

Council Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2024

The Tazewell Town Council met in an executive session at 6:30p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present:

Mayor Michael Hoops

Councilmember Jonathan Hankins

Councilmember Zach Cline

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Emily Davis

Councilmember Joe Beasley

Absent:

Vice Mayor Glenn Catron

Staff present were Town Manager; Leeanne Regon; Executive Assistant, Susan Reeves, Attorney, Brad Pyott; Police Chief, Stan Lampert; Fire Chief, John Thomas; Zoning and Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley; EMS Director, Syndee Saleem; Water Clerk, Sabrina Schooley; Treasurer, Jessica Hayes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Councilmember Beasley to go into executive session. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Cline. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

RESOLUTION

Motion made by: Beasley

Resolution Number: ES240813

Motion Seconded by: Cline

Meeting Date: 24 August 13

Vote: All voted Aye

Purpose: Advice from Legal
Counsel, Real Property, and
Prospective Business

CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Tazewell Town Council has convened an executive session on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, 2.1-344.1 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Council that such executive session was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Tazewell Town Council hereby certifies 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 executive session to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive session were heard, discussed or considered by the Tazewell Town Council.

VOTE

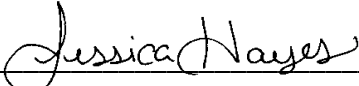
Ayes: Hankins, Cline, Fox, Davis, Beasley

Nays: none

(For each nay vote, the substance of the departure from the requirements of the Act should be described.)

Absent during vote: Catron

Absent during meeting: Catron



Jessica Hayes, Clerk

Councilmember Cline motioned to come out of executive session. Councilmember Fox seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Mayor Hoops stated the reason they went into executive session was for Advice from Legal Counsel, Discussion of Real Property and Prospective Business. He then read the resolution for Certification of Executive Session. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hoops called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance. Invocation by Nate Thomas.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

RECOGNITION OF TAZEWELL GIRL JUNIOR LEAGUE STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The team's coach was asked by Mayor Hoops to speak on behalf of the girls and to give the stats for their team's district. Their team was undefeated in State. In the Regionals the girls were only two wins away from the world series. They lost to the region winner by one run. The coach told members that the girls have worked for this since t-ball and have been building their talent from very early on. Mayor Hoops asked the team and coaches to come up so that the Council Members could present gifts to the team and have their photo taken.

RECOGNITION OF TAZEWELL LITTLE LEAGUE ALL STAR TEAM

The team's coach was asked by Mayor Hoops to speak on behalf of the Little League All Star team and to give the STATS for the team's district. They had a great season, only gave up 11 runs the entire year. They lost to the #2 team in the championship. The team and the coaches were invited up to the front to have their gifts presented and to have their photo taken.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE TAZEWELL COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AMANDA KILLEN

Amanda Killen was introduced and asked to speak about her new role as Executive Director for the Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce. She spoke of how her very first grant she worked on was for the Chamber of Commerce and it was for the first year of Oktobrewfest. Killen also recalled that the first event that she organized was First Fridays for the Chamber. Killen stated that she would do her best to serve the Chamber and Tazewell. She spoke of the true goal of the Chamber of Commerce is to provide support for businesses in Tazewell both County and Town. She said one of the focuses is to promote commerce to our area. Killen informed the members that the Chamber will hold an event on September 19th 12pm-2pm at the Tazewell Train Station for a business bridge hour. She said that the Councilmembers are invited to come. She wishes for business owners to connect with the Councilmembers and to provide council of support and

resources for businesses in our area. Killen also informed the members that Oktobrewfest will be coming up on October 5th. It is held on the first Saturday of October. She thanked the Town for all their support and has been coordinating with Donny Pruitt on the logistics of the event. Killen stated that in the past the event has held over 3,000 people. She hopes that they will have at least that many this year as well.

Killen also spoke on behalf of the Main Street Merchants Group regarding upcoming events of the Haunted Tour of Main Street that they will be hosting and stated that they will also have the New Year's Eve Ball Drop on Main again this year. Councilmember Fox asked Killen who the active president of the Merchant Group is. Killen responded, Greta Burton is the President and Jody Hazelwood is Vice President of the committee.

On behalf of Sharon Thomas, Killen informed the Council that they were awarded the \$399,000 grant for the Tazewell Cinema. Killen thanked the Town for agreeing to be the applicant for the IRF Grant and Loan Program.

