

**Council Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**August 12, 2024 - 6:30 p.m. - 502 Front St. E, Coeburn, VA**

**Attendees:**

Upon roll call, all members of council were present: Cathy Sharpe - Town Clerk/Treasurer, and William Sturgill - Town Attorney, were also present. Jimmy Williams - Town Manager, was not present.

**Call to Order:**

Mayor Deventae Mooney called the meeting to order. The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance took place before the public hearing that preceded this meeting.

**Public Expression:**

Mr. Garry Taylor, 137 Central Street, addressed Council concerning the new coffee shop, Guest River Coffee. Mr. Taylor urged everyone in town to visit the coffee shop and said that the ladies running the shop are very nice people.

Mr. Taylor also asked about an abandoned house on May Avenue near his home. He said the people appear to have left their home and the porch is full of garbage. Mr. Taylor said there is also another house near that one and it appears abandoned as well. He said the ceiling is falling in. Mr. Taylor said he is mentioning the houses to Council in hopes that the town can try to contact the owners and get them to clean up the properties.

Public Expression was closed.

**Response to Public Expression:**

There was no Response to Public Expression.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

Vice Mayor Sharon Still made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Mr. Joe Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

**Reports:**

Fire Department

There was no representative from the fire department present.

### Police Department

Mr. Travis Mullins, Police Chief, reported that the printer went down, and he was unable to bring Council a printed report. He advised there is a work order in to fix the printer. Chief Mullins said the call volume is staying consistent, and the department is adapting to the new SOMA system. He said it is going well, but they are working out a few kinks.

Chief Mullins reported there has been an increase in community service workers. The workers have pressure washed the police department and cleaned up around the building. Twenty-one bags of trash have been collected from the roadside. Mr. Mullins reported three community service workers will be working five days a week starting August 13, 2024.

Chief Mullins met with the Department of Social Services, HUD, and the Homeless Shelter to coordinate resources to assist the homeless population in town. He reported there has been a decline in the number of calls concerning the homeless. He said five previously homeless people have been able to find housing, a couple of the homeless were incarcerated and there is an ongoing effort to help the homeless population.

Mr. Mullins said there has been a grant completed with the purchase of new furniture, new office equipment and storage for the department. He said the purchase has made a big improvement in the appearance of the department.

Chief Mullins will be going to Bristol to sign papers to accept a grant from the DMV and find out how much the town will be given.

Mr. Jeff Kiser said that he appreciates everything Chief Mullins does for the town. He feels that the interactions Chief Mullins has with the citizens of the town are a plus and he has heard lots of positive feedback about Mr. Mullins. Mr. Kiser thanked Chief Mullins for getting the DMV grant back after a two-year suspension.

### Water Plant

There was no representative from the water plant present.

### Town Manager

Mr. Jimmy Williams, Town Manager, was absent.

### Public Works

Mr. Jeff Livingston, Public Works Superintendent, reported lights were put in at the police department, sewer lines were jetted on Starla Lane and Front Street West, a water line was repaired at the depot, a meter was relocated on Mills Street and a meter was installed at the Job Corps. A leak was repaired on Spring Street and brush was cleared on Flag Hill. Mr. Livingston is working with the Job Corps to get the staining done at the Farmers Market, fixing the concrete at the swimming pool and doing some electrical work.

Mr. Mooney asked Mr. Livingston if he knew if the paver could be repaired. Mr. Livingston said he is waiting to hear from the mechanic.

Vice Mayor Still asked if the chlorine leak has been repaired at the pool. Mr. Livingston said it has been repaired.

Lane Group

There was no representative from The Lane Group present.

Treasurer

Ms. Cathy Sharpe, Clerk/Treasurer, reported a posted cash balance of \$126,807.44 as of 8/8/2024. She reported \$41,363.79 in outstanding checks, accounts payable due in the amount of \$11,657.06 and interim accounts payable in the amount of \$159,436.32. After deducting the accounts payable due and outstanding checks, the reconciled cash balance was \$73,786.59.

Ms. Sharpe presented meeting minutes for July 8, 2024, regular meeting and July 22, 2024, workshop meeting.

Ms. Sharpe reported three additional deposits since reports had been presented for the meeting. Thursday's deposit was \$18,033.68, Friday's deposit was \$5,434.39 and today's deposit was \$13,598.36 making the combined cash availability \$110,853.02.

Mr. Still asked if Southern Software completed the update. Ms. Sharpe said that the update has been completed.

Mr. Kiser expressed concern about the cash availability. He feels that the spending needs to be watched or the town could be back in a position of worrying if the bills could be paid. Mr. Kiser cautioned the departments to only buy what is necessary.

Sharon Still made a motion to approve the accounts payable due as presented. Mr. Joe Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Sharon Still made a motion to approve the interim accounts payable as presented. Joe Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Sharon Still made a motion to approve the July 8, 2024, regular meeting minutes as presented. Deventae Mooney seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes. Jeff Kiser abstained.

