

**WISE TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022; 6:00 P.M.
WISE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS
501 WEST MAIN STREET - WISE, VIRGINIA 24293**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor
Ben Conway
Jeffery Dotson
Caynor Smith, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor

PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

There being no one from the public audience wishing to speak, Mayor Adkins closed public expression.

DISCUSSION OF WAGES AND BENEFITS FOR FY 2022-2023 BUDGET:

Town Manager Beverly Owens explained the reason for the budget workshop meeting was to obtain Council member input regarding employee cost-of-living increases.

Councilman Dotson stated that he had given a lot of thought to a possible cost-of-living adjustment for the upcoming fiscal year. He said that although employees had recently received the largest pay adjustment since 1990, he feared that if cost-of-living adjustments were not maintained, employee wages would fall behind. Dotson stated that he had discussed the matter with Vice-Mayor Taylor and the two agreed that a 2% COLA would be reasonable. He added that he did worry about the 8.6% health insurance premium increase effective July 1st.

Caynor Smith, Jr. said employees had received significant pay increases in July 2021 and January 2022, in addition to a Christmas stipend and the \$5,000 ARPA premium pay in December, 2021. He expressed his concern that the Town could overextend itself.

Mayor Adkins agreed with the suggestion for a 2% cost-of-living adjustment and suggested the Town Manager include this in the fiscal year 2022-23 preliminary budget figures. Councilman Smith added that even if the COLA was appropriated, Council had the option of deciding when, or if, the cost-living-adjustment would be enacted. He further added that if the adjustment was determined to not be financially prudent, Council could decide to forego the adjusted wages. The Town Manager was instructed to request that the Town Attorney review and comment on this potential option.

Following the brief discussion, Councilman Smith made a motion that Council authorize the implementation of a 2% COLA for the preliminary budget figures and that discussions could continue. Ben Conway seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

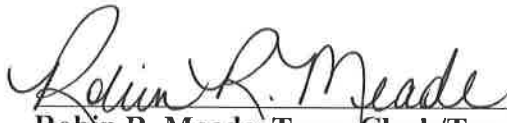
Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

DISCUSSION OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE:

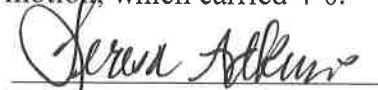
Beverly Owens presented written information to Council regarding the health insurance and the 8.6% premium rate increase. She stated that she was providing the information on health care at this time to provide council members ample time to consider options for renewal. Owens reported that The Local Choice Program (TLC) had stipulated renewal acceptance must be received no later than March 25, 2022 and no extensions would be granted; however, she noted that formal action could not be taken until the regular February Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional business to come before the governing body, the meeting was adjourned on a motion made by Jeff Dotson. Ben Conway seconded the motion, which carried 4-0.



Robin R. Meade, Town Clerk/Treasurer



Teresa Adkins, Mayor

**WISE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022; 7:00 P.M.
WISE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS
501 WEST MAIN STREET - WISE, VIRGINIA 24293**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor
Ben Conway
Jeffery Dotson
Caynor Smith, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INVOCATION:

Councilman Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance. Adrian Dale, Town of Wise Street Superintendent, provided the invocation.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the consent calendar, which included the minutes of the January 25, 2022 regular Council meeting, minutes of the February 10, 2022 Budget Workshop, the October 2021 Treasurer's Financial Report, the January, 2022 Police, Water Plant, and Fire Department Reports, and the February, 2022 Planning Department and Recreation Specialist Reports. Laura Taylor seconded the motion that passed 5-0.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

There being no one from the public audience wishing to speak, Mayor Adkins closed the public expression.

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP GRANT:

Pro-Art Association Executive Director Michael McNulty thanked Council for their continued support of Pro-Art. He provided a brief summary of the Pro-Art events for 2022. He stated that under the Creative Communities Partnership Grant (formerly Local Government Challenge Grant) the Virginia Commission for the Arts would match contributions up to \$4,500. Mr. McNulty requested that the Town of Wise apply for VCA matching funds in the amount of \$7,600 years. He noted that the deadline for applying was April 1st. Council members thanked Mr. McNulty and the Pro-Art Association.

