

Town Council Regular Meeting March 8th, 2022

The Altavista Town Council held their March 2022 regular meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, March 8th, at 6 p.m.

1. At six o'clock p.m., Mayor Mike Mattox called the regular meeting to order and presided.

Council Members

Present: Vice Mayor Reginald Bennett
Mr. Tracy Emerson
Mr. Timothy George
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mayor Michael Mattox
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Absent: Mr. Jay Higginbotham

Town Staff present: Mr. Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
Mr. Thomas Merricks, Altavista Chief of Police
Mr. Tom Fore, Public Services Director
Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

Reverend Ed Soto, Altavista Presbyterian Church, gave the invocation for this evening.
After the invocation, Mayor Mike Mattox led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox informed everyone of an amendment to that evening's agenda.

- Section #8, Item C. – removed from the agenda

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the March meeting agenda, to which there were none.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, to approve the March 8th, 2022, Altavista Town Council Meeting Agenda as amended.

Motion carried

Vote:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

3. Recognitions and Presentations

A. Personnel Changes

The Town of Altavista's personnel changes during February 2022:

New Hire Listing:

Gayle Puckett, Avoca Events Coordinator, as of 2/15/22

Departure Listing:

Jason Roberts, Utilities Maintenance Supervisor, as of 2/25/22

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Altavista's Public Services Director, Tom Fore, informed everyone that a Public Works employee, Tim Boley, had been in a motorcycle accident the previous weekend and required surgery on one of his legs. He asked that everyone keep Mr. Boley in their prayers.

B. Multiple Sclerosis Awareness

Mayor Mattox recognized Altavista citizen Deise Ellis, being present that evening to promote awareness for Multiple Sclerosis. He asked if Council had any questions or comments, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tim George, to approve a resolution declaring March 2022 as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in the Town of Altavista.

Motion carried

Vote:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Mayor Mattox presented Ms. Ellis with the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION DECLARING MARCH AS "MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS MONTH"

WHEREAS, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that affects approximately 400,000 people in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it typically strikes young adults in the prime of life – in their 20's to 40's. Women are more likely to have multiple sclerosis by about 3:1. Symptoms can begin as simply as tingling and progress to near paralysis;

WHEREAS, March is Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month. It is important for better education and awareness of multiple sclerosis so that its victims can lead more productive and satisfying life; to benefit themselves, their caregivers and families, and the overall community; and

WHEREAS, multiple sclerosis is a disease that not only affects the person with the condition, but also greatly impacts family, friends, and the community; and

WHEREAS, the exact cause of multiple sclerosis is still unknown, and there is no known cure; and

WHEREAS, the symptoms of multiple sclerosis may be mild such as numbness in the limbs, or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision; and

WHEREAS, every hour of every day, someone is newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis; and

WHEREAS, the Multiple Sclerosis Alliance of Virginia (MSAV) provides programs and services for anyone in Virginia whose life has been affected by MS; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mike Mattox, Mayor of the Town of Altavista do hereby proclaim March 2022 as

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS) EDUCATION AND AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the Town of Altavista and urge all citizens to observe this month by becoming aware of the difficulties that individuals with MS face on a daily basis, supporting those who are working toward its end and participating in community efforts. The Altavista Town Council joins advocates and communities across the country in playing an active role to prevent Multiple Sclerosis.

Adopted this 8th day of March 2022 by the Altavista Town Council.

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Mayor Mattox informed Ms. Moorman that the Altavista Police Department and Community Development Director were combining efforts to enforce the Property Maintenance Code and assured her they would continue working on nuisances to eliminate the issues.

- Mr. Tony Clifton, with T&C Promotions, P.O. Box 373, Appomattox, VA, updated Council on the Bluegrass Festival that Council approved at one of their 2021 meetings, for the event to be held in April 2022. He said T&C had booked multiple bluegrass bands and food vendors for the all-day event on Saturday, April 23rd.

Mr. Clifton stated the event was originally planned to span over two days, however, funding was less than expected, so the event would only be held on Saturday.

Mr. Clifton reminded everyone the festival proceeds went to The Children's Miracle Network (CMN). He informed Council that the neo-natal mobile unit from VA Baptist Hospital, and possibly the Centra One emergency helicopter, would also be on-site at the event. He stated he believed having the two vehicles there would give visitors a partial idea of what the CMN did and what the event proceeds would be used for.

Mr. Clifton stated, during an event meeting the previous week with Altavista's Town Manager, APD Police Chief, Public Works Manager, and Community Development Director, they discussed what would be required for the event. He said the town workers needed would cost approximately \$3,200, which they did not have due to an initial sponsor dropping out. Mr. Clifton asked Town Council to consider allowing the town to cover the labor cost of the few town employees requested for the event.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Clifton and his organization for the work they do. He asked the Town Manager for his input on the request.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger confirmed the cost was closer to \$3,500, which included the use of the town's backup transit bus to help commute event patrons from Town Hall's public parking area to English Park for the festival that day. He stated both the Police Department and the Public Works Department had funds in their budget to cover the labor cost of the request.

