

Council Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2022

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

Present:

Mayor Michael Hoops

Vice Mayor Terry Mullins

Councilmember Joe Beasley

Councilmember Glenn Catron

Councilmember Chris Brown

Councilmember Emily Davis

Absent:

Councilmember David Fox

Staff present were: Town Manager, Todd Day; Executive Assistant, Robin Brewster; Town Attorney, Brad Pyott; Clerk/Treasurer, Leeanne Regon; Zoning & Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley; Assistant Police Chief, Stanley Lampert; Fire Chief, John Thomas.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hoops called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance. Invocation by Manager Day.

HARPER'S HOME UPDATE

April Morefield the executive director of The Care Center of Southwest Virginia came before council to discuss a children's residential facility. She stated that The Care Center is a child advocacy center in Southwest Virginia. She stated that it is for children who have been abused, been around drug use, or sexual abuse. They have seen 400 plus children since 2019. She said the children were not getting the same medical care as children in other areas in Virginia. They have found a nurse from Roanoke that comes down twice a week to see children that has been physically or sexually abused. They serve Tazewell, Russell and Buchanan Counties. They have a location in Richlands. She stated that there are some cases where children are living in the DSS office, emergency rooms, or motel rooms because they have nowhere else to go. She thought of an idea to create a home where these children could go while they are waiting placement. It would allow them to have a bed, food, clothes, etc.

She stated that the name of it would be Harper's Home. She told a little bit about Harper Mitchell. Harper was a little girl who was killed from physical abuse and her family has created Harper comfort bags for children in these situations. They are given to kids when they have to be placed in care like that. She said these bags mean the world to those kids. She thanked the council for allowing her to come speak. Council thanked her for coming and thanked her for caring so much and coming up with this idea.

REVIEW AMENDMENT TO EXISTING ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 23-SECTION 23-1. DEFINITIONS AND SECTION 23-26. USE) AND SET PUBLIC HEARING

Manager Day stated that the Virginia Code has wording in it for adult homes but no wording in it for young adult or children’s homes. He stated that we have a chance to change that and make this happen. He does not like spot zoning but there will be a request coming and he is in full support of it. He would like to ask for council’s unanimous support.

Zoning & Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley stated that we could change our definitions and add a section for children’s facility and change R2 use to allow children’s facility/foster home. He stated if it is set for public hearing in December, he will be sending letters to 700+ citizens to make them aware. Motion to approve was made by Councilmember Brown and seconded by Councilmember Davis. It was stated that we needed to have a motion for each, the definition change and the ordinance. Councilmember Brown amended his motion. Councilmember Brown made a motion to approve the definition change. Motion seconded by Councilmember Davis. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Councilmember Brown made a motion to approve the ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Catron. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Councilmember Beasley made a motion to set a public hearing December 13th at 7:00pm. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

NEW BUSINESS RECOGNITION

SHEPHERD’S DELI

Mayor Hoops introduced Guy Beavers and Zack Bowman of Shepherd’s Deli. They came before council and thanked them for having them. They said they are just two old friends who are trying to give our area something new. They have new flavors and they really enjoy what they do. They invite everyone to come out and try their menu. Mayor Hoops congratulated them and presented them with a couple small gifts and welcomed their business to town.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Catron, seconded by Vice Mayor Mullins to approve the minutes of October 11, 2022. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Motion was made by Councilmember Beasley and seconded by Councilmember Catron to approve the financial statements for October 2022. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye;

Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Councilmember Davis stated that the Planning Commission met on Monday and they discussed Harper's Home and unanimously voted in support of it and voted to send it to council.

SPORTS COMPLEX UPDATE

Manager Day stated that he just wanted to give an update on this project. He has been working on an Arise Grant, which is a federal grant. It is a multiple state grant. He has spoke to Mercer County Board members and they are working together to capitalize on that project. They are speaking with VAARC and WVARC and the maximum available is \$10million in value. He said this is the biggest battle but has the biggest value. He has a meeting on December 1st on this and he will know more then.

