

TOWN OF NEWLAND
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 2, 2018
6:00 PM

PRESENT:

MAYOR: Valerie Jaynes
ATTORNEY: Joe Seegers
ALDERMAN: James C. Johnson, Lauren Turbyfill, Joleta Wise, Greg Seiz.
GUESTS: Shelby Winstead, Sabena Maiden Roy Reynolds, Casey Turbyfill, Matt Debnam, Shannon Seiz, Jane Wise
STAFF: Lise Meinhardt, Keith Hoilman, Byron Clawson, Michael Fields, Crystal Hicks, Tammy Gardner

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Mayor then led the audience in the pledge to the American flag.

Joleta Wise made a motion to approve the proposed agenda. Greg Seiz seconded the motion. Joleta made a motion to approve the December minutes stating she wants more details on public comments and states that's just a FYI. James seconded the motion.

The Mayor then asked for public comments and read the rules of public comments to the audience. There were no public comments.

Keith introduced Shelby Winstead from Serv-Line and stated she is here to submit a presentation to the board about her company providing insurance to the water department. Shelby offered three plans to choose from. Shelby stated the company was partnered with National Rural Water. Shelby asked if anyone was familiar with Serv-Line. Shelby stated that they were a new company of 5 years and she has been active for about 3 years. Shelby stated they were an insurance company for high water bills and makes adjustments for them. Shelby stated she got into this business working for an insurance company and would get single moms coming in that could not pay their high water bills. Shelby then goes over the proposal with the board explaining how there are three options of insurance and prices for the water department. She stated they could get a total right off a bill once a year if they had something happen. Shelby stated the water world is compassionate and they want to help you. James asked if she was talking about residential leak coverage. Shelby stated yes and commercial as well. Greg Seiz asked if commode running or inside leaks would fall under that, Shelby stated yes but if a toddler or someone left the water running it would not be covered. Joleta asked how they do the billing for the citizens. Shelby stated the town decided that. Shelby stated the town would create their own invoice. Lauren asked if it would be a separate line item. Shelby states that rates can be added to the rates now or make it separate. Greg Seiz stated then you have a 100% participation and it's like forcing everyone to take it. Greg stated it was almost like self-insuring. Shelby stated yes it was self-insuring. Shelby stated that some lawyers in Raleigh stated that they were not comfortable with self-insuring.

Greg stated that would go back onto our customer or what we are absorbing in our water system lost. Greg stated he would like to see what those numbers are. Joleta stated it was \$16,000.00 dollars at one time. Keith explained how a customer gets one time a year for forgiveness. Keith stated that the town asks for a plumber's receipt or one from someone who fixed the leak. Then the town gives an adjustment. The town takes three months and averages it out for the customer. Sheby stated that now a customer feels they do not have to pay extra but the insurance will help to keep the rates from going up. Joleta asks, being a property owner myself if I have a leak, how do you address it. Are you selling insurance to me as an individual or as a town? Shelby stated it was to the town. Greg stated they are opt in or opt out. Shelby stated they had never seen more than 4% opt out. Greg Seiz asked Keith if the option of 500 be adequate or do we need to go to option 2. Keith stated he personally thought option 2 would be the best option. Shelby stated Commercial has a different rate. James asked who does the water billing. The clerk replied she did. Shelby stated they would train the clerk in how to bill the customers. Shelby stated that the town could send letters to everyone or put it in the paper. James asked if they paid to put it in the paper. Shelby stated no unless it was a breaking point. Joleta stated it could be a breaking point. Greg asked how many accounts do we have? Keith replied around 500. James asked what 500 times \$2.00 would be. Greg stated it would be \$22.80 per account for option 2. Shelby stated it could be rounded off from the \$1.90 to \$2.00 if the town wanted too and if a customer opts out they will not be able to receive any help from the town if they have a leak. Lise stated she believed that they need to address sewer at the same time and would like to hear options for both water and sewer. She stated that now we waive for both not just water. The board agreed. Shelby stated she would get a proposal for both water and sewer which will be higher and be back at the February 6th board meeting. Lauren asked if customer could have just one water or sewer not both. Shelby stated that they could do them separate. Greg stated that we do not have people that have only one and Keith replied we do have people grandfathered in that have only water or sewer, but very few. Greg asked Shelby to get the board a proposal for that. Shelby stated absolutely. Greg stated we would only be cutting it about 50% if everybody only opts in for water and that's why we need to put all that together. Joleta stated to Shelby that she appreciated her. The board thanked her for coming.

