

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Jeanne Gentry
Alderman Wendy Stancil
Alderman Dan Myers
Attorney Selina King

Fire Department –
Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham
Police Department – Chief David Shelton
Tax Department – Laura Holloway
Zoning – Ben Houser

Mayor Norton called the Town meeting to order at 6:00pm

Mayor Norton referred the audience to the public charge. A copy of the public charge was placed in each chair for the meeting attendees to read.

Mayor Norton asked if there was a motion to approve the August meeting minutes. Alderman Myers made a motion; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

AGENDA

There wasn't anyone on the evening's Public Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no Public Comments.

DEPARTMENTS

Entertainment Committee – Wendy Stancil

The Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 14.

Maintenance Department – Jeremy Trantham

Mr. Trantham said that the Well House Generator has been fixed. Maintenance will test the generator once a month.

The New Trash Truck made it's first pick-up earlier in the morning. The Town's name will be put on the truck next Monday evening.

Maintenance is looking for a carport to park the new trash truck under. When a metal shed is removed from fire station the carport can be put up and the new trash truck can be protected.

Tax Department – Laura Holloway

People have been asking about the Town's tax bill. Town has not yet received the scroll from the County. Town bills can not go out until the information is received from County. Alderman Myers explained to attendees that the Town can not decide the tax rate until the County provides the finalized taxes are; this will have to wait until the end of the appeal process.

Ms. Holloway provided the Board with a payment agreement she had set up for one tax payor who is delinquent on the 2023 tax bill. She explained that she had misunderstood the comments from the June meeting regarding payment plans. She now understands that changes have to be made to the policy that is currently in place. Alderman Gentry explained the policy the prior Board put into place. Alderman Gentry said that with the 2024 Tax Bills coming out in the next couple of months, the 2024 taxes would add to the person's delinquency. Alderman Myers asked if the person could be placed on a plan that would have the delinquent taxes paid by the time the 2024 taxes were due. Ms. Holloway said she didn't think the would be an option for this particular resident. Alderman Gentry told Ms. Holloway that the Board will have to discuss the matter and the property owner will need to wait.

Mayor Norton told the attendees that the Board has lowered the tax rates to 45¢, but the Board will have to review the evaluation once it's received. She said the County provided an estimated evaluation; but, if the evaluation doesn't go up the Board will not be able to lower the tax rate. Alderman Gentry [Financial Officer] agreed.

BUSINESS

Mayor Norton

The Magnolia House has requested live music on September 14th from 4:00pm until 10:00pm and on September 28th from 4:00pm until 10:00pm. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve the request; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton provided the Board with a CodeRed quote [OnSolve] communication software that would allow the Town to map out a specific area and notify those residence when water will be cut off. Alderman Myers asked how people would sign up for the notification. Mayor Norton said something will be set up on the Town's website and people can sign-up there. People who have signed up will receive a text when the water will be off in their area. Alderman Gentry asked about the annual fee. Mayor Norton said the fee is \$4,000.00 for three years. Alderman Stancil told the Board that our Water/Sewer software [Southern Software] has the ability to do something similar. We'd need to contract with a 3rd party, but the service is ran through our water/sewer software and may be less expensive than going through CodeRed. Alderman Stancil said she'd get with the 3rd party and get a quote from them. Kaitland Finkle, with Land of Sky told the Board that she uses Blackboard Connect. Mayor Norton explained that the money for the communication system is not in the budget, but...

