



CORPORATION OF HARPERS FERRY

Town Council

MINUTES

Regular Meeting **Monday, 14 September 2020** **7:00 p.m.**
Town Hall • 1000 Washington Street, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425 • VIA ZOOM

Called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Bishop. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted through Zoom and live-streamed on social media, in compliance with the State's emergency guidance on the Open Governmental Meetings Act.

Member	Title	Status
Wayne Bishop	Mayor	Present
Kevin Carden	Recorder	Present
Barbara Humes	Councilmember	Present
Hardwick S. Johnson, Jr.	Councilmember	Present
Christian Pechuekonis	Councilmember	Present
Jay Premack	Councilmember	Present
Charlotte Thompson	Councilmember	Present

The agenda was approved as amended. Items 4.e.v., 4.e.vi., 6.f., and 6.g. were moved to the end of the meeting. Item 4.e.ii. was stricken from the agenda. Item 7.d. and 7.e. were stricken and will be placed on a future agenda.

1. Mayor's announcements.

None.

2. Approval of minutes.

a. Regular Council meeting: 10 August 2020.

b. Special Council meeting: 5 August 2020; 27 August 2020; 2 September 2020.

Approval of the minutes for 5 August, 10 August, and 27 August 2020 was postponed.

The minutes for 2 September 2020 were approved as amended.

3. Treasurer's reports and approvals.

a. Review and approval of financial reports: July 2020.

The financial reports for July 2020 were approved as received.

b. Approval of invoices and purchases over \$500.

- i. **Approval to run a Martinsburg Journal newspaper advertisement for legal counsel which shall not exceed \$700.00.**

The cost for this item is below \$500, so no approval is required.

4. Town reports.

a. Police Department.

- i. **Police report for the month of August 2020.**

Chief Brown reported that for the month of August 2020, there were 125 incidents, 83 citations issued, one accident, no call-outs, and 15 assists to other agencies.

b. Ordinance Compliance Officer.

A written report was submitted by the Ordinance Compliance Officer.

c. Budget and Finance Committee.

- i. **Discussion and action regarding the appointment of a Town Council member as the representative of purchasing and grant point of contact when registering for Federal grants.**

Motion	Motion to appoint Jay Premack as the Town’s point of contact for purchasing and grants. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Hardy Johnson
Second	Christian Pechuekonis
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

d. Office Operations Committee.

- i. **Discussion and action regarding credit card processing of B&O / Room Occupancy taxes.**

Motion	Motion to direct office staff to develop a system through GovCard to process B&O and Room Occupancy back taxes, and eventually current taxes. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Nancy Case
Second	Christian Pechuekonis
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

- ii. **Discussion and action on the purchase of office partitions to accommodate social distancing during COVID-19.**

The Budget and Finance Committee had questions about the efficacy of the proposed office partitions, so no action is recommended at this time.

iii. Discussion and action on approval of revisions to Town Council agenda approval process / procedure.

Motion	Motion to approve and adopt the Town Council agenda approval process dated 9-9-2020, as amended. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Nancy Case
Second	Christian Pechuekonis
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

iv. Discussion and action on approval of revisions to the FOIA process and procedure.

Motion	Motion to approve the FOIA Request Process dated 9-9-2020, as amended. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Nancy Case
Second	Jay Premack
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

e. Water Department.

i. General report.

Christy Huddle reported that interviews have been completed for the Operator-in-Training job vacancy; a recommendation will come to Council for approval in the near future. Region 9 will hold a team meeting for the water system improvement project soon, including discussion on the need for a water project coordinator. Laurel Drake has been working on easements in the Lower Town for the project. An application for a West Virginia Source Water Protection Grant is being completed, funding from which will include purchase of a sensor to detect hydrocarbons in the source water. Chris Styer has been working on a number of items, including equipment calibration, sludge testing, the PSC annual report, and updating the capital assets list.

Mayor Bishop recommended that the Town Council hold a special meeting with the Water Commission to discuss a timeline for the water system improvement project.

~~**ii. Approval of the 22 February 2018 Town Council minutes.**~~

iii. Discussion and action on the purchase of a mini-excavator and trailer.

Motion	Motion to purchase a mini-excavator and trailer, including a one-year service contract, from United Rentals, not to exceed \$36,000, pending approval of the service agreement within 72 hours (17 September 2020) by Councilmember Christian Pechuekonis. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Barbara Humes

Second	Christian Pechuekonis
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

iv. Discussion and action on hiring a Water Project Coordinator.

The Water Commission is recommending the hiring of a professional point person to act as the Water Project Coordinator during the water system improvement project. This position is not budgeted in the project loan. There was some discussion on whether this person should be an employee who could provide long-term oversight, possibly as a water plant manager. Once a water project team meeting has been held, a special joint meeting may be scheduled between the Town Council and the Water Commission.

v. Discussion and action on appointment of Water Superintendent.