Valerie introduced Sabena Maiden who is over the Avery Mentoring Program. Sabena explained to the board that January 2018, is the 17th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, which is an annual campaign to recruit volunteer mentors for young people. She states that teachers, counselors, health counselors and guardians refer the child to them from ages 7 to 17. They try to match them with an adult. They want to bring awareness to the area. Sabena stated that maybe 1 out of 5 adults have time to mentor. Sabena explained how there are a lot of young people who would like for an adult to eat a meal, take a walk, or just have someone do whatever fun things they like to do. They match an adult with a child and the adult commits to two hours a week with that child. Sabena explained to the board you can become a lunch buddy also. Sabena handed the board fliers to look over. James made a motion to make January National Mentoring Month. Joleta seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I. Mayor Valerie Jaynes signed a proclamation stating January 27th, 2018 as "Newland Thank Your Mentor Day" and January 2018 as Mentoring Month.

Crystal Hicks gave the tag office report. James asked Crystal if everything was going well and if she was happy, and if there were improvements. Crystal stated yes. James asked if she had gotten the things they had discussed. Crystal stated they were working on it. Greg asked if they were putting together a list. Crystal stated yes. The board thanked Crystal. There were no questions for Crystal.

Lise Meinhardt gave the financial report. Lise stated she was getting ready to prepare the yearend report for taxes and w2s and will be issuing the w2s soon. She stated once she got all of the bills in for December she will put out a report for the board. Lise stated she would try to have the next 6 months

report so they could tell how the year will end. Lise stated she had received a letter from Misty Watson which explained that she was using a comparison of the average across the state metric whereas the letter we had is looking at all small-town metrics. Lise states we are doing fine we do not need to go into our reserves. The reserves are on the level where they need to be or are real close. Lise also stated that Misty stated there was a population group average that has reasonable units they can use. Lise stated that Misty states the counties and municipalities need a much bigger unit. Lise stated that since we were in an area where we do not have major catastrophes we should be in a good metric. Lise stated that the state does not look at a single metric but at least 100 of them. Joleta stated she had talked with Sharon Edminsten in 2016 and she stated that an average municipality of our size is 37.9% and where are we at in that average, because Misty was stating 8% Lise stated we are at 46.08. Greg stated he did not understand those metrics when Misty quoted the 8%. Lise stated she had not had the time yet to go over this and will look at it again. She stated she thought they were talking about the 46.08% and that's what she asked about. Lise states she is not sure which metric Misty and the letter are using but she would get with her and see. Greg Seiz stated that the letter recommended 120% and that they were notified because it was below 40% and now in the neighborhood of a little over 50%. Lisa explained that they do not recommend 120% and maybe that is a state average. Lise stated we need to look at percentages that match our piers. Greg Seiz stated that he checked into things a couple years ago when that letter came, and it does not take much for one flood or something to happen to take that. He states he thinks that number is much higher than larger municipalities who have much bigger costs. Greg Seiz states that right now we are at 58%. Lise stated that the letter's percent was when there was a concern about going into the reserves. Lise stated she would look into it. She stated we were not throwing a lot into reserves, but we were maintaining our balances. Greg stated we are pulling in the right direction. Lise stated she has not looked at the balances for collections yet but feels we are getting close to 100%. Lise stated she would know more when she does her 6 months evaluation. The board thanked Lise. There were no questions for Lise.

