

Town Council Regular Meeting - February 14th, 2023

The Altavista Town Council held their February 2023 Regular Meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, February 14th, 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
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mayor Michael Mattox

Absent: Mr. Wayne Mitchell
Mr. Jay Higginbotham

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
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

Absent: Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney

Reverend Ed Soto, Altavista Presbyterian Church, gave the invocation on 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 February 14th Town Council Meeting Agenda, of which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tim George, to approve the February 14, 2023, Altavista Town Council Meeting Agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

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

3. Recognitions and Presentations

Town of Altavista Personnel Changes:

- Milestone:
Mary Hall, Altavista Police Department, Administrative Assistant, 20yr anniversary
- New Hire:
Samuel Maddox, Water Treatment Plant, Trainee
- Departure:
None in January

4. Citizen's Time

- Keith Pieper, Altavista High School's Head Baseball Coach, and a member of the Citizens for Altavista Baseball (CAB) organization, informed Town Council that the CAB recently purchased a building to be used for equipment storage, and potentially to also be utilized as a changing area for baseball players.

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Mr. Pieper asked for Council's consideration to allow the building to be placed beside the batting cages at War Memorial Park. He stated that no utilities would be required for the building, and future maintenance of the building would be taken care of by the Altavista Baseball Program or the CAB.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger informed the Town Council that Staff was currently working on the maintenance agreement between the Town of Altavista and Campbell County regarding the War Memorial ballfields; and suggested Council wait for completion of the updated agreement before making a decision on this matter.

Town Council concurred with the Town Manager's recommendation.

Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams reminded Council and Mr. Pieper that the installation of the aforementioned building would also need to be in compliance with the Town's Zoning Ordinance and if so, required a Zoning Permit.

- In reference to one of the Consent Agenda items, Billy Booker Memorial Ballfields, Harriett Hardy, 1617 Melinda Drive, Altavista, shared her love for the Altavista ballfields being part of the War Memorial Park. She stated that many members of her family and several friends were military veterans, and she appreciated the recognition that the War Memorial Park showed the area veterans.

Ms. Hardy asked Council not to allow the ballfield's name to be changed, but to consider leaving them named as part of War Memorial Park.

- Betty Moorman, 900 16th Street, shared her concerns with the Altavista Post Office having several "substitute carriers" recently; resulting in the mail not being delivered to her area of Town until late in the evening. She also stated that her mailbox was located on her porch and the carriers were not picking up her outgoing mail.

Vice Mayor Bennett informed Ms. Moorman that the Altavista Post Office had a new "fulltime" carrier for her area, so she should not be experiencing any more issues.

5. Town & Community Partners - Updates

There were no updates on this date.

6. Consent Agenda

- TOA Monthly Financial Reports - January 2023
- Town Council Meeting Minutes
- William "Billy" Booker Memorial – baseball fields
- English Park Electrical Repairs
- Public Works - Surplus Request
- Springs Rehabilitation Project - Engineering Proposals
- UV System Replacement
- Pro AVR (Automated Vehicle Recognition) Program
- Development of the Altavista Housing Development Reserve
- Frazier Farm - Environmental Testing

There was a consensus of Town Council to remove the Billy Booker Memorial request from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett shared his appreciation for the many accomplishments of Mr. Booker. He stated there were many citizens that responded in opposition to the proposed memorial for Mr. Booker, not due to disliking him, but because they believed the ballfields should remain park of the War Memorial Park.

Mr. Bennett suggested the individuals that proposed renaming the ballfields, to consider having a park bench donated in Mr. Booker's honor.

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Councilman Tim George also spoke of citizens that contacted him with good things to say about Mr. Booker, but expressing opposition of renaming the ballfields. He read aloud an article from the American Legion website, stating “The Altavista War Memorial Park is dedicated to the residents of Altavista and surrounding areas that served in the United States military”.

After considerable discussion on the matter, Town Council elected to deny the request to rename the ballfields; and to keep the ballfield’s name as part of Altavista’s War Memorial Park

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tim George, to approve the February 14, 2023, Consent Agenda as amended.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	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. Enterprise Fund - FY2024 Draft Operations Budget and FY2024-2028 Draft Capital Improvement Plan

Background:

Annually, Staff provides Town Council with a Draft Budget and Capital Improvement Plan that shows how resources are allocated for the delivery of public services. Budget preparation for fiscal year 2024 began in October 2023. Over the past several months, revenue forecasts have been made, department managers have submitted operational and capital requests, and local agencies and non-profits have submitted funding requests to create a draft budget for FY2024 and Draft CIP for FY2024-2028.

Finance Director Tobie Shelton delivered the draft documents to Town Council for their review and consideration during the FY2024 budget process. She informed Council that the draft budget included an increase in utilities (10% water & 5% sewer) as previously discussed and approved; and a proposed increase in utility connection and availability fees. She stated the draft budget did not include cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) to town employee pay/salaries or CIP items.

Ms. Shelton referenced the summary sheet that was added this year to Council’s budget review packets. She stated the new worksheet was intended to assist Council when making the important decisions they have during their budget discussions.

