

**WISE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Tuesday, February 27, 2024; 7:00 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:**

Robin Dotson

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INVOCATION:**

Police Chief Kevin Yates led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilman Jeffery Dotson provided the invocation.

**AGENDA CHANGES:**

Town Manager Laura Roberts advised that there were no changes to the agenda.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the consent calendar, which included the minutes of the January 30, 2024 regular Council meeting, the November – December 2023 Treasurer's Financial Reports, the January 2024 Police, Water Plant, Fire Department, and Recreation Specialist Reports, and the February 2024 Planning Department and Special Events Reports. Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

**PUBLIC EXPRESSION:**

Dr. Walter Crouse, resident of 6855 Hurricane Road, provided an informational summary of topics he had discussed at the recent Wise County Board of Supervisors regular meeting held on February 8, 2024. Crouse's synopsis included the need for the construction of a roadway connecting U.S. Route 58 Alternate to the campus of UVA-Wise or the Lonesome Pine Airport, the need for a regional recycling center in the area, and his opposition to Nuclear Reactors and additional Data Centers being brought to the area.

Rod Tiller, resident of 739 Old Hurricane Road, requested assistance addressing speeding issues along Old Hurricane Road. Police Chief Kevin Yates stated he would increase patrol in the area. Council advised Tiller to contact Chief Yates when speeders were observed.

**TOWN OF WISE CENTENNIAL REPORT – NAMING OF THE TOWN OF WISE:**

Town Manager Laura Roberts explained the Town of Wise Centennial Committee had been working diligently researching the history of the Town and planning events to celebrate the Town's Centennial year throughout 2024. She added that Bonnie Aker, Centennial Committee Member, had encouraged citizens to submit essays documenting their knowledge of historical events in the Town of Wise. Roberts informed that Sharon Pigeon, long-time community member and friend of the Town, had submitted an essay regarding the historical account of the beginnings of the naming of Wise, which was provided to Council. Councilmen Jeffery Dotson and Caynor Smith, Jr. provided a brief overview of events planned by the Centennial Committee to date.

**PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE #1, 2024:**

Town Planner Reagan Walsh informed the Town had seen an increase in Conditional Use Permit applications for short-term rentals, which had prompted the need for updated language in the Zoning Ordinance to provide an accurate description of said rentals. Walsh advised the Town of Wise Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on February 1, 2024 regarding the matter and recommended Council approve the zoning text amendment as presented. A public hearing was held on “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AMENDING ARTICLE 4, ARTICLE 6 AND ARTICLE 11 OF THE TOWN OF WISE ZONING ORDINANCE AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS ADOPTED MARCH 23, 1987, AS AMENDED, TO INCLUDE SHORT-TERM RENTALS IN THE R-B, B-1, B-2, AND B-3 ZONING DISTRICTS AND TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS FOR SHORT-TERM RENTALS”. There being no one from the public audience wishing to comment, Mayor Adkins closed the public hearing. Ben Conway moved to adopt Ordinance #1, 2024 as presented. Jeffery Dotson seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

**PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE #2, 2024:**

Town Planner Reagan Walsh advised the Zoning Ordinance was written without clarification of the difference between mobile and manufactured homes, and therefore needed to be updated. Walsh advised the Town of Wise Planning Commission recommended Council approval of the zoning text amendment as presented. Following a brief discussion, a public hearing was held on “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AMENDING ARTICLE 4 AND ARTICLE 11 OF THE TOWN OF WISE ZONING ORDINANCE AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS ADOPTED MARCH 23, 1987, AS AMENDED, TO UPDATE LANGUAGE REGARDING MANUFACTURED HOMES”. There being no one from the public audience wishing to comment, the public hearing was closed. Jeffery Dotson made a motion to adopt Ordinance #2, 2024 as presented. 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”

**PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE #3, 2024:**

Town Planner Reagan Walsh explained that Article 5, Section 6 of the Town of Wise Zoning Ordinance was outdated due to a change in Virginia Code, prohibiting the requirement for a property owner to obtain a Special Use Permit to replace, rebuild or repair any residential or commercial building damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster or other act of God. She added the Town of Wise Planning Commission recommended Council approval of the zoning text amendment as presented. A public hearing was held on “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AMENDING ARTICLE 5, SECTION 6 OF THE TOWN OF WISE ZONING ORDINANCE AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

ADOPTED MARCH 23, 1987, AS AMENDED, TO UPDATE LANGUAGE REGARDING NONCONFORMING USES”. There being no one from the public audience wishing to comment, Mayor Adkins closed the public hearing. Vice-Mayor Conway moved to adopt Ordinance #3, 2024 as presented. Councilman Dotson seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

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

**RESOLUTION #2, 2024:**

Town Planner Reagan Walsh stated the Town had received a Highway Safety Improvement Program grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation for the addition of high-visibility crosswalks throughout Town. Following a brief discussion, Ben Conway made a motion to adopt “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AWARDED A CONTRACT WITH THOMPSON & LITTON, INC. FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE WISE CROSSWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT”. Caynor Smith, Jr. seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

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

**RESOLUTION #3, 2024:**

Town Planner Reagan Walsh informed the Town had been awarded grant funds in the amount of \$15,000 from the Cumberland Forest Community Fund for improvements to the restroom facility at Bear Creek Reservoir. Jeffery Dotson moved to adopt “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM THE CUMBERLAND FOREST COMMUNITY FUND FUNDED BY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RESTROOM FACILITY AT THE TOWN OF WISE RESERVOIR”. Caynor Smith, Jr. seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

**RESOLUTION #4, 2024:**

Town Manager Laura Roberts informed that a “Request for Bids” for paving was recently advertised with two proposals received. She provided a written list of streets to be paved in the fiscal year 2023-2024 paving schedule, which would be completed by June 1, 2024. Jeffery Dotson made a motion to adopt “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WISE, VIRGINIA AWARDED A CONTRACT TO W-L CONSTRUCTION AND