Byron gave the police report. Byron stated last month was pretty active. He told the board of all the notable calls. Byron stated all officers have completed the 2017 mandated training. He also stated the police officer advertising had only one to respond. Joleta asked Byron how many well fare checks do you have? Byron stated they had been going around town checking on people as part of their routine. Greg Seiz asked Byron if all officers had completed is that 3. Byron stated that's all officers and reserve. Joleta asked if there are time there is no coverage. Byron states yes. Byron gave the board a schedule. Byron explains that is quiet a few days and nights without coverage. Byron states it's impossible to do 24 hour coverage at this time. Byron explained how he has been using the reserve when he can but unfortunately this is not their first job and they have other commitments. Greg Seiz asked if the dates given included the reserve. Joleta asked if no coverage on the 23rd. Byron explained he could not find anyone able to work that day. Lauren asked who was on reserve. Byron stated he has Matt Milsaps, Matt Potter, Joe Buchanan sometimes but he also drives a bus and cannot be there a lot and it is hard for him to be out all night but he steps up when needed. Jamie asked is that your three? Greg Seiz asked Byron if he has 3 full time plus himself? Byron states no there are 3 including himself. James stated he visited with a policeman the other day and James stated that Ben Townsend said he would love to come back in on reserve. Joleta asked what the possibility of Ben coming back to the town would be? James stated he wanted to come back to reserves, just not full time. James asked if Byron had spoken to him. Byron stated not really, he goes by his house from time to time. Byron stated he would love to have Ben. Jamie stated it was up to Byron if he wanted him back. James and Joleta stated they would like to have him back since he is familiar and knows the people and a member of the town. James and Joleta told Byron it was up to him. Byron stated he would see what could be done. Lauren asked if Mr. Fields and Mr. Denton both are going to stay on the shifts that they are now one day and one night. Byron explained the shifts have changed Michael will be Monday and Tuesday, Mr.

Denton will be Wednesday and Thursdays, in which they will be opposites. James asked if they will be working day shifts? Byron stated they will be utilizing reserves that can help and doing a split shift. Byron stated the busiest time is evenings and nights, not so much in the mornings and would be nice to have somebody. Lauren asked if there would be change in overlap time. Greg Seiz stated that double coverage be as minimal as possible. Lauren stated we will have these two officers of the day and reserve at night, right? Lise stated to the board that they were budgeted for a chief and three officers. She states you take a 168 hrs a week and divide by 4, She states that you cannot pay to have a chief and 2 officers and all these reserves also. Joleta states we are not budgeted for top coverage. Joleta stated we will just have to budget them in. Lauren states there is no one at times when there is a call. James stated that the Chief is doing all he can do with the resources he has. James stated to Byron to tell the board what he needs, and they are going to try and fix things for him as quick as possible. James stated that Byron had only 1 application in 30 days and that word gets around that Newland has the lowest paid officers. James stated the last officer went down the road for around \$2500.00. James states how it will affect everyone even people thinking about moving here and stated we need help now. Jamie states he hires people right out of high school making more money than the Newland Police Officers. Joleta stated if we don't have the money we don't have the money but that they should give the officers more pay but feels it's not right to raise one department and not the others. James agreed. Joleta stated she wanted it fair across the board. James agreed but stated that Byron has to have another person. Joleta agreed and stated she lives in town and wants full time protection. Lauren stated about an incident at the Quik shop and it took 25 minutes and stated it was the night of a certain situation. Lauren asked Byron about an incident in which he had heard little about it and Lauren stated a lady at the quick shop was not protected in that time of need. Lauren states we need that nightly coverage because she just cannot be unprotected at night. Lise stated she had some figures put together. Lise stated she would let Byron talk first and then she would help him. Lise stated if you want full coverage you need a chief and four officers. Lise presents an option budget for the board to look over. Lise stated there was Chief stuff that needed to be done and it is too hard for him to do both. Lise gave the board a proposal to look over. Lise explained that the information given to them was the first half of the current budget and the second was bringing some figures around to show replacing officer that left and raising it a little bit more. Lise explained to increase it annually is \$17,000.00 but to do it for the next half of this year is option 2 \$8500.00. Lise stated we can afford that. Lise stated that was for replacing a police officer and raising them up a bit. Lise stated the second proposal was for adding an officer and increasing the pay would increase this year is \$33,000.00 and next year \$66,000.00. Lise stated she believed where we were at right now that we could afford to do option 2. Lise stated that we have to commit to it because Byron would not want to fire someone come the first of July either. Lise explained we have to find \$76,000.00 if this is what the board wants. Joleta asked where Lise was going to find it. Lauren asks how did we have it before when we had four and a chief? Lise explained it was a higher budget. James asked if we were supposed to be in closed session because of personnel. Keith explained this was not a personnel issue. Lise explained she believes they can budget for it next year. Greg stated they had discussed a two-door plan and stated they were spending the money training and the officer going someplace else. Joleta stated and spending it on reserves also. Greg stated this would get us through the next 6 months. Greg stated he thought they could do the \$8400.00. Joleta stated she would like to reinforce what she stated at the last meeting and have officers enter into an employee contract that they stay two or three years and if they want to leave they can pay back for their certification training. Greg asks Joe Seegers if that was legal. Joe stated they could put that in an employment contract. Joleta stated that that should be included. Byron stated it would be included. James stated if you're going to have 24 coverage you have to pay the reserves that anyway. Lise stated we were budgeted for plan A. Lise stated the reserves were plan B a little less because they do not make between \$11 to \$12 an hour. Lise stated we do not have the money in the budget to cover four officers. Byron stated he would like to talk about the officers first before discussing a potential raise for him. Lise stated we need to modify