PBS APPALACHIA DOCUMENTARY ON THE CLASS OF 1973

Debra Wilson accompanied by her fellow class members and a representative for PBS; spoke to the Council Members today about the project the Class of 1973 is collaborating with PBS Appalachia. They recently celebrated their 50th reunion in September of 2023. The documentary is going to tell the story and successes of the class of 1973. "Today we follow, tomorrow we lead" was their motto and they have truly embodied this motto. Their journeys in life have been rich and diverse. No matter where they have gone in life Tazewell remains the heartbeat of their lives. Debra says that they are collaborating with the Historical Society who will be documenting and storing all of their original interviews. They will be copyrighted to the Library of Commerce ensuring their legacy is preserved for future generations. The President of the organization was asked to speak. He stated that they have put a lot of work into this project and are very proud because this story comes from the heart. The legacy is what has been instilled in him and it has stayed with him in all his walks of life. He spoke of the special care and excellent education that is and was received here in Tazewell in comparison to other schools and locations. His goal is to leave a legacy that will carry on to future generations and pay it forward to our community via scholarships. They have done 3 within months of their organization's start up. They have more that they want to see through in the future. They want to teach the generations in the future that this community is special, encourage them to give back and support our community in the future as well. The main focus of the documentary is not to focus just on the Class of 1973 but to focus on our community and it is a special opportunity to spotlight just how wonderful Tazewell is. He is asking if the Council would be willing to partner with them on this project and help in any way to fund this project. The PBS representative Shannon is with the production team working on this documentary. They will air this documentary on their television station in Southwest Virginia as well as on their sister station in Roanoke and Lynchburg area. In perpetuity it will be on their website PBS. They will have the same team working on this as they did the Hometown Series which is an award-winning series. The Class of 1973 believes that this documentary could showcase our Town and will have the opportunity to draw more people into our area. They believe that this documentary can have a positive effect on our economic development.

TAZEWELL YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE DONATION REQUEST FOR TACKLE WHEEL (VOTE)

The town has received a request to see if we would be interested in helping to purchase a tackle for wheel for Tazewell Youth football. Councilmember Fox made a motion via email. The tackle wheel they presented for request was \$349 each. Councilmember Beasley voiced that he would like for us to be mindful for the amount of donations that the council has approved this year. He said that he was willing to donate \$50 of his own money to avoid having to use Town budgeted money for this donation. Mayor Hoops said that he would donate \$100 of this own money to this as well. Councilmember Davis volunteered to donate \$50. Councilmembers Cline and Hankins also donated \$50. Syndee Saleem with Tazewell EMS volunteered \$100 for this. Mayor Hoops proposed that along with the donations raised by their personal funds that the Town donate \$250 which would be enough to purchase two tackle wheels. Councilmember Davis made the official motion that with their personal donation that they match that up to \$700 which would leave a donation of \$250 from the Town. Councilmember Beasley seconds this motion because he believes it is an important cause for our youth and is happy to support it. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye. Councilmember Fox, stated he wanted three wheels.

SWCC FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

We have received a thank you for all of the support that we have provided in the past. This is done every year. The festival will be happening in April 2025. They are asking that we continue our usual annual donation of \$500. This is their 30th year of having this event. It will be bigger than ever. Council agreed that this is a donation that we have honored historically in the past. Councilmember Beasley makes the motion. Councilmember Davis seconds. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye; Councilmember Cline, no.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Fox motioned to approve the minutes. Councilmember Hankins seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye;

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Councilmember Beasley made a motion to approve. Councilmember Davis seconded. Councilmember Cline requested discussion. He asked a question to Manager Regon regarding Audit of last fiscal year. When do we expect that? Manager Regon said we have pre-audit next week and our main auditors are coming in the 3rd week of September. They usually give it back to us around the 1st week of October and will present it to the Council around November or December. Mayor Hoops asked if all in favor to approve the financial statements and financial reports for June and July of 2024. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

COMMITTEE CONFERENCE UPDATES

Councilmember Davis stated that a meeting was held last Monday with a company that is working with a land owner who is trying to put solar panels on a piece of property. They want to make a sighting agreement with us. There has been vast discussion but, nothing has been finalized. Mayor Hoops asked if there were any question? No questions at this time.

