

Mount Jackson
Town Council Regular Meeting
April 14, 2020

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Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Mount Jackson Town Council was held April 14, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the council chambers at 5901 Main Street. Roll call was taken with the following in attendance; Mayor Donnie Pifer; Councilmembers Judy Fultz, Dennis Andrick, Rod Shepherd, and Roger Rudy. Councilmembers Whitney Miller and Bonnie Good attended electronically through Zoom. Also, in attendance, Neil Showalter, Town Manager; Joseph S. Paxton, Consultant; Matt Akers, Town Attorney; and Debbie Stover, Town Clerk. Dave Moore from Cornerstone Technology was present to video record the meeting. There were no visitors.

Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes: None

Hear from Visitors: None

Remarks & Recommendations from the Mayor: Mayor Pifer stated meeting electronically is a new horizon forced upon us, but we will get through it.

Remarks from Councilmembers: None

Presentations: None

Chief of Police Report: None

Town Attorney Report: None

Town Manager Report:

Mr. Showalter stated tonight's regular meeting, while not able to accommodate the public due to the Governor's COVID-19 restrictions, however, interested parties have been invited to send comments by email to townoffice@mountjackson.com, and he will share those emails with the Councilmembers. He also noted that the entire meeting would be broadcast on the Town's website and on the Facebook page. He noted that the Town office also remains closed to the public, but productive work continues, with all staff reporting for regular shifts. Mr. Showalter reminded the Councilmembers of the special meeting which will be preceded by a public hearing, on April 20th at 5:00 PM to consider the re-adoption and ratification of the emergency ordinance for the continuity of government. The Town will be publishing information on how the public may provide their input. Mr. Showalter stated the Zoning Ordinance is in the final stage, and asked Mr. Paxton to speak on this.

Mr. Paxton stated he received today the latest version of the Zoning Ordinance, with copies of memos explaining the highlights. He will review it tomorrow and send it to members of the Planning Commission and Town Council. He stated staff recommends a work session for April 23rd at 5:00 PM or April 30th at 5:00 PM, using Zoom to allow all members to participate and review the document. A representative(s) of the Berkley Group will join this meeting electronically. The goal is to have a joint public hearing in May. Mr. Paxton noted that the overall content of the ordinance has not changed, but it is in a format easier to read, including table and charts as opposed to primarily written text.

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Mr. Paxton also noted that the Town's EDA will have a Zoom meeting Thursday, April 16th at 5:00 PM to consider establishing a disaster loan program. He stated staff has been in contact with USDA Rural Development and the EDA has been given approval to use the money remaining in the RBEG program, to loan to small businesses impacted by the coronavirus. The proposed program requires businesses to be located in the Town, or be a business that has made an impact within the Town over the last number of years. Businesses may apply for up to \$10,000 from the EDA, with the loan to be for three years at no interest. Loan funds may be used for payroll, rent, utilities, and inventory similar to the federal PPP program. Mr. Paxton noted that this is a good opportunity for the Town to provide some assistance to businesses in our community during this difficult time.

Committee Reports:

1. Finance Committee Chairperson, Rod Shepherd stated he will speak to Item #4 under New Business. He noted the coronavirus pandemic is having a negative impact on our current budget year, and the anticipation is the Town may have a budget amendment for our current fiscal year. He stated staff will have better numbers in May to determine if adjustments are needed.
2. Ordinance Committee Chairperson, Dennis Andrick had no report.
3. Personnel Committee Chairperson, Roger Rudy had no report.
4. Public Safety Committee Chairperson, Judy Fultz reported March Police Department calls were 838, down 2 from February. There were 6 criminal offenses, 3 cleared by arrest, 2 closed, and 1 under investigation. They conducted 630 extra patrols and property checks, and found 4 open doors/windows at 4 different locations.
5. Public Services Committee Chairperson, Bonnie Good stated in March the Town was only at 43% capacity for sewer. She stated the Town had a significant change in the amount of water usage by approximately 4 million gallons due to leaks, which is causing more expense for the Town.
6. Public Properties & Facilities Committee Chairperson, Whitney Miller had no report.

Consent Agenda: Approval – Minutes of March 10, 2020 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting, and Minutes of April 2, 2020 Special Meeting.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Andrick to APPROVE the Consent Agenda consisting of the Approval-Minutes of March 10, 2020 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting and Minutes of April 2, 2020 Special Meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Miller			
Councilmember Andrick			
Councilmember Shepherd			
Councilmember Rudy			

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Councilmember Good
6 AYES, motion carried

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Resolution R-02-2020 Establishing April 2020 as National Autism Awareness Month.

Mr. Showalter stated the Shenandoah County Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee is spearheading an awareness effort in order to educate parents, professionals, and the general public about autism and its effects. He noted that last year Council designated April 2019 as National Autism Awareness Month, and staff recommends approving the Resolution to make April 2020 National Autism Awareness Month as well.

