

Council Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2022

The Tazewell Town Council met in regular session at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present:

Absent:

Mayor Michael Hoops

Vice Mayor Terry Mullins

Councilmember Emily Davis

Councilmember Joe Beasley

Councilmember Glenn Catron

Councilmember Chris Brown

Councilmember David Fox

Staff present were: Town Manager, Todd Day; Executive Assistant, Robin Brewster; Town Attorney, Brad Pyott; Clerk/Treasurer, LEEANNE REGON; Police Chief, David Mills; Interim Fire Chief, Jason Kinser

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hoops called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance. Invocation by Zach Hash.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION/REQUESTS

RECOGNITION OF TAZEWELL HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN TALAN HALL (VIRGINIA 2 A STATE WRESTLING CHAMPION)

Mayor Hoops read a resolution of recognition in honor of Talan Hall for his achievement of being named the state champion in the Virginia 2A state wrestling competition. Mr. Hall's personal record is 26-1. He is the second state champion in THS history. Council congratulated him on his success and what a great job he did.

RECOGNITION OF TAZEWELL HIGH SCHOOL TRACK TEAM

Mayor Hoops read a resolution of recognition in honor of Abigail Rhudy for her achievement of being named state champion. Mayor Hoops read a resolution of recognition in honor of Lauren Keene for her achievement of being named state champion. Council congratulated them on their success and what a great job they did.

INTRODUCE AARON GILLEPSIE

Manager Day introduced Board of Supervisor, Aaron Gillespie. Manager Day stated that he is working hard and they have had a number of conversations together already. Mr. Gillespie thanked Manager Day for the invitation tonight. He hopes in his position that he and the Town will be able to work together in various aspects. He thanks the Town for being willing to communicate and open doors to projects. He thanked council and stated that if they ever needed him to not hesitate to contact him.

OKTOBREWFEEST REQUEST

Lori Stacy with the Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce came before council to discuss Oktobrewfest. She stated that this was their annual craft beer festival. They try to bring in five to eight vendors for the event. She stated that the participants will receive a certain number of tickets to use at the booths. They will try to have three or four food trucks as well. Their goal for attendance is about 2,000 people. They are encouraging businesses on Main Street to stay open. They will be bringing in musical guest Jamie McLean from New York. They have never been here and are hoping to be able to come perform here. She is requesting a one day banquet license and is requesting man power to help with their event. She also stated that the Chamber will make a donation to the Town in order to help pay for the expense of wages for our employees at their event. If approved, the event will be held the first Saturday in October, October 1st from 5:00pm to 10:00pm. Motion to approve the event was made by Councilmember Fox. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

UPDATE ON RECREATIONAL ACCESS PROJECT

Andy Cecil came before council to discuss the recreational access project at the Little League Fields. He first congratulated the track team and wrestling team on their state championships. He also stated that when he was in school, the fastest guy in school happened to be Councilmember Fox. He then began to discuss the project. He stated that he had previously come before council with preliminary details for the project. We had received funding, then the project was put on hold and then taken under review again. He stated that this project has now been advertised and he has contacted contractors that he thinks may be interested. We will have a bid opening on this April 6th. Manager Day stated that the last estimated cost he believes was around \$370,000. Manager Day stated that Mr. Cecil has been in contact with Little League and they are going to try to keep them going for their season.

UPDATE ON TAZEWELL COUNTY RDA

Kurt Breeding with Tazewell County RDA came before council to give an update. He stated that with the trends they are seeing we are getting recognized more often in our area. They are working hard to make it better and excited to see it happening in Tazewell County. He stated that we have to have opportunities for people to do. He stated that the increase in cost of everything such as gas may keep people from traveling to the beach and they may be more likely to come

our way for their recreation time. They are seeing kayaking in Cedar Bluff. More possibility of hiking in our area. He also stated that this is some of the best leadership he has seen since he has been with the County. He also discussed the Spearhead Trail and the Jawbone. The Jawbone is a trail that they are seeing lots of Jeep's on. He stated Mayor Hoops visits there often in his Jeep. He also stated that Jeep USA is coming here. They sold 3,000 tickets in three days. He stated that once the Jawbone is complete that they will have 300 miles of trails. They are working toward connecting with Pocahontas trails. They are trying to get funding for a telescope. The cost is \$30,000 and they have \$10,000 so far. The telescope would be mobile and it would be great for schools to do outdoor classrooms and use it. He also discussed the idea of connecting Lake Witten with Lincolnshire Lake by having a walkway on the bridge at Market Street. They would be connected by the trails. Council thanked him for coming. He left Spearhead maps with them. Councilmember Brown stated that side by sides, etc. are also riding those trails.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Davis to approve the minutes of February 8, 2022 and February 24, 2022. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Motion was made by Councilmember Catron and seconded by Councilmember Brown to approve the financial statements for February 2022. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Councilmember Davis stated that the Planning Commission meeting for this month was cancelled due to illness.