IEDA- Chair Cara Spivey was unable to attend the meeting tonight so Manager Regon spoke on her behalf. During the meeting they discussed the old Ramey lot and future possibilities with future business and the possibility of selling the lot. They did have a meeting regarding the old Bowling Alley lot. Dialogue and Design attended the planning meeting. There are plans for that space and this company is very gracious and helps to create designs, they are funded through DEQ. There are grand submission plans for possible farmers market in that area and discussed meals tax incentives. Mayor Hoops asked if there were any questions. There were none.

TAZEWELL LITTLE LEAGUE REQUEST (RATIFY THE VOTE)

The Town received a request to utilize the Lincolnshire pool to hold a fundraiser. The council approved by email vote. The council now needs to ratify the vote. Councilmember Beasley makes a motion to approve. Councilmember Davis seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

TAZEWEL HIGH SCHOOL BAND BOOSTERS' DONATION REQUEST

Manager Regon informed that during the last meeting the school band boosters requested donation for band camp that was held at Emory and Henry College. They have already attended this camp and still requested that we help donate towards the cause. Manager Regon stated that we have donated \$500 in the past. Councilmember Fox made a motion to donate. The motion was not seconded. No action is taken.

TAZEWELL TORPEDOES REQUEST FROM TAMMY GILLESPIE (VOTE)

Tammy Gillespie presented the request last month. Manager Regon said that the request was for a lane divider for the swim team. They have one that is damaged and unable to be used. Mayor Hoops and the council questioned if it is something that the recreation park is responsible for or if it is an item that the swim team is responsible for. The council needs to determine if it is a part of the recreation department and can it be covered under the budget for park and maintenance responsibilities. Manager Regon informed the council that this lane divider was purchased 10 years ago it is around \$2000. It has been repaired three times. Councilmember Davis suggests that this should be considered apart for the recreation department budget and should be maintained as any other part of the pool. Mayor Hoops agreed as well as Councilmember Fox that this should come out of the recreation department budget and not donations. Councilmember Davis motioned. Councilmember Cline second. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye;

Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

TAZEWELL COMMUNITY HEALTH RENOVATIONS (RATIFY VOTE)

At a previous meeting there was discussion about a permit request for the Tazewell Community Health Building. There was an email sent out regarding this and council voted by email. Council now needs to ratify that vote. Councilmember Beasley made a motion. Councilmember Cline seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

LAW CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 1ST (VOTE)

Attorney Pyott stated that this is something that we go through every year. General Assembly amendments of 18.2 general misdemeanor and 6.2 Traffic enforcement DUI. Attorney Pyott read the amendments to the council. The council is asked to adopt the amendments to the state law. Two motions were needed. Councilmember Davis made the first motion. Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Next motion is to issue this as an emergency to take effect right away. Councilmember Beasley made the motion and Councilmember Hankins seconded. Roll call vote was called. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

RT. 460 WATER LINE PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Chitwood wants to update the council on the status of this project and wants to present a few ideas. On June the 5th they had open bids and the supplier chosen was \$260,209.00 below estimated cost. In this market it is hard to find this low of a bid. All councilmembers were handed a project status report that shows every dollar of what has been spent to date on this project. They are about \$92,255.00 short to be able to pay for all materials. Once the project is awarded, and the loan is closed. The first drawdown we can get \$96,450.00 reimbursement. We have hit a delay because Rural Development has requested a parity review, this parity can delay 60 to 90 days. The supplier has a quote for the materials and it is good through September 5th. We have a risk to lose that bid and the prices may go way up. The concern is that we could miss the opportunity to lock down that pricing. He offered consideration that before we lose the bid; he asked if the Town would be able to front the cost for the first 2 or 3 months for what materials come in. That could lock in that price. Then once the loan is closed. Then we will be reimbursed with the first draw back request. Anthony Hess is the new manager of the DEQ. He estimates it could be \$100,000 or more of an upfront cost. Councilmember Cline asked about the possibility of purchasing the materials and then storing it. We could then wait until the loan is closed before starting the project. Is it possible if the project falls through that the goods can be returned or if they can be used on alternative projects without facing a true loss? The council was hesitant to grant the award letter at this time because if the project were to be denied then it could be breach of contract with the supplier. Councilmember Fox liked Councilmember Cline's idea of

purchasing materials and storing them at the old Ramey lot. The council would like to revisit this at the upcoming work session to allow time to present these questions to the supplier to be sure that this could be an option.