Motion	Motion to change employment status of Chris Styer to Water Works Superintendent, effective immediately, with a salary of \$50,000 per year. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Barbara Humes
Second	Jay Premack
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

vi. Discussion and action on appointment of Operator-in-Training.

Motion	Motion to hire Christopher Schrift to the position of Operator-in-Training, effective immediately, with a wage of \$12.00 per hour, with benefits as mandated by the employee handbook. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Barbara Humes
Second	Jay Premack
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

5. Organizations / other reports.

None.

6. Unfinished business.

a. Update on Corporation of Harpers Ferry's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A special meeting will be scheduled to discuss this subject.

b. Update on space for lease at Town Hall.

Patty Morse said several inquiries have been received concerning the space for lease in the former liquor store. A space plan layout was received from an architect with the possibility of dividing the area. There was discussion on use of the space by the Water Works staff and / or a project coordinator. A contractor has taken a sample of the floor tiles to determine whether or not asbestos may be present. Mrs Morse suggested the formation of a committee to advise on use of the space and other related items. The consensus of the Town Council is to remove the signs advertising the space for lease at this time until it can be thoroughly cleaned and the best solution can be determined.

c. Update on High Street Beautification project.

Mayor Bishop said the State will likely hold an update meeting for the Town Council, followed by a public informational meeting, but at this time he is awaiting further information.

d. Discussion and action on police protection for Town of Bolivar.

A letter was received from Mayor Dettmer of Bolivar requesting further information from the Harpers Ferry Town Council. Jay Premack felt that Mayor Bishop should spearhead engagement with Mayor Dettmer more. Nancy Case felt that in the correspondences between Harpers Ferry and Bolivar, there was no inquiry as to what Bolivar would like to see from Harpers Ferry. Pat Morse said many of Bolivar’s concerns are expressed in their January 2020 Town Council meeting minutes.

Christian Pechuekonis and Nancy Case volunteered to serve on a committee for this purpose, along with Mayor Bishop.

e. Discussion and action regarding citizen’s request to seek design and curb realignment and installation of ADA-compliant ramp for NE corner of Franklin and Washington streets.

Mayor Bishop said the WVDOH recommended that the Town pursue grants to finance the curb realignment. He is going to discuss this issue further with WVDOH’s design engineer and bring it back to the Town Council for further action.

f. Discussion and action regarding police employee matter.

Motion	Due to COVID-19, motion that the Corporation of Harpers Ferry extend health benefits to the part-time police officer until such time as this police officer can take the civil service exam. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Nancy Case
Second	Jay Premack
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

g. Discussion and action regarding Town Hall employee matter.

Motion	Move to terminate employment of Rachel VanMetre effective immediately and to send the drafted letter, as amended, to that effect. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Nancy Case
Second	Jay Premack
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

7. New business.

a. Discussion and action on annual snow plowing and snow removal contract.

This item will be advertised and brought back to Council for action next month.

b. Discussion and action on disposal of old vehicles housed at the Water Department.

Motion	Motion to advertise in the newspaper of record for sealed bids to purchase and remove the old vehicles, to be received by 31 October 2020. (ROLL CALL VOTE REQUESTED)
Motion by	Wayne Bishop
Second	Christian Pechuekonis
YES	Humes, Premack, Johnson, Pechuekonis, Case, Carden, Bishop
NO	<i>none</i>
Result	MOTION APPROVED

c. Discussion and action on a response to Bee Line DAR's request to sign a proclamation in support of Constitution Week.

Motion	Motion to approve a proclamation in support of Constitution Week.
Motion by	Kevin Carden
Second	Hardy Johnson
Result	MOTION APPROVED by consensus vote

~~**d. Discussion and action on increasing parking rates.**~~

~~**e. Discussion and action on citizens' complaints regarding noise, trash, illegal parking, speeding, and lack of social distancing.**~~

Motion	Motion to enter executive session, pursuant to WV Code § 6-9A-4(b)(2)(A) (for agenda items 4.e.v., 4.e.vi., 6.f., and 6.g.).
Motion by	Barbara Humes
Second	Nancy Case
Result	MOTION APPROVED. Executive session began at 10:24 p.m.

Motion	Motion to exit executive session.
Motion by	Jay Premack
Second	Nancy Case

Result	MOTION APPROVED. The meeting returned to open session at 10:47 p.m.
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Motion to adjourn by Jay Premack, second by Hardy Johnson. Meeting adjourned at 10:56 p.m.

The above minutes are true and correct, as approved.

Mayor: _____ Date: _____

Recorder: _____ Date: _____