

Mount Jackson
Town Council Regular Meeting

June 11, 2024

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Regular Meeting

Mayor Pifer called the regular meeting of the Mount Jackson Town Council to order at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers at 5901 Main Street. Roll call was taken with Councilmembers Al Asbury, Evelyn Burner, Judy Fultz, Bonnie Good, Todd Holtzman, and Rod Shepherd in attendance. Also in attendance were Olivia Hilton, Town Manager; Greg A. Beam, Assistant Town Manager; Mario Rosso, Finance Director; Jennifer Frye, HR Manager; Barbara Riggelman, Town Clerk; and Keith Cowart, Police Chief. Visitors included David & Rebeccah Hilton, Clemmitt Sigler, Oliver Holtzman, Judi Wakeman, and Brenda Foley.

Prayer: Mr. Clemmitt Sigler, Pastor of Grace of the Vine Church, offered the invocation.

Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes: None.

Hear from Visitors: None.

Opening Remarks from Mayor: Mayor Pifer recognized Mr. & Mrs. Hilton, Town Manager Olivia Hilton's parents, and Oliver Holtzman, son of Councilman Holtzman, who were present in the audience. Mayor Pifer also recognized Assistant Town Manager Greg A. Beam as it was his birthday; everyone present sang Happy Birthday to Mr. Beam.

Presentations: None.

Chief of Police Report: Chief Cowart reported for the month of May 2024, there were 839 calls for service; 3,630 year to date. There were a couple motor vehicle crashes and 25 mutual aid/warrant services with 9 warrants served for other agencies. There were 2 open doors/windows in different locations. There was 1 report of larceny, closed unfounded as goods were found in the back of a closet vs being stolen; 2 reports of domestic assault, turned over to other agencies as they occurred in their jurisdiction; 2 frauds of spam-likely phone calls, closed with leads exhausted; 2 stolen vehicles were recovered with multiple charges stemming from that; 1 disorderly conduct was closed as victim declined prosecution; and 1 hit and run closed with leads exhausted. Officer Chazz Beaver passed away on June 3. The MJPD escorted him from the Medical Examiner's office in Manassas to the funeral home in Richmond. As of right now, the funeral service is planned for June 22 at 12:00 PM at March Funeral Home in Richmond. There was a Neighborhood Watch Meeting on May 23; there were 2 attendees; topic was emergency preparedness. The MJPD Memorial Day Weekend Community Picnic that was held in conjunction with the Hometown Partnership's event to honor veterans was on May 26. Estimated attendance to be approx. 100 people. They will continue to evaluate and plan for an even better event next year. The 2 stolen vehicles were Flock camera alerts reported stolen out of Pennsylvania. They were able to be located and occupants were arrested with additional charges for other crimes. June 14 will be the ShenCo Summer Kick-off at the county park in Maurertown.

Town Manager Report: Ms. Hilton stated that the Planning Commission has changed their meeting time from 7:00 PM to 5:30 PM on the 1st Monday of each month, beginning July 1. The first Open Market of the season had a good vendor turnout. Gazebo Gatherings will begin June 29. So far this year, Staff has submitted \$2.1 million in grants and have already been approved for \$1,056,000. Grants include a \$50,000 Community Business Launch grant, Staff will know in July if it has been awarded; \$1 million Industrial Revitalization grant on behalf of CREW; \$50,000 annual Public Safety grant, via the Police Department; \$4,500 for an arts grant for the music festival; and a \$2,500 training grant was approved for Ms. Hilton's Women's Municipal Leadership class, which will cover her course. Ms. Frye will be applying for additional safety improvements grants. In positive news, the WQIF Grant for the WWTP Equalization Basin that was submitted on the Town's behalf was

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estimated to be worth a little over \$1 million, and Staff is learning that number could potentially be \$1.5 million. So at least \$1 million will be covered for the EQ Basin project. Grants coming up in the first half of the next fiscal year total \$229,000 in the VRSA safety grant that comes back up in August; the \$200,000 Red Banks river park grant, which will be submitted in June; a litter grant that Mr. Rosso submits annually; and the Get Outdoors Fund, which will be \$25,000 that will hopefully go towards the dog park. Staff is diligently searching for other ways to cover the costs of these exciting planned projects so they won't be tax payer funded.