BRIDGE UPDATE (HUBBLE HILL & HARDEES INTERSECTION)

Manager Day stated that we must get our bridges inspected periodically and that we had applied for funding for our bridge projects and we have been awarded a lot of funding for that work. The upcoming bridge work will be for the bridge at 4way close to Hardees and Farm Bureau. Traffic will have to use the crossover beside of Pop Shop. Also the bridge by Hubble Hill will be worked on as well and have to have a traffic pattern change.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Treasurer Regon presented recommended budget amendments to the council for approval. She stated that these amendments are mostly just moving money around in the budget to cover areas of spending. There are also a couple of amendments that are to budget for revenue received that was not initially in the budget. Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve the budget amendments. Councilmember Catron seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Manager Day stated that with inflation rising we have to budget the best we can but we will have to continue to have the amendments to keep us in line.

PAVING DISCUSSION

Manager Day stated that we had been awarded \$750,000 from VDOT to pave from the YMCA to the intersection at Hardees, including the bridge that would be replaced. This project was going to happen now but has been pushed back until spring. He also stated, bridge projects take about a year to complete.

EMPLOYEE CHRISTMAS DINNER

Manager Day stated that the employee Christmas dinner will be held Friday, December 16th at 6:30pm at the VIP Room. Councilmember Brown asked if we will be sending invitations to the newly elected councilmembers, it was stated yes, we would.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Brown stated he would like to congratulate Councilmember Davis on her reelection and congratulate the two newly elected councilmembers. He said he would like to speak on the sports complex for a minute. He said that he had spoken with Councilmember Beasley, Catron, and Mullins, and said that this project is something near and dear to him. He remembers a time when our Main Street was not thriving like it is now. He said that he has a family here, a business here, raising his kids here and that he has lived here since 1998 and he loves Tazewell. His kids have been involved with travel ball and while he was away at these events he thought, we could do this. This is for commerce not recreation. The town has had two studies performed. This is a \$45 billion dollar a year industry. Our sports complex would create eight full time jobs and 70 part time jobs for the years 2024-2043. It could have an impact in our area of \$5.5 million dollars. Eastern Sports Management thinks it would have an estimated \$190,000 of tax dollars for our town per year. It would bring \$59,000 in real estate tax to our town. This can change our town. It would bring in almost 400,000 people a year to our town. He stated that each year the cost of doing business goes up and this can help us get more funds flowing through our town. "What ifs" are the killers of many things. We need to look at the "what is." He said that Eastern Sports Management has 12 other facilities and they picked us. They picked us because they know it can work. We have got to get moving to prepare for the future of our town. We had a \$10 million dollar wastewater treatment project that is now on hold. He asked Manager Day if it is still at the cost of \$10million. He answered no, it was \$18million last he heard. Councilmember Brown asked what happens if we want to continue this project. We would have to raise rates. He stated that no one up there on that council wanted to raise rates. So, if we can bring in the sports complex, we would not have to raise rates. Outside tax dollars are the best tax dollars we can get.

Vice Mayor Mullins stated that he would like to congratulate Councilmember Davis, and newly elected members, Jonathan Hankins and Zack Cline. He said that he had lived here his whole life. He was a government teacher for 25 years. Some of the councilmembers and newly elected members were his students. 13 years ago, he was diagnosed with cancer. He had cancer surgery in 2009 and has been cancer free. God gave him an opportunity to do something more. He served three terms and has been blessed to have a manager and council that thinks outside the box. Over the past seven years they have discussed the sports complex and it has been at the top of their list. It has been approved by council, the IEDA board, legal counsel, supervisors, and school board. Many outside people have supported the sports complex. He feels that the tax revenue will supplement the payments on the complex. He doesn't want to look back on 2022 and see what could have been or what should have been. It would provide jobs and tax revenue to our

area. We have a chance to do something big. Council has worked hard without division to show the community they are working for the future of Tazewell.

Councilmember Davis stated that she would like to also congratulate Mayor Hoops for his reelection also. She stated that all the candidates were polite and cordial and it was a very nice experience. She wanted to thank all the candidates.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.