

Town Council Regular Meeting June 14th, 2022

The Altavista Town Council held their June 2022 regular meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, June 14th, 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. Timothy George
Mr. Jay Higginbotham
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mayor Michael Mattox
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Absent: Mr. Tracy Emerson

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
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

Chief Tommy Merricks, Altavista Police Department, 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 asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the June 14th meeting agenda, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, to approve the June 14th, 2022, Altavista Town Council meeting agenda as presented.

Motion carried

Vote:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	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

A. Town of Altavista Personnel Changes - May 2022

Milestone(s):

Larry Rigney, APD Officer for 15 years

New Hire Listing:

Anthony Earhart, Altavista Police Department

Departure Listing:

Kameron Taylor, Utilities Department

Mayor Mattox congratulated and thanked Officer Larry Rigney for his fifteen (15) years of service to the Town of Altavista in the Altavista Police Department. He also welcomed APD's newest Officer, Anthony Earhart.

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4. Citizen's Time

- Ms. Harriet Hardy, 1617 Melinda Drive, Altavista, thanked Town Council for their continued efforts to improve, grow, and beautify the Town of Altavista.

Ms. Hardy also thanked the Town of Altavista for its continued support of the Altavista Seniors Club, an organization of Campbell County's Recreation Department.

- Mr. John Porter, Clean Footprint, said that his company had collected data on Altavista over the past two years pertaining to the potential of them installing a solar farm on a 68 acre parcel adjacent to Abbott Laboratories. He stated they would like the town to consider having a mutual relationship/agreement that would benefit both parties

Mr. Porter stated solar farms were sometimes controversial, but he assured Council that Clean Footprint would follow the correct process and town requirements to help move their desired project forward. He stated Clean Footprint was seeking direction to whether the town would support a permit for such a use.

Mr. Porter gave Council an overview of Green Footprint's "Siting Agreement" proposal.

- The aforementioned parcel would be deeded to the Town of Altavista
- The solar units would be hidden behind natural foliage/vegetation
- Solar equipment would be removed at the end of the term both parties agreed upon and noted in the proposed siting agreement as a "bonded" requirement

Mr. Porter stated, since his time was limited, he would be happy to have a one-On-one conversation or gather at a later date to answer any questions Council may have.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Porter for his time and the information he shared with Council.

- Ms. Bonita Badgett, 1602 School Street, Altavista, stated that she recently moved to the Town of Altavista to be closer to her mother. She came before Council to ask for an explanation of why Altavista citizens pay both town and county taxes.

Mayor Mattox reminded everyone that "Citizen's Time" was not a question-and-answer session between citizens and Council, however, he believed it was important to respond to Ms. Badgett's question as a new citizen.

Vice Mayor Bennett informed Ms. Badgett of the need to have both town and county taxes, and Councilman George informed her that the town lowered their taxes a few years prior.

Mayor Mattox thanked Ms. Badgett for attending the Town Council meeting that evening.

- Ms. Shelia Williams, 1707 Eudora Lane, Altavista, addressed Town Council as a member of the Moseley Heights Community Project Team. She thanked the Town of Altavista, Altavista's Public Works Department, and Altavista's Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams for their support with the Moseley Heights Community Clean-up Day held in April. She also thanked Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett and Councilman Tim George, for their attendance at the event.

Ms. Williams stated there was more work to be done in the Moseley Heights community, but she believed, with the town's help, they had made a lot of progress and she looked forward to partnering with the town again on future projects.

- Mr. Terry Austin, Three Into One Community Project, 624 Main Street, Altavista, informed Council that he was working on a Special Event Permit request for an event his organization would be hosting, if approved, in September. He stated the event usually showcased a cruise-in and gospel music, but he hoped to be adding additional attractions to the upcoming event, such as a fashion and talent show, and a petting zoo.

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Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Austin for his time and for the information regarding his future Special Event Permit request.

There were no other citizens to come before Town Council.

5. Town/Community Partner Updates

A. Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber)

There was no one present at this meeting to represent the Chamber.

B. Altavista On Track (AOT)

AOT's President, Reverend Ed Soto, and Vice President, Regina Adams, briefed Town Council on AOT's current activities and upcoming events.