WATER & SEWER RATES APPROVAL (RATIFY VOTE)

There had previously been a discussion regarding water and sewer rates. There was a email vote to approve the rates and this vote needs to be ratified. Councilmember Davis made a motion, Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW CLERK

Manager Regon makes a recommendation of new Town Treasurer, Jessica Hayes for Clerk. Councilmember Fox made a motion, Councilmember Davis seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Manager Regon also took a moment to thank Water Clerk, Sabrina Schooley for stepping in to assist with her Clerk duties over the past few months. Manager Regon announced that Sabrina Schooley is now Accounts Payable and Jessica Hayes is the new Treasurer.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Treasurer Hayes and Manager Regon prepared the final budget amendments for Fiscal Year 23-24. Manager Regon addressed a question from Councilmember Cline regarding water fund amendment. She explained about the True Up billing agreement between the Town and the County for use of shared facilities. She explained that there is a true up audit performed every January it is separate from our regular audit. Councilmember Beasley made a motion to approve budget amendments, Councilmember Fox seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

BACK OF THE DRAGON / OTR 2024 SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA TOURISM AWARDS- OUTSTANDING FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR

Manager Regon announced that while away at the Southwest Tourism Conference, Back of the Dragon was recognized. She wanted to congratulate Back of the Dragon for winning Outstanding Festival of the Year award for a festival of 2 or more days.

TAZEWELL TODAY DIG GRANT

Councilmember Davis recuses herself from the discussion. There is a DIG Grant that Tazewell Today had been awarded. It is a Downtown Improvement Grant with the DHCD. This was for a

\$15,000 matching grant. Our previous administration had given a letter stating the Town supports this and signed it with the previous administration of Tazewell Today. However no documentation of financial support contributions has been found. Manager Regon stated that the President Nathan Thomas is asking that we cover the matching \$15,000 which was originally promised to fund for the grant. Councilmember Cline opens it up for discussion. He contacted pastor Nate regarding this grant money and inquired if it was supposed to be remitted by December of 2023. Nathan said that \$15,000 was received and has not been used to date. DHCD has had consideration of this grant to be amended to include North Tazewell and to address transportation issues. There is a final report due November 15th. They are agreeable to push that deadline back. If the plans to expand the grant to North Tazewell and for transportation falls through. The intent of the funds would be for the original plan of the mini park and green space. Councilmember Cline expressed concerns that he wants us to use the funds and not risk missing this opportunity. He wants us to work together and find a comprehensive plan to use these funds in projects that are upcoming. It is suggested that the council should table it until next Thursday's work session discussion. Mayor asked if any objections. None.

WORKSESSION TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 8/22/24

Councilmember Beasley made a motion; it was seconded by Councilmember Fox to hold a work session on August 22nd at 6:00pm. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

AUTCION FOR SURPLUS

Manager Regon said that in May we sent items to a surplus auction. The council approved the list of items to be auctioned off. The garbage truck was not sent at that time although it was approved. Manager Regon is requesting that this be sent off at the next surplus auction. Police have a cruiser and a golf cart with that can be sent to the next auction as well. Police Chief Lampert said that the Football Parents Boosters used their golf cart during season. He offered if it was approved that they could have this golf cart. Chief Lampert asked if we could donate that to the football parent's boosters. Councilmember Hankins motioned and Councilmember Beasley seconded it. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Councilmember Beasley motioned to sale the police cruiser at auction. Councilmember Cline seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Councilmember Davis motioned that if the Football Parents Boosters did not accept the donation of the golf cart that they will submit it to auction. Councilmember Hankins seconded. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye, Councilmember Beasley, aye.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Attorney Pyott said that the property on Marion Ave is meant to be addressed to the IEDA. The IEDA owns the lot and the boundary goes all the way to the wall. There is 4ft easement to the staircase. The town donated the property to the IEDA. There is an existing agreement that the lot would remain open for use between both properties. This was written in 1937. The gravel lot between the two buildings. It is an issue that needs to go before the IEDA. It was removed from the agenda tonight because it is going before IEDA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilmember Fox asked about the status of the Rescue Squad. Attorney Pyott said that suit has been filed to Brian Hieatt. The deadline runs from the end of the week to the first of next week. Mr. Hieatt is the last one on the board and this responsibility went to him. Once this is taken care of Mr. Hieatt will sign off to convey the property to the Town of Tazewell EMS. He tried to expedite things but unfortunately, we just have to wait. He stated that it has been filed and served now it can take a max of 60 days, then we should have a resolution to this.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Beasley motion to adjourn. Councilmember Cline seconded. All said aye. Meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.