UPDATE ON MAIN STREET MINI-PARK

Manager Day stated that he was unsure of the history of the Mini Park such as the funding etc. but there has been an issue at the Mini Park and with Sharon Thomas's building. The wall/land has been settling and shifting. In the council packet there are pictures showing some of the troubled areas. This has caused structural damage to the Mini Park building as well. After much discussion and review the decision to remove the building has been discussed. Councilmember Davis asked how would we stabilize the ground. Manager Day stated that he just didn't see a financial way that we could save the building. He does have multiple pictures that show damage and an engineering report from Andy Cecil as well. Vice Mayor Mullins asked if that was real brick on the building. Manager Day stated it was just brick façade. He stated that we will salvage what we can. Councilmember Davis asked if we could remove the building, stabilize the ground and keep the park up there. Manager Day said that we would try and keep the park up there.

APPROVE QUOTE FOR FIREWORKS

Manager Day stated that we have received a quote for fireworks this year and it is significantly higher than last year. Last year we paid \$8,500.00. He also stated that Board of Supervisor, Aaron Gillespie has offered support however, there are no funds that he can offer as of right now. Councilmember Davis stated that she doesn't know if having no fireworks show is an option. Motion was made by Councilmember Fox to approve the quote. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Brown. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVE USDA RESOLUTION

Manager Day stated that every year we apply for free money with USDA Rural Development for police cruisers. He is not sure if there will be funds available but we are going to try for it anyway. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

FIRE CHIEF POSITION RECOMMENDATION

Manager Day stated that Fire Chief, Jason Hodge has moved on and currently Jason Kinser is acting Chief. Manager Day asked the fire department members for a recommendation on who they would like to see as fire chief. They have recommended John Thomas as chief. Motion was made by Councilmember Fox to appoint John Thomas as Fire Chief. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVE BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Treasurer Regon stated that in the council packet were a few budget amendments that she recommends. She went over each of them and explained what each one was for. They were either for funds that were not originally in the budget or to reallocate funds within the budget. Motion was made by Councilmember Fox to approve the budget amendments. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

CLEAN UP MONTH

Manager Day stated that each year the Town tries to sponsor a month for clean up month. This is usually done the month of May. Councilmember Fox asked if we could contact Thompson Valley Fire Rescue and see if they will do another event at the Fairgrounds where they can accept chemicals, etc. there. It was stated that we can contact them. Motion to approve clean up month for the month of May was made by Councilmember Davis. Motion was seconded by

Councilmember Fox. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

FRAUD CASES

Treasurer Regon stated that there had been eight Town employees that have been victim of fraud cases with the Virginia Employment Commission and some employees had even received 1099's but had never actually received any funds for unemployment. She stated that HR had reported these as fraud and has been trying to contact the VEC but has been unsuccessful to reach anyone by phone. We have reached out to Delegate Morefield and Senator Hackworth's offices to try and get them to help us make contact with the VEC. They have passed our information along to them. HR has also spoke to Investigator Menefee and states that on March 3rd, his subpoena was approved and the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office served the VEC with that subpoena for information and they are to have a response to us by March 15th. He has also spoke with Detective Hall with the sheriff's office and he is also working on the same type of cases with the VEC.

MISCELLANEOUS

Manager Day stated the IEDA has proceeded with the PPP Guidelines. The ad will run Thursday. There will be 46 days of advertisement time. The PER was received last week. So now any state or federal agency that we go to for funding, we will have all the documentation they need. We also have an updated Chmura report and they are estimating 372,000 people to come to our area because of the sports complex. Councilmember Brown asked Vice Mayor Mullins how much money he spent at the competition he went to this past weekend. Vice Mayor Mullins answered that for everything he probably spent about \$1,500. Councilmember Brown said the best tax dollars are those from outside citizens. Vice Mayor Mullins stated that he can't wait for people outside our area to come to our sports complex and help boost our economy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Davis stated that she had been asked what was going to happen to the fence posts at the park that had peoples name on them and could they get them back. Manager Day stated that they had planned on using them in some way to keep them out there but if they want them, they can have them. Councilmember Davis also asked if the ladder truck had been inspected. Manager Day stated that it had been inspected and they did have a little bit of work to do to it and they have found someone to work on it. She then asked if we were going to try to replace it, even if it were with a used one. Manager Day answered yes, and he was very open to the idea of replacing it with a used truck. Councilmember Davis stated that she thinks the fire department equipment needs to be put in a rotation program like the police department has.

Councilmember Brown thanked Board of Supervisor Member Aaron Gillespie for being here and thanked Kurt Breeding for being here also. He said there were also great sports team and athletes represented here tonight.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Davis and seconded by Councilmember Fox. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.