- Reverend Soto informed Council of a ribbon-cutting ceremony that AOT recently hosted for Kaitlin Smith at Perfect Canvas Salon, 613 Broad Street. He stated Ms. Smith was able to take advantage of a grant program that the town and AOT offered entrepreneurs to start their new businesses.
- Reverend Soto referenced the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently presented to the AOT Board of Directors, by Town Staff, for AOT's review and approval consideration. vacant Executive Director position and stated that AOT completed their interview process and would announce their new director soon.
- Mrs. Adams informed Council that Kaitlyn Smith, owner of Perfect Canvas Salon, completed the three-month cycle with AOT's Downtown Business Investment Grant Program. She stated that Ms. Smith's salon was thriving and AOT planned to host a ribbon-cutting event for her business.

Mrs. Adams stated that AOT recently received the last \$5,000 payment from Virginia's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to be used towards Altavista's aforementioned grant program. She stated that AOT intended to utilize a portion of those funds to assist the recipients of the grant program with advertising and marketing their small businesses.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked if there was a rain date scheduled for the upcoming Riverfest.

Mrs. Adams answered not at that time. She stated that AOT would be meeting with Altavista's Public Works Manager, Jeff Arthur, that week to discuss the possibility of moving vendors to the paved areas of the park, and the potential of cancelation if strong weather persists.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mrs. Adams for the updates and thanked AOT for the work they do for the Town of Altavista and its community.

6. Consent Agenda

- Delinquent Utility Account Write-offs
- May 2022 Financial Reports

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

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the June 14, 2022, Council Meeting Consent Agenda as presented.

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Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	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 conducted on this date.

8. New Business

A. Special Event Permit Request – Sonya Brown, Relay for Life

Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams shared a brief description of Mrs. Brown's request for the proposed Relay for Life event. She stated, in the past, the Relay for Life walk had been held at the Altavista Combined School football stadium allowing survivors and caregivers to share their stories.

Ms. Williams said, this year, Relay for Life representative would like to host the event at the Booker Building in English Park; the Booker Building facility, exterior back stage, and grassy area behind the building would be used; and if rain occurred, the event would be moved inside the Booker Building. She stated that Town Staff had reviewed the request, the YMCA had been made aware of the request, and no concerns had been raised.

Ms. Williams stated that Town Staff was recommending approval of Relay for Life's Special Use Permit.

Mrs. Brown came forward and thanked Town Council for their consideration of the request. She stated that Relay for Life had been holding this event in Altavista since 2001, however, due to the COVID pandemic, they had not been able to do so for two years.

Mrs. Brown stated that Relay for Life wanted to bring the community back together again to recognize the areas cancer survivors. She said, if approved, the event would be held on Saturday, September 10th, from 6-9pm.

With a motion by Councilman Jay Higginbotham, seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, Town Council approved Relay for Life's Special Event Permit; to hold a small event for cancer survivors at the Booker Building in English Park on September 10, 2022.

Motion carried.

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

B. Special Event Permit – Vista BBQ Festival, Revision Request

Altavista Community Development Director, Sharon D. Williams, briefed Council on the details of this request. She referenced AOT's Special Event Permit previously approved by Town Council to hold a BBQ festival in English Park on October 1st. Ms. Williams informed Council that the rain date specified on the permit was October 8th, however, another event was scheduled for that date and the request was to revise the permit to specify Saturday, October 15th as the event's designated rain date.

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A motion was made by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, Town Council approved AOT's request to revise the Special Event Permit approved for their 2nd Annual Vista BBQ Fest, to specify October 15th as the designated rain date, instead of the initial date of October 8th, due to a conflict of scheduling.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	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. Adoption of the FY2023 Budget and FY2023-2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Altavista's Finance and Administration Director, stated, over the past several months, Town Council reviewed, discussed, and commented on the proposed FY2023 Budget and FY2023-2027 proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP), as well as held the required public hearing for the proposed items. She said the proposed budget totaled \$18,262,980, which included the town's General Fund, Enterprise Fund, Cemetery Fund, and Highway Maintenance Fund, and allocated funds for the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2023.

