

Mayor J. Paul Kilgore, Jr. called a regular monthly meeting of the Amherst Town Council to order on September 14, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 174 S. Main Street. Council members Andr  Higginbotham, Kenneth Watts, Kenneth Bumgarner, Mike Mozingo, and Rachel Thompson were present. Town Manager Jack Hobbs, Town Attorney Tom Berry, Police Chief Robert Kimbrel, Office Manager Tracie Wright, and Deputy Town Clerk Vicki Hunt were present.

Ed Carton, 241 Hanger Road, came forward to offer a prayer as a citizen comment.

Mayor Kilgore opened the floor to further citizen comments.

Sally Glynn, 127 Vista Drive, came forward to read the preamble to the United States Constitution to promote Constitution Week. Mayor Kilgore presented her with a Proclamation declaring September 17th – 23rd Constitution Week in the Town of Amherst.

Ann Marie Clarke from the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District came forward and gave a report on her agency’s work to maintain and improve the Town’s raw water source.

Gary Christie and Ben Bowman from Region 2000 Local Government Council came forward to give that agency's annual activity report.

Chief Kimbrel came forward to report on a proposed regional hazard mitigation planning project that would identify the best ways to prevent or reduce the loss of life and property during natural disasters such as storms or earthquakes. Gary Christie from Region 2000 Local Government Council was present to answer questions. After a brief discussion Ms. Thompson made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mozingo and passed 5-0 to authorize Town Manager to sign a Letter of Intent to participate in the Region 2000 All Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Messrs. Watts, Bumgarner, Mozingo, Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”.

Victoria Duff from the Village Garden Club came forward to present a proposal that would have the effect of beautifying downtown Amherst. After a brief discussion Ms. Thompson made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mozingo and passed 5-0 to provide \$3,500 to the Village Garden Club to be used for planters, seasonal flags, meter pole finials and flag poles associated with project. Messrs. Watts, Bumgarner, Mozingo, Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”. It was understood that the Town crew would have a limited role in this project.

Police Chief Kimbrel and Detective Sergeant Mayberry came forward to present information in support of a request for an additional full time police officer for the Amherst Police Department. Bertha Riley came forward in support of the Police Department’s request. After some debate, by consensus the Council agreed to consider the matter at the October meeting .

Mr. Watts made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Thompson and passed 5-0 to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2016 meeting. Messrs. Watts, Bumgarner, Mozingo, Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”.

After a brief discussion about the property at 178 Washington Street, Mr. Higginbotham made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Watts as follows:

- That Council finds that a health hazard exists at the Pitsenbarger property at 178 Washington Street (TM# 96A4-15-1thru3);

- That all underbrush on the property smaller than 1” in diameter from ground level to the height of 7’ needs to be removed to eliminate this health hazard; and
- That the Town Manager is directed to issue an order to abate the problem and effect the cleanup per Sec 7-2. 1B of the Town Code.

The motion failed 2-3 with Messrs. Higginbotham and Watts voting in favor and Messrs. Mozingo, Bumgarner and Mrs. Thompson voting against.

Discussion on filling the seat on the Industrial Development Authority formerly held by Jim Meade and the IDA/EDA merger issue was deferred.

Mr. Bumgarner made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Watts and passed 5-0 to renew a request that VDOT use inmate labor for roadside maintenance along US 29 Bypass within the Town of Amherst in a manner to be determined by VDOT and the Department of Correction officials. Messrs. Watts, Bumgarner, Mozingo, Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”.

The Council discussed ways to dispose of old fire hydrants.

The Town Manager gave an oral report on various projects.

Town Manager reported on measures that have been taken to cover the duties of former Utilities Director Tom Fore and asked for the Town Council's input on a potential staff reorganization. The Mayor asked the Personnel Committee to work with the Town Manager on this issue.

It was agreed at a discussion on holding special work sessions on various issues would continue at the October meeting.

Mr. Bumgarner made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Watts and passed 5-0 that the Town Council convene in closed session for discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation per the exemption at §2.2-3711A.1 of the Code of Virginia. Messrs. Bumgarner, Higginbotham, Mozingo, Watts and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”.

Mr. Bumgarner made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Thompson and approved 5-0 by a roll call vote that the Councilors certify that to the best of each councilors’ knowledge that (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Title 2.2, Chapter 37 and §15.2-2907 of the Code of Virginia and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the session. Messrs. Bumgarner, Higginbotham, Mozingo, Watts and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye” by the roll call method.

There being no further business, Mr. Watts made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Thompson and passed 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 P.M. Messrs. Watts, Bumgarner, Mozingo, Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”.

J. Paul Kilgore, Jr.
Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk of Council