

Town Council Regular Meeting November 8th, 2022

The Altavista Town Council held their November 2022 Regular Meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, November 8th, 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. 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

Mr. Tom Fore, Public Services Director, gave the invocation for this evening.
After the invocation, Mayor Mattox led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox informed Town Council of an amendment to the agenda.
Regarding Section #6: Consent Agenda - add Item 6.E, SCADA Project Bid Award

He asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the November 8th meeting agenda, to which there were none.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the November 8, 2022, Altavista Town Council Meeting Agenda as amended.

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 - October 2022

Milestone(s):

None in October

New Hire Listing:

Joshua Farmer Utilities, Facilities Maintenance Mechanic

Departure Listing:

None in October

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4. Citizen's Time

Harriett Hardy, 1617 Melinda Drive, Altavista, addressed Town Council with a request. Ms. Hardy referenced the holiday lights and lighted snowflakes that adorn the town's decorative light poles this time of year. She asked that the holiday decorations not be turned on until after Thanksgiving. Ms. Hardy said that Thanksgiving was an important event in our history, and she believed it deserved its own attention before celebrating Christmas.

Mayor Mattox asked for Town Council's input on this matter.

Councilman Mitchell stated that he shared Ms. Hardy's sentiment regarding Thanksgiving and said he would be in favor of approving her request.

Councilman Higginbotham suggested that the holiday decorations could be erected without the lights being turned on until after Thanksgiving.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to approve Ms. Hardy's request.

Mr. Fore stated, moving forward, the Public Works Department would erect the holiday decorations in November, but would not turn them on until the Monday after Thanksgiving.

There were no other citizens to come before Town Council on this date.

5. Town & Community Partners - Updates

There were no updates given at this meeting.

6. Consent Agenda

- TOA Monthly Financial Reports: October 2022
- Lynch Creek Clearing & Restoration Project Bid Award
- Public Works - Surplus
- Town Council Meeting Minutes – August 2022
- SCADA Project Bid Award

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the November Consent Agenda.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the Lynch Creek Restoration Project and asked if the work included holding fabric and rip rap to be added to the creek bank.

Altavista's Public Works Manager, Jeff Arthur, confirmed the scope of work for the Lynch Creek Restoration Project included both, holding fabric and rip rap to be added to the creek bank between English Auto and Elber's Butcher Shop. He stated the area would also be chemically retreated in the Spring to deter new growth.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Lowman, to approve the November 8, 2022, Consent Agenda as amended.

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 scheduled for this meeting.

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8. New Business

A. Town Hall/Spark Innovation Center – Internet Connection

Background:

In preparation of the vacant fire station becoming the Spark Innovation Center, the Town worked with River Street Networks and Mid Atlantic Broadband to extend the fiber connection from the alley into the building; and entered into a three-year contract with River Street Networks to provide a 50/50Mb connection to the building at a cost of \$930 per month. Since that time, Council directed Staff to investigate the possibility of connecting the Town Hall (including Police) and English Park to the Spark Innovation Center's broadband internet. Staff recently met with River Street Networks and ITG to discuss the project, and a proposal was received from ITG; \$10,770 to install the cable and necessary equipment, and to reconfigure the Town's network, which would eliminate the town's monthly Comcast bill for Administration, APD, and English Park cameras.

Community Development Director, Sharon D. Williams, shared with Council an overview of ITG's proposal related to connecting the Town Hall, Police, and English Park to the Spark Innovation Center's broadband internet, and stated that the quote was valid for thirty (30) days. Ms. Williams informed Town Council that, if they considered the proposal, the security cameras at English Park would need to be upgraded, as well as a new firewall added to accommodate new areas/departments serviced.

Ms. Williams stated that she and staff would be happy to answer any questions Council may have regarding ITG's proposal and/or the project's scope of work.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked for a comparison between the annual cost of the proposed broadband service and the internet service the town was currently receiving.

Ms. Williams stated that the town was obligated to a three-year contract at \$930 per month, however, the proposed plan would offer the town better internet service and a larger area of coverage for nearly the same cost.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the security cameras at English Park and asked if getting new cameras could be postponed, to reduce the cost of the project.

Altavista Police Chief, Tommy Merricks, explained to Council that the existing camera system was basic and did not capture all of the areas he believed needed coverage. He said the existing system was also expensive if needing to review multiple data streams, because ITG had to access the data for the Town, which was a charge each time.

Chief Merricks informed Council that the proposed internet plan offered better technology with clearer data, such as viewing license plates, more areas covered, and would allow designated users to access data through their cellphones and computers, without the Town being charged additional fees.

Councilman Lowman asked if there were any monies remaining in the Town's ARPA funds that could help cover the cost of the proposed plan, to which Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Altavista's Finance Director, answered there was not.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with the proposed plan and said that he believed extending the broadband service to English Park was an investment in the community. He reminded Council that, after three years, the cost savings from the proposed plan would be revenue neutral.

Mayor Mattox asked Chief Merricks how often the security camera system at English Park had been utilized for issues or incidents in the park.

