

Mount Jackson
Town Council Regular Meeting

July 14, 2020

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Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Mount Jackson Town Council was held July 14, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the council chambers at 5901 Main Street. Town Council roll call was taken with the following in attendance; Mayor Donnie Pifer; Councilmembers Judy Fultz, Rod Shepherd, Bonnie Good, and Roger Rudy. Councilmembers Whitney Miller and Dennis Andrick attended electronically through Zoom.

Also, in attendance, Neil Showalter, Town Manager; Debbie Stover, Town Clerk; Jay Neal, Town Attorney; and Keith Cowart, Police Sgt. Dave Moore from Cornerstone Technology was present to video record the meeting. Visitors included John Boor and Jim Hines.

Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes:

Mayor Pifer stated there will be two new items under New Business: the election of Vice-Mayor, and the award for the fuel bid contract for FY 2021.

Hear from Visitors:

Mr. John Boor gave an update from the Mount Jackson Hometown Partnership. He stated this season's first Second Sundays Music event was held July 12, with approximately 70 in attendance. The August event will host The Rinard family, and there will be a gospel night in September. Current events to be hosted the remainder of the year, in addition to Second Sundays and the Farmers Market, include the Apple Harvest Festival on October 31, and a Veterans Parade on November 7. The Apple Harvest Festival will incorporate a Halloween march, with bands and vendors. The Veterans Parade will have marching bands, including Massanutten Military Academy, the City of Winchester Pipes and Drums, and bagpipes from Kathy Boyer in Staunton.

Mayor Pifer asked if the Second Sundays Music event on August 9 would interfere with the Route 11 Yard Crawl. Mr. Boor stated the yard crawl should end on Saturday, August 8, and should not be a conflict.

Councilmember Rudy asked how the Apple Harvest Festival would be coordinated with Halloween traffic and trick-or-treating. Mr. Boor stated the children will be paraded from Mount Calvary to Town Hall during the daytime at the festival, and should not interfere with that evening's traffic.

Remarks & Recommendations from the Mayor:

Mayor Pifer stated he has appointed a committee to spearhead the military banner program, to hopefully have completed in time for the Veterans Parade in November. The committee members are John Boor, Karen Costie, Ron Zerkel, Debbie Stover, and himself.

Mayor Pifer stated he received a letter from Mr. Dale Foltz in Avondale Acres commending the Public Works department. The letter read "I'm proud of all the hardworking employees of the Town of Mount Jackson, so much so that I would like to share a couple of recent examples. After an increase of water usage I asked Randy Lonas for advice. Randy came several times a day to read our meter and kept me informed. With Randy's help we tracked the problem to our water softener. One morning we awoke to find road kill possum on our street. I called the town office to have it removed and within a half an hour the carcass was gone. Many thanks to the maintenance personnel for that unpleasant task. And most recently I found a squirrel that had fallen out of our tree and was paralyzed in the hind quarters. The dog warden was on a call so Investigator Devin Caplinger of the Mount Jackson Police Department came to humanely remove it."

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Mayor Pifer would like this letter to be a part of the personnel files of those mentioned, and agreed the Town has an excellent staff in all departments. Mayor Pifer also welcomed the Town's new attorney, Jay Neal.

Remarks from Councilmembers:

Councilmember Miller asked Mayor Pifer to provide detailed information on the fuel bids, as she was not present to have the copy in front of her. Mr. Showalter immediately emailed the fuel bid information to Ms. Miller and Mr. Andrick for their review.

Councilmember Good stated she is very happy with the trash service provider.

Presentations: None

Chief of Police Report: Sgt. Cowart stated the recent peaceful public gathering outside at Town Hall prompted a revision to the Town's event permit. He stated a revised form is in the developmental stage, but should be available soon.

Councilmember Shepherd asked if National Night Out is still scheduled for August. Sgt. Cowart stated it has been rescheduled to October 6 due to the pandemic.

Town Manager Report:

Mr. Showalter stated the town office remains busy, despite rebounding from COVID-19. He noted there are currently 21 items in various stages of inquiry or application for pending approval in the zoning, planning, and land use area. He stated with the help of the Town's consultants, he is working to get these requests and applications completed as soon as possible.

Committee Reports:

1. Finance Committee Chairperson, Rod Shepherd stated he received a report from the finance department, which compares tax revenues from the 4th quarter 2019 to the present quarter, and the deficit is roughly \$100,000. Sales tax revenue is up \$5,000, meals tax revenue is down \$31,000, and cigarette tax revenue is down \$26,000. Mr. Shepherd noted this is of concern, but not disastrous.
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 June Police Department calls were 598, down 100 from May. There were 4 criminal offenses, 1 cleared by arrest, 1 closed, and 2 under investigation. They conducted 400 extra patrols and property checks, and found 4 open doors/windows at 2 different locations. The Fire and Rescue Department had 77 total responses for June, 65 EMS, and 12 Fire. 75% of the total responses included volunteer crews. 40 of EMS calls responded to by a unit capable of advanced life support care. The total number of members taking calls was 20, and the total calls in Mount Jackson were 26.
5. Public Services Committee Chairperson, Bonnie Good stated the new storage shed at the water/sewer plant location has been erected, and is currently being insulated. They are looking for mega-shelves to store larger equipment, to effectively use less space.

