

Town of Hot Springs
Board of Alderman Meeting
November 4, 2024

Present:

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

Fire Department – Josh Norton
Maintenance – Donnie Waldroup and Justin Wood
Tax Department – Laura Holloway
Zoning – Ben Houser

Mayor Norton called the Town meeting to order at 6:03pm

Mayor Norton asked all to turn phones to silence and not carry on side conversation.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ike Lassiter

Would like to see an emergency plan in place and distributed to all should another catastrophe hit Hot Springs

Gary Goss

He and the Town are spending a lot of money to get back on their feet after Spring Creek flooded the Town. He is concerned with what will happen when the Town floods again. However, if the Town floods again, he will not rebuild. Mr. Goss said Karen, his wife, can write grants. He said there are other places that have bridges that can open up and let the water [and debris] flow through smoothly. Alderman Stancil said that Frank Vogler has a drawing of a draw bridge and a proposal. She feels to not entertain the thought of a draw bridge would be negligent, Mr. Goss agreed. Mayor Norton said she, too, agreed we need to get DOT on board. We need to start contacting our Representatives, Senators, and Congressmen.

David Wagnor asked if there was any negligence on behalf of the DOT; they were aware of the problem in 1977 and have allowed the bridge to remain the same – now we have great loss in the town again.

Barbara Pritchett said traffic continues to use Hot Springs as an alternate route when I-40 is closed. If Hot Springs continues as an alternate DOT needs to make sure traffic can get through safely for the town and safely for the traffic. Ms. Pritchett said she will be happy to help with drafting letters.

Andy Fulton

Feels the Town should hire a social media influencer to help for about 6-months. Perhaps the Tourism or sign a contract that they would receive a percentage of the donations. The influencer could get the word out in a continued attempt to keep donations coming in for the next 6 months. Mayor Norton said she would get with the TDA to see if they could help pay for the social media influencer.

DEPARTMENTS

Fire Department – Josh Norton

Chief Norton said there is an organization structure that is in place, but didn't get posted. He said that there is a lot of messages, on the message board, that need to be shut down. A lot of people, outside of Hot Springs follows our message board and negative comments about disorganization are getting back to him.

Leadership meetings need to maintain notes of the meetings; everyone needs to know what is going on.

Commercial and private needs: Needs a critical assessment for what then needs are. He knows of a few people who need medical equipment, heaters, hot water heaters.

Chief Norton is working on getting a side by side for the Fire Department.

Tax Department – Laura Holloway

Ms. Holloway said she received the 2024 Tax Scroll on November 1st. She is not sure when the bills will be mailed, but it will be as soon as possible.

Ms. Holloway was asked where the water payments could be received. She said that their office is now at the spa. People can come to the town end of the spa's office to pay their water bills.

Maintenance -- Donnie Waldroup and Justin Wood

Mr. Wood announced that the Maintenance Team will be working on the manhole in front of the post office. It may take up to 3-days for the repair. Semi-trucks, over 30-feet long will be turned around at the Look Out Loop and the top of the mountain.

Maintenance needs a con-x box to keep equipment in. Chief Norton offered the Fire Department's pole shed --- if they can find a place to put the drinking water. Sonya Phillips told Chief Norton that she would get with him to work something out for the drinking water.

Mr. Wood said they have been looking at a GIS mapping system. It would be beneficial to help map water lines, document repairs, and have technology based information. The fee is about \$250.00 per year for the service.

Zoning – Ben Houser

Mr. Houser said the County is waving permit fees through the end of the year. He asks that the Zoning fees also be waived through the end of the year. The County is also stopped zoning review, until the end of the year, for anything that is rebuilt as long as the use doesn't change. Mr. Houser said he can digitally sign the permits to help streamline the process. Mayor Norton asked the Board if there was a motion to waive Zoning fees until December 31, 2024; Alderman Stancil made a motion to waive the Zoning fees until December 31, 2024; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Entertainment Committee – Wendy Stancil

Ms. Stancil announced that the Entertainment Committee is working on fun Christmas activities for all. This will be held on December 14, 2024.

