

Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 14, 2025 - 6:30 p.m. - 502 Front St. E, Coeburn, VA

Attendees:

Upon roll call, the following members of council were present: Carles Collins, Deventae Mooney, Joe Still, and Lisa Woodruff. Sharon Still was absent. Jimmy Williams - Town Manager, Cathy Sharpe - Clerk/Treasurer, and William Sturgill - Town Attorney, were also present.

Call to Order:

Mayor Deventae Mooney called the meeting to order. Mr. Shane Wallace, Pastor, Coeburn Methodist Church, gave the invocation. The group remained standing for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Deventae Mooney.

Public Expression:

Mr. Jeff Collins, 202 Alfred Avenue, requested a copy of the budget and discussed the ordinance about cleaning up properties. Mr. Collins thanked Town Manager, Jimmy Williams, for all his help. Mr. Collins said Mr. Williams has done more to help him than anyone in the past seventeen years. He asked what Council's plan is to address problem properties after the owner is notified. Mayor Mooney paused Mr. Collins' time to let him know that Town Attorney, William Sturgill, will be presenting a new ordinance tonight. Mr. Sturgill said the ordinance has been updated to comply with the current code. Mr. Collins asked about the details of the budget. Mr. Mooney said Mr. Collins could get a copy of this year's budget with year-to-date spending on it from Mr. Williams and informed Mr. Collins that work on the new budget has just begun.

Ms. Lisa Odle, 9237 Forest Road, stated that she felt the last meeting was a disaster and that Council's behavior toward Mr. Jeff Proulex was unprofessional. Ms. Odle said she does not know Town Manager, Jimmy Williams, but feels that comments made during meetings indicate he is not always getting things done in a timely manner. Ms. Odle said she feels like Mr. Proulex has the best interests of the town in mind and that he has been working with his committee. Ms. Odle feels Council should apologize to Mr. Proulex.

Ms. Diana Bond, 4903 Kingbird Road, shared with Council that she and her niece walked through town and saw many rundown buildings and trash. Ms. Bond was interested in finding out if there will be something done about these problems and if there are plans to fix the sidewalks that are in disrepair. She said that in her opinion, the sidewalk from the depot to Frosty Bossie is in dangerously bad condition and is an accident waiting to happen. Ms. Bond is aware that these issues have been discussed and is wondering how the issues will be resolved. She is also aware of the town's financial situation and stated that Rome wasn't built in a day but it's time to make a start. Ms. Bond thanked Mr. Jeff Proulex and his wife, Ms. Chantay Proulex, for their efforts to improve the town.

Ms. Jennifer Mathieson, 110 Lincoln Street, addressed Council concerning the narrow roadside near the turnoff to Wise Mountain on Route 72. Ms. Mathieson informed Council the roadside is used by people walking, or using wheelchairs, and it does not have a sufficient roadside area of sidewalk to ensure their safety. The narrow area forces people to walk into the roadway as they pass by that area and is a safety issue, particularly at night when visibility is an issue. Ms. Mathieson asked Council if they could look into a grant to fund improvements to the sidewalk in this area.

Ms. Pat Gass, 4708 Hall Orchard Road, said she had been looking into how the Town of Coeburn operates and has been looking over the charter and the job descriptions. Ms. Gass questioned Council, wanting to know where the meeting times and dates are posted, stating that according to her research meetings are supposed to be posted in three specific places and asked where those places are. Ms. Gass also asked who is responsible for keeping the ordinances up to date to ensure that the ordinances are current. She stated that the charter calls for five Council members with three members being current. Ms. Gass questioned how change can be made if the same people continue to make the laws and rules governing the town.

Ms. Ilene Couch and Mr. Buddy Couch, 613 Front Street, commended Vice Mayor Sharon Still for her pictures of Coeburn that she posted on Facebook and said the town looks good when it is decorated for special occasions. Ms. Couch also commended Mr. Jeff Proulex for the pictures he posted, stating that those pictures show the town as it is seen every day. Ms. Couch went on to mention that she can see many signs of disrepair and things that need maintenance. Ms. Couch said Coeburn needs cleaning and maintenance, mentioning the Clean Up Day, April 26th, and inviting everyone to come to that event.