Councilmember Fultz MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Andrick to APPROVE Resolution R-02-2020 making April 2020 National Autism Awareness Month.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Miller			
Councilmember Andrick			
Councilmember Shepherd			
Councilmember Rudy			
Councilmember Good			
6 AYES, motion carried			

2. Appointment of Neil D. Showalter, Town Manager as Coordinator of Emergency Management to Coordinate with Shenandoah County. – Eligible for Action.

Mr. Showalter stated Virginia code section 44-146.19B3 requires each town to appoint an individual to ensure integration into the County’s emergency management organization and to coordinate with the emergency management department at the county level. Shenandoah County has declared an emergency due to COVID-19, and the Town needs to work with them to report on emergency measures and their effectiveness.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Rudy to APPROVE the appointment of Neil D. Showalter, Town Manager as Coordinator of Emergency Management to coordinate with Shenandoah County.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Miller			
Councilmember Andrick			
Councilmember Shepherd			
Councilmember Rudy			
Councilmember Good			
6 AYES, motion carried			

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3. Sewer Influent Equalization Study Authorization. – Eligible for Action.

Mr. Showalter stated the Town has been asked by the DEQ to provide an explanation for some high effluent readings from our sewer plant last spring, as some contaminants were in violation of our permit. He stated the Town's consulting professional engineer and utilities director worked together to bring the situation under control, but the DEQ is interested in what the Town intends to do to help protect that from happening again. Mr. Showalter stated one of the suggestions is to have the Town's consulting engineer evaluate a system to equalize the influent entering the Town's wastewater treatment plant. This system, if feasible, would give the Town more lead time to react to changes in the chemical composition of the effluent in the plant. Staff is recommending a preliminary engineering study to evaluate this option. Mangrum Consulting submitted a proposal for \$12,340 to prepare the preliminary engineering report and provide a recommendation on the economic feasibility of making these improvements. Mr. Showalter recommended approval of the study.

Councilmember Andrick asked if most of the effluent issue was created by Bowman Andros. Mr. Showalter stated it was determined the event did not occur directly as a result of something Bowman Andros did. Mr. Paxton added that in this instance, Bowman Andros generally helps the system because they put large quantities of water into the system; however, last spring the plant had reduced its flow to begin irrigation. He stated the violation was caused by the use of an ammonia product at the same time there was a reduced total water flow, which led to a system imbalance. Mr. Paxton noted that Mr. Mangrum has advised that equalization systems are generally eligible to receive significant grant funding, which could reduce the Town's cost.

Councilmember Andrick MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Fultz to APPROVE the proposal from Mangrum Consulting in the amount of \$12,340 for Sewer Influent Equalization Study.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Miller			
Councilmember Andrick			
Councilmember Shepherd			
Councilmember Rudy			
Councilmember Good			
6 AYES, motion carried			

4. Ordinance O-05-2020 Adopting Budgets for the General Fund, Utilities Funds, Capital Projects, and Equipment Replacement Funds; Establishing Real and Personal Tax Rates, Establishing Compensation Amounts/Rates, Setting Fees for Water, Sewer, Refuse Service, Auto License Tax, and Other Fees, Charges, Penalties, and Taxes, and Establishing Annual and Specific Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2021. – Introduction/Set for Public Hearing – May 12, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

Mr. Shepherd stated the Town's proposed budget for this coming year is a little over 6 million dollars. He stated staff anticipates having a review meeting prior to the May 12th council meeting to give Councilmembers an opportunity to bring any questions to staff.

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Mr. Shepherd stated the Town normally raises its water rates minimally every year to cover costs. He also noted that the cost of trash collection is increasing this coming year due to higher costs from the refuse collection contractor and the County is raising tipping fees at the landfill. However, staff is recommending delaying an increase in these fees until January 1, 2021 to give some economic relief to Town businesses and residents, due to the difficulties from the COVID-19 crisis.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Fultz to APPROVE the introduction of Ordinance O-05-2020 on first reading and set for public hearing Ordinance O-05-2020, which provides for the Adoption of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, beginning July 1, 2020.

Mr. Paxton pointed out, in reference to Mr. Shepherd's statement of not increasing utility and trash collection fees until January 1, 2021, that on Page 3 of the proposed ordinance, there is a note which states "As authorized by Ordinance O-04-2020, this Ordinance suspends through December 31, 2020, the provision in Section 42-6(b) of the Town Code which requires that collection fees for solid waste disposal be established on a basis that they will cover at least the cost of providing the service". Mr. Paxton stated that Ordinance O-04-2020, which Councilmembers will consider for adoption and ratification at the meeting on the April 20th, allows the Council to suspend certain ordinances for a period of time during the disaster.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Miller			
Councilmember Andrick			
Councilmember Shepherd			
Councilmember Rudy			
Councilmember Good			
6 AYES, motion carried			

Mayor Pifer thanked members present tonight, and remotely, for bearing this burden for the Town and asked everyone to be safe. On Mr. Paxton's recommendation, Mayor Pifer also added this meeting was not broadcast live due to a technical difficulty, but will be rebroadcast shortly. He thanked Dave Moore from Cornerstone for working with the Town on this.

Motion made by Councilmember Shepherd, to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM.

Debbie A. Stover, Clerk

Donald I. Pifer, Mayor