

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLIAMSON, WEST VIRGINIA, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2015, AT 6:00 P.M.

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Mayor Pro Tem Matthew Newsome opened the meeting by requesting that those present please bow their heads for prayer and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, with the prayer being offered up by Chief of Police, Barry Blair.

The Mayor next requested a Roll Call and it was ascertained by the City Clerk the following persons were present, in person:

MAYOR PRO TEM:	MATTHEW NEWSOME
COUNCIL MEMBERS:	YORK SMITH SHERRI HAIRSTON BROWN JUDITH HAMRICK

The City Attorney was absent due to the resignation of C. Christopher Younger in the August 27, 2015 meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Newsome requested approval of the Minutes of the meetings held September 10, 2015 and special meeting held September 14, 2015. Whereupon, Councilman York Smith moved to approve said Minutes and which motion was seconded by Judith Hamrick, and carried.

Inas Evans thanked Councilman Newsome for his willingness to step in as Mayor Pro Tem when the former Mayor, Steven Johnston Knopp, resigned. Ms. Evans asked for an update of the ongoing issues in the Utility Department. Utility Board Member, Jerry Hurley, was present in the

meeting and briefly gave those present an update on the matter at the request of Councilwoman Judith Hamrick. Ms. Evans went on to ask if the rate increase will still go into effect. Mayor Pro Tem Newsome informed her that the water rate increase has been suspended for 120 days by the West Virginia Public Service Commission.

Steven Hager asked the Council for an update on the issues occurring on Vinson Street. Jason Allen, Project Manager for Veolia Water, explained the West Virginia Department of Highways has scheduled to begin working on the street the last week of October. Mr. Hager expressed concern about the Fairview Cemetery. He asked Council who is responsible for keeping the grass cut. Ricky Wilkerson stated that it was part of the contract with Veolia Water that they have to keep the cemetery cut. Mr. Wilkerson was informed that it was cut by Veolia Water until the contract was renewed in 2008, and the new contract removed that responsibility from Veolia. The City Clerk, Larry Brown, informed him that Poor Boys now have the contract to keep the cemetery cut. It was also explained, however, that it is not maintained on a regular basis.

Shawn Williamson requested an explanation of how the City is working to collect past due sanitation customers. With permission from Mayor Pro Tem Newsome, City Clerk, Larry Brown, explained to those

present the process by which his office pursues delinquent sanitation accounts. Mr. Williamson asked if Steven Knopp will remain the Municipal Judge. Councilwoman Hamrick explained to Mr. Williamson that the Council was unsure at this time, but did not believe he could keep that position.

Madonna Shapiro informed the Council of trash being dumped in the parking lot near Maple Walk. She stated the Council had agreed before to place cameras in the area, but this has not happened. Despina Kapourales explained how the trash was being dumped during the night. Councilwoman Sherri Hairston-Brown requested the sanitation workers make a daily visit to the area and clean it up. With the other members of Council in agreement with Councilwoman Brown, Jason Allen was directed to have the sanitation employees make a daily stop in that location until an alternative solution can be found.

Michele Webb-Messerian informed the Council of an issue that she is having with Mingo County 911. She explained to the Council that when she calls 911, the City Police never show up; however, when she calls the Police Department directly, a Police Officer always shows up. The Council explained to Ms. Messerian that the Council has no control over the 911 system, so she should take her concerns to the Mingo County Commission.

James Maynard expressed his gratitude to Jason Allen for helping him with some issues that he was having, stating we only hear negative things being brought up, so I wanted to mention something positive.

Since no other member of the audience had any more comments or matters to bring before the Council, the Mayor Pro Tem moved on with the next item on the agenda – old business. The Council members did not have any old business to discuss at this time.

Mayor Pro Tem Newsome then presented General Fund bills in the amount of \$2,372.35, and following review thereof, Councilman York Smith moved to approve the said bills as the money is available, and which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sherri Hairston-Brown and carried.