RESOLUTION #4, 2022:

Beverly Owens presented the results of a bid opening for the fiscal year 2021-2022 street paving project. She reported that W-L Construction and Paving, Inc. submitted the lowest bid. Owens explained that the lowest bid for the project, including "additive bid items", exceeded budgeted funding by \$24,325. She explained that the increase was primarily due to the need for milling of the Town Hall parking lot, which had deteriorated from the time the paving appropriations were originally adopted. Following a brief discussion, Councilman Dotson made a motion to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA

AWARDING A CONTRACT TO W-L CONSTRUCTION AND PAVING, INC. FOR COMPLETION OF THE TOWN'S FY 2021-2022 PAVING SCHEDULE". Laura Taylor seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

RESOLUTION #5, 2022:

Beverly Owens advised that a notice had been received from the U.S. Department of Justice requiring all public entities having 50 or more employees to designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate its Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and to investigate any complaints that the entity had violated the ADA. Following the brief summary, Caynor Smith, Jr., made a motion to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA DESIGNATING LAURA ROBERTS AS THE TOWN'S ADA COORDINATOR". Laura Taylor seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

DISCUSSION OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT – FINAL RULE:

Assistant Town Manager, Laura Roberts, reminded that at the January, 2022 Council meeting, she was directed to work with department heads to reevaluate their priority projects submitted for ARPA funding under the U.S. Treasury's Interim Final Rule. Roberts submitted a written report of updated projects and pricing. She stated that the material she provided was for informational purposes only and no action was needed. Following a brief discussion, Vice-Mayor Laura Taylor made a motion that the remaining balance of ARPA funds available be transferred to the Town's General Fund to be used as eligible revenue replacement. Councilman Ben Conway seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

DISCUSSION OF EMPLOYEE GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL:

Beverly Owens provided information regarding the town's employee health insurance for fiscal year 2022-23. In a written memorandum, Owens indicated that premiums would increase by 8.6% for the new fiscal year. Following a brief discussion, Jeff Dotson made a motion that the Town of Wise approve health insurance as described in a written memorandum from the Town Manager dated 02/03/22 as follows:

- 1) *Offer Key Advantage 250 Plan and Key Advantage Expanded Plan.*
- 2) *Fund 90% of the cost of the Key Advantage 250 Plan with comprehensive dental coverage. Provide employee option to buy up to the Key Advantage Expanded Plan and option to elect either comprehensive dental coverage or less expensive preventive and diagnostic dental coverage under the Expanded Plan.*
- 3) *Designate eligible enrollees as:*
 - i. *Full Time Employees – persons regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week, year-round, for a definite term.*
 - ii. *Part Time Elected Officials – Town to pay 50% of the amount contributed for full time employee at all membership levels.*
 - iii. *Part Time Employees – persons regularly scheduled to work at least 20 and not more than 29 hours per week, year-round, for no definite term with the Town to pay 50% of the amount contributed for the full time employee at all membership levels.*
 - iv. *COBRA Qualified Beneficiaries (Per Federal Law, COBRA enrollees will pay a 2% Administrative Fee in addition to the monthly premium)*
 - v. *Early Retirees not Eligible for Medicare*
- 4) *Provide one month of coverage for surviving eligible dependents of a deceased employee/retiree to allow time for them to get their affairs in order following a tragic loss.*

Caynor Smith, Jr., seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:

- **Discussion of Trail Around the Lake** – Caynor Smith, Jr., Chair, provided a brief summary of the Recreation Committee meeting. He informed that the meeting included a telephone conference with Shane Fields, City of Norton, who provided background information of the local trail systems in the area. Smith added that Fields indicated the first step in pursuing a single-track loop trail around the Wise Reservoir would be to complete an assessment and preliminary design, which would identify whether or not a usable trail could be constructed. Councilman Smith reported that the committee recommended that \$1,500 be allocated from the General Fund budget to be used toward trail assessment.

