

**WISE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021; 7:00 P.M.
WISE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS
501 WEST MAIN STREET - WISE, VIRGINIA 24293**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor
Jeffery Dotson
Ben Conway

Members Absent:

Laura Taylor-Baugh
Caynor Smith, Jr.

Pledge of Allegiance / Invocation:

Councilman Jeff Dotson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Adrian Dale, Pastor of the Norton First Church of God and Town of Wise Street Superintendent, provided the invocation.

Discussion of Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

Town Manager Beverly Owens informed that there was an amended agenda to correct the numbering of resolutions. She also mentioned that Councilman Smith had withdrawn his request to participate in the meeting electronically. Councilman Jeff Dotson moved to approve the amended agenda. Councilman Ben Conway seconded the motion that carried 3-0.

Consent Calendar:

Councilman Conway made a motion to approve the consent calendar, which included the minutes of the January 26, 2021 regular Council Meeting, the November and December, 2020 Treasurer's Financial Reports, the January, 2021 Police, Water Plant, and Fire Department Reports, and the January-February Planning Department Reports. Councilman Dotson seconded the motion that passed 3-0.

Public Expression:

Thomas Kennedy, 303 Spring Avenue, S.E., thanked the Town Council for their participation and cooperation at Veldon Dotson Park. He expressed his excitement that there had been over two hundred children sign up for participation and the league expected more late registrants. He noted that there had been tremendous progress at the fields.

Mayor Adkins thanked Kennedy for his comments. She also offered condolences, on behalf of the Town of Wise, for the recent loss of his uncle, Tommy Akers.

Creative Communities Partnership Grant:

Beverly Owens, Town Manager, briefly reviewed the letter submitted by Michael McNulty, Executive Director of Pro-Art, to request the Town's continued support of Pro-Art. He reminded of the pending application deadline for the Virginia Commission for the Arts Creative Communities Partnership Grant on April 1st. McNulty asked Council to apply for VCA matching funds and maintain the same level of support as the last fiscal year. He reminded that the Commission would match contributions up to \$4,500. There being no additional discussion, Councilman Jeff Dotson moved that the Town of Wise apply for matching grant funds under the Creative Communities Partnership Grant in the amount in the amount of \$5,000, the same last fiscal year. Councilman Ben Conway seconded the motion, which was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor
Ben Conway
Jeffery Dotson

"Aye"
"Aye"
"Aye"

Resolution #6, 2021:

Beverly Owens informed that a recent "Request for Bids" had resulted in two companies submitted proposals. She advised that the town's staff recommended that Town Council award the paving contract to the lowest responsive bidder W-L Construction and Paving, Inc. Owens added that the bid was within budgeted funds. There being no additional discussion, Ben Conway made a motion to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AWARDDING A CONTRACT TO W-L CONSTRUCTION AND PAVING, INC. FOR COMPLETION OF THE TOWN'S FY 2020-2021 PAVING SCHEDULE". Jeff Dotson seconded the motion that was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"

Discussion of FY 2020-2021 Paving Striping:

Beverly Owens informed that a recent "Request for Bids" for pavement striping was issued with no bids submitted. Council instructed the Town Manager to rebid the project.

Resolution #7, 2021:

Town Clerk/Treasurer Robin Meade informed that the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development had recently extended the COVID-19 Municipal Utility Relief Program "covered period" from December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021. She advised that the resolution under discussion was simply to extend the date that penalties and interest would be "forgiven" for those customers participating in the program to the same date of December 31, 2021. Jeff Dotson made a motion to adopt "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AMENDING AUTHORIZATION TO REMOVE ACCRUED PENALTIES AND/OR INTEREST ON DELINQUENT WATER AND SEWER ACCOUNTS". Ben Conway seconded the motion that was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"

Discussion of Dotson Park:

Beverly Owens informed that Council needed to establish registration fees for Dotson Park. She explained that in an effort to increase participation in tournaments at Dotson Park, Doug Bates, park coordinator, had offered travel teams a discounted rate of \$400 to participate in five tournaments. Ben Conway made a motion to establish the fees for 2021 travel ball tournaments to be \$100 per team per tournament or a discounted rate of \$400 per team for five tournament games. Jeff Dotson seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"

Following a brief discussion regarding opening day at Dotson Park, Councilman Dotson made a motion that the park open on March 6th provided that the date does not conflict with any orders issued by Governor Northam. Councilman Conway seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Ben Conway made a motion authorizing Doug Bates the authority to set gate fees and other

miscellaneous fees for the 2021 baseball season. Jeff Dotson seconded the motion. Mayor Adkins called for a roll call vote:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Jeff Dotson made a motion to authorizing Sandra Adkins the authority to price concession stand items with approval by the Town Manager. Ben Conway seconded the motion, that was recorded by roll call vote:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Resolution #8, 2021:

Beverly Owens explained that the resolution under discussion would simply rescind the standards for Dotson Park set in the Spring of 2020 and were no longer valid considering that new guidelines had been adopted. Jeff Dotson made a motion to adopt “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA RESCINDING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR VELDON D. DOTSON PARK ADOPTED MARCH 3, 2020”. Ben Conway seconded the motion that was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Resolution #9, 2021:

