

Altavista Town Council Regular Meeting - May 9, 2023

The Altavista Town Council held their May 2023 Regular Meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, May 9th, 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
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney

Altavista's Chief of Police, Tommy Merricks, delivered the Invocation for this meeting. 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 May 9th Meeting Agenda, of which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the May 9, 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

3.a Town of Altavista Personnel Changes:

- Milestones:
None in April
- New Hires:
Wanda K. Adkins, ACTS Bus Driver
Jimmie R. Campbell, Utilities, Maintenance Specialist
- Departure:
Geoffrey "Chaz" Smith, APD Police Officer

3.b Proclamation for Public Services Recognition Week

Mayor Mike Mattox read aloud the proclamation, to be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

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WHEREAS, the Town of Altavista is served every single day by devoted public servants; and

WHEREAS, these unsung heroes do the work that keeps our town working; and

WHEREAS, public servants in Altavista help to educate our children, creates a stronger and connected town through planning, preserve public safety and the health of our citizens, maintain our roads, public facilities, and infrastructure, protect citizen's rights, and handle a multitude of other essential duties entrusted to them by the public; and

WHEREAS, dedicated Town of Altavista employees strive daily to perform their jobs with professionalism, and integrity, to make government services more accessible and responsive to the needs of the citizens of Altavista.

THEREFORE, I, Mike Mattox, Mayor of the Town of Altavista do hereby proclaim May 7 – 13, 2023 as

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

throughout the Town of Altavista and urge all citizens to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of employees of the Town of Altavista and Campbell County who continually work to make Altavista a great place to live, work and play.

Adopted this 9th day of May 2023 by the Altavista Town Council.

With a motion by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, the Town Council adopted the Resolution

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

4. Citizen's Time

Christopher Martula, 214 West Road, Altavista, shared two concerns with Town Council.

- Mr. Martula said there were many vehicles that drove too fast on West Road, and suggested the Town add Speed Limit signs to West Road to help deter speeding.
- Mr. Martula also informed Council that his neighbor at 216 West Road, Dan Kinman, had been flying an airplane from his property, which he thought was in violation of Altavista's Town Code and Zoning Ordinance. He asked Town Council to take action on the matter for "public safety" reasons.

Mayor Mattox asked Community Development Director Sharon Williams, also the Town's Zoning Administrator, to investigate the issue.

Ms. Williams stated that Staff was currently working with Mr. Martula on this matter. She informed Council that Mr. Kinman was a US Forestry Fire Fighter and a Commercial Pilot.

Ms. Williams said Staff did not find where a plane had been registered in Altavista or Campbell County by Mr. Kinman; but stated Staff would continue to monitor the situation. She stated that Mr. Martula's complaint was considered an "alleged violation" until proven otherwise.

5. Town & Community Partners - Updates

Avoca Executive Director Caleb Lafoon updated Town Council on Avoca's most recent activities and some upcoming events. He also informed Council of grants recently awarded to Avoca for both interior and exterior renovations to the museum, and to the grounds surrounding the main house/museum.

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Mr. Lafoon said the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation awarded Avoca a \$3,400 to conduct tree-trimming on the Avoca property; and they also received an additional \$1,000 from a private donor to complete the project.

Mr. Lafoon stated that Avoca was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Americana Corner Association to assist with developing educational exhibits in two of the museum's exterior buildings, the smoke house and milk house; both of which were dated pre-Civil War, and not open since that time. He said he was excited to share the new exhibits with the public.

Mr. Lafoon stated that the Moore's Charitable Foundation, the Powell Foundation, and the Minnie Lane Foundation were among the grants awarded to Avoca; and said he was very proud of Altavista businesses, which donated approximately \$33,000 to Avoca over the past year.

Mr. Lafoon concluded by thanking Altavista's Public Works Department for their assistance with maintaining the Avoca grounds, and for helping to apply fresh mulch to the gardens. He also thanked the Town of Altavista for their continued support of Avoca.

Councilman Mitchell thanked Mr. Lafoon for his due-diligence in seeking grant funding for some of Avoca's needs, and for his hard work as Executive Director.

Councilman Lowman said he believed the museum and grounds looked great, and congratulated Mr. Lafoon for his accomplishments in such a short period of time as Director.

6. Consent Agenda

- TOA Monthly Financial Reports - April 2023
- Town Council Meeting Minutes - March Work Session; and April Regular Meeting and April Work Session
- Town of Altavista, Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS) – FTA Drug and Alcohol Policy updates

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the May 9, 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

Altavista's Director of Finance, Tobie Shelton, presented all three public hearings. She said that additional discussion among Town Council could be held later during this meeting, and at their May 23rd Work Session, if needed. She reminded Council that approval of the FY2024 Budget and CIP was scheduled for the June 13, 2023, Town Council Meeting.

- FY2024 Budget and FY2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Background: Over the past few months, Staff provided Town Council with budget sheets that were updated along the way, based on the actions or direction of Council, to create the budget that was being proposed at this meeting.

Mrs. Shelton presented Council with an overview of the proposed FY2024 Budget as advertised; which would allocate funds for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024.

Total Revenue: \$21,156,030
Operating Expenditures: \$10,103,430
Proposed Capital Outlay: \$11,052,600
\$21,156,030

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Mayor Mattox opened this hearing at 6:14pm for public input.