At Triplett Tech Signing Day, Gavin Wolfe signed on with the staff at least through the season, so we will have a Triplett Tech student with the Town through October. Personnel meetings were held with all staff members individually to walk them through the COLA recommendations thru FY25, along with some merit raises, to start plans to move towards a graded pay structure based on qualifications and duties in order to be consistent in our pay rate.

Ms. Hilton stated that going forward, she would like to recognize Town Staff employee anniversaries. Investigator Christina Whorton celebrated her 5 year mark, Justin Baker reached 1 year, Chief Cowart reached his 7 year mark, Riese Painter and James Penwell are both at their 1 year mark.

Project highlights: There was a ribbon cutting for the Montvue stone wall and the town pool has made it through the first few weeks. Ms. Hilton commended Ms. Frye and Ms. Riggleman on getting things prepared and ready. The Town now has 2 Public Works employees registered as Certified Pool Operators to keep things safe and consistent. Staff is expecting the final draft of the town park from Kimley-Horn by June 20 and plans to discuss the park plans at the July Town Council meeting. A preliminary draft has been sent to VDOT for feedback on the connectivity pieces. Staff plans to hold an approval vote at the August Town Council meeting and then head into implementation. An implementation team will be assembled and will identify timeline cost prioritization of the projects.

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 had no report.
5. Public Services Committee - Chairperson Bonnie Good stated that she hoped Council read the report from Public Utilities and commended them on the great job on water quality. She stated that the Town has not had the types of problems that were seen in the past.
6. Public Properties Committee - Chairperson Judy Fultz had no report.

Consent Agenda: Approval – Minutes of May 14, 2024 Special Meeting and May 14, 2024 Regular Meeting

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

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ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Asbury			
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			

6 AYES, motion carried

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance O-07-24 – 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 – Eligible for Action

Mr. Shepherd stated that this is the budget for the coming fiscal year which will begin July 1, 2024. Mr. Shepherd commended Staff for an exceptional job on what has been a challenging budget this year.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Fultz, to APPROVE Ordinance O-07-24.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Asbury			
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			

6 AYES, motion carried

2. Resolution R-04-2024 – Exoneration of 2018 Personal Property Taxes

Mr. Shepherd stated that this is an annual task to remove delinquent taxes from the books, and Staff is proposing this year to remove \$1,241.12. It would expend more money to track these down than what would be recovered. A list of delinquent taxes was provided to Council. For 2018, 99.6% of all taxes were collected.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Burner, to APPROVE Resolution R-04-2024.

Mr. Holtzman inquired if these taxes were just cars. Mr. Shepherd answered that it is personal property and referred to the list given to Council showing some are less than \$10. Mr. Holtzman inquired if all means of collection had been exhausted. Mr. Rosso stated that DMV stops had been placed. Mayor Pifer stated that most individuals are now out of town, deceased, a business that is no longer in business, etc. Ms. Hilton commended Mr. Rosso and Debbie Allen who collected 99.64% of what could be collected. Mr. Rosso commended Ms. Allen for doing an excellent job with the collections.