Mr. Paul Sterling, 13010 Crab Orchard Road, stated he has only lived in the area for four years. Mr. Sterling discussed his efforts to promote his business of ballroom and country western dancing lessons. He is having difficulty garnering interest. Mr. Mooney suggested Mr. Sterling bring information about the lessons he offers to town hall.

Mr. Jeff Proulex, 847 Laurel Avenue, stated he has no vendetta against anyone and no political ambitions, but has come forward to address Council about his vision to clean up the town. He said he would like to continue the vision for the town that leaders had in the past and would like to know the vision plan of this leadership. Mr. Proulex feels he was interrupted, criticized and dismissed at the last meeting for calling out the lack of support from Council and refusal of Council to deal with staff performance issues. He said there are two sides to every story and the people who support him see things one way, and the people who support Council see things another way. Mr. Proulex said his goal is to have Council hold accountable people who don't do their jobs. He asks that the Town Manager be responsible for implementing a quarterly maintenance schedule for the town that includes all sidewalk pressure washing and cleaning, cleaning the lamp posts, street sweeping, maintaining the depot and farmers market area, and maintaining the parks. Mr. Proulex suggested using outside laborers for jobs if necessary and called upon business and building owners to clean and maintain their properties. Mr. Proulex discussed the need for performance evaluations, transparency and accountability. Mr. Proulex was made Chair of the Coeburn Revitalization Committee and said that the Coeburn Revitalization Committee will meet in the late spring. He said the committee is gathering information in order to do their job properly.

Mr. Proulex said going about the process of revitalizing the town needs to be done in the right way or there could be long-term consequences. He said that he thinks everyone can agree Coeburn is one of the most beautiful towns in Southwest Virginia when it is decorated for a special occasion, but there are areas that need work all over the town. Mr. Proulex exceeded his five-minute limit and his wife, Chantay Proulex, continued.

Ms. Chantay Proulex, 847 Laurel Avenue, said there has been some improvement since Mr. Jeff Proulex first approached Council thirteen months ago. Ms. Proulex said the new ordinance is a good start but warned against excuses and being immune to what surrounds us. She asked to implement a plan to have cleaner sidewalks and quarterly maintenance of the historical district area, to hold the Town Manager accountable and give him the resources to do his job to the best of his ability and to place the responsibility for the upkeep of buildings on the property owners. Ms. Proulex said it is important to make the downtown area both clean and safe. She stated cleanliness and safety promote new business and keep property values up. Ms. Proulex also discussed her concern that she had spoken with town employees, and they are scared for their job if they do things without prior permission. Ms. Proulex discussed issues with buildings with broken glass, dogs living inside, and named addresses and owners of buildings that are in disrepair. Ms. Proulex exceeded her time limit and Ms. Kim West continued.

Ms. Kim West, 6002 Hadassah Lane, continued reading the list of properties that need the most upkeep. Ms. West stated that she doesn't see why it's such a problem to keep the town clean and said she doesn't even like to drive through town and usually passes town on the four lane. Ms. West said the town is unsafe and dirty and makes her ashamed to say where she lives. She said Coeburn is known for drugs and is not safe and she doesn't understand why there is a problem making people clean up their property. Ms. West said she hopes Council can get things situated.

Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, 137 Central Street, said she hadn't planned on speaking because she wasn't present at the last meeting and doesn't think that the behavior set a good example for either side, but is concerned for the town. Ms. Taylor lived in Coeburn as a young girl when the buildings were in good repair and business was thriving and can see how it has gone downhill. She said she is ashamed of the town and the store owners that could easily clean their buildings. Ms. Taylor said if the funding is not available to help the town, there could be fundraising done to assist in that effort. She said something must be done to make the town beautiful again.

