

**Town of Alberta
Council Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2016**

The Alberta Town Council held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 9, 2016 at 7:30 PM in the Town Office with Vice Mayor Janet Waller presiding.

Council Members Present:

Janet Waller, Vice Mayor
William Holmes
Thomas Mabry
Diane Ashley

Council Members Absent:

Ryan Lafoon
Jeanette Moore
Harriett Johnson

Town Residents/Visitors Present:

Sheriff Brian Roberts, Attorney Joe Whitby, Editor of Newspaper: Sylvia Allen, Chad Short, Wes Ruffin , Mary Markle, Karla Martindale, Aubrey “Buddy” Hyde, Brad Lambert, George Daniel, Bill Hudson, Elizabeth Burns, Officer Mike Brown, and Town Clerk Kerry Baker

Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

Vice Mayor Janet Waller called the meeting to order then asked for approval of the agenda. A motion was made by Diane Ashley and seconded by William Holmes. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes and Bills List

Vice Mayor Waller called for tabling approving the minutes from April 11, 2016 and the bills list due to council has not had a chance to read over the minutes or the bills list due to they received the information right before the meeting.

Town Residents and Visitors Comments

Brad Lambert- Tax payor and he would like to see Council cut out personal property tax and real estate tax- he feels like residents aren’t getting anything. Doesn’t think town needs anyone in the office for more than 4 hours per week. We have no sewer or water billing to do. The only thing the town provides is a great part time policeman.

Chad Short with Meherrin River Forest Products- Don Bright was unable to be here so he is speaking on behalf of him and his employer. Had a lot of wet weather- complaints about mud in road- putting in concrete pad to reduce mud- 60 day project- costing the mill \$60,000.00. We provide money to the town through taxes and licenses. Please bear with us. Spoke with VDOT and we clean the road twice daily. Any questions or concerns please feel free to stop by to speak with Don Bright.

Karla Martindale- Previous resident and council member of Alberta. She is concerned for the Town. Seeing items in the paper and things going on. Asking you as Council to please put aside your personal differences and work together. "The Town is not about you." "The Town is about everyone who lives here." "Please work out whatever it is. You are running into dangerous territory. You need to come together for the sake of the Town."

Vice Mayor Waller stated at this time she would like to ask Sheriff Roberts some questions and so she began by stating she understood from Officer Brown that Sheriff Roberts runs inmate crews to cut grass around the county and she was asking Sheriff Roberts could he do that for the Town of Alberta?

Sheriff Roberts stated he runs 2-3 crews out of the jail along with part time staff to oversee the crews. They specialize in jobs such as grass cutting. The inmates cut all the counties grass including majority of volunteer fire and rescue operations- 34 sites from April 1 – October 31st- 5 days a week. The County owns the equipment and Sheriff Roberts oversees the operations. He has budget for this and runs it like the other 8 budgets that he runs.

Sheriff Roberts said he would need to do an assessment of the property to see how many man hours to do it and how extensive the properties are to cut. Challenge is figuring out the cost-officer to oversee, fuel and assess the properties and come back to give the Town a business plan. He has not been given a budget from the County to take on the towns. He has other crews that go out and they specialize in Construction – 5 days a week. Any job as simple as painting to building walls. We have skills such as plumbing and electrical but don't get into deep serious or complicated jobs. The crews have fixed 63 plumbing leaks at the Student Thompson Center- church cemeteries – civic groups- Mayfield Rec Center, Brunswick Dixie Youth- Gazebo- Government or non-profit. Has no problem partnering with the Town of Alberta but need to figure out the details of where all of the town's property is that would need to be cut. We need to get Sheriff Roberts the details as soon as possible.

Vice Mayor Waller thanked Sheriff Roberts and she questioned him further: She stated our police department is 35% of our budget. She stated this is entirely too much for part time. Asking Sheriff Roberts what did he have to offer the Town of Alberta. Vice Mayor Waller stated she was speaking for herself only- not anyone else. Sheriff Roberts said it was a touchy subject since Officer Brown was present, but the Town of Alberta falls under the umbrella of the County of Brunswick. As Sheriff- everything Officer Brown doesn't do- we do. More man power is better than less. Sheriff Roberts is responsible for helping Officer Brown so it's Sheriff Roberts job to take care of Brunswick with or without Office Brown. He stated he could not assign a deputy to sit in Alberta. He stated he did contractual service. A flat rate of \$30.00 per hour.

Vice Mayor and Council thanked Sheriff Roberts for his input.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Vice Mayor Waller called on for the committee reports beginning with the Public Safety Report.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:

Diane Ashley stated there were complaints in the town of brown water on Second Street and Sanford Street. Mary Markle discovered someone had a tank to wash cars and possibly was using the hydrants causing this problem. Two letters received from Lawrenceville and contaminates were found in water. Lead levels are acceptable. Stagnant water behind Verizon building- snake problems-Town Attorney Joe Whitby working on letter to Verizon to resolve stagnant water problem.

Stagnant water will breed mosquitoes leading to other problems. Need to spray or put something in the water to kill the mosquitoes.

Animal Control problem- Diane Ashley stated people are dropping off cats and dogs at her house that are pregnant and she can't afford to continue to feed and care for the animals. She needs some help finding homes for these animals. Melissa Parrish's sister in law, Nancy said Dr. Dennis will spade but would like a donation. Mary Markle stated there was a place in Danielstown that takes in strays and it doesn't cost anything. It is a sanctuary for cats and dogs. She would look further into this information and get back with Ms. Ashley.

