

Mount Jackson  
Town Council Regular Meeting

May 14, 2024

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**Public Hearing**

Mayor Pifer opened the public hearing at 7:00 PM in the council chambers at 5901 Main Street, to hear public comment regarding the following:

1. **Ordinance O-07-2024** – 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 Services, Auto License Tax, and Other Fees, Charges, Penalties, and Taxes, and Establishing Annual and Specific Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025
2. **Resolution R-02-2024** – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Mount Jackson Amending FY24 Annual Budget
3. **Zoning Text Amendment** – Proposal to Change Section 66-32. – Dimensional Standards. Dimensional standards for base zoning districts. Dimensional standards within each zoning district shall apply as provided in Table 1, except as otherwise provided in this section. Table 1: Dimensional Standards for Base Zoning Districts  
**Current:** (B1) Central Business Minimum Lot Size: 6,000 sq. ft.  
**Amended:** (B1) Central Business Minimum Lot Size: NONE

There were no public comments and Mayor Pifer closed the public hearing.

**Regular Meeting**

Mayor Pifer called the regular meeting of the Mount Jackson Town Council to order at 7:02 PM in the Council Chambers at 5901 Main Street. Roll call was taken with Councilmembers Evelyn Burner, Judy Fultz, Bonnie Good, Todd Holtzman, and Rod Shepherd in attendance. Councilmember Al Asbury was absent. Also in attendance were Olivia Hilton, Town Manager; Greg A. Beam, Assistant Town Manager; Mario Rosso, Finance Director; Barbara Riggelman, Town Clerk; Keith Cowart, Police Chief; Sergeant Mark Johson; and Officer Christopher Burns. Visitors included Drew Warren, Seth Jones, Judi Wakeman, Brenda Foley, and Ryan Fitzmaurice, reporter for the Northern Virginia Daily.

**Prayer:** Mayor Pifer offered the invocation.

**Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes:** None.

**Hear from Visitors:** Drew Warren stated that he has purchased the Old Hickory property on Jackson Street and Moore Avenue, having closed on it last month, and hopes to finish the project. This property was previously approved for 24 duplex lots and he is hoping to redesign it for a nice townhouse community. Mr. Warren lives in Stephens City, so he is fairly local, and wanted to introduce himself to Council. Mayor Pifer welcomed Mr. Warren to Mount Jackson. Ms. Hilton stated that Mr. Warren is on the agenda to speak at the June 3 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Warren stated that he hopes to have a rendering/sketch available.

**Opening Remarks from Mayor:** Mayor Pifer welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

**Presentations:** None.

**Chief of Police Report:** Chief Cowart reported for the month of April 2024, there were 720 calls for service; year to date total 2,791. There were a couple motor vehicle crashes that took up some time and shut some lanes down. Mutual aid/warrant services were 22, there were 2 warrants served for other agencies, and there

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were no open doors or windows. There was one report of larceny closed by arrest; a domestic assault closed by arrest; a fraud that was closed due to lack of evidence or suspects; a counterfeiting that is a mutual investigation with other agencies; a shoplifting closed by arrest; and one suicide. Chief Cowart introduced former part-time officer, Christopher Burns, who is now a full-time officer. Officer Burns comes with lots of experience from the Broadway Police Department. The DEA Drug Take Back Initiative collected 37 pounds, total collection to date is 154 pounds. Chief Cowart stated that he was nominated and unanimously voted onto the Board of Directors for Shen-Paco Industries. MJPD and CREW are in negotiations about a possible summer day camp in 2025. The day camp will be based on a model through the Office of the Attorney General called Virginia Rules. More information to follow. There will be a TRIAD event on May 17, assisting Shenandoah County Sheriff's Office with activities for elderly citizens. There will be a Neighborhood Watch Meeting on May 23 regarding emergency preparedness at the Town Hall. May 26 will be the Hometown Partnership's Memorial Day event followed by the MJPD community picnic at the town park.

**Town Manager Report:** Ms. Hilton wished the MJPD a Happy National Police Recognition Week. Mr. Beam has been spearheading social media, so this will be rolling out tomorrow. Public Works Week will be next week. There will be a branding presentation at the June council meeting to show the survey results and July will hopefully be a reveal of the pedestrian and park master plan, to be approved in August. July 9 will also be a reception for Bill Holtzman in Town Hall prior to the council meeting. Ms. Hilton reported that the Big Band Bash was a success, but will let the Hometown Partnership report on that later. Ms. Hilton and Mr. Beam are working on an IRF grant, submitting that tomorrow. Ms. Hilton also gave kudos to Mr. Rosso for his work on the budget preparations.

**Committee Reports:**

1. Finance Committee - Chairperson Rod Shepherd stated he would speak under New Business.
2. Ordinance Committee - Chairperson Evelyn Burner had no report.
3. Personnel Committee - Chairperson Todd Holtzman had no report.
4. Public Safety Committee - Chairperson Al Asbury was absent. Mayor Pifer read the report in his absence.  
April 2024 EMS Report – there were 72 calls for service, 74 last month; 305 calls year to date, 289 last year.  
April 2024 Fire Report – 27 total incidents, 32 last month; 59 year to date, 78 last year.
5. Public Services Committee - Chairperson Bonnie Good had no report.
6. Public Properties Committee - Chairperson Judy Fultz had no report.

