

TOWN OF BATH COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, January 3, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER: @ 5:30pm by Mayor.
2. ROLL CALL: Scott Merki (X) Susan Webster (X) Chris Chapman (X) Rose Jackson (A) Elizabeth Skinner (X) Greg Forney (X) Rick Weber (A) Quorum present.
3. REVIEW OF MINUTES: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 20, 2022 were approved by Common Consent.
4. PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL: Businesswoman Regina Gorsuch addressed Council with concerns about divisions that have developed in the business community. She offered suggestions on reconciliation and hopes for good will. Sue Evans presented Council with a letter (attached) requesting more public safety for her property, herself and her employees due to animosities toward her by a neighboring business. TBS President Stephanie Rebant expressed her desire for peaceful coexistence and economic prosperity. The Mayor permitted discussion by meeting attendees. Mayor Merki and Councilmen made statements reiterating their positions encouraging resolution of disputes by recognized methods, disavowing negativity in action and speech and explaining the limitations of small-town government in civil and criminal legal action. Councilwoman Skinner raised a point of order requesting that the meeting be returned to the regular agenda.
5. COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR: The Mayor announced that the WV Center on Budget and Policy was meeting in the County Commission Room at 6:30 on this day and that all are invited.

COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS

1. BATH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (BDA): President Lisa Stine reported that the BDA is moving forward with projects including a late spring event in town. The next meeting is January 18th in the County Commission Room.
2. PARKS & REC: The next meeting is January 18th in the Courthouse.
3. PLANNING COMMISSION (PC): The next meeting is January 5, 2023. The Comprehensive Plan Assessment sub-committee continues to meet. President Landon has attended many organization's meetings in the community to learn about their roles and functions. He would like to see more group leaders attend Bath Council meetings.
4. RAIL/TRAIL: The progress report has been submitted to the Town office (attached). Rebecca MacLeod reported that the remediation may have a cost overrun of \$7,000 or more.
5. STREETScape: Committee Co-Chair Pete Brown has submitted reports to the Town office (attached). The Committee is waiting on a Notice to Proceed on design.

6. TRAIN DEPOT: Chairman Webster reported that work progress continues on the interior rehab of the Depot. The next Owners Meeting will be January 11th at 1pm.
7. LANDMARK COMMISSION (HLC): No report at this time. President John Mason reminded Council that the next HLC meeting is January 12th at 2pm.
8. CLERK/RECORDER REPORT: No reports at this time.
9. FINANCE: Chairwoman Webster delivered the following bills for approval.
 - (a) Town of Bath \$12,944.04- Motion to approve: Forney/Chapman- Carried
 - (b) BSWW \$5,255.96 – Motion to approve: Forney/Chapman- Carried
 - (c) Hotel/Motel Disbursements-\$28,071.64- Motion to approve: Forney/Chapman- Carried
10. TREE BOARD: No report at this time. Next meeting is January 18th at 4pm.
11. GRANT: Chairman Forney and Councilman Chapman will meet to discuss ARPA funds.
12. PUBLIC SAFETY: No report at this time.
13. CEMETERY: Chairman Skinner explained that Gen. Barstow's headstone has been repaired and set up in Greenway Cemetery. The Morgan County Historic and Genealogical Society has donated \$1,200.00 for the educational sign to be placed at this site. A ceremony to dedicate Barstow's headstone is being planned with historian and author Steve French.
14. PUBLIC WORKS: Christmas tree pick up has started.
15. ORDINANCE: Councilman Chapman reported that the Committee is working on updating the personnel manual. The Committee is studying a draft ordinance produced by the Tree Board. Legal assistance may be sought due to private property concerns with the ordinance as currently written.
16. BERKELEY SPRINGS WATER WORKS: The next meeting is January 9th at 4:30pm.
17. MOTION TO ADJOURN: Approved by Common Consent.

Attest:

Mayor Scott E. Meek

Recorder Shirley Jen

Carmeletta Sue Evans
Mountain Laurel Artisans
1 N. Washington Street
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

December 27, 2022

Town of Bath
271 Wilkes Street
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

RE: SAFETY ISSUES

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

On Sunday, December 18, 2022 as Charlie and I were pulling into a parking space in front of our shop, a man leaving the Fairfax Coffee Shop got into a red pickup truck across the street. I got out of our vehicle and proceeded to wait at the door while Charlie was getting some things out of the back seat of the truck. The man in the red truck rolled his window down as he waited at the traffic light, yelling something to Charlie, referring to us as "fuckups". The man then looked at me and said "Is that a woman or a dog? Maybe it should just be put down.", then drove away howling until he was out of sight.

Charlie received a threatening email from a man in New York State whom he has never met and two rounds of emails have gone out to our artisans (over 30 of them) from David Abruzzi and B. Crittenden Freeman, in attempts to destroy our business, the most recent round being sent out December 21 by Mr. Freeman. The emails to our artisans encouraged them to take action against us based on lies about us.

Additionally, Charlie and I were specifically named several times in the article stirring hatred against our community published by Southern Poverty Law Center, an extreme leftist hate group which is notorious for inciting violence against anyone who does not share their political views.

Charlie is now carrying a gun because we no longer feel safe on the streets of Berkeley Springs. I fear for the safety of my employees and have asked them to park as close to our shop as possible so that I can watch them to their vehicles.

Given the climate towards us, I am asking that the Town work with us regarding parking arrangements for our employees. We are willing to pay a monthly fee for access to metered parking on Fairfax Street to allow our female employees access to parking within sight of our shop. I do not want my employees to have to walk across Washington Street to a dark parking lot, out of my sight in the evenings, and it's difficult for them to get out of the shop to put money in a meter every two hours, which would also put them on the street more often.

I am asking that you work with us until the climate of this town changes and the attacks on us and our business ends. Otherwise, we have absolutely no choice but to close our door and walk away. We need our employees and I need to know they are safe.

Sincerely,



Sue Evans
Mountain Laurel Artisans.