Chief Merricks said that the system had only been needed a few times since its installation, but it was important to have the security system in place. He stated that he would like to have additional coverage at the playground and splashpad, which the new plan would have

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Vice Mayor Bennett shared his favor with extending internet service to English Park. He said the amenity would benefit a wide array of park patrons such as individuals that work remotely that could enjoy the park's scenery while doing their work; and it may also be a source for school-aged children that do not have internet in their home.

Mayor Mattox asked Finance Director Tobie Shelton if there were funds available in the current budget to cover the cost of the proposed internet expansion plan.

Mrs. Shelton stated there were no funds currently allocated for this project, and if the plan was approved, funding for the project would come from Town Reserves, with any surplus of funds at the end of the fiscal year being returned to Reserves to help cover the cost.

Public Services Director, Tom Fore, referenced the Consent Agenda approved earlier that evening and reminded Council of the two vehicles approved as surplus to be sold. He stated the funds from the sale of those two vehicles could be allocated for this purpose.

Councilman Lowman asked if there were grants available to help cover the cost for the proposed internet expansion plan.

Ms. Williams stated it was hard for single entities/localities to acquire a DHCD Grant for broadband. She said that Altavista was excluded from Campbell County's broadband grant application because the county believed Altavista had adequate internet coverage.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger stated that he was unaware of any grants available to the town for the proposed project, however, he and Ms. Williams would take the next couple of weeks to investigate grant possibilities and report to Council at the Work Session

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council to consider postponing a decision on this matter; and discussing the item further at their November Work Session.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if there were other providers the town could acquire quotes from for the proposed internet/broadband extension project.

Ms. Williams stated that Riverstreet and ITG were both existing town providers. She reminded Council that the town was under a previously approved contract with Riverstreet for \$930 per month for 36 months, whether the newly proposed plan was approved or not, however, the new plan offered better internet service and a larger service area.

Councilman Higginbotham and Vice Mayor Bennett requested that Staff revise the proposed plan, showing the town's current service, the proposed service, and the cost difference of each.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the Staunton River Memorial Library (SRML), located at the upper end of Broad Street, and reminded everyone that the library offered computer access, with free internet service, to its patrons.

Mr. Bennett suggested the town utilize the SRML's affiliation with Campbell County and ask if they would like to join the town on the new broadband package. He stated that Campbell County could take the dollar amount usually paid for the SRML's internet service and reallocate the monies towards the new broadband service (if approved). Mr. Bennett stated this would help cover the monthly cost of the new broadband service, as well as benefit the SRML with better internet service.

There was a consensus of Council for Staff to investigate Mr. Bennett's suggestion.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any additional questions or comments in regard to this item, of which there were none.

Town Council was in consensus to continue the discussion and consideration of this item at their November 22nd Work Session.

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B. Planning Commission Appointment

Community Development Director, and Planning Commission Secretary, Sharon D. Williams, referenced the Altavista Planning Commission's current Chairman, John Jordan, and informed Town Council that Mr. Jordan's term would end on November 30th, 2022.

Ms. Williams stated that Mr. Jordan expressed interest in remaining on the Planning Commission; and his fellow Commissioners unanimously recommended Mr. Jordan for re-appointment as their Chairman.

With a motion made by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, and seconded by Councilman Tim George, the Altavista Town Council accepted the Planning Commission's recommendation and approved Mr. John Jordan for another 4-year term as the Chairman of the Altavista Planning Commission; term ending November 30th, 2026.

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. Status Report – Sedimentation and Solids Handling Improvements Project

Background:

The Town of Altavista submitted a loan application to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) for this project and were awaiting approval from the VDH for a \$3 million loan.

Altavista's Public Services Director, Tom Fore, informed Town Council that the town recently received a "letter of approval" from the VDH, which included a \$2.3 million forgiveness of the \$3 million loan.

All Town Council members thanked Mr. Fore for his due diligence in finding available funds for this project and for the work he and his department do for the Town of Altavista.

10. Departmental Reports - October 2022

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

Departmental Reports and Council's Meeting Calendars were delivered to Town Council with their November Regular Council Meeting Agenda Pre-Packet.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager and Department Directors if they had any questions or comments pertaining to the monthly reports. There were none.

11. Matters from Council

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

- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett referenced Planning Commissioner Marvin Clements' recent announcement that he would not be seeking re-election to the Commission. Mr. Bennett asked if Town Council needed to discuss the matter that evening.

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Community Development Director/Planning Commission Secretary, Sharon D. Williams, informed Town Council that Mr. Clements' term would expire on December 31, 2022. She said that the Planning Commission recommended an individual and the individual expressed interest in serving; therefore, an application was forwarded to the individual.

Ms. Williams stated, as soon as the individual returned the application, staff would bring the matter before Council for consideration.

- Ms. Williams referenced the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update, delivered to Town Council earlier that week for review, and she reminded Council that they would be discussing the draft document at their November Work Session; and a Public Hearing would be held at the December 13th Town Council Meeting.

12. Closed Session

There was no closed session held on this date.

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 6:35 p.m.

Michael Mattox, Mayor

Gary Shanaberger, Town Clerk,
Town Manager