Ms. Kayleigh Still, 209 Grand Avenue, thanked Council for all the work they do outside of the meetings. Ms. Still stated she is not ashamed to say she lives in the town and feels safe in the town and is walking home from the meeting and is not afraid at all. She said it will take more than Council to change the town; it will need to be a joint effort involving everyone. Ms. Still said the town does a great job given what it has to work with. She said she can see a noticeable difference in the town now compared to years ago when she was in middle school and thanked Council for all they do.

Ms. Tristin Lucero, 820 Laurel Avenue, said she does not feel safe walking in town and works at a business in Coeburn that has had incidents where they were not safe. Ms. Lucero is concerned that the town has a reputation for drugs and people have a negative view of the town.

Public Expression was closed.

Response to Public Expression:

There will be a response to Mr. Jeff Collins' questions about ordinances from the last meeting during Mr. William Sturgill's report.

Approval of the Agenda:

Town Manager, Jimmy Williams, asked to add under New Business (A.) Farmer's Market. Mayor Deventae Mooney made a motion to add under New Business (A.) Farmer's Market Presentation-Emily Whitaker. Ms. Lisa Woodruff seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Deventae Mooney made a motion to add under Old Business (B.) Repairs to Town Hall Roof. Lisa Woodruff seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Deventae Mooney made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Joe Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Resolution

Resolution 2025-007 Recognizing Jocelyn Aldrich - Mayor Mooney read the Resolution aloud to the group assembled recognizing Ms. Aldrich for her individual win in the Triple Jump at the 1A Indoor State Track and Field Competition. The Town of Coeburn is proud of Ms. Aldrich's achievements and the fine way she represents the school and the town. The town congratulates Ms. Aldrich on her win.

Mr. Joe Still made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-007. A roll call vote resulted as follows:

Carles Collins - Aye
Deventae Mooney - Aye
Joe Still - Aye
Lisa Woodruff - Aye

Reports:

Fire Department

There was no representative from the fire department present. Mr. Cliff Hawkins, Chief, provided a monthly activity report and Mayor Mooney went over that with the group. There were 22 incidents, 236 man-hours, and 157 personnel responding and a total of 16 training hours.

Police Department

Mr. Travis Mullins, Police Chief, provided Council with a copy of the report for the month of March. The call volume is consistent, and the department is staying busy. Chief Mullins said the

department worked with the fire department on several calls and thanked the fire department for their assistance. The police department hosted a meeting with the business owners and feels like it went well and opened a dialogue between the businesses and the police department. Chief Mullins participated in the Wise County Career and Tech Advisory Committee. This helps guide students that are interested in a career in law enforcement.

Phase One of the FBI Course has been completed and that course was 100% grant funded. There are two more phases to complete. Chief Mullins said the course is not offered very often in this area. Mr. Mullins has completed and submitted applications for Justice grants and the DMV grant and is waiting to hear about that. The department had 47 hours of community service, primarily around the police department. There was also work done to clean the steps up to the schoolhouse. There are more sidewalk projects that are planned to begin on Wednesday.

Mr. Mullins said the department is aware of several business owners not in compliance with the latest ordinance and is working to contact them before they issue citations. The department has received several complaints about the dogs on Front Street and officers and Animal Control have gone by but contacting the resident that lives in the apartment in the back of the building has been difficult. Chief Mullins has acquired a phone number and has reached out to that individual. He said there are new ordinances to be drafted as issues are identified. He has found additional manpower for Clean Up Day and the department will be on hand for that event.

Mayor Mooney, Chief Mullins, and Town Manager, Jimmy Williams met earlier in the day to discuss some things that need to happen, and Chief Mullins has community service workers that will make it a priority to focus on cleaning the Front Street area. Mr. Mooney said Chief Mullins has done an excellent job since he came into the department. He said all towns have issues with crime and drugs but personally feels safer with all the efforts made by the department under Chief Mullins and thanked the department for all they do.