The next item of business presented by the Mayor Pro Tem was the approval of Trick or Treat to be held between the hours of 6:00p.m. and 8:00p.m.on October 29, 2015 in the City of Williamson This is the date and time the Mingo County Commission approved Trick or Treat in the County. The Council discussed also blocking the streets on Sunset Addition as they customarily have done in previous years. Councilman York Smith made a motion to approve the date and time of Trick or Treat as presented, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Judith Hamrick, and carried.

The Council had several personnel items to discuss whereupon a motion was made by Sherri Hairston-Brown to go into executive session and which motion was seconded by Councilman York Smith, and carried. The Council went into executive session at 6:42p.m.

7:01p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Newsome reconvened the meeting.

The first personnel matter before the Council was the current vacant position of Mayor of the City of Williamson. A motion was made by Councilman York Smith to approve Robert Carlton as Mayor, which motion was seconded by Judith Hamrick, and carried with Sherri-Hairston Brown voting no and Mayor Pro Tem Matthew Newsome not voting. Mayor Pro Tem Newsome asked if the Council had any further discussion pertaining to the position of Mayor. Councilwoman Sherri Hairston-Brown stated she had something to say. She expressed her displeasure with the decision of the Council stating she thought Ricky Wilkerson should have been appointed Mayor because he had previously been a member of the City Council for a period of eight years. She stated that it was her feeling that the other members of Council did not want to appoint him because he “is a black man.” Mr. Carlton will begin his duties as Mayor after being sworn in by the City Clerk.

With no further discussion concerning the Mayor position, Mayor Pro Tem Newsome asked the Council if anyone wanted to make a motion to fill the position of City Attorney. A motion was made by Councilwoman Sherri Hairston-Brown to hire Joshua Ferrell as the City Attorney, which motion was seconded by York Smith, and carried. Mr. Ferrell will begin his duties as City Attorney after being sworn in by the City Clerk.

Mayor Pro Tem Newsome then asked the City Clerk if he had a recommendation to fill the position in his office. Mr. Brown made the recommendation to hire Tammy Mosely. A motion was made by Councilwoman Judith Hamrick to hire Tammy Mosley on a one hundred and twenty day probationary period, which motion was seconded by Councilman York Smith, and carried. Ms. Mosley will start work after giving notice to her current employer.

Mayor Pro Tem Newsome did not have any remarks.

Councilman York Smith told the audience that was pleased to see more people attending Council meetings and taking interest in their city government.

Councilwoman Sherri Hairston-Brown stated that she has been a member of Council for six years and until the last fifteen months, everyone on the City Council worked together. She expressed that the last fifteen

months she has worked hard and struggled to do so. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the upheaval of the Council and believes other Council members are working for themselves, not the City as a whole. She went on to say she was born and raised in Williamson and has the City in her heart. She also expressed displeasure in a past event where an employee was not given a pay raise at a meeting when others had been given a raise because the “color of her skin.” She also mentioned the suspension of a fireman, by the previous administration, because of the “color of his skin.”

Councilwoman Judith Hamrick expressed her satisfaction with the actions taken by the members of Utility Board to move toward rectifying the issues in that department. She went on to thank Mr. Shawn Williamson for his efforts to get the public involved when the Utility Board issues were made public, and she expressed how much Mr. Williamson has “matured” through the process. She asked everyone in the City to thank him for doing a good job.

Despina Kapourales asked if the water and sewer rate increase would still go into effect. The Council explained that it is uncertain because the West Virginia Public Service Commission must do a rate study first, and then a hearing will be held December 3, 2015.

Inas Evans asked the Council to fix the signs over the Police Department and Fire Department. They have been out for a considerable amount of time. Police Chief, Barry Blair, stated it would cost approximately one thousand five hundred dollars to make the necessary repairs. Curtis Height told Mr. Blair he had a friend who may be able to help fix the signs and would have him contact Mr. Blair.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the same was adjourned, upon motion by Councilwoman Judith Hamrick seconded by Councilman York Smith, and carried.

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MAYOR

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CITY CLERK