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6. Public Properties & Facilities Committee Chairperson, Whitney Miller had no report.

Consent Agenda: Approval – Minutes of June 9, 2020 Regular Meeting and Public Hearing, Minutes of July 1, 2020 Annual Organizational Meeting, and Minutes of July 6, 2020 Special Meeting and Joint Public Hearing.

Councilmember Good MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Fultz to APPROVE the Consent Agenda above.

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			

Old Business:

1. Ordinance O-07-2020 – To repeal chapter 66, sections 66-391 through 66-425, floodplain district, and adopt chapter 28 – floodplain, sections 28.1 through 28.61 of the code of the Town of Mount Jackson for the purpose of updating the Town’s floodplain ordinance to comply with federal and state regulations – Eligible for Action.

Mr. Showalter stated the floodplain ordinance has been completed with the help of Berkley Group. He summarized the two reasons for this floodplain ordinance; 1) to regulate development in the floodplain as an environmental protection and preventative measure to reduce loss of life and property during flood events, and, 2) to ensure that the citizens of Mount Jackson qualify for pre-disaster flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program and post-disaster relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Andrick to APPROVE Ordinance O-07-2020.

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			

New Business:

1. Appointment of Floodplain Manager – Staff Recommendation: Neil Showalter, Town Manager

Councilmember Fultz MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Rudy to APPROVE the appointment of Neil Showalter as Floodplain Manager.

Councilmember Good thanked Mr. Showalter taking on this roll. Councilmember Andrick added that he has 40 years of experience in this area, and offered to help as needed.

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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. Canoe Landing Update

Councilmember Shepherd stated there are many stakeholders involved in a project to install a canoe landing on the southern bank of Shenandoah River, east of the iron bridge. It was decided during a meeting today, that the existing iron bridge cannot be saved or restored. The cost to restore it for a pedestrian walkway is estimated at \$200,000, and painting is estimated at \$50,000. Also, the new bridge will have a pylon in the middle of the river, and water analyses have concluded that the pylon, combined with the landing points of the old bridge, can potentially cause water back-up. There was some further discussion on the possibility of saving part of the iron bridge to incorporate into design elements for the canoe landing and parking area.

Councilmember Andrick stated the past several years, the water level has been very low this time of year, and he has witnessed kayakers having to walk over low water areas. Mr. Shepherd agreed, but stated the canoe season appears to be late March through May, and again in the fall, when the water levels are higher. He stated regardless, people are still using the river, and adding a canoe landing will draw tourists. Mr. Andrick asked who owned the land where the canoe landing will be built, and Mr. Shepherd replied it is the state's right-of-way. Mr. Shepherd added the new bridge, which will be built east of the canoe landing, will be on state-purchased land as well. Mr. Shepherd stated during the new bridge construction, a ramp will need to be installed to get machinery down to the river, and that ramp can be incorporated into the new canoe landing once construction is complete. He received a cost estimate of \$300,000 for a similar canoe landing, however in this case, costs should be much lower due to the state owned land, and the ramp already in place. Mr. Shepherd stated he does not have the cost estimate yet, but there is a strong possibility of being awarded a DuPont grant. The deadline to submit that grant is October 1, and Friends of the Northfork will take the lead in this task. Mr. Shepherd encouraged Council to be a stakeholder in this project, and to send a letter of endorsement along with the grant application, which will add weight to the review committee. Mr. Andrick asked who covers costs and maintains the canoe landing. Mr. Shepherd stated the Friends of the Northfork are interested in having that role, but the details haven't been worked out. Mr. Shepherd stated canoe landings are essentially maintenance free, with the exception of trash pick. Mr. Andrick stated the wood would deteriorate eventually. Mr. Shepherd noted there are different materials that could be used, which is why he urges Council to be an active part of this project. Mr. Shepherd stated the official name is Hand Carry Canoe Launching, but another option in discussions is Toll House Canoe Landing at Mount Jackson.

Mr. Shepherd asked if Council wanted to vote to support this project now. Mr. Andrick stated he was not ready to vote at this time. Ms. Good stated she feels it is a good idea, but was unaware of the low water aspect, and asked if there is a way to tie in streams to raise the water level. Ms. Miller stated even when the water is shallow, there is still a lot of activity including playing and cooling off in the river. Mr. Shepherd added he has also been made aware of a developing project in Virginia Recreational Tourism called water trails for canoes and kayaks, and this is a good possibility for parts of the Shenandoah River.

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3. Election of Vice-Mayor

Councilmember Good MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Rudy to APPROVE the appointment of Rod Shepherd as Vice-Mayor for FY 2021.

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. Acceptance and Award of Fuel Bid Contract for FY 2021

Mr. Showalter stated each year the town asks for bids, of at least two local suppliers, for its purchase of gasoline and on-and-off road diesel fuel. The deadline was Friday, July 10, and Holtzman Oil Corporation was the low-bidder in each category. Staff recommends awarding Holtzman Oil Corporation as fuel supplier for FY 2021.

Councilmember Fultz MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Rudy to APPROVE awarding Holtzman Oil Corporation as the Town's fuel supplier for FY 2021.

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			
5 AYES, 1 ABSTAIN, motion carried			

Motion made by Councilmember Shepherd to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Debbie A. Stover, Clerk

Donald I. Pifer, Mayor