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ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Asbury			
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			
6 AYES, motion carried			

3. Organizational Meeting of the Town Council – Set Meeting for July 1, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Councilmember Holtzman MOVED, seconded by Councilmember GOOD, to SET the Organization Meeting of the Town Council for July 1, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Asbury			
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			
6 AYES, motion carried			

4. Town of Mount Jackson Branding Initiative

Ms. Hilton gave a background into the branding process and the need for a brand. Mr. Beam discussed the current official government seal and stated that this would not be going away. The seal would become part of a family of images that are linked to the town. It would stay in place and be used on documents and anything official business. Adding in elements to a brand would become pieces to be used for tourism, attract new businesses and residents, visitors, etc., to show what we love about our community, and be used for marketing. Brands evolve over time, so what is decided at this point would shift again in the future as the community evolves and changes and it would get updated. Mr. Beam gave some examples of well-known brands that have changed over time, but the heart is still there. Ms. Hilton related this to the State of Virginia seal. The seal is used on the government side of things and on official business. The “Virginia is for Lovers” logo, the LOVE sign, is used for tourism. Ms. Hilton stated that over 100 community surveys were received, discussed how that was advertised, and shared some of the responses received. These were gathered into a proposed brand packet to be shared with Council and Town Staff. In July, Staff hopes to give a final draft incorporating feedback from tonight’s meeting. This new brand, once adopted, would be used for the website launch, wayfinding signs, Welcome to Mount Jackson signs, Visitors Center gift shop merchandise, a Downtown Style Guide, etc. Mr. Beam discussed this guide, which would be a streetscape design creating a cohesive look. This would also be used for the social media campaigns.

Ms. Hilton shared the primary and secondary color schemes and photo examples, along with three initial concepts for a new brand from the graphic designer. Discussion ensued on these potential brands. Council and Town Staff gave feedback on these designs. Staff will share this feedback with the graphic designer and expand on the preferred examples to include some variations thereof. Ms. Hilton stated that more options will be shared probably prior to the July meeting.

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Closing Remarks by Council Members, Mayor: Mayor Pifer asked Ms. Wakeman for a Hometown Partnership update. Ms. Wakeman discussed the Big Band Bash 2024 on May 11; the Memorial Day event which honored Ronnie Zerker and Jerry Painter – the Veterans Day event is in the works to honor 2 more veterans; and the first Open Market on June 1 with 10 vendors. Several vendors have picked up applications, so she hopes to see more vendors at the July 6 Market. Gazebo Gatherings will be at the end of the months of June through August. Ms. Wakeman discussed the Hometown Partnership meetings; volunteers are welcome and needed. Ms. Hilton stated that TaterFest flyers will go live this week. Rt. 11 Chips has plans in the works to partner with a local brewery for a beer and potato chip pairing. Ms. Wakeman stated that in May of next year, there will be a celebration honoring Buck Ryan on his 100th birthday; more details to come. Ms. Hilton discussed some plans to honor the apple industry and the former Apple Harvest Festival with some apple activities as well. Ms. Wakeman discussed the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce’s Business After Hours, which was hosted prior to tonight’s meeting in the Town Hall. This event was very well received. Ms. Wakeman expressed thanks to the Town for their help and support.

Mr. Holtzman recognized Mr. & Mrs. Hilton and congratulated them on raising a capable Town Manager.

Ms. Foley stated her disappointment that there weren’t more councilmembers and staff present at the Memorial Day event to honor the veterans. She stated her disappointment that the police department was not present to help setup. Ms. Foley suggested that this should be better prepared ahead of time as the Memorial Day event is every year about the same time and another function should not be held on the same day as it divided people’s attention too much. Ms. Hilton stated that more recruitment all around is needed. The Hometown Partnership ideally should be fully-functioning on their own, and the Town Staff support that has been given has been because we want them to thrive. Ultimately at this time next year, there should be 20-30 people in the Hometown Partnership that are able people, not just on an email thread. Ms. Hilton stated that this was also a day for the Mount Jackson Police Department, and having a veteran on staff, Staff wanted to support him. Ms. Hilton stated that she did not want the Town Staff to always be working these events; volunteers need to be recruited. Ms. Hilton thanked Ms. Foley for supporting Ms. Wakeman and assisting her at their event.

Motion made by Councilmember Shepherd, seconded by Councilmember Good, to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 PM.

Barbara Riggelman, Clerk

Donald “Donnie” I. Pifer, Mayor