PAVING, INC. FOR COMPLETION OF THE TOWN'S FY 2023-2024 PAVING SCHEDULE". Ben Conway seconded the motion and the vote was recorded by roll call:

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

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:**

**CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS-**

Sarina Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer, informed numerous requests had been received for the option to make payments with credit/debit cards in the office at the Town of Wise Municipal Building. She added that an online payment kiosk located in the lobby was the only option for paying with a card in person. Collins advised that following diligent review of the practices of accepting credit/debit cards in the office, the Finance Committee recommended Council approval of the acceptance of cards as a method of payment in the Treasurer's Office, with the payer required to be present and to conduct their transaction with provided card readers. Following a brief discussion, Ben Conway made a motion that the Treasurer's Department obtain card readers from First Bank and Trust to begin accepting cards at the cashier windows located at the Town of Wise Municipal Building. Jeffery Dotson seconded the motion. The vote was recorded by roll call:

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

**ICS MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT-**

Town Clerk/Treasurer Sarina Collins informed the Town had the option to open an Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) account at First Bank and Trust in order to obtain FDIC Insurance on the Town's funds in excess of \$250,000, which was the maximum FDIC Insurance available per entity at any one bank. She explained the ICS account would allow First Bank & Trust to deposit Town funds into other partnering banks, therefore providing more protection through additional FDIC Insurance. Collins advised the Finance Committee recommended the Town open an ICS Money Market account with First Bank & Trust. Following a brief discussion, Councilman Smith made a motion for the Town to participate in an ICS Money Market account at First Bank and Trust. Councilman Dotson seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

**FY25 COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT-**

Town Manager Laura Roberts provided an overview of several cost-of-living adjustment scenarios and employee step increase details for the upcoming fiscal year. She also provided a review of

part-time wages for temporary seasonal employees. Roberts advised the Finance Committee recommended a 3% cost-of-living adjustment in addition to the automatic 3% step increase for eligible employees for FY 2024-2025. There being no further discussion, Jeffery Doston made a motion to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation of a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for eligible full-time employees in addition to the annual step increase for those who had not previously reached the final step in their respective pay grade. Caynor Smith, Jr. seconded the motion with the vote recorded by roll call:

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

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:**

Jeffery Dotson, Chair, summarized the meeting of the Public Safety Committee held to discuss options presented to the Town by the Virginia Department of Transportation for the Smart Scale Project, a project intended to address congestion and safety challenges for the portion of US-23 from the Norton Interchange with US-58 to the Glamorgan intersection. Dotson advised the Public Safety Committee recommended option 2 for the intersection of US-23 and Norton Road, which added a westbound through lane. He added the Committee recommended option 1 for the intersections at US-23/Southmark Road and US-23/Woodland Drive, which included widening to provide a westbound right turn lane. Councilman Dotson informed the Committee recommended Council authorize Town staff to submit the two Smart Scale pre-applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation. Caynor Smith Jr, made a motion to accept the Public Safety Committee's recommendations as presented. 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 GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL:**

Laura Roberts provided information regarding the Town's employee health insurance for fiscal year 2024-2025. Roberts informed premiums would not increase for the new fiscal year. Following a brief discussion, Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the renewal of the Town's health insurance as described in a written memorandum from the Town Manager dated 2/27/24 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.*
- 3) *Designate eligible enrollees as:*
  - a) *Full Time Employees – persons regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week, year-round, for no definite term.*
  - b) *Part Time Elected Officials – Town to pay 50% of the amount contributed for full time employee at all membership levels.*

- c) *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.*
- d) *COBRA Qualified Beneficiaries (Per Federal Law, COBRA enrollees will pay a 2% Administrative Fee in addition to the monthly premium)*
- e) *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”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

**CLOSED SESSION:**

On a motion made by Caynor Smith, Jr. and a second by Ben Conway the Wise Town Council moved to convene into closed meeting for the purpose of and including:

***Personnel** – Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body as permitted by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1).*

***Legal Matters** – Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel as permitted by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(8).*

**OPEN SESSION:**

Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to reconvene in open session. Ben Conway seconded the motion that carried 4-0.

**CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION – CM RESOLUTION #1, 2024:**

Sarina Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer, read Closed Meeting Resolution #1, 2024, “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, Vice-Mayor	“Aye”
Jeffery Dotson	“Aye”
Caynor Smith, Jr.	“Aye”

**APPOINTEE REPORTS (Informational Purposes Only) – Acknowledgment of Receipt:**

Councilman Smith made a motion acknowledging receipt of the following appointee reports:

1. Cumberland Airport Commission meeting from February 15, 2024
2. C-N-W Board meeting from January 29, 2024

3. C-N-W Board meeting from February 21, 2024
4. Economic Development Authority meeting from September 28, 2023
5. Economic Development Authority meeting from November 9, 2023
6. Economic Development Authority meeting from January 11, 2024

Ben Conway seconded the motion that carried 4-0.

**COUNCIL COMMENT:**

Caynor Smith, Jr. suggested reaching out to UVA-Wise to request Jeffrey Baylor, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, to serve on the Centennial Committee on behalf of the College. Smith stated that Baylor and his spouse were new to the area and possessed great enthusiasm about the Town of Wise and the College.

**STAFF COMMENT:**

Town Manager Laura Roberts advised new Employee Handbooks had been received and would be distributed to all employees.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no additional discussion by the Wise Town Council, Caynor Smith, Jr. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ben Conway seconded the motion that passed 4-0.

  
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Sarina F. Collins, Town Clerk/Treasurer

  
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Teresa Adkins, Mayor