



Town of Nutter Fort Minutes December 14 ,2021

Mayor Sam Maxson called the meeting to order @ 6:30PM.

Attendance: Mayor Sam Maxson, Councilors Charlene Louk, Brenda Riley, Natalie Haddix, Karen Phillips, James Link, Treasurer Leslie Cummings, Police Chief Ron Godwin, PW Supervisor Taylor Keith, Fire Chief Jeremy Haddix

Absent: Recorder Rezin Hudkins

Guests: Logan Alastanos, Zack Dobbins, Ed Steel, Dan Ferrell, Linda Blake, Janet Conrad, Kathy Powell, Shirley Sheets, Rick Lafferty, Cynthia Lafferty, & Charlotte Link

Minutes

- Approval of minutes 11/9/2021 - Council Meeting
- Approval of minutes 11/9/2021 - Ordinance Workshop
- Approval of minutes 11/15/2021 - Special Council Meeting

All approved by unanimous vote after a motion by Charlene Louk and a second Karen Phillips.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Leslie Cummings reported that notifications, from the WV State Tax Department, went to businesses on the 1% sales tax increase as of Jan 1, 2022, as part of Home Rule. Ferrari & Associates from Morgantown has been chosen to audit for FYs 2019 and 2020. Sent to WV State Auditor for approval. The last phase of current sewer project rate increases is now in effect. These will be reflected on the Jan 15, 2022 bills.

We've implemented the WENS system. This is for notifications for the town, such as water emergencies, boil water alerts, etc. There will be a link added to our website for anyone who wants to subscribe.

Approval of Accounts Payable

Leslie explained, there's an error of a double entry - one for Dan's salvage and one for Danny's Door service. Dan's Salvage needs to be removed.

Charlene asked about repeated rental of a bobcat and track loader, and if it would benefit us to making a purchase? Taylor would like to look at this for the new budget year. Passed by unanimous vote after a motion by Charlene Louk and a second by Karen Phillips.

New Business

1. Presentation & Discussion from Thrasher Engineering and Bennett & Dobbins on Phase III Sewer Project - Dan Ferrell (Thrasher Engineering) and Zack Dobbins (Bennett & Dobbins), made a presentation on Phase III Sewer Project. This is an all-grant project. Dan stated when they get into making binding commitments and a PSC waiver, they will ask “where are we now on our bills”. They will look FY 21 (ending in June) to see expenses and that bills, and bond commitments are paid. Zack clarified that when we first looked at this project, we were using numbers from FY 2019. There have been changes since then. Usage has gone down by almost 4 million gallons, causing loss of revenue. Also, municipal bonds are not earning near as much, causing a huge decrease in interest income. Example: they were earning about \$10K per year. This last FY they only earned about \$500. There are also guidelines we must follow for setting aside a percentage of funds in a separate account. If we put the allowed funding in (1/8 of our expenses, this would be devastating to our rates). So, PSC has allowed us to put in 1/3 of this amount, about \$21,000, and fund the project at a lesser rate. This account is very restrictive to only use for emergencies. Our expenses are trending up at 5-6% a year, due to rising costs across the board. Unfortunately, we must compensate. What they have come up with is a 19% increase in rates. This would take a minimum bill of 2000 gal from \$40.04 to \$47.64. If we don’t raise rates and can’t show that we can cover the bonds and fund Senate Bill 234, they’re not going to allow us to move forward with Phase III, and ultimately Phase IV. Both are grant funded projects. Average usage bill is 3400 gallons is \$66.79 (in Jan) to \$79.48. This is comparable to Greater Harrison PSD now.
2. Consideration and approval - Thrasher Engineering Task Order - Route 20 Storm Line Investigation - Removed from agenda until a later date
3. Discussion on Route 20/Buckhannon Pike Storm Sewer Lines- Discuss on Rt 20/Buckhannon Pk storm/sewer lines - Logan Alastanos gave an overview of some current issues with a storm line on Rt 20 and camera work and smoke tests to see what’s going on. Some of the line is in rough shape, some in decent shape. They spoke with DEP and they now funds storm systems. We qualify through our rates for up to one million in grants with a match. If we combine a storm and sewer project, DEP thinks it could be fully grant funded. DEP advised us to submit the project. If approved, this would be our Phase IV project. An agreement was made today during the Sanitary Board meeting. Logan will try to expedite this quicker than normal. Mr. Ed Steele asked questions regarding how this will be handled with private property. Logan addressed this and explained the opinion of the attorneys. Mr. Steele will discuss his issues with council later.
4. Consideration and approval - Bonding of Town officials - this is following up from previous meetings. Leslie reported the cost for a blanket bond to cover all town officials and employees is \$6825.00 per year for \$25,000.00 each. This is through the company who has our liability insurance. Motion made to bond employees and officials approved by unanimous vote after a motion by Charlene Louk and a second Brenda Riley.

Committee Reports:

- Chief of Police Report - N/A
- Fire Chief - Jeremy reported we now have an ISO rating of 2, which takes effect early March. Check with your insurance company for a possible decrease in your rates. The Santa run was very successful and generated more food than the last couple of years.
- Public Works Supervisor Report - N/A
- Engineer Report - Logan reported regarding water, the USDA application is open. We are getting information uploaded. We can complete this once the audits are done. This is for the water system upgrade. Zack recommends getting the 2021 audit on the books too, as this information will be needed also.
- Code Enforcement Report - Robert Leonard has been working for us part time. He is fully certified and works for Harrison County and Stonewood. We are trying to hire a FT CE Officer.
- Other Committee Reports-N/A

Public Comment- Cynthia Lafferty asked that when issues are brought up in council meetings or if someone takes an issue to city hall, that it be addressed. Issues have been ignored, causing problems with residents' property. She acknowledged the curb in front of her home has been fixed, but was ignored for a long time, causing their steps to deteriorate. Mayor Maxson confirmed we are trying to be more proactive.

Adjournment @ 7:08

Respectfully submitted,

Rezin Davis Hudkins IV, Recorder

Sam Maxson, Mayor