficulty of this decision and the need to keep our streets safe and our power continuous. Though these trees are on the Town's rights of way, each owner of property that fronts on one of these trees will be contacted by either a Town Public Works employee or by an Appalachian Power employee, prior to cutting any tree. We thank our citizens for their understanding in this matter. A motion was made by Councilman Gillman and seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison to accept the recommendation from the Tree Advisory Committee and to authorize Appalachian Power to remove certain trees on Withers Road and Church Street. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman. Against: None. The Public Works Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

### **RE: NEW BUSINESS**

Under New Business, Town Manager Moore reported the following:

1. The Wytheville Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.
2. The next Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 7:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.
3. The New River Regional Water Authority will meet on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., at the Water Plant in Austinville.
4. The Wytheville Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting (7:18 p.m.).

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Beth A. Taylor, Mayor

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Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk

## **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**MARCH 8, 2021**

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Cathy D. Pattison

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Gary L. Gillman

## BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 8, 2021

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Mark J. Bloomfield

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Holly E. Atkins