BUSINESS

Mayor Norton

Mayor went over the Lead people for The Town Recovery Volunteer.

Bridge Street sewer – Mayor went over two alternatives, provided by Keith Webb, for the sewer line repair.

Mayor Norton let everyone know that we can't put the sewer line back on the creek as it was; she said DEQ won't allow. She told David Wagner and Tim Arnett that, in her opinion, the best option would be to run under the road between their two buildings. Mr. Wagner asked for some information; Alderman Stancil offered Mr. Wagner to review the maps for the two options. Questions from several people were presented to the Board regarding the replacement of the sewer lines.

Mayor Norton told the Board that the cost for repair of the Bridge Street sewer would be just under \$500,000.00. The Town will be responsible for this cost.

Mr. Wagner asked if it would be possible for the business owners to meet with McGill to discuss alternatives for the sewer line.

The topic of a drawbridge was brought up, again. One of the business owners said his insurance adjuster had told them that if the [Spring Creek] bridge was fixed his premiums would go down substantially. Fire Chief Norton reminded everyone that Bridge Street is a US Highway, not a State Highway.

Plumbers, from Hill Plumbing, will be coming in to scope the sewer lines to ensure the lines are okay and not damaged.

Service Master looked at the Town Hall and has let Mayor Norton know their findings. Due to the kerosene spill, in the basement, there would be more intensive clean up needed.

Mr. Fuller asked Mayor Norton if all cleanup efforts could be moved to a less damaged building. He also asked about auctioning the Town Hall building away. Mayor Norton said that the Town Hall building was given to the Town and couldn't be sold for a specified amount of years. She wasn't sure how many years were specified; the documents were damaged in the flood.

Mayor Norton went over the old trash truck's damage assessment from the insurance company. The Town will receive \$13,580.00 for the damaged truck.

Mayor Norton asked the Board if they wanted to provide the Town's employees a Christmas Bonus. Alderman Myers made a motion to give each full-time employee a \$400.00 Christmas Bonus; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

The Board will meet regarding Code Red. Alderman Stancil said the training is 3-weeks.

Mayor Norton told everyone that Town Hall is now located at the spa.

Karen Goss has notified Mayor Norton that the Iron Horse will host a Christmas Festival. Gary Goss said that the Army Core enjoyed Hot Springs and wanted to bring their Toy Grab to our town. A stage could be set up in front of the Iron Horse and 4 bands will playing Christmas music from 12:30 to 4:30 on December 15, 2024.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sara Jo Litwak

Ms. Litwak expressed concern with the Semi-Trucks coming down 25/70. There are problems with Semi's having to make such a long swing to make the turn at Lance and 25/70. She said if a truck ends up hitting the gas pumps, there Town could be in a lot of trouble.

Alderman Myers

Alderman Myers asked if there was any way to keep people from setting up their donation center. He said he has had to clarify who is doing what and who is in charge.

Mayor Norton

Mayor Norton asked Attorney Selena King if there was any way to shut down a Hot Springs Message board – the person who set up the message board does not live in town and a lot of negative information is consistently posted. Ms. King said she would look into this matter.

Chuck Fowler

Said he read the note on the Post Office door, directing him to the Postal Truck in the Medical Center. Mr. Fowler said he went to the postal truck during the designated time and no one was there. He asked that someone speak with the Post Master to ensure the times posted were covered.

Fire Chief Norton

Chief Norton told the Board that the Fire Department does not have any money left in their maintenance budget; the suburban needs breaks.

Chief Norton said the Town needs to have Mark Durner, with Communication Services, come in. There is an emergency siren alerting system that can be set off due to water levels. Once the water reaches a certain level the sirens sound and stay on alerting people of flood concerns so they could seek higher ground.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Stancil made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:34pm.

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Approved
Abigail Norton

Mayor Abigail Norton

12-2-24

Date

Other