

## Town Council Regular Meeting - January 10th, 2023

The Altavista Town Council held their January 2023 Regular Meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, January 10th, at 6pm.

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  
Mr. Jay Higginbotham  
Dr. Scott Lowman  
Mayor Michael Mattox  
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

### Town Staff present:

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

Pastor Sinclair Hall, First Church of Jesus, gave the invocation for this evening.

After the invocation, Mayor Mattox led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## 2. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the January 10th Town Council Meeting Agenda, of which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the January 10, 2023, Altavista Town Council Meeting Agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

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

## 3. Recognitions and Presentations

### Town of Altavista Personnel Changes:

There were no milestones, new employees, or employee departures in December 2022.

- Mrs. Jamie Gillespie, Altavista's Business & Community Engagement Coordinator, addressed Council at this time. Mrs. Gillespie thanked the Town for giving her the opportunity to work in Altavista. She shared her excitement for the new Spark Innovation Center and informed Council of a new office tenant starting in February. Mrs. Gillespie stated that she would be happy to give a tour to anyone interested.
- Mayor Mattox referenced National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, recognized in 2023 on Monday, January 9th. He stated, on the behalf of Town Council and the Town of Altavista, he thanked the men and women of the Altavista Police Department for their service and dedication to the Altavista community.

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## 4. Citizen's Time

Mr. Jordan Parker, Founder and CEO of the Claire Parker Foundation, 1019 9th Street, Altavista, came before Council to offer a heartfelt "Thank You" to the Town of Altavista for continuing to support the Claire Parker Foundation's annual Deck the Heels 5K Event. He specifically thanked the Altavista Police Department and Public Works for their hard work and safety efforts during the race.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Parker for the great work accomplished through his foundation.

## 5. Town & Community Partners - Updates

There were no updates on this date.

## 6. Consent Agenda

- TOA Monthly Financial Reports – December 2022
- Town Council Meeting Minutes – November RM and WS

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, to approve the January 10, 2023, Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

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

## 7. Public Hearings

There were no public hearings scheduled for this date.

## 8. New Business

### A. FY2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Background:

In November 2022, Town Council received the proposed Capital Improvement Plan project sheets, detailing large capital projects for all Town departments. This will be the first opportunity for Council to provide Staff with input on the working document.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins shared with Council the draft CIP documents for the following departments: Administration, Police, Economic Development, and Transit. He stated that Staff would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions pertaining to the proposed projects/CIP plans for the aforementioned departments. There were none at this time.

### B. Special Event Permit (SEP) Request

Background:

Altavista Town Staff submits all Special Event Permit applications to Town Council for their review and approval consideration.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed Council of a SEP application recently submitted by Lori Watkins on behalf of the Rustburg Dixie Youth Softball League (RDS).

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Mr. Perkins stated the event, RDS Diamond Diva 5K, was a fundraising event for the league, open to the public with a participation fee of \$25; and Ms. Watkins requested the use of English Park to hold the event on Sunday, April 30th, 2023. He said the park would remain open, similar to the town's annual Gibley Jog.

Councilman Mitchell asked if Staff had checked with the Town to determine if there were any other events that day, that may be in conflict with the request.

Mr. Perkins informed Council that Town Staff, including the Altavista Police Department and Public Works, had an opportunity to give input on the event request, and there were no concerns or known conflicts.

Councilman Mitchell referenced there not being a fund request as part of the SEP application. He asked if the event would require any Town Staff or Altavista Police.

Mr. Perkins stated that no Town Staff had been requested, or was required, because RDS had their own volunteers to coordinate the race and the event activities; and Campbell County Public Safety Personnel would also be on site for the event.

With a motion made by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, and seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, the Special Event Permit application by Lori Watkins on behalf of the Rustburg Dixie Softball League was approved by Town Council.

Motion carried.

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

### 9. Unfinished Business

#### A. Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) – System Installation

Background:

The Town of Altavista has approximately 1800 water meters in the Town's utility system. On a quarterly basis, all water meters are read "*manually*". The Town was given Federal Funds (ARPA) that could be utilized for utility infrastructure projects; and Town Council approved the Town Staff to move forward with procurement of an Automated Metering Infrastructure System (AMI). Town Council also authorized Staff to solicit firms for the installation of the new metering system.

Public Services Director Tom Fore informed Town Council that the committee for this project consisted of himself, Paul Hill, Assistant Public Services Director, Jeff Author, Public Works Manager, Teri Anderson, Public Works Administrative Assistant, and a representative from one of the Town's on-call engineers, Hurt & Proffitt.