With no public comments, Mayor Mattox closed the hearing at 6:15pm, and asked Town Council if they had any questions pertaining to the proposed FY2024 Budget and CIP, of which there were none.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, to accept the proposed budget as presented, and to authorize Staff to place the item on the June 13th Consent Agenda for official approval.

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

- FY2024 Increase to Water & Sewer Rates; and the Connection & Availability Schedule
Background: The FY2024 Proposed Budget was built on a (previously discussed) increase to utility rates; 10% for Water and 5% for Sewer. With budget approval, the increase to water and sewer rates would be effective on December 1st, 2023.

Mrs. Shelton stated that the proposed budget also included increases to the water/sewer connection and availability schedule. She said connection fees continued to be based on size and the capacity factor.

Mayor Mattox opened this hearing at 6:15pm for public input.

With no public comments, Mayor Mattox closed the hearing at 6:16pm, and asked Town Council if they had any questions pertaining to utility increases, of which there were none.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to accept the proposed utility increases as presented, and to authorize Staff to place the item on the June 13th Consent Agenda for official approval.

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

- FY2024 Proposed Meals Tax Increase
Background: To balance the budget, Town Council proposed an increase to the Real Estate Tax rate and the Meals Tax rate.

Mrs. Shelton stated that the General Fund portion of the FY2024 proposed budget was built on a 1% increase to the Town's Meals Tax rate, which increased the rate from 7% to 8%; and if approved, would be effective July 1, 2023.

Mrs. Shelton informed Town Council, due to Campbell County's recent reassessment of real property, resulting in an increase of more than 1%, the Town must hold a separate public hearing for the proposed increase to their Real Estate Tax rate; as required in Section 58.1-3321 of the State Code.

There was a consensus of Town Council to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, June 6th, at 6:00pm for the aforementioned public hearing, which would meet requirements of State Code, while allowing the adoption of the FY2024 Budget and CIP to remain on schedule.

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Mayor Mattox opened the hearing for the proposed Meals Tax rate increase at 6:16pm.

With no public comments offered, Mayor Mattox closed the hearing at 6:17pm, and asked Council if they had any questions pertaining to the rate increase, of which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, to accept the proposed increase to Altavista's Meals Tax rate, from 7% to 8%, and to authorize Staff to place the item on the June 13th Consent Agenda for official approval. 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

8. New Business

There were no new business items to discuss at this meeting.

9. Unfinished Business

There were no unfinished items to discuss at this time.

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

- TOA Finance Reports
- Utilities – Project Updates
- Public Services Monthly Report
- Community Development Report
- Altavista Police Department Reports
- Town Council Monthly Meeting Calendars – May and June

Departmental Reports and Town Council's Meeting Calendars were delivered to Council with their May 9th Meeting Agenda Pre-Packet.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager and Department Directors if they had any project updates, comments pertaining to monthly reports, or any other matter to discuss with Council.

- Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed Town Council that the Town of Altavista's project to include Town attractions on the Rt 29 (blue) Attraction signs was complete, and both the north and south entrances into Town now recognized some of Altavista's most historic and treasured amenities.
- Assistant Director of Public Services Paul Hill informed Town Council that the Electrical Project at English Park was complete, and power was restored.
- Director of Community Development Sharon Williams reminded everyone of the upcoming "Moseley Heights Cleanup Day" on Saturday, May 13, starting at 9am at the YMCA; and said they were still in need of volunteers.

11. Matters from Council

- Councilman Wayne Mitchell referenced the APD's April Report and asked why "traffic stops" drastically decreased.

Chief Merricks answered it was mainly due to having a light staff from time off duties.

- Councilman Mitchell referenced the Community Development Depts.' April Report and shared his enthusiasm that there were five new business applications in April.
- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett referenced the decorative water fountain in Shreve Park, which is currently not operating, and needs a \$30,000 water pump replacement.

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Mr. Bennett said, due to budget restraints for FY2024, this item did not make it to the budget/CIP. He suggested the Town put more effort into restoring the historic fountain; such as considering alternate ways to cover the cost; or at the least, to consider the item during the next fiscal year's budget process.

- Councilman Jay Higginbotham asked Tom Fore for updates regarding "drive motors" purchased for a Town project
 - Assistant Public Services Director Paul Hill stated the Town was currently waiting on confirmation (in writing) from the engineers that the VFDs for were correct.
- Councilman Tim George referenced the town-owned parking lot at the corner of 7th Street and Campbell Avenue. He stated that he considered the lot to be in a "blighted state" and suggested the Town consider adding the parking lot to its spring paving schedule in 2024.

Public Services Director Tom Fore stated that a cost analysis for the project would be drafted and the feasibility of paving the property would be considered when Staff developed the Town's 2024 Paving Schedule.

- Mayor Mattox thanked Town Staff and Town Council for their hard work, and for working together so diligently to accomplish a balanced budget for fiscal year 2024.

12. Closed Session

Town Council went into a Closed Session under State Code: Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) and Section 2.2-3711(A)(8).

With a motion made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, the motion carried, and Council began their closed session at 6:30pm.

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

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

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

Town Council voted 6-1 (Jay Higginbotham abstained) in favor of the Town of Altavista proceeding with the purchase of the former Leggett Building, located on Main Street, Altavista, from Blue Ridge Developers, Inc.

13. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 7:27pm.

Michael Mattox, Mayor

Gary Shanaberger, Town Clerk/Town Manager