**Consent Agenda:**

1. **Approval** – Minutes of the April 9, 2024 Regular Meeting & April 23, 2024 Work Session

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

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ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE

NAY

ABSTAIN

ABSENT

Councilmember Asbury

Councilmember Burner  
Councilmember Fultz  
Councilmember Good  
Councilmember Holtzman  
Councilmember Shepherd  
5 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Resolution R-02-2024** – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Mount Jackson Amending FY24 Annual Budget – Eligible for Action

Mr. Shepherd stated that there is a lot of positive energy happening in Mount Jackson, and some of that positive energy requires some adjustments to the current fiscal year.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Good, to APPROVE Resolution R-02-2024.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE

NAY

ABSTAIN

ABSENT

Councilmember Asbury

Councilmember Burner  
Councilmember Fultz  
Councilmember Good  
Councilmember Holtzman  
Councilmember Shepherd  
5 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

Mr. Shepherd stated that there was also a public hearing earlier tonight for the upcoming fiscal year budget, but that is not eligible for action on the same night as the public hearing. Approving next year’s budget will be on the agenda for the June council meeting.

**2. Zoning Text Amendment** – Proposal to Change Section 66-32. – Dimensional Standards. Dimensional standards for base zoning districts. Dimensional standards within each zoning district shall apply as provided in Table 1, except as otherwise provided in this section. Table 1: Dimensional Standards for Base Zoning Districts – Eligible for Action

Ms. Hilton stated that the only real change is removing the minimum lot requirement for space downtown, giving more flexibility for new businesses, allowing space downtown that may not fit the current minimum 6,000 sq. ft. space.

Councilmember Good MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Burner, to APPROVE Zoning Text Amendment – Proposal to Change Section 66-32.

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ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE

NAY

ABSTAIN

ABSENT

Councilmember Asbury

Councilmember Burner

Councilmember Fultz

Councilmember Good

Councilmember Holtzman

Councilmember Shepherd

5 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

**3. Appointment of Independent Auditors**

Ms. Shepherd stated that the Town has worked with Robinson, Farmer, Cox and Associates for a number of years and they have performed well. This contract will be for 3 years.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Fultz, to APPROVE the Appointment of Robinson, Farmer, Cox and Associates as Independent Auditors.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE

NAY

ABSTAIN

ABSENT

Councilmember Asbury

Councilmember Burner

Councilmember Fultz

Councilmember Good

Councilmember Holtzman

Councilmember Shepherd

5 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

**4. Resolution R-03-2024** – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Mount Jackson Providing Matching Funds for the Creation of a Community Center at the Historic Triplett School

Mayor Pifer read the resolution aloud in its entirety.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Burner, to APPROVE Resolution R-03-2024.

Mr. Shepherd requested Ms. Hilton speak regarding the in-kind contributions making up the 3<sup>rd</sup> \$50,000 contribution. Ms. Hilton stated that the Town paid CREW the 1<sup>st</sup> \$50,000 in FY24 and budgeted a 2<sup>nd</sup> \$50,000 in the proposed FY25 budget. The 3<sup>rd</sup> \$50,000 is contingent upon CREW receiving a \$1 million grant - they will need to show that they can match the million for million, which in total they would have \$2 million to renovate the space. This would be a match to theirs, if funded, and can be any number of things on the Town's behalf, including administrative cost for support, intermitent administrative for administering the grant, and land acquisition. There are several different ways that \$50,000 can be matched to CREW that would not be specifically the tax payers dollars in cash. Ms. Hilton stated that the grant is due May 31 and ideally, they should find out July 1 if the grant was approved.

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ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE

NAY

ABSTAIN

ABSENT

Councilmember Asbury

Councilmember Burner

Councilmember Fultz

Councilmember Good

Councilmember Holtzman

Councilmember Shepherd

5 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

**Closing Remarks by Council Members. Mayor:** Mayor Pifer requested a report from the Hometown Partnership.

Ms. Wakeman gave a report from the Big Band Bash, which was on May 11 – the same day as JMU’s graduation, Strasburg’s Mayfest, Conicville’s Cruise-thru – but there was still a good crowd. Ms. Wakeman discussed some of the vendors and attendees. Looking towards 2025, they will be shifting to the first weekend in May, although that will be the same weekend as the Apple Blossom Festival, to celebrate Buck Ryan Day. Buck Ryan was a well-known fiddle player that would have been 100 years old in 2025. Big plans are coming.

There will be two veterans from the Ashby District honored at the Veterans Day event. Mitch Rubenstein will be the speaker and was commander at the Edinburg VFW. This event will be on Sunday, May 26 at the MJ Fire & Rescue building at 3:00 PM. There will be vintage cars available to escort veterans to the town park for the MJPD’s community picnic.

Ms. Wakeman discussed some upcoming Partnership events, including Open Markets, Gazebo Gatherings, and the September Tater Fest. Mayor Pifer stated that the Big Band Bash was a nice event.

Motion made by Councilmember Good, seconded by Councilmember Fultz, to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 PM.

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Barbara Riggelman, Clerk

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Donald “Donnie” I. Pifer, Mayor