Mr. Fore said, after review of the submitted proposals, Hurt & Proffitt and Town Staff recommended Water Works, Inc., which had the lowest bid of \$851,990.44, with an additional \$30,000 to cut holes in the Town's existing meter lids, so the Town would not need to purchase new lids with pre-cut holes; for a total of \$881,990.44.

Mr. Fore reminded Council the Town appropriated \$1,075,000 for this project; leaving \$193,009.56 remaining of the initial amount appropriated.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the surplus would be added to Reserves or General Fund.

Mr. Fore reminded Council that the funds for this AMI project were granted by the ARPA (government) Program, and not for use on projects that didn't qualify for the program's requirements and specifications.

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Mr. Fore stated the surplus of funds from the AMI Project would not be wasted, but utilized to help cover costs for another utility infrastructure project that qualified for the funds.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this item, of which there were none.

With a motion made by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, and seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, Town Council accepted Staff's recommendation and approved awarding the AMI Installation Project to Water Works, Inc. in the amount of \$881,990.44.

Motion carried.

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

### B. Town of Altavista (TOA) Employee Policies Handbook

Background:

Periodically, the Town Council and Town Manager review the TOA Employee Policies Handbook for needed updates and revisions. Town Council began reviewing the proposed updates by Management for the TOA Employee Handbook at their November 22nd Work Session. Council asked that the item be discussed further before approval.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger referenced Council and Staff's previous discussion about the proposed updates. He informed Council, taking their concerns into consideration, there was an addition to the handbook on page 17, under Item 2.14 – for new employees not to be eligible to receive pay increases/raises until after they have completed their probation period (6 months).

Mr. Shanaberger also referenced Council's suggestion to add the town's safety manuals to the employee handbook. He stated, after further review and consideration, Staff recommended leaving out the safety manuals. He said that safety manuals were always changing with continuous updates; and it could become costly for the town to update the employee handbook to accommodate for each of those changes.

Councilman Higginbotham suggested having two separate signature sheets: one for the safety manual and one for the policy handbook. He stated a new employee should be given the most current safety manual during their initial training, and if any updates were made to the manual, the employee would sign a new acknowledgment sheet for those changes.

Public Services Director Tom Fore informed Town Council that the safety manuals for Public Works, Water Treatment, and Wastewater, were updated weekly. He stated that his aforementioned departments were informed of every update and were required to sign off that they were given, and had read the new updates.

Mr. Fore stated that his employees were also required to read at least one chapter per month of their safety manual, so at the end of a year, the employee had read the entire manual at least once, including any updates throughout the year. He stated that his employees were all initially trained on Standard Operating Procedures, and that training was also refreshed throughout the year.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if employee sick leave or accrual time had been changed

Mr. Shanaberger answered yes, accrued time was increased to be in line with surrounding localities, and more competitive in the current job market.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the addendum to the draft employee policy handbook and asked the Town Manager if it would hinder the town's ability to solicit new employees.

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Mr. Shanaberger stated it possibly could, but he had not experienced the situation during his current or previous employment.

Mr. Mitchell said that he relied on the Town Manager's expertise and recommendations, and stated he would support the employee policy updates with , or without, the addendum.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with the addendum regarding no pay increases for new employees during their six month probation period, however, he believed an employee should be eligible for the same increase given to others after their probation was complete.

Mr. Shanaberger stated the town was currently handling the matter that way.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his concern with approving the employee policies handbook that evening, and stated that he believed the item was a budgetary matter and should be discussed further during the budget process.

Councilman Mitchell asked for clarity regarding the addendum presented that evening and asked the Town Manager if he agreed with the addition.

Mr. Shanaberger informed Council that the addendum was a group decision among Staff.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this item, of which there were none.

With a motion made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, and seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, Town Council accepted Staff's recommendations and approved the updates to the Town of Altavista Employee Handbook/Personnel Policies as presented, with the addition of Item 2.14 – new town employees do not qualify for pay increases until after a probation period of six months.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	No
	Mr. Tim George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

### 10. Departmental Reports – December 2022

- Utilities – Project Updates
- TOA Financial Reports
- Community Development Report
- Public Services Monthly Report
- Altavista Police Department
- Town Council Monthly Meeting Calendars-December and January

Departmental Reports and Council's Meeting Calendars were delivered to Town Council with their January 10th Meeting Agenda Pre-Packet.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager and Department Directors if they had any comments pertaining to their monthly reports.