the budget for \$33,000.00 for this current year and make a commitment for an additional \$76,000.00. James asked Byron about a grant. Byron stated he was working on an equipment grant. James states there is a grant where for the first year if they commit they will pay 75% we pay 25% second 50% we pay 20%. Greg stated to Byron that we need to get standing upright cause now there is two officers and a chief and we are barely crawling. Byron stated we get kicked around quite a bit. Lise stated with three officers and himself it is still a lot on him. James stated that Byron was taking a beating. Joleta stated they were too that they inherited this like a bunch of heirs. Lise stated even with three officers and himself we are still not where we need to be. Greg asked if dates not covered is still with three officers. Byron stated it was with two officers and himself. Byron stated the officers will get tired at some time pulling so much time. Byron stated he covered as much as he could when one of the officers was out sick but states he cannot do 24/7. Lauren asks if the shifts now were 6 to 6. Byron explains it varies from day to day, sometimes from 2 to 2 and depends on when they need full coverage. Byron stated that from 6 am to 6 pm would be him and an officer. Lise explains she could figure it up now but the board would have to commit. Joleta stated she needed time to think about it. Lise explains she can get the numbers for the board to see full coverage. James asks if we do this are we going to shoot the tag girls and water boys in the foot? Joleta stated they thought they would start with this first \$8500.00 and kind of look at it. James asks Byron if he had Lise look at the schedule he gave him that he uses. Byron stated no he mentioned it a couple to three weeks ago. Greg stated from his understanding if they agreed to this tonight it would help Byron. Byron stated it would be a great help. Greg asks the rest of the board would this be the step to give him the \$8500.00 he needs. James stated with this, we will be right there with Seven Devils, Spruce Pine, Elizabethton and above Sugar Mountain. Greg stated we would be in the top 25%. Byron stated there was a difference with Elizabethton, they actually hire and send them to their academy. When finished training they could get a 5% pay increase. Byron stated it was his understanding at Seven Devils they come out of training for the first three years if they have experience they go up to \$32,000.00. Byron stated we need to sustain what we have now. Byron stated if we get the new hire now it will make his job sustainable. Byron stated as it is right now who will come. Greg asks if this option 1 will keep Michael and Daniel happy about retaining them. James ask Michael if he would stick around and if he would be willing to sign a contract. James stated he rode with Officer Denton and the lady that works the night shift bragged how good he is and how he would flash his lights to let her know he was there when they were leaving. James stated he would watch and make sure the girls at Flick Video got to their cars safely. James stated that means a lot and with that being said James made a motion to accept option 1. Joleta seconded the motion stating that she wants to mention adding to that looking at a contract for adding a fourth officer, so we have 24-hour coverage, but I would like a contract, don't know if you need to work with Mr. Seegers as far as an employment contract when they get them certified if we need to hire in some new individuals and get them trained. Byron asks what the motion was on the board. Joleta stated option 1. Joleta stated that for next month she wants a proposal for another officer. Joleta stated she wanted to see a contract for employment. The Mayor asked for discussion and all in favor by saying I and raising their hands. The board asks Lise where it will come from and Joleta asks if they would have to take it from someone else department. Lise explains revenues were going to exceed what was previously planned. Greg asked if it was based on the current receivables. Lise stated the budget that was approved is by department only. Lise explains she will need a minute to go look to see where they can pull the funds from. Jamie withdrew his motion to give Lise time to figure it out. The motion was tabled. James asked Byron if there were any upgrades he wanted to do. Byron stated yes but not at this meeting because it was not a priority. Lauren then asked Byron if there was any chance of recruitment of calling a college and seeing if they would want a job. Byron stated that he would make some calls. She asks maybe some phone calls to get a list of new graduates. She stated to call and say we have a nice offer for you.

