

BOLIVAR TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Stephen Paradis, Mayor
Victoria Gale
Chris Higdon
Sarah McMains
Dan Jimeno
Sarah Shafer
P. Jean Reed, Recorder, Mayor Pro Tem
Laura Whittington, Town Administrator

Moment of Silence
Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Paradis asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence and for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order

The November 12, 2024 regular meeting of the Bolivar Town Council was called to order by Mayor Stephen Paradis at 6:30pm. Mayor Paradis welcomed Chris Higdon to the Council. Mayor Paradis said he has already been sworn in.

Treasurers Report

Treasurer Eric Lewis was not in attendance for this meeting. Mayor Paradis said we need to approve the August Financial Report because we did not have the Bank Statement to finalize the report at that time. Mayor Paradis asked for a motion.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno moved to approve the August Treasurers Report as received. Recorder P. Jean Reed seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 – 0.

Mayor Paradis said we would approve the October Treasurers Report in November when we get the Bank Statement. Mayor Paradis said the Video Lottery and Gaming looks more in line than last month. Mayor Paradis asked Laura to put this on the agenda for November. If you have any questions or concerns for the October Financial report, please forward them to me to forward to Mr. Lewis.

Town Attorney, Effie Kallas

My report is for the last two months. I conducted an Ethics training for Bolivar on September 11. I attended the day long State Auditor training in Martinsburg on October 1. Also there is the WV Ethics Commission Newsletter in your packet. I would like to call to your attention the asking for donations. Please read that portion and then there is a quiz I think you will find interesting. Also included is the quarterly Wine, Liquor Tax report October, 2024 for \$10,457.92. This quarterly amount is in line with previous years and quarters. The next quarterly ethics training will take place on January 30, 2025 starting at 12 noon. Please email kimberly.b.weber@wv.gov for an invite. Mayor Paradis thanked Attorney Kallas for her report.

Sheriff's Department Report and Public Comments

Corp. Hockman reported the following for the month of October: 100 total incidents, 39 Road Patrols, 22 Directed Patrols, 6 Building Checks, 4 Welfare Checks, 3 Fellow, 3 Suspicious Act,

2 Juvenile complaint, 2 Public Service, 2 Traffic Stop, 1 Alarm, 1 Alarm ATM, 1 Animal Bite ACO, 1 Break Enter NIP, 1 Disturbance

Corp Hockman said things seem pretty normal. He reported he had not heard anything from the night shift of activity in the park.

Mayor Paradis said Halloween seemed to have been covered very well by the Sheriff's Reserve. Councilperson Chris Higdon informed Corp. Hockman of the Bolivar Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 14 at 4:00 pm. Line up for the Parade will begin at 3:00pm and the Parade will start at 4:00pm.

Mayor Paradis thanked Corp. Hockman for his report.

Harpers Ferry National Park Report

- Superintendent Gossett reported that wild fire risks are extremely high due to very dry conditions. The Park has issued an alert to make everyone more aware of wild fires. Visitors are reminded that fires, grills and propane stoves are not permitted in Harpers Ferry National Park. Please use extreme caution with any other items that may cause a spark. There was a five acre three day fire on Loudoun Heights which fire fighters put out with the help of some rain on Sunday Night.
- On Friday, December 6 at 600pm The National Park Service will kick off with their opening ceremony for Old Tyme Christmas.
On December 7 and 8 from 11:00am until 4:00pm the National Park Service and Harpers Ferry National Park Association will again present this year family friendly activities for visitors including historic weapons demonstrations, tin Christmas Tree ornament making demonstrations, Civil War sewing demonstrations, Victorian dances, model train displays and horse drawn buggy rides. Most of these activities are free. Homemade candy-making requires registration. History Volunteers will be available for story telling of how Harpers Ferry would have looked in 1864. Please check NPS web page calendar for times and schedule of events.

Mayor Paradis thanked Ms. Gossett for her report.

Minutes:

Approve Meeting Minutes October 1, 2024

Mayor Paradis asked for corrections and/or clarifications on several items to the minutes.