Mr. Shanaberger confirmed that staff was in support of the event and, if approved, saw no issues with assisting during the festival.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns with the request by Mr. Clifton, to which there were none.

Councilman Tim George made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, to approve of the town absorbing the labor cost of town employees that would be working the Bluegrass Festival in English Park on April 23rd; (2) APD Officers, (4) Public Service Employees, and (1) Transit Driver, with the use of the ACTS backup transit bus.

Motion carried

Vote:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Councilman Mitchell thanked Mr. Clifton for bringing the event to the Town of Altavista and stated he believed the event would be a success.

Mr. Clifton thanked Town Council and Town Staff and stated he hoped the Bluegrass Festival could become an annual event for the Town of Altavista.

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5. Town/Community Partner Updates

A. Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber)

Representing the Chamber of Commerce, Codie Cyrus, Chair Elect and Business Committee Chairperson, updated Council on a few of the Chamber's recent activities.

Mrs. Cyrus informed Council that February 25th was former Executive Director, Grace Mattox's, last day with the Chamber. She stated the Chamber brought in an Interim Director, Brandi Shirlen, until such time as a fulltime director could be hired.

Mrs. Cyrus shared some of the Chamber's upcoming events:

- Coffee & Conversation - March 17th at Finch & Finch, from 8:30 to 9:30am
- Lunch-N-Learn - March 23rd at the Train Station, from 12 noon to 1pm
- Chamber's Annual Year-end Dinner - April 30th at Leesville Lake Marina

Mrs. Cyrus stated, due to a limited number of tickets being available for the annual dinner, the Town Council's and Town Manager's tickets were on hold for purchase at the Chamber office.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions for Mrs. Cyrus.

Councilman Emerson asked if the current interim, Ms. Shirlen, was interested in being the Chamber's fulltime Executive Director.

Mrs. Cyrus stated it was a possibility. She said the interim position was a ninety-day trial; to give Ms. Shirlen time to acclimate to the position and determine whether her home schedule and work schedule would work together if she went fulltime. She said it also gave the Chamber time to evaluate if Ms. Shirlen would be a good fit as the Executive Director. Mrs. Cyrus stated, either way, Ms. Shirlen would need to apply for the position like anyone else if she was interested at the end of her interim ninety days.

With no additional questions from Council, Mrs. Cyrus thanked them for their time and stated she hoped to see everyone at the Chamber's annual dinner.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mrs. Cyrus for the work she does for the Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Altavista.

B. Altavista On Track (AOT)

Altavista On Track's Board President Reverend Ed Soto gave Town Council a brief update on Altavista On Track's most recent and upcoming events.

- Reverend Soto informed Council that AOT canceled their Golf Tournament, scheduled for April 2022, however, all but one of the initial sponsors had agreed to move their sponsorship to a future AOT event, and one even increased their funding.
- Reverend Soto referenced AOT's first spring festival event, Altavista River Fest, to be held on May 14th. He stated the festival would now be "free" to enter, with food, alcohol, and non-alcoholic beverages available for purchase.
- Reverend Soto shared his enthusiasm that AOT had received several applications for the vacant Main Street Coordinator position, and the nominating committee would be reviewing the applications for viable candidates during the upcoming week.

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- Reverend Soto stated AOT was continuing to plan its fall BBQ festival and reminded Council that the event was now KCBS (Kansas City Barbeque Society) Certified, which he believed would help draw a lot of visitors to the Town of Altavista.

Reverend Soto concluded his AOT updates and said he would be happy to answer any questions Town Council may have, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox thanked Reverend Soto for the updates and thanked the AOT Board for the good work they continue to do for the Town of Altavista and its community.

6. Consent Agenda

- February 2022 Financial Reports
 - Check Register, Revenue Report, Expenditure Report, and Reserve Balance/Investment Report
- Approval of Council Meeting Minutes:
 - February 8, 2022 Regular Meeting

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the March 8th Consent Agenda, to which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the March 8, 2022, Council Meeting Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Vice Mayor Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

7. Public Hearings

There were no public hearings scheduled for this date.