Sharon Still made a motion to approve the July 22, 2024, workshop meeting minutes as presented. Deventae Mooney seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes. Jeff Kiser abstained.

Attorney

Mr. William Sturgill, Town Attorney, reported that he has the ordinance ready and it is on the agenda to be discussed later in the meeting.

**New Business:**

- A. Coeburn Downtown Properties - Mr. Jeff Proulex addressed Council about the state of the town. He advised that what he has to say is in no way a personal attack against anyone on the town Council. Mr. Proulex said he is concerned about the look of the town. As Mr. Proulex has gone through town, he has noted that the creek needs to be cleaned out to prevent flooding and damage to the properties in town. He said the buildings downtown are looking run down and unkempt, windows need to be cleaned and properties need to be kept up. He advised several properties currently have damaged or missing awnings, garbage laying about and tarps over the windows.

Mr. Proulex said the sidewalks and streets need some repair, the lights that line the sidewalks are dirty and covered in cobwebs and some lights need to be replaced. He also noticed that the farmers market is often used as a drop-off site for old clothes that anyone can go through and take. Mr. Proulex noted that the post office is even in disrepair and people gather there during the night, which is unsafe. He said this type of environment invites homeless people and devalues property.

Mr. Proulex asked Council to read his Facebook post and pay attention to the comments the community left on that post and suggested that Council take time to google the Broken Window Theory. Mr. Proulex noted that Coeburn does have issues with crime and people are afraid. He said people who live outside of town limits also have concerns and a voice in what happens in the town.

Mr. Proulex is concerned about who holds the responsibility for maintaining and cleaning streets and sidewalks. After contacting other towns in the county, Mr. Proulex learned that other towns are utilizing their public works or parks and recreation departments to clean streets and sidewalks and suggested that these be put on regularly scheduled maintenance calendars. Mr. Proulex said he is tired of hearing there is not enough workers and suggested utilizing the Job Corps, Camp 18, Civic and School Groups and the Wise Works program.

Mr. Proulex compiled a list of properties that are in disrepair and asked Council what they plan to do to improve the town and asked them to look at the Community Comparison Board he had displayed comparing the state of Coeburn to other towns in the County. Mr. Proulex suggested that the town involve the Wise County Building and Zoning Department to have these properties condemned, placing liens on properties with delinquent taxes and using ordinances to hold property owners responsible. The Coeburn Improvement Association invited Council to a sit-down meeting with concerned citizens on September 10, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., location to be determined.

Sharon Still said that the next Council meeting will be held August 26, 2024, and she hopes to have a written response and address the concerns as much as she is able to. Ms. Still reminded everyone that it is often a slow process to work through red tape to take care of issues that the town faces. She said she lives in town and is not immune to what she sees when she goes out and it is a community effort. Ms. Still is encouraged by the community involvement and appreciates people coming to the meetings and their willingness to learn how the town works.

- B. Loitering Prohibition Ordinance 24-001 - Mayor Mooney read the ordinance during the public hearing. Mr. Jeff Kiser said he doesn't see camping covered in the ordinance. Mr. William Sturgill, Town Attorney, said the wording of the ordinance does not mention camping in the specific wording but the ordinance does contain language that covers camping. He said the ordinance falls in line with the Supreme Court ruling allowing towns to prohibit camping.

Sharon Still made a motion to accept the Loitering Prohibition Ordinance 24-001. Joe Still seconded the motion. A roll call vote resulted as follows:

Carles Collins - Aye  
Jeff Kiser - Aye  
Deventae Mooney - Aye  
Joe Still - Aye  
Sharon Still - Aye

- C. Delinquent Tax Report - Town Clerk/Treasurer, Cathy Sharpe, submitted a delinquent tax report for Council to approve before names of people owing taxes is published in the local newspaper. Ms. Sharpe said the amounts and names will change as payments come in and interest goes on. The warning must be published in two editions of the paper, the website, and in the town hall twenty-eight days before publication. Council will have to approve posting the warning and publishing the list.

Sharon Still made a motion to post the warning of publication of the names of people who owe delinquent taxes in the next two editions of the Coalfield Progress. Joe Still seconded the motion. After twenty-eight days a delinquent list will be published. The motion resulted in all Ayes.

- D. Quote from Mid-State Equipment for Green Trash Cans - The trash cans have been distributed and supplies are low. Ms. Still asked if the cans make pickup easier. Mr. Yusef Thornton informed Council people are getting their four cans but only filling them partially and it is resulting in more time spent emptying the cans. There are also bags of trash still being put on the ground beside the cans. Ms. Still said that needs to come to a stop per the trash can agreement. She asked if one hundred cans were necessary. Mr. Jeff Kiser said if there is an ordinance requiring cans, then having cans available is a must and asked if American Recovery funds could be used for the purchase.