Recorder Reed will make all corrections as noted.

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to approve the Minutes as amended for the October 1, 2024 regular meeting. Councilperson Sarah McMains seconded the motion.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno asked Laura if she got an answer from Eric Lewis about his question, last month, concerning line item 104A ICS account. Laura said she did not but would check with Mr. Lewis.

Motion passed 4 –0.

Attendee Concerns:

None

Mayor's Report

- Attended with Superintendent Gossett the 250 year celebration of signing the Declaration of Independence. Anyone interested in participating in celebration planning meeting are more than welcome to represent Bolivar.
- Attended the Mayor's meeting, asked questions about short term rentals. Asked questions about CVB. Talked about water issues around water and sewer utilities.
- Participated in C. W. Shipley Elementary School Business Partners Meeting. Discussed attendance issues and combating these issues. We discussed a bake sale that they are holding to help Hurricane Helene victims. They also asked for help in judging their science
- Fair.

- Laura and I had a phone meeting with Director of West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). He is an expert on American Disabilities Act pertaining to roads and streets.

Committee Reports

Water Commission Report-Harpers Ferry Mayor Vaughn

Mayor Vaughn recognized Sarah Shafer for all she did for the Veterans Day Parade in Bolivar yesterday. He also recognized Sheriff Hanson and Trey Hockman for the fine work they do protecting the Citizens of Bolivar.

Mayor Vaughn gave an update on the water department. He said there is a lot going on at the Water Department. You will see a lot in the near future.

The history of water service has a unique history. We applied for a USDA Loan back in 2011-2012 to upgrade the Town's water Plant (where the water was made). Once the water is shipped up to the towers on Bolivar Heights and then it goes into the distribution tower and then sent to each household.

We were taken to court and spent years fighting a law suit. The loan set in the checking account, the pandemic hit and the price doubled. We decided to do one or the other so we did the water plant which we completed in about 1.5 years ago. The distribution system is now estimated to be at seven, eight or nine million. Because our MHI is too high, so we do not qualify for grants or loans. We have been very limited in our success obtaining loans or grants because they are based on Appalachian counties where they do not have the MHI's that we have here.

Harpers Ferry has one of the highest MHI in the State. We went to the Water Development Authority (WV agency) where we received a \$3.3 million dollar grant. We have to come up with \$800,000 matching funds. That means we have to come up with our own matching money in order to get grant money. Three ways to come up with this matching money is to secure a loan, raise rates or go into our reserves. We chose to secure a loan. This \$3.3 million grant will commence on about December 11, 2024. This will involve upgrading a lot of the distribution system service lines that come off the main lines that come down the center of the street. Most of this aspect of the work will be done here in Bolivar and a few isolated areas of Harpers Ferry and the county. We then began applying for CDS (Congressionally Directed Spending) money. We applied for grants through Joe Manchin and Shelly Capito.

I put in for \$900,000 and received \$625,000 from Senator Manchin. This money will be applied to new water meters. We spend 25% of our time reading meters. When these new meters are installed, there will be no meter reading.

Back in November, we applied for another CDS with Senator Capito for \$6.3 million. We are in the final running to receive \$6.3 CDS from Senator Capito. Our match for that will be \$1.3 million. We will need all together matching funds of \$2.1 million.

I just received a letter that Governor Justice is picking up the \$800,000 match for Senator Manchin's matching money. . If we are successful with getting Senator Capito's CDS for \$6.3 million, then Governor Justice will pick up the \$1.3 million match. This is a one of a kind deal.

Mayor Vaughn said there will be no going into our reserves, no rate increases thanks to the State of West Virginia. This is a big deal. This just does not happen.

Mayor Vaughn said if you have a Class 2 plant, you must have at least one Class 2 Operator.

Mayor Vaughn also said they needed a Class 2 operator but was able to hire a Class 3 Operator from Martinsburg. Today was her first day on the job.

Mayor Vaughn also said our water rates are @50%. Our sewer rates are @ 85 to 95%.