Mrs. Shelton asked Council if they had any questions regarding the proposed budget and CIP before staff moved forward in the process of adopting each item.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the compensation plan recently approved by Council and asked if the plan stayed within the \$300,000 as desired by Council; to which Mrs. Shelton stated, including the 10% increase to all town employees, the increase to entry-level police officers, and the \$100 per year for employees with twenty+ years of service, the compensation planned totaled approximately \$350,000.

Mayor Mattox also referenced the recently approved compensation plan. He stated, historically, the town gave its employees annual merit bonuses. He asked Mrs. Shelton to share what the determining factor was and the value of the town to implement the compensation plan instead of bonuses for this fiscal year.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger came before Council to answer the Mayor's question. He referenced the Compensation Study and Market Analysis recently requested and reviewed by Town Council and stated that staff utilized the reports as a guideline for the approved compensation plan.

Mayor Mattox asked if the 10% fund parameter, given to staff by Town Council for analyzing the most feasible plan, could be broken down to include a 5% employee increase and the remaining funds utilized to retain existing key employees that were below the market average in pay rate.

Mr. Shanaberger stated. during the compensation plan process, staff conducted several compensation scenarios to come up with viable options for Council to consider. He stated, when reviewed by Council, they approved the plan that was in the draft FY2023 Budget.

Vice Mayor Bennett thanked Town Staff for their due diligence with this matter and the hard work that went into this process. He stated it was "unprecedented times" we lived in, and employers were having to make necessary wage adjustments to keep key employees.

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Mr. Bennett stated the town would not be able to provide its citizens with the numerous amount of services it currently provided, if it did not maintain a certain number of employees. He stated, in order for the town to remain competitive in the job market, he suggested the town review its compensation plan on an “annual basis”.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated, in regard to keeping key employees, he stated the 10 + 2% proposed compensation plan allocated funds to key employees that had been with the town for 20+ years, so he believed the proposed plan covered the retention matter.

Councilman Higginbotham suggested splitting up the 10% pay increase into two parts; 5% now and 5% in six months, but only if needed due to a recession. He made a motion that included the suggestion, but the motion was not seconded by any other Council member.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion that was seconded by Councilman Tim George to approve the proposed FY2023 Budget as presented.

Councilman Higginbotham stated his reason for voting against the proposed budget, saying that staff went over the \$300,000 budget set by Council for the compensation increase.

Motion carried.

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

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion that was seconded by Councilman Tim George to approve the proposed FY2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as presented.

Motion carried.

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

Councilman Tim George made a motion that was seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman to approve the proposed FY2023 Master List of Fees/Charges as presented.

Motion carried.

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

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion that was seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett to approve the FY2023 Utilities (water & sewer) rate increase as presented.

Motion carried.

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

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Mayor Mattox thanked Mrs. Shelton for all the work she did pertaining to the budget and budget process; and for the work she does everyday for the Town of Altavista.

10. Reports and Communication

- A. May 2022 Financial Reports
- B. May 2022 Departmental Reports
- C. Council Monthly Calendars - May and June

The Departmental Reports and Council Calendars were delivered to Town Council with their June Regular Council Meeting Agenda Pre-Packet.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager and Department Directors if they had any comments pertaining to the monthly reports, to which there were none.

11. Matters from Council

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

- Councilman Tim George asked if the Town of Altavista had a Property Maintenance Code, and if so, he asked Town Staff to evaluate a property located on Bedford Avenue to potentially being considered as a nuisance.
- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett asked that the property on the corner of West Road and Lynch Road also be evaluated as a potential nuisance.

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, and/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.

The motion was made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, seconded by Councilman Tim George.

Motion carried.

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

Town Council went into Closed Session at 6:43 p.m.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 6:48 p.m.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, 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.

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 discussed, or considered by Town Council.

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

Per Town Manager Gary Shanaberger, after returning from closed session, Town Council approved the appointment of Jacob “Jake” Taylor to the Town of Altavista’s Parks & Recreation Committee until March 31st, 2024, to fill the unexpired term of Reverend Ed Soto.

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 6:50 p.m.

Michael Mattox, Mayor

Gary Shanaberger, Town Clerk,
Town Manager