Town Manager

Mr. Jimmy Williams, Town Manager, reported he had a phone call with LENOWISO about the DHDC grant and the town is waiting to see how DHDC is planning to spend the money. Once that is decided, the ability to apply for a grant will open.

Mr. Williams has been in contact with several businesses in the town and says that about 90% of the businesses are in compliance. The smoke shop across the street from the depot still has the windows covered and will be addressed. Mr. Mooney went over the steps in place to bring the businesses into compliance and thanked Mr. Williams, Chief Mullins, and Mr. William Sturgill for their efforts, and outlined the process of updating ordinances.

Mr. Mooney asked if the flagger training had been completed by the last two employees that needed the training. Mr. Jeff Livingston said that training had been completed. Mr. Mooney asked how the CDL class was going for the employee that was taking that class. Mr. Williams said it went well, and the individual is getting some time in on the trash truck and has the license. Mr. Williams said there is a program with the DMV that allows local governments to get the paperwork

done and drive for the agency after completing the test. He is going to be in contact with the DMV to find out more information about the program.

Mr. Mooney said he met with Mr. Livingston and Mr. Williams about the fountain. A new motor for the fountain is needed and they hope to have that up and running by next week.

Mr. Carles Collins asked if Camp 18 was available one day a week. Mr. Williams said Wednesday is the day that Camp 18 can work in Coeburn.

Public Works

Mr. Jeff Livingston, Public Works Supervisor, reported the sewer line was jetted on Plum Street and Banner, potholes were patched by the football field, a drain was put in at the swimming pool and water lines were repaired on Front Street West. Additionally, sewer lines were repaired on Front Street West and in Banner, leaks were repaired on Foggy Lane and Prater Lane and a drain was put in at Banner. Public works completed 84 work orders.

Mr. Livingston informed Council there are no more of the green trash cans for the town to distribute. He asked Council for a reminder about the trash can policy. Mr. Mooney said there has been no change. He said if the customer has a trash can that the trash truck can pick up, the trash truck crew needs to pick up the can, and the trash must be inside the can. The only exception is cardboard, and that can be placed beside the can.

Mr. Still asked Mr. Livingston if he thought the Job Corps would be able to paint the lamp posts throughout town. Mr. Mooney suggested having the Job Corps paint the clock. Mr. Carles Collins said the gazebo at the pool needs painted as well. Mr. Livingston will speak with Tim and see if that can be done.

Mr. Jimmy Williams took a moment to address concerns people have expressed regarding the amount of work that is being done in the town. He reminded people that the town is run by a minimal number of employees and every absence or vacation impacts the productivity of the town. Business continues despite absences and the employees work hard to carry out the necessary business in the town. Mr. Williams reminded the group there are rules and laws to follow that govern the business of the town and the employees. He also reminded the group that there are laws that must be followed, and he does not want to and will not infringe upon people's constitutional rights.

Mr. Mooney thanked Mr. Livingston for all the work his department does.

The Lane Group

There was no representative from The Lane Group present. Mr. Williams reported that the final okay has been given to utilize the railroad property and bids will begin in July. VRA has done the financial certification and is waiting for the final audit. Mr. Williams is waiting to hear from the auditor as to when the date is set to begin.

Treasurer Report

Ms. Cathy Sharpe, Clerk/Treasurer, reported a posted cash balance of \$210,580.56 as of 4/11/2025. She reported \$98,185.69 in outstanding checks, accounts payable due in the amount of \$4,056.39 and interim accounts payable in the amount of \$197,920.65. After deducting the accounts payable due and outstanding checks, the reconciled cash balance was \$108,338.48.

Ms. Sharpe presented meeting minutes for March 10, 2025, regular meeting and March 24, 2025, workshop meeting.

Ms. Sharpe reported two additional deposits since reports had been presented for the meeting. Friday's deposit was \$3,067.37 and today's deposit was \$6,833.38, making the combined cash availability \$118,239.23.

Mr. Mooney asked about the payment for \$1,012.50. Mr. Williams said that is the price of the repair for the electrical system at the Flatwoods Pump Station.