Ms. Shelton informed Town Council they would be receiving the General Fund’s FY2024 Draft Budget in March.

Mayor Mattox shared that he liked the new format for the proposed draft budgets. He thanked Ms. Shelton for her presentation.

Councilman George suggested the pier analysis, conducted with the recent the Draper Aden Report, be added to citizen’s utility bills, showing Altavista having the lowest utility costs compared to surrounding localities.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett suggested the same information also be shared on the Town’s website and social media page.

Public Services Director Tom Fore said he would send the Draper Aden Report to Council and to the appropriate Staff to be posted on the Town’s website and social media page.

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9. Unfinished Business

A. USDA Royal Development Pre-Grant Application

Background:

The Town of Altavista was looking for grant funding to assist with the estimated cost of \$5,500,000 for the Town's Aeration Improvement Project. The USDA-RD (United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development) provides the opportunity to obtain grant funding for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) and Environmental Reviews (ER).

Public Services Director Tom Fore informed Council that Staff was recently notified by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) of the loan award for the Town's Aeration Improvement Project. He stated that Staff was applying for a USDA-RD Grant to do a preliminary Engineering Report/Study and an Environmental Review; and therefore, needed Town Council's approval of a Rural Development Application Resolution.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman, to adopt the presented resolution and approve Staff to move forward with a USDA-RD Grant application.

Motion carried.

Vote:

Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
Mr. Tim George	Yes
Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

RESOLUTION BY THE ALTAVISTA TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ALTAVISTA, VIRGINIA

The Town Council of the Town of Altavista, Virginia, consisting of seven members, in a duly called meeting held on the 14th day of February 2023, at which a quorum was present, resolved as follows:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that in order to facilitate obtaining financial assistance from the United States of America, United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (the Government) in the development of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and Environmental Report (ER) for improvements at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP); to serve the community, the Governing Body does hereby adopt and abide by all covenants contained in the agreements, documents, and forms required by the Government to be executed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Manager, of the Town of Altavista, be authorized to execute on behalf of the Town of Altavista, the above referenced agreements, documents, and forms and to execute such other documents including, but not limited to, debt instruments, security instruments, and/or grant agreements as may be required in obtaining the said financial assistance. This Resolution is hereby entered into the permanent minutes of the meetings of this Council.

10. January 2023 Departmental Reports, Project Updates, and Communications

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

Departmental Reports and Council Meeting Calendars were delivered to Town Council with their February 14th Meeting Agenda Pre-Packet.

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

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- Town Manager Gary Shanaberger informed Town Council that the 2023 Uncle Billy's Day event had been cancelled, due to the lack of time for adequate preparation and a lack of the sufficient number of volunteers needed for such an event.
- Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins gave Council updates for two ongoing projects:

Mr. Perkins referenced the recently approved Altavista Housing Development Reserve Fund, and the ability to use the funds as leverage for grant opportunities. He informed Council there had been a recent opportunity to do so, and Staff applied for the grant.

Mr. Perkins said Staff should find out results from the grant application in the next couple of weeks, and he would keep Council updated on its progress.

Mr. Perkins also referenced the (blue) wayfinding signs on RT. 29, and informed Council that the English Park, Dalton's Landing, and Avoca logos for Altavista "attractions" were in production and would be added to the signs soon.

- Community Development Director Sharon Williams referenced the Town's recently submitted application for a Community Development Block Grant – a planning grant for the Moseley Heights area of Altavista. She informed Council that the pre-planning stage of the grant process required the Town to survey the Moseley Heights neighborhood for citizen input on what they think their neighborhood needed.

Ms. Williams stated the Town was required to obtain a 90% return rate on the surveys distributed to the Moseley Heights citizens. She informed Council that a group of Staff members and volunteers would be visiting Moseley Heights on Saturday, February 18th, to acquire as many surveys as they could. She invited Council members and Staff members, that were available that day, to join the group.

11. Matters from Council

- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett asked that "Code of Ethics Training" be added to the agenda of Town Council's 2023 Retreat/Work Session.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger stated Town Council Retreats were usually held every two years, and unless otherwise directed by Council, the next one was scheduled for 2024

Under the suggestion of Vice Mayor Bennett, the Town Council was in consensus for Staff to investigate what small-scale training options were available for Town Council to participate in this year, and also add the item to the retreat agenda for 2024.

- Councilman Tracy Emerson referenced the Spark Innovation Center's recent grand opening, and stated that he believed it was a successful event.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed Council that, as of that afternoon, all four offices in the Spark Center were officially rented.

- Mayor Mattox reminded everyone of the following dates:
 - Monday, Feb. 20th - Town Offices will be CLOSED in observance of President's Day
 - Tuesday, February 28th - 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)(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

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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
	Mayor Michael Mattox	Yes		

Town Council went into Closed Session at 6:40 p.m.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 7:25 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.

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
	Mayor Michael Mattox	Yes		

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

Michael Mattox, Mayor

Gary Shanaberger, Town Clerk,
Town Manager