...The Board appropriated \$250,000.00 for the Town's new trash truck. The truck cost \$205,000.00, wiring fee for a deposit was \$20.00, permanent tag fee was \$2,000.00, license fee was \$6.00, and card processing fee was \$24.47. The appropriated fund balance is

\$42,426.00 – this can be used for the communication software and tires needed for Fire Truck #31. Mayor said Fire Chief Norton obtained a quote from Brush Creek Tire and Auto. Mayor Norton said she spoke with the Town's Accountant and a Budget Amendment would not need to be made for the communication system because it would be used for any and all departments of the Town. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment for the Fire Truck #31 tires; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Kaitland Finkle, from Land of Sky Regional Council, gave a presentation of the Process for Appointed Committees created by the Town Board; the information is pulled from the State's General Statutes. The presentation discussed a Committee's establishment, member appointments, requirements, expectations, open meeting laws, and conflicts of interest. Kaitland said something that isn't law, but she expressed that it is important to be transparent and to not have a perception of impropriety. Mayor Norton suggested that David Wagner and Kaitland get together so that Mr. Wagner can ask questions or get better understanding of the State General Statutes.

There was additional dialogue between the Board, Mr. Wagner, and Ms. Kaitland regarding public perception, open meetings, posted agendas, sub-committees, committees being appointed to work on/discuss one topic but end up discussing another topic and word getting back to the Board of Alderman that the off topic was being discussed. Alderman Gentry brought up the Rocky Bluff matter. She told Mr. Wagner the Town of Hot Springs, the Board, can not be involved with anything Rocky Bluff as a Board. Property owners out where Rocky Bluff is located do not pay Town Taxes. The Board can not use Town taxpayer's money for things out of the Town limits; such as Rocky Bluff. Alderman Gentry told Mr. Wagner that a County Group could get involved because Rocky Bluff is in the County. Ike Lassiter mentioned that people with good intentions would not follow all of the requirements that are being explained. He said he is wondering what practical difference it would make if the *Love of Hot Springs Committee* were a publicly appointed committee vs. a workgroup sub-committee working on projects. Alderman Gentry said her opinion is that there doesn't need to be an appointed Board. Kaitland said a private citizen working group wouldn't be held to all the legal, State Required, regulations. She said a private citizen group could possibly do more than a Board appointed group. Alderman Stancil said the Committee may also be able to get funding from the County if the Committee were separate from the Town Board. Kaitland let the attending Committee members know that they could have fund raisers as a private citizens group where they would not be able to do so if they were an appointed by the Board. The Committee could report to the Board as a private citizens group during the Board of Aldermen meetings. Mayor Norton said she would ask about updates during the Department report part of the meeting.

Alderman Gentry

She asked Zoning about sheds being labeled as a tiny house being placed on property with water and sewer. Ben Houser, Zoning Administrator, said that the owner would have to go through the County.

Alderman Gentry asked Mr. Houser that the Board be advised of new business opening in Town, such as the food truck. Mr. Houser suggested a Business Register. Mayor Norton said she was the person who presented the food truck question to Mr. Houser. Alderman Gentry said the Board needs to know about a business that is actually going to be established. Mr. Houser said the business wouldn't have to complete an application because the Town currently doesn't require businesses to have a license or register, but he told the Board that if that is something they want, that process would have to be put together. He said if one person was allowed to do something [food truck] everyone would need to be allowed. Kaitland suggests not doing things as a business license but as 'approving the use'.

Taxes and health benefits are pulled out of the General Fund each year for the Water/Sewer Employees. Since Water/Sewer has a separate account from General Fund, Water/Sewer has had to pay back the General Fund account. This hasn't been done in several years, but it has now been done. Going forward, this needs to be done on an annual basis. [Nancy is now paying the Heath premiums for the Water/Sewer Employees out of the Water/Sewer account and Laura is paying the General Fund Employees out of the General Fund account. We may not have to transfer funds from Water/Sewer to repay General Fund in the future.]

Executive Session

At 7:00pm Alderman Gentry made a motion to move into Executive Session; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

At 7:06pm Alderman Gentry made a motion to return to regular session; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton said the Board had moved into Executive Session to discuss a Legal Matter.

Maintenance will replace the burned-out lights in the Police Department.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Gentry made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:08pm.

3-3
Approved _____
Abigail Norton
Mayor Abigail Norton

11-4-24
Date _____
Other _____