Street Committee

Mayor Paradis said he and Laura finished walking and evaluating the streets. They have a list of streets that need repairs. Since it is too late to repair streets for this year, they will complete in the spring of next year.

Bolivar Planning Commission

Barb Staats reported the Comprehension Plan is finished. We held a meeting on November 4. Thank everyone that attended and for their comments. We will forward this to the Mayor and all councilpersons for you to read and approve, hopefully in December.

Mayor Paradis thanked Barbara Staats and Jeff. Mayor Paradis said he knew it was a lot of work.

Park & Recreation Committee

Councilperson Victoria Gale thanked Councilperson Sarah McMains for joining the committee and giving the report tonight.

Councilperson McMains said she had been talking to Mike at Metro Rec. and can get a consultation for free but if we act on any of the recommendations then, we would need to pay for a report. He recommended getting rid of the stand-alone slide, and the smaller one that has a gap. Both of these recommendations were in the 2022 report. Each piece could be replaced as needed. The park is still in good shape since it does not get over used. Mike would not recommend sun shades at this time until we have a master plan. I would like to put a suggestion in the park and have the community think big about what they want the park to be.

Councilperson Victoria Gale said paving the basketball court is top priority.

Mayor Paradis asked Councilperson Sarah McMains what the next step would be.

Councilperson McMains said removing the slides and getting a master plan!

Canal Town Partnership

No report

Streetscape Committee

Nothing to report

Jefferson County Development Authority

Nothing to report.

Old Business

1. Sidewalk project status update

Mayor Paradis said the sidewalk project has not been totally closed out. The sidewalk curving, paving was all done for Trick or Treat. We are still working of mailbox upgrades. So, we have not closed out this project with Department of Highways.

New Business

1. Appoint Town Council Official as Liaison to Bolivar Planning Commission.

Mayor Paradis asked for a recommendation from the council. Councilperson Chris Higdon volunteered to serve in this position to replace Sarah Gordon.

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to appoint Councilperson Chris Higdon as Council Liaison to Bolivar Planning Commission. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 – 0.

Mayor Paradis thanked Councilperson Higdon for volunteering to serve.

2. Discuss/Approve snow plowing contract in Bolivar for 24-25 season

We received one bid from Cornerstone for snow plowing contract in Bolivar for 24-25 season.

Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked about the added concrete behind the new mailboxes if it needed to be shoveled.

Laura said we would need to contact them if necessary.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno mentioned we may need to do a budget revision if and when necessary.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno moved to accept the Cornerstone Snow Plowing Contract for full service, as indicated on rate sheet including street sweeping.

Councilperson Chris Higdon seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Note: Councilperson Sarah Shafer requested Laura Whittington's name be removed from being responsible for payment and changed to Town of Bolivar.

3. Discuss/Approve trolley service for Old Tyme Christmas 24-25

This Trolley service will be for one day, December 14, 2024. Laura will be sending a map of stops for approval.

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to approve EPTA Trolley service Contract for \$825. for one day and striking out the overtime part of the contract. Councilperson Sarah McMains seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Note: Superintendent Gossett said we would need a special permit for the bus to turn around in lower Town of Harpers Ferry on December 14, 2024.

4. Appoint Audit committee

Mayor Paradis said the purpose of this audit committee is to identify/select an auditor. Mayor Paradis said the committee will consist of Laura Whittington, Recorder P. Jean Reed and Mayor Paradis. It will be their responsibility to select an auditor for the Town of Bolivar.

Part 1

Councilperson Chris Higdon moved to create an Audit Committee for the Town of Bolivar for the purpose of selecting an auditor for Bolivar.

Councilperson Sarah McMains second the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Part 2

Councilperson Chris Higdon moved to approve an audit committee consisting of Laura Whittington, Recorder P Jean Reed and Mayor Stephen Paradis.

Councilperson Sarah McMains seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

5. Discuss/Approve bid(s) for park inspection

We will drop this at this time.

6. Discuss/Approve budget request for Lantern Festival Parade

Mayor Paradis said it looks like they are requesting \$2700 at this time. All requests for money have not been received yet.

Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked if we are setting a precedence to pay someone to teach lantern making and getting paid when last year they taught the class for free. Councilperson Shafer feels we should be including local people, activities and volunteers.

Councilperson Victoria Gale said we only give the Library \$3000 per year and we are asking for \$3000 for one activity.

Councilperson Sarah McMains feels like people should get paid for the work they provide or teach. Maybe we need to just appropriate what we can afford.

Mayor Paradis said there was a request for \$3000 in the budget. Mayor Paradis said she did not realize she needed to make an appropriation request.

Laura said so there is a request made, we put it in the budget, but, like anyone else you have to come in with an itemized list. It does not mean they are going to get that amount.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno asked who is making this request. Are they a West Virginia entity, a Baltimore, MD entity, a 501C.? Do we have any information on who is asking for this request?

Laura said this event was started by Lisa Kovatch last year. She wanted to bring it back this year. We only had one instructor last year and two this year.

Councilperson Chris Higdon said he agreed with what Councilperson Vickie Gale said about the Library operates pretty much all day all year, they have been very active and do a lot all year

with the kids and families. I think it would be a huge slap in the face to throw \$3000 at a request, a command, for a one-time event when they are up there every day. I watched this event last year and I am all about the community but, I would throw something out there like we cover for all the expense for supplies and they work out the fees for wherever they come from. If they decide not to do it we are doing our job. I just don't think we can throw that out there and be held hostage whether we do it or they don't.

Councilperson Sarah McMains said we need to know if we want to support a community project such as this one and how much we can contribute to this project.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno moved to table this until the next meeting and put it back on the agenda as we need further details. Councilperson Sarah McMains seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Approve funds for suggestion box to be placed in the Bolivar Children's park

Councilperson Sarah McMains would like to put the suggestion box in the park to get ideas from the citizens. It was also mentioned that the box be put nearer Town Hall.

Councilperson Chris Higdon moved to purchase a suggestion box and paper not to exceed \$100 and pending location/placement of the box. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

8. Discuss/Approve funding opportunity for Bolivar/Harpers Ferry Green Infrastructure Grant

Mayor Paradis said he does not have a letter of commitment yet. I will let you know when I find out.

9. Discuss/Approve Intergovernmental Agreement for Tax Collection services w/JC Sheriff
Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to start the process for approval and changes to our intergovernmental Agreement for Tax Collection with Jefferson County Sheriff.

Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

10. Discuss/Approve Intergovernmental Agreement for Police Services w/JC Sheriff

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to start the process for approval and changes to our Intergovernmental Agreement for Police Services with Jefferson County Sheriff.

Councilperson Sarah McMains seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

11. Discuss/Approve funds for tree lighting event decorations (located in Bolivar Children's Park)

Councilperson Sarah Shafer and four other people met to discuss tree lighting, decorations and Parade needed for the Holidays in the Children's Park. All the Christmas tree lights and Decorations were provided by Businesses. The Town of Bolivar has not paid for lighting or decorations in past years. We are asking for \$500 to fund this project.

Councilperson Sarah McMains moved to appropriate up to \$500 for new tree lighting and decorations for the Holidays in the Bolivar Children's Park.

Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

12. Discuss/Approve funding for mailbox upgrades on W. Washington Street

Mayor Paradis said to upgrade the mailboxes to give the patron access to the back of their mailbox to keep the patron from going out into the street to get their mail. Nothing is definite yet. If we just replace all the mailboxes on Washington Street, it might cost \$10,009.83. Mayor Paradis is also working with those patrons that have disabilities to possibly move their mailboxes to a cluster of boxes.

Recorder Reed said we need to find a way to resolve this with the State Highway Department. We evidently signed a contract with them.

Mayor Paradis said so I will contact Dept. of Highways, offer a solution to move the bump outs back, get cost estimates on the mailboxes and understand the cost share for this. We need a solution to this project.

Adjournment

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:50pm

P. Jean Reed
P. Jean Reed, Recorder

Stephen Paradis
Stephen Paradis, Mayor

Next Regular Meeting Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at 6:30pm