



## TOWN OF NEWLAND

04/02/2024

### BOARD MEETING

#### ATTENDING:

**MAYOR:** Derek Roberts

**ALDERMAN:** Gail Haller, James Johnson, Christie Hughes, Dave Calvert, Kenan Foxx

**GUEST:** Nancy Davis, Theresa Foxx, Jason Parker, Jodie Parker, Jim Rickard, John Jones, Christian Gardner, Melania McKinney, Donetta McKinney, Brenda Pittman, Drema Hayes

**STAFF:** Town Administrator Bill Bailey, Town Clerk Mackenzie Tipton, Finance Officer Jessica Buchanan, Police Captain Michael Fields, Deputy Chris Clark, Town Attorney Gerald McKinney

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., reminded everyone of ethics awareness, and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Alderman Hughes made a motion to approve the March minutes; Alderman Haller seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye. Alderman Johnson made a motion to adopt the agenda. Alderman Calvert seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

#### EVENTS

Mayor Roberts asked about the event planning for July 4. The proposal was for Dave Calvert to perform in the evening and Eric Church to perform during the day. The proposal also included entertainment for the Thursday food trucks and suggested a fishing tournament for children. Christian Gardner, a journalist for the Avery journal, recommended that Appalachian Holler Hunters organize the fishing tournament. The state manages the river, so they must adhere to its rules, according to Christian. However, they are getting advice from people who have held fishing tournaments before, so the town can be sure that they are following the rules and doing things the right way. Christian proposed the idea of roped-off sections of the river.

#### PUBLIC HEARING

Gerald announced that the mayor-council form of government would be replaced with a council-manager style. Mayor Roberts indicated that the decision will increase the administrator's authority. The board will appoint a manager and pay them via contract. Alderman Foxx moved to adjourn the public hearing. Alderman Hughes seconded the motion. Everyone agreed with a show of hands and a stating eye.

## **OLD PUBLIC AND NOTALEE REPAIRS**

It was agreed that old public repairs will be put out for RFP. Mayor Roberts requested a time limit. Bill stated that he could issue an RFP tomorrow.

## **DISCUSSION OF WATER**

Bill indicated that a corporation would return a well to the community in exchange for water and fire services. The well would have enough water capacity to supply the town. Mayor Roberts inquired about his tap. The suggestion was for the town to hire Iron Mountain.

## **MOWING BIDS**

The board received RFP packets for mowing bids; Bill explained that the packet included six additional properties, resulting in a higher fee. Alderman Calvert made a motion to go with the lowest bid. Alderman Foxx seconded the motion. The motion received a vote of 3 to 2.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Francis Banner talked about the YouTube channel. Alderman Calvert clarified his stance on the YouTube channel, stating that he is okay with filming meetings as long as everyone maintains professionalism. Francis inquired as to why the audits were still incomplete. Jessica said that the auditor will be there on April 25 to finish the audit report for 2021–2022.

## **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT.**

Bill mentioned that Gary was returning in the coming weeks and had been reading meters. Bill mentioned that Gary had checked and found no sewage leak, despite rumors of one. Bill stated that he spoke with the DEQ but was unable to determine who reported the leak. Bill discussed water infiltration into the sewer system, adding that if it overflowed, he had no idea where. Mayor Roberts expressed his belief in a set-up, citing the lack of recordings or images supplied to the DEQ, and provided an update on the streetlights.

## **FINANCE REPORT**

Jessica gave the finance report and assured the board that they would receive the weekly report upon request. Jessica indicated that there had been a tax release, and that Cindy would be here to do the audit.

## **POLICE REPORT.**

Captain Michael Fields provided the police report, stating that they are currently recertifying Laszlo and Kodi. Michael added that the residence near the vet's office has calmed down, and the vet seems to be less concerned now.

## **ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

According to Bill, the EPA mandate to locate lead lines on private and public property is now in effect, and Newland is at the top of the list for grants at no cost to the property owner or the town. Bill stated that engineers from the AIA grant applied for four more grants on the town's behalf. Bill clarified that while working at the river walk, the town neglected to fill out the permit, so Avery County sent paperwork for him to complete. Bill gave an update on the 3.2 million grants for wastewater and drinking water, stated the paperwork was almost complete, and stated that the state approved the wastewater section but had not approved the drinking water section. Bill stated that Gerald will review and send out the fire department contract next month, potentially leading to a multi-year contract. Bill provided an update on the community survey for planning and zoning, revealing that 176 individuals participated. Bill suggested scheduling a budget workshop. Everyone agreed to schedule two budget workshops. Bill mentioned that a rate study for utilities is necessary, and the engineers responsible for the AIA grant will conduct this study. Bill provided an update on the town park swap with the church. The board approved the switch, but there was a restriction in the deed. Gerald drafted the deed to meet requirements, but they haven't been able to look at it yet. Gerald mentioned the possibility of releasing the restriction. Bill stated that the playground arc is in bad shape and requested permission to take it down. He also gave an update on job applications.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Alderman Calvert asked about Powell Bill roads and proposed that the residents of Newland should ask the county for help fixing the roads.

Alderman Johnson made motion to go into closed session. Alderman Haller second in the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating eye.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

No decisions were made during closed session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Alderman Calvert seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

---

**Town Clerk**

---

**Mayor, Derek Roberts**