Keith gave the Administrator and water works report. Keith explained to the board that the furnace had gone out and they may have to change it out its probably 50 years old or better and will cost around \$25,000.00. He has checked on natural gas furnace and it would save on costs and already has it tapped in. James asks if that is something to bid on. Keith explained he was taking bids and had three at this time. Keith stated that the new gas furnace would pay for itself in 6 or 7 years plus have endless amounts of fuel. Keith then explained to the board that on December 27th we were accepted to do passports. The company will be in touch with us about it and we will set up appointments to do them. James asked who would be doing it and if it would bring money to the town. Keith replied Crystal, Whitney, and Tammy and yes it would bring money. Jamie asked if the girls would have time, Joleta stated that you usually do a schedule with the passports. She suggested maybe two afternoons a week. Keith stated that water and sewer had a couple of leaks and also received court case money back from a former employee of \$5030.68. Keith thanked Eddie and Lise for doing Santa Clause and pictures and all the effort and time by the employees they put into Christmas at the town hall. Jamie then stated he really thanked Eddie for all he's done and walking to James's church to see the kids was special. James stated he would like a letter of thanks to all the employees to put in their files for later. Keith stated he had one. Keith then stated he talked with Steve Meyerson at the old IRS building and it will be bringing about 40 jobs and should start about spring time. Joleta asked what they make, Keith replied steel panels. Keith stated he talked with Phillip Trew at High Country Council about future planning and grants available for Newland. Keith stated he also is planning to meet with Phillip Barrier county manager, in Spruce Pine on Thursday over economics needs. Keith then stated he would like to do a workshop to see where we are going in the next 6 months, long range planning. The board agreed and decided to do the workshop on Saturday, January 13th at 9:00 am. Joleta asks Keith if things were alright because she feels that maybe he is being stretched between water-sewer and maintenance and wants to make sure he is ok. Joleta ask Keith if they should consider bidding out water and sewer. James agrees. Keith stated that was something they could look at later. Joleta stated at budget time maybe. Keith stated he wanted to spend more time with Danny Cole showing him more and getting him certified, so he can take more control. James stated they could start the budget process now to budget that in. Keith stated he would not be around forever, so some people need to be trained. Keith stated it was the best job he has ever had, and he loved it here, not planning on leaving anytime soon. Keith stated he would make some calls and look into it.

Lise came back with her option. She stated she could take \$6948.00 from general government, \$2500.00 from general government administrative group insurance and \$1500.00 from automotive fuel fund where she had budgeted high and \$4448.00 audit services from where it cost less to do the audit this year. Lise stated they had budget high based on previous years because every budget is based on guessing since you never know what will happen. Lauren asks Lise if she will be here Saturday morning. Lise states probably, yes. This option will give the police officers more money and add another police officer. Joleta made a motion to do Option 1 for a police officer and a pay raise. James seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I.

In old business

Joleta stated she would like to bring back the challenge to the board of elections pay the bill to pay 75%. Joleta stated she talked with Sheila because she did not understand it then but now she does and realizes it is the town's responsibility. Joleta made a motion to pay the Board of Elections the rest of what is owed. Joleta stated the town should pay the Board of Elections what they owe them. James seconded the motion. Lauren stated she opposed last time because it was her personal feeling that the previous board purposely cost the town money but wants to do what's right for the town. Greg stated

that now we realize it had little to do with the board but with the state statues. The mayor asked for a show of hands. All agree by raising hands and by stating I.

The board then discussed bids for the audit. Lise stated the deadline is not until the fiscal year. James stated he would like to have them by the March meeting. Lauren made a motion to accept closed bids at the March 6th meeting. James seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I. James stated he received his new email account set up from the town. Keith stated that the winners of the Christmas Decorations was Faye Lacey for residential and Mountain Jewelers for the commercial. Keith stated he would send them a letter.

In new business.

Keith stated he had a thank you letter to Balsam Acres for the Christmas tree and wanted all the board members to sign.

Lauren made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joleta seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating I.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

Valerie Jaynes, Mayor

Tammy Gardner, Clerk