Town Manager Beverly Owens stated that the resolution under discussion would simply rescind agreements previously made with the Wise Little League, which are no longer applicable. Jeff Dotson made a motion to adopt “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA RESCINDING ALL PRIOR RESOLUTIONS, AGREEMENTS OR COMMITMENTS TO THE WISE LITTLE LEAGUE, INC.”. Ben Conway seconded the motion that was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Discussion of Employee Group Health Insurance Renewal for FY 2021-2022:

Beverly Owens provided information regarding the town’s employee health insurance for fiscal year 2021-22. In a written memorandum, Owens indicated that premiums would decrease an average of 4% 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 2/17/21 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*
 - 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.*

Ben Conway seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Recreation Committee Meeting:

Ben Conway, appointee, reported that the Recreation Committee met on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 to discuss possible grant applications through the Abandoned Mined Land Economic Development Pilot Fund and the Cumberland Forest Community Fund, for improvements to Veldon Dotson Recreation Park. He advised that the programs were both 100% grant funded and had tight application deadlines with a letter of intent to apply for the AML Pilot Fund program due March 1, 2021 with final application due April 1, 2021 and the application for CFCF grant funding was by due March 29, 2021. Conway stated that committee’s recommendation was to proceed with the letter of intent for the AML Pilot program due March 1st, but because of a couple of unanswered questions, the committee would meet again to discuss moving forward with the full application due April 1st. He noted that submission of the CFCF application was dependent upon whether or not a full application was submitted for the AML Pilot Fund. Following the report, Jeff Dotson made a motion to approve the committee report and recommendation as presented. Ben Conway seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Public Works Committee Meeting:

Jeff Dotson, on behalf of Committee Chair Caynor Smith, reviewed the Public Works Committee meeting from February 17, 2021 to discuss various sidewalk projects eligible for funding under the VDOT Transportation Alternative Grant Program. Dotson stated that the committee considered three project areas and after a lengthy discussion recommended the Town pursue the grant funding for the West Main Street area (from the intersection of Norton Road to D. Avenue) to provide a more balanced streetscape for downtown. He added the project would include sidewalks, curb and gutter, stone edging and ornamental street lamps. Dotson reported that the committee further recommended that if there was a grant funding shortfall, the Town consider self-funding any remaining portion of the West Main Street project area. Ben Conway stated that there were several other areas of Town that needed sidewalks. Dotson responded that there was current budgeting that could be used toward the repair of some of the sidewalks in Town. Following a brief discussion, Jeff Dotson moved to approve the recommendation of the Public Works Committee. Ben Conway seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	“Aye”
Ben Conway	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”

Closed Session:

Councilman Conway made a motion that the Wise Town Council convene into closed meeting for the purpose of and including:

***Real Property** – Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, as permitted by Virginia §2.2-3711(A) (3).*

Councilman Dotson seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

Additional Public Expression:

Following Council convening into closed session, but prior to moving to the conference room, Mayor Adkins allowed additional public expression. David Yeary, owner of Sherry Hills Mobile Home Park since 1983, described what he considered a very offensive and profane yard flag displayed at a home on Virginia Avenue within the corporation limits of Wise. He said he had researched the matter and decided to contact the landlord who was renting the property. He stated since that time, the flag had been removed. He noted that the Town of Clintwood had an ordinance on record regulating such offensive signage. Yeary requested the Town of Wise considering adopting an ordinance regulating language that could be printed on signs or flags displayed on private property. Mayor Adkins referred the matter to the town's attorney, Leonard Rogers. Rogers stated that he would obtain a copy of the ordinance from Clintwood. He said he would research what the Town could potentially do to regulate such matters. He cautioned that "freedom of speech" issues should be handled very carefully.

Following Mr. Yeary's comments, councilmembers retired to the conference room for the closed session.

Open Session:

Councilman Conway made a motion to reconvene in open session. Councilman Dotson seconded the motion that passed 3-0.

Certification of Closed Session – CM Resolution #2, 2021:

Town Clerk/Treasurer Robin Meade, read Closed Meeting Resolution #2, 2021, "Resolving and certifying that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applied, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Town Council of the Town of Wise," and the vote was recorded by roll call:

Teresa Adkins, Mayor	"Aye"
Ben Conway	"Aye"
Jeffery Dotson	"Aye"

Appointee Reports (Informational Purposes Only) – Acknowledgement of Receipt:

Jeff Dotson made a motion acknowledging receipt of the C-N-W Board Meeting Report from February 17, 2021. Ben Conway seconded the motion that carried 3-0.

Staff / Manager Comment:

Laura Roberts notified that Greg Cross was currently in the planning stages of the upcoming Chillin' & Grillin' and he had asked if Council planned on preparing breakfast for the participating teams at the

Wise Baptist Church, as they had in years past. She said the breakfast event would be held on Saturday, July 17th at 7:00 a.m. Mayor Adkins polled the members present and each acknowledged that Council was willing to prepare and serve breakfast.

Adjournment:

There being no additional business to come before the governing body, the meeting was adjourned on a motion made by Councilman Dotson. Councilman Conway seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.



Teresa Adkins, Mayor



Robin R. Meade, Clerk of Council