Mr. Livingston said there is also a pump burned up out there and Buchanan Pump will come out to give an estimate on that replacement.

Mr. Mooney asked about the credit card bill and the charges on the 24th and the 26th more than \$400.00 each at Rural King. Mr. Williams said that it was purchases for filters and DEF for the trash truck, weed eaters and weed eater fuel.

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

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

Joe Still made a motion to approve March 10, 2025, regular meeting minutes as presented. Deventae Mooney seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes. Lisa Woodruff abstained.

Joe Still made a motion to approve March 24, 2025, workshop meeting minutes as presented. Lisa Woodruff seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Attorney Report

Mr. William Sturgill, Town Attorney, handed out copies of the new ordinance discussed earlier and brought up by Mr. Jeff Collins at the last meeting. Mr. Sturgill read the new ordinance and went over the changes of the ordinance. The ordinance covers properties with an excess of trash, and items detrimental to the community. The owners of the property are responsible for removing trash and keeping the yard mowed, and if they fail to do so, they can be notified by the town, and the property can be cleaned by the town and charged to the property owner. Violations will result in fines. The ordinance is in effect as soon as it is adopted and is planned to be voted on at the May 12, 2025, regular meeting. Mr. Sturgill said the ordinance brought up at the last meeting is

still valid and legal. However, the penalties now are more, and the previous ordinance is for vacant lots and this new ordinance will cover any property in the Town of Coeburn, including property that is occupied. The penalties are maximized in the new ordinance. Mr. Sturgill feels this ordinance will be very helpful to the town. Mr. Mooney thanked Mr. Sturgill for his work on the new ordinance.

New Business:

- A. Farmer's Market - Guest River Market - Emily Whitaker - Ms. Whitaker said she hasn't lived in the town long, but her daughter taught school here for twelve years. She said they think it is the best town around and they spend a lot of time in the town. Ms. Whitaker distributed copies of her proposal for the Farmers' Market and informed Council she has fliers available for distribution at the Guest River Coffee Shop. Ms. Whitaker went over her proposal with Council. She and her committee have been meeting and have scheduled the Farmer's Market (Guest River Market) to begin May 2, 2025, from 3pm - 6pm. The first market will have fourteen craft vendors and a few vendors selling plants, along with two food trucks. The goal is to provide access to local produce and goods and to support local businesses. The merchandise will be local produce with non-local produce sales only if no local produce is available. A program will be encouraged every time to bring educational opportunities. The plan is to have a food truck set up at each event. Ms. Whitaker said she will leave dealing with permitting to the town. Ms. Whitaker has set up other food markets in Kentucky and was successful. She said she feels like it is very important for everyone to show up to the Farmer's Market, because just the presence of people influences the success of the market.

Ms. Whitaker mentioned that she walks her dog several times a day safely with no problems in the town and if anything, untoward happens in the town, it is handled well. She said the vendors will pay \$5.00 per market for their space. Ms. Whitaker said she is requesting use of the parking lot and restrooms, assistance with the vendor agreement and food truck approval. Mr. Mooney said Mr. Livingston can assist with some of the set up and have the restrooms open. Mr. Still expressed his excitement for the market. Mr. Mooney mentioned to the group assembled that if they haven't yet met Ms. Whitaker, stop by the coffee shop. Mr. Still asked Mr. Sturgill if he had reviewed the agreement. Mr. Sturgill said he has and is good with however Council wants to proceed.

Joe Still made a motion to approve the proposal to begin the Guest River Market from May 2, 2025, through September 6, 2025. Carles Collins seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Old Business:

- A. July 4th Fireworks - Mr. Williams updated the price of the fireworks and it is now \$9,000.00. There is a delivery charge that may be waived if the town can transport the fireworks, and Mr. Williams will be speaking to Chief Mullins to see if it is legal for the town to do so. The price with the delivery charge will be \$11,700.00. Mr. Mooney knows of a local business that is sponsoring the fireworks in the amount of \$1,000.00. There is

still work ongoing to get sponsors for the fireworks show. Mr. Still said Ms. Sharon Still is still waiting to hear from a sponsor.