Fire Department Report:

37 calls for April. Couldn't answer all the calls due to understaffed. Please see attached report submitted by Aubrey "Buddy" Hyde.

Police Department Report:

See attached report submitted by Officer Brown.

Administrative & Finance/Economic Development:

Diane Ashley is filling in for Harriett Johnson until she returns from her illness.

A bill is being researched by Ms. Baker that have never been seen before and she will report at the next meeting what she finds out.

Old Business

HB 1,000 Tax Bill Committee: Diane Ashley said committee has not yet met- Susan Hayes, JoAnne Wathall, William Holmes and herself. Research hasn't been done and committee needs to meet.

Southern Software: Vice Mayor signed off on the quote of \$1,850.00 which includes training and the software upgrade. This includes 6 business licenses. Training will begin this Thursday and Friday May 12, and 13, 2016. A representative will train Kerry, Toni, Ms. Ashley and Ms. Burns. Ms. Ashley checked to make sure the macros were correct with them and they are correct.

Announcements or Handouts- See packet- (please disregard this) – not applicable. Mistake by the Town Clerk.

New Business

Vice Mayor spoke and said she had some things to say:

“Tonight I am presenting you with a copy of the proposed 2016-2017 budget to review and approve. You will note I have composed this budget from several different comparisons. I have compared the year to date income and expenses to last year’s year to date income and expenses and I have also averaged the past five years of income and expense to come up with what appears our budget should be barring any unforeseen circumstances. There are no real major changes over the past year except for the extra money for the antenna rent which I have adjusted for and no major changes over the past 5 years with the items that left in the budget at this time. I have not included any items that have been deleted (such as items related to water and sewer and any major projects).

We do need to address the items I have made notes next to. It appears we have been expending funds for fire and police “grant funds”, yet we have received no grant monies. We are also supporting a large police budget and are only getting a minimum return for our money. We need the committee to address ways to better offset the budget or decrease spending.

You cannot spend public tax money on items that do not benefit the general public for items such as fire, rescue, trash pick-up, etc. If you want to entertain you cannot hire private groups to perform. You have to follow the procedures for competitive bids and the entertainment must be for the welfare of the public.

The Vice Mayor stated she consulted with a very good friend and they would like to stay anonymous. She stated she tried to meet with Ms. Ashley and she thought we needed to close the office if we couldn’t pass this budget. She stated she wanted everyone to know what she did and how she came up with the budget she is presenting.

(Please see attachments that Vice Mayor Waller presented to Council)

There began a lengthy discussion about Vice Mayor’s Budget and the budget presented on May 2nd, 2016. She stated she wanted her Budget part of the record (please see attachment)

The Tentative Budget to advertise will be the one that was presented on May 2, 2016 at the Budget Meeting. You can’t add to the budget but you can always decrease the budget.

Vice Mayor asked, Is there a Motion to vote on which budget to advertise?

William Holmes made a Motion to use the Budget submitted on May 2nd.

Another discussion ensued concerning the Special Events amount in the budget. George Daniel said you can’t have parties for public at tax payer’s expense .Karla Martindale stated that special events is usually operated by volunteers and by donations by residents and community

businesses. The town supplies the Venue and the Insurance and nothing else. Diane Ashley asked why has it always been there and no one ever spoke up to Council before.

Diane Ashley seconded the motion to advertise the May 2nd budget and the motion was carried with Vice Mayor abstaining.

CLOSED SESSION- PERSONNEL:

Town Clerk asked, "Is there a motion that pursuant to VA Code Section 2.1-344, Section A.3, we go into a closed meeting for the purpose of PERSONNEL? Diane Ashley made the motion and Mr. William Holmes seconded it.

CLOSED SESSION RECONVENE CERTIFICATION

Town Clerk asked, "Do each of you certify that to the best of your knowledge, that the only matters discussed during the closed session just concluded were those both lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements and identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened?

Ms. Waller- yes

Mr. Holmes- yes

Ms. Ashley- yes

Mr. Mabry- yes

OPEN SESSION:

Diane Ashley made a motion to make Vice Mayor Waller Mayor. Waller stated she did not want it. A long discussion ensued and many comments from Council and Residents that were present asking Vice Mayor Waller to please reconsider for the good of the town. Mr. Whitby stated one has to be appointed within the 60 day period and at the next meeting in June it would be past the 60 days. Community needs to have stability and to be solid- everyone knows you and will support you said one resident. Another resident stated, this will send a bad signal to the community if you don't take this position. After more discussion, Vice Mayor Waller ACCEPTED the position. The Motion was seconded by William Holmes and the motion was unanimously agreed upon.

Vice Mayor Waller stated : "Y'all need to appoint a Vice-Mayor and it was agreed to table it until next meeting.

Town Clerk Kerry Baker wanted to see if it would be possible for Council to accept the bills list and William Holmes made the Motion to pay the bills as listed and Diane Ashley seconded it and it was unanimously agreed upon.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Mayor Waller called for an

adjournment. William Holmes motioned and Thomas Mabry seconded to adjourn the meeting.

TOWN CLERK

MAYOR