- Public Services Director Tom Fore gave Town Council a brief overview of each item in his December 2022 Utilities Report:

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - Melinda HPZ Project           | - WWTP Electrical Project         |
| - Frazier Road Drainage Project | - Clarifier #3 Project            |
| - Springs SCADA Project         | - Lynch Creek Restoration Project |
| - VDEM Generators               | - AMI Meter System Project        |
| - Filter Improvement Project    | - Aeration Study                  |

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Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Fore what the expected completion date was for the Springs SCADA Project.

Mr. Fore estimated a 1 ½ year timeframe for completion of the project. He stated an approval by Health Department for the project's design work was required before moving forward, which could take three to six months, and the project build was a six to eight month timeframe.

Councilman George referenced the Lynch Creek Restoration Project and asked if the plan was to apply rip rap all the way down the creek line to the boat ramp (in English Park).

Mr. Fore informed Council that dead Ash Trees along the creek bank had caused erosion issues. He stated that he was in the process of consulting with an engineer about whether to plant new, creek friendly trees, that would help stabilize the creek bank, or to lay rip rap along the entire length of the creek to the river.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the Melinda HPZ Project and asked if the town had a way to compare the current PSI with the PSI readings after the work was done.

Mr. Fore answered that yes, the town did have that capability. He stated, once the project was complete, the PSI would increase for everyone in that area, but monitored to regulate the standard (45PSI) when demand required.

Councilman Higginbotham recommended that the town notify the homeowners in the area of the work being done, that when completed, their water pressure would increase. He stated this would prepare the citizens that had old or weak plumbing, that the increased pressure had the potential to cause a water leak.

Mr. Fore asked Public Works Manager Jeff Arthur to prepare a flyer to deliver to the citizens in the Melinda HPZ Project area, stating that the work being done to increase their water pressure could cause leak issues to old plumbing.

### 11. Matters from Council

- Mayor Mattox recognized Chief Merricks and the Altavista Police Department's (APD) Annual Christmas Shop-With-A-Cop Event. He stated the APD did an extraordinary job with the event every year and he appreciated their dedication to the Altavista community.

Chief Merricks informed Council, with generous donations from the community, the APD was able to invite sixty-eight children to the 2022 event, the largest group to date. He said it was a group effort to accomplish the task on the event day; and shared that his department was joined by volunteers from the Campbell County Sheriff's Office, the Blue Ridge Regional Jail, the Town of Hurt Police Department, and many other volunteers

Chief Merricks stated it was a positive testimony of the great community he lived in and the continued collaboration between the Town of Altavista and its surrounding localities.

- Mayor Mattox reminded Town Council that this period of the meeting was an opportunity for them to "propose" an item, or items, for consideration to be discussed on a future agenda. He said this enables Staff to be prepared with requested information for answering questions regarding the proposed items.
- Councilman Lowman referenced English Park and the need to upgrade the park's electrical system in order to add more lights in the park..

Public Services Director Tom Fore stated that he was currently gathering price quotes for the electrical work needed, and he would be bringing this matter to Council at their January 24th Work Session.

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- Councilman Higginbotham referenced the English Park Trail System, specifically the stone structures along the paved portion of Eagle Trail. He suggested the dead trees and overgrown shrubs be cleared away from the structures so they could be a nice visual feature to the trail.

Public Services Director Tom Fore reminded Council of Public Works' busy schedule. He stated Public Works could work on clearing of the structures a little at a time, as time allowed. He said the suggested item might be addressed sooner by outsourcing the project.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with the idea and suggested allowing local Garden Clubs to assist with new colorful plants around the structures.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any additional questions, concerns, or items for future discussion, of which there were none.

Mayor Mattox reminded everyone of the following dates:

- Monday, January 16th - Town Offices will be CLOSED in observance of the National holiday: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Tuesday, January 4th - Town Council Work Session, starting at 5pm

### 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, consideration, or interviews 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

*Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3)* Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body

*Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8)* Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

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

Motion carried.

VOTE:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Mayor Michael Mattox	Yes		

Town Council went into Closed Session at 6:49 p.m.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 7:33 p.m.

#### FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Reggie 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

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.

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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.

VOTE:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Mayor Michael Mattox	Yes		

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger informed Staff that the Altavista Town Council did not make any official actions as a result from their Closed Session.

### 13. Adjournment

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

Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

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Michael Mattox, Mayor

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Gary Shanaberger, Town Clerk,  
Town Manager