Deventae Mooney made a motion to allow Town Manager, Jimmy Williams, to move ahead with the purchase of the fireworks, not to exceed \$11,700.00. Joe Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

- B. Repairs to the Town Hall Roof - Mayor Mooney said the representative from LaFerney gave a thorough presentation at the last meeting and that quote seems to be the best one received. Mr. Mooney said that based on what the representative said is needed the cost would be \$39,010.00. Mr. Mooney informed the group he has been in town hall when it is raining and the back leaks and there are issues in the restrooms and that building needs to be taken care of.

Deventae Mooney made a motion to move forward with repairs on the roof at town hall to be done by LaFerney and not to exceed \$40,000.00 and to be paid with ARPA funds. This is the Laferney Defender Gold Package that includes removing and replacing decking and replacing the roof. Mr. Mooney said the roof has a 20-year manufacturer's warranty and an additional 20-year warranty from the company that installs the roof. Joe Still seconded the motion. A roll call vote resulted as follows:

Carles Collins - Aye
Deventae Mooney - Aye
Joe Still - Aye
Lisa Woodruff - Aye

Mr. Still said he contacted a local business about renting a paver and a roller. The business does not offer paver rental.

Closed Session:

There was no reason to enter into closed session. Mayor Mooney reminded everyone that evaluations for department heads are completed and will be discussed during Closed Session at the April 28, 2025, meeting.

Council Comments and Concerns:

Carles Collins - Mr. Collins asked about paving and patching roads. Mr. Mooney said some roads have been patched by VDOT and said something will have to be done about the paver to move forward. Mr. Williams has looked at pavers at auction and questions if it's a good idea to buy a paver for parts. Mr. Mooney asked Mr. Williams for some paver and roller quotes.

Joe Still - Mr. Still expressed his appreciation for everyone working toward the betterment of the town and stated he is proud of the accomplishments made in the town. Mr. Still said it has taken a while to grab the tiger by the tail, but they have grabbed the tiger by the tail and are swinging it. Mr. Still said it is not cost effective to pull people off the jobs that are vital to work on non-vital

jobs. He appreciates everyone for staying on top of their jobs. He said a lot of the things the town has are old and antiquated and are having to be replaced, citing the skimmers from the 70's that are being replaced at the pool. Mr. Still thanked Chief Mullins for having all the answers before he even asked the questions and thanked him for having his department out and about in the town. Mr. Still said the public works is the same; everyone is always out working and not down at the shop. Mr. Still thanked the public and the citizens for their patience with Council and said that Council would like to do a lot, but everything takes money, time and planning and asked for continued patience and said Council does their best and are concerned citizens too.

Lisa Woodruff - Ms. Woodruff said it an honor to serve with Mayor Mooney and she considers him a true leader. Ms. Woodruff is honored to serve on Council and is thankful for all the town staff and the work they do and for the people who came out to voice their concerns because what they care about matters. She agrees with Mr. Still, it is not an easy job and does take time to make changes.

Deventae Mooney - Mr. Mooney thanked everyone for being present, and hopes the audience can sit in the meeting and hear the things they are doing as a Council and there are steps to take in order to accomplish all they hope to do. Mr. Mooney said he would love to see the town booming tomorrow like it was back in the day, but it is not possible overnight. As citizens bring their concerns forward, Council is listening and researching and trying to find ways to help. Mr. Mooney is thankful for his fellow Council, the town workers, the citizens, and everything they do. Regardless of what the town looks like, and what might be going on outside, Mr. Mooney said he will never be ashamed to call Coeburn home and is thankful to be here and be serving the community.

Adjournment:

Mr. Deventae Mooney made a motion to adjourn this meeting. Joe Still seconded the motion, which resulted in all Ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Sharpe
Attest: Cathy Sharpe, Clerk

Deventae Mooney
Deventae Mooney, Mayor