Sharon Still made a motion to purchase 200 trash cans from Mid-State Equipment for a price of no more than \$15,000.00 using ARPA funds. Jeff Kiser seconded the motion.

A roll call vote resulted as follows:

Carles Collins - Aye  
Jeff Kiser - Aye  
Deventae Mooney - Aye  
Joe Still - Aye  
Sharon Still - Aye

- E. VERO Flow Residential Meter Tester - Mr. Jeff Livingston said this is a meter tester to check and see that meters are working correctly by measuring the water that goes through the meter. Mr. Mooney asked if there is an issue with the meters. Mr. Livingston said there are some meters that need checked. Ms. Still asked if these two are the only two companies that sell this item. Mr. Livingston said yes. Mr. Kiser asked how many meters still need to be replaced. Mr. Matthew Robinette said that meters aren't replaced until they go bad. Mr. Kiser said the meters from Toms Creek to the red light and into town were replaced recently. Mr. Joe Still said that he was thinking the grant covered about 700 meters. Mr. Livingston said the older meters weren't under warranty and are having issues. Mr. Kiser said at his last restaurant the meter wasn't reading correctly and the town tested the meter, having a policy of not charging if it was faulty but allowing the customer to incur charges if they asked for testing and there was no issue. He asked if the town was looking at testing meters at random or at the request of customers. Mr. Livingston said that meters that have been in the ground for a while need to be tested. He added that meters can also be tested by the request of customer or if there is an unusually high reading. Ms. Still said that she agrees with Mr. Kiser that there should be charges for the town going out to check those meters.

Meters can be reused and would be able to be tested before being installed. Sometimes water in the meter box will affect the reading of the meter. Mr. Livingston and Mr. Robinette explained how the tool would be used to check the meter at the shop. Council decided to table the issue and add it to old business at the next meeting. This will allow time to research and understand both the process and the tester.

### **Old Business:**

- A. Service Agreement for Solid Waste Collection - Two hundred additional trash cans will be ordered. Mr. Mooney said he understands that people can have up to four trash cans but is interested in knowing what criteria determines how many trash cans customers are requesting. He asked if people are getting four just because they can. Mr. Matthew Robinette and Mr. Yusef Thornton said not everyone is getting four. Mr. Mooney suggested people are getting the extra cans because the service agreement states that the cans can't be packed too tightly. Ms. Still said if the garbage truck crew sees that cans are only partially filled, they could suggest to customers that it is possible that four

cans are not needed. It is taking longer to empty cans with the additional cans. Ms. Still reminded public works that they are paid by the hour and it's the same amount of trash. There is a problem with one of the trash trucks and will need to discuss it with Mr. Williams.

Sharon Still made a motion to accept the Service Agreement for Solid Waste Collection as presented. Mr. Carles Collins seconded the motion.

A roll call vote resulted as follows:

Carles Collins - Aye  
Jeff Kiser - Aye  
Deventae Mooney - Aye  
Joe Still - Aye  
Sharon Still - Aye

**Closed Session:**

Mayor Deventae Mooney made a motion to enter into closed session in accordance with Virginia Code §2.2-3711 (A1) to discuss performance of Town of Coeburn personnel, which resulted in all Ayes.

Immediately following closed session, Ms. Cathy Sharpe read "Certification of Closed Meeting", which is attached to these minutes and made a part hereof. A roll call vote certifying that only business matters that were identified in the motion convening were discussed or considered.

A roll call vote resulted as follows:

Carles Collins - Aye  
Jeff Kiser - Aye  
Deventae Mooney - Aye  
Joe Still - Aye  
Sharon Still - Aye

There was no action resulting from Closed Session.

**Council Comments and Concerns:**

Carles Collins - Mr. Collins had no comments or concerns.

Jeff Kiser - Mr. Kiser said it was nice to see so many people attend the meeting and wished that all meetings had such an attendance. He stated that the more people who are involved with the town the better off everyone is. Mr. Kiser thanked everyone for all the work they do and reminded everyone that the Guest River Rally is coming up and urged everyone to make plans to attend.

Joe Still - Mr. Still had no comments or concerns.

Sharon Still - Ms. Still thanked everyone for their work for the town and thanked Council for the work they do behind the scenes. She echoed Mr. Kiscr's remarks about the attendance of the meeting. Ms. Still said a better community is made from informed citizens.

Deventae Mooney - Mr. Mooney said that he appreciated seeing a crowd at the meeting and said it takes the efforts of everyone to make the community be what it needs to be.

**Adjournment:**

Mayor Deventae Mooney made a motion to adjourn this meeting. Vice Mayor Sharon Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Sharpe  
Attest: Cathy Sharpe, Clerk

Deventae J. Mooney  
Deventae Mooney, Mayor