- **Discussion of Gate at Town of Wise Sports Complex** – Smith further reported that the committee discussed the entry gate at the Town of Wise Sports Complex. He informed that after discussions with several engineers and steel fabricators, it was determined that installation of a donated 2000-pound steel gate, was not feasible. Smith noted that Norris Fabricators recommended one option would be the installation of an 8’ – 12’ high wrought iron gate (25 feet wide) that could be opened by hand rather than mechanically. He stated the committee recommended that staff work with Norris Fabricators to obtain pricing.

Town Attorney Leonard Rogers informed that a price would have to be known before he could determine if the gate purchase would be required to be put out for bid. Vice-Mayor Taylor recommended that three telephone quotes be obtained. Following the discussion, Councilman Dotson moved to accept the Recreation Committee’s report as presented including the transfer of \$1,500 from the General Fund for the “trail” assessment around the Bear Creek Reservoir and that staff should obtain pricing for an entry gate for the Town of Wise Sports Complex. Vice-Mayor Laura Taylor seconded the motion. Councilman Smith clarified the committee’s recommendation by emphasizing the gate should be 8’ – 12’ in height. There being no additional comments, the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

APPOINTEE REPORTS (Informational Purposes Only) – Acknowledgement of Receipt:

Caynor Smith, Jr., presented the C-N-W Board Meeting report from February 16, 2022. He reported that the Board voted to apply surplus funds in the amount of \$76,268 toward the purchase of a new dump truck. Smith added that surplus funds were normally returned to the participating localities. He also noted that the Board recognized D.L. Peters for individually applying for a grant on behalf of the C-N-W Board for a \$6,000 testing machine. Smith informed that the organization was among only a few that received the grant funding. Following the report, Vice-Mayor Taylor made a motion acknowledging receipt of the C-N-W Board Meeting from February 16, 2022. Councilman Ben Conway seconded the motion that carried 5-0.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE:

Mayor Adkins introduced Natasha Proulex who was hired as the “Community Event Coordinator”. Ms. Proulex summarized activities that she had been working on since being hired in January. Council members welcomed Ms. Proulex to the Town of Wise.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Ben Conway shared his excitement about the possibility of a trail around the lake.

Caynor Smith, Jr., shared Councilman Conway's interest in the walking trail. He added that he enjoyed the feeling of enthusiasm throughout the Town.

Laura Taylor reiterated comments regarding the trail and other activities going on in the Town.


Jeff Dotson suggested that if the lake trail was approved, the Town should look for volunteers, or groups, to help with the trail maintenance, rather than adding even more responsibilities to the Town's staff. Caynor Smith, Jr. added that a group referred to as "Friends of the Town of Wise" be organized that could help with different projects throughout the Town.

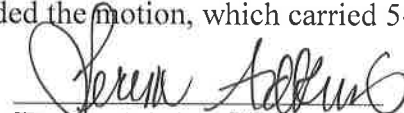
Mayor Adkins informed that the Wise County Chamber of Commerce requested donated items for a "silent auction" to be held during the Annual Gala event to be held April 9th. She suggested that Natasha Proulex be in charge of putting together a gift basket that would include items from the Town of Wise. Following a brief discussion, Councilman Smith made a motion authorizing Natasha Proulex put together a gift basket for the "silent auction" to be held during the Chamber of Commerce dinner on April 9, 2022. Smith elaborated on the items to be incorporated in the basket including Town of Wise collectibles, or souvenirs, and any other items that needed to be purchased up to \$150. Vice-Mayor Taylor seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Laura Taylor, Vice-Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"
Caynor Smith, Jr.	"Aye"

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional business to come before the governing body, the meeting was adjourned on a motion made by Laura Taylor. Caynor Smith, Jr., seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.


Robin R. Meade, Town Clerk/Treasurer


Teresa Adkins, Mayor