8. New Business

A. Public Works – Old Garbage Truck #1017 Needing Repairs

Altavista's Public Works Manager Jeff Arthur informed Town Council that the town's 2006 Peterbilt Garbage Truck needed repairs in the amount of \$11,600. He stated staff was seeking Council's consideration to cover the cost of the repairs with funds from Reserves. He stated, if Public Works had a surplus at the end of the fiscal year, the funds would be returned to the Reserve Fund.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, to approve staff's request and authorize \$11,600 from Reserves to cover the cost of repairing the town's 2006 Peterbilt Garbage Truck.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Vice Mayor Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

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B. Bluegrass Festival in English Park 2022

Mayor Mattox reminded everyone that this item had been discussed earlier in the meeting, when Mr. Tony Clifton, T&C Productions, came forward during Citizen's Time pertaining to the festival. Mayor Mattox asked Ms. Sharon Williams, Community Development Director, since this item had been submitted by her, if she had any further comments on the matter, to which she did not.

C. Information Regarding Community events and Business

Due to the speaker for this item, Dale Moore, not being able to attend, Town Council approved amending the agenda, at the beginning of the meeting, to remove the item and reschedule it for a future meeting or work session when Mr. Moore was available.

9. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business items were scheduled for this date.

10. Reports and Communication

A. February 2022 Departmental Reports

B. Council Monthly Calendars – February and March 2022

C. Informational Items

The Manager's Report, Departmental Reports, and Council Calendars were delivered to Town Council with their March Regular Council Meeting Agenda Pre-Packet. Mayor Mattox asked if the Town Manager or any Department Director had any comments.

Public Service Director Tom Fore stated he would be glad to answer any questions Council may have in regard to the many ongoing projects of Public Works and the Utilities Department.

Councilman Mitchell asked Mr. Fore how many positions were vacant in Public Services.

Mr. Fore explained, with Tim Boley currently out for medical reasons, the Public Works Department was down six employees, the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) was down one operator, and Utilities had a Facilities Mechanic position vacant, for a total of eight vacant positions in Public Services.

Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager, informed Council that he had an application from a potential candidate that he was reviewing for his department.

Mr. Fore also informed Council he recently received an application for the WWTP position and was scheduled to interview that person the following day. He stated they were dealing with "trying times" pertaining to finding employees. He informed Council of a previous town employee that showed interest in returning but was getting paid five dollars more an hour at his current job, so he could not afford to return to town employment.

Councilman Mitchell shared his appreciation for the work the town's Public Service Departments do, especially under the current circumstances of being short-staffed, to which the Mayor and Town Council concurred.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any other questions, comments, or concerns regarding the February 2022 monthly reports, to which there were none.

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11. Matters from Council

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any additional concerns or items for discussion.

- Councilman Lowman said that Backwoods Rod and Customs, hosts of summer Cruise-In events, contacted him to say they were pleased to be approved to hold the events again in the Trade Lot at Shreve Park in Altavista.
- Councilman George asked when The Berkley Group would have the requested market study and peer analysis ready for Council's review. He stated he hoped the study would assist Council in making a more informative decision regarding town employee compensation and help the town be more competitive with wages when trying to hire the additional staff it needs.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger stated the agreement with The Berkley Group was for them to have the study completed by March 15th and ready for Council's March Work Session. He said he would forward the information to Council as soon as it was available,

- Mayor Mattox thanked Staff for the work they do for the Town of Altavista every day.
- Vice Mayor Bennett thanked the citizens attending the meeting that evening and encouraged town citizens to participate in Council meetings. He also shared his appreciation for the work Staff does for Council and the Town of Altavista.
- Councilman Emerson referenced the market study and peer analysis being done for the town by The Berkley Group. He stated, while all businesses were currently struggling to get good help, he encouraged the town to utilize Berkley's report to be competitive in the hiring market and also when discussing salaries of the town's existing employees.
- Councilman Mitchell suggested, with the town currently being understaffed, to consider contracting out some of the town's basic work tasks, such as mowing, in order to continue providing its citizens the best quality of services they were currently receiving.

12. Closed Session

I move that the Altavista Town Council convene in closed session in accordance with the provisions set out in the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended,

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) Discussion and/or consideration of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson.

Motion carried.

<i>VOTE:</i>	<i>Mr. Wayne Mitchell</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>Mr. Tracy Emerson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Timothy George</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>Dr. Scott Lowman</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mayor Mike Mattox</i>	<i>Abstained</i>

Town Council went into Closed Session at 6:37 p.m.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 6:45 p.m.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, to adopt the certification of a closed meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING WHEREAS, the Town Council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

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WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the town council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Town Council hereby certifies, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Town Council.

<i>VOTE:</i>	<i>Mr. Wayne Mitchell</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>Mr. Tracy Emerson</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Timothy George</i>	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>Dr. Scott Lowman</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mayor Mike Mattox</i>	<i>Abstained</i>

During the Closed Session, Town Council approved the reappointment of Sarah Roach to Altavista's Parks & Recreation Committee, for another 3-year term, ending March 31st, 2025.

13. Adjournment

Mayor Mattox asked if there was anything else to bring before Town Council or any additional comments or concerns from Council, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Michael Mattox, Mayor

Gary Shanaberger, Town Clerk,
Town Manager