

**TOWN OF NEWLAND**  
**MONTHLY BOARD MEETING**

**September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022**



**Attending:**

**Mayor:** Derek Roberts

**Attorney:** Gerald McKinney

**Alderman:** Kenny Caraway, Gail Haller, Christie Hughes (Via Phone), James C. Johnson, Lauren Turbyfill

**Guests:** Alena Stair, Sandra Lewis, Robert Hedrick  
Mike Nelson, Lily Kincaid, Keith Hoilman, Nathan Gittner

**Staff:** Chief Byron Clawson, Officer Nathaniel Ruppard, Public Works Supervisor Gary Lewis, Town Clerk Jennifer Beam, Town Administrator Bill Bailey, Finance Officer Jessica Buchanan

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Mayor then led the assembly in the Pledge to the American Flag and reminded everyone of ethics awareness.

**AGENDA:**

The Mayor stated since Christie is not at the meeting, he will not be able to discuss his first agenda item, and the second item will be discussed among the board members in closed session.

Alderman James Johnson made a motion to accept the meeting's revised agenda, Gail seconded the motion, all agreed by show of hands and stating aye.

Mr. Hedrick was not present when his agenda item was brought before the board.

Alena Stair came before the board to ask for a stop sign at the end of Shady Street. She stated there is a lot of traffic on this street and with Mike's plans, she is afraid it will get worse. Mr. Nelson stated he is working on moving the address from the 400 Shady Street to the 322 Meadowbrook address and in a few months the back entrance will most likely be blocked. While construction is still underway, he needs to utilize that entrance. Alena stated she would specifically like to ask for a stop sign to slow traffic.

Jessica mentioned she received an invoice for \$790.00 from Secret Garden Nursery for hanging baskets and did not know who ordered the flowers. She felt this was expensive for something the current employees did not order. James asked if we could call and asked the company who placed the order. Kenny said these are the same folks that supplied the flowers from Jonas Ridge in the past. Kenny suggested it may have been a standing order from the former clerk.

Mr. Gittner thanked the board for the experience he has had while re-opening the inn. He mentioned the Inn has been at 100% occupancy three nights in a row for the previous two weekends. Mr. Gittner formally requested the Town of Newland add a referendum on the ballot for the November election. He stated that Newland is one of two municipalities that does not offer liquor by the drink in Avery County. The Inn has been in business since 1955 and at a recent chamber event the members did not know about the inn. Mr. Gittner mentioned he was truly saddened by this occurrence. Mr. Gittner continued that tax revenue is the obvious argument for liquor by the drink. Newland's history states 72% voted in favor of beer and wine in 2015. Mr. Gittner stated that if you look throughout the county, crime rates per capita are consistent regardless of alcohol sales. The Mayor asked Bill what the next step would be to add a referendum. Bill stated that if the board votes to go forward with the referendum, the next step is to sign a resolution, draft the referendum, send it to the board of elections and they will add it to the ballot. The board of elections would then need to advertise at least forty-five days before the election takes place. Mr. McKinney said he believed that you must have a town with more than 5000 citizens, or an existing ABC Board must ask you to join them, and you must have an ABC store to supply the liquor. Mr. Gittner asked about Beech Mountain not meeting those qualifications. Mr. McKinney suggested they may have predated this law. Mr. McKinney said he would reach out to the ABC Board in Raleigh to confirm the process. James suggested the board may look forward to the March election for this item. Mr. Gittner apologized to the board and suggested more research is needed to move forward.

James made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 2022 meeting. Gail seconded the motion, all agreed by stating aye and show of hands.

#### **Public Comments:**

Clara Dickson asked about the 3.2-million-dollar grant and if the town is going to use the grant for water only, or if the town had other plans? James Johnson mentioned that the town can only use the funds to pay off stuff pertaining to water and sewer. She then asked Mr. McKinney if this was true and if so, she would like to see it in writing. Mr. McKinney stated he has not received the grant documents and could

not comment. Ms. Dickson stated Newland is fortunate to receive the funds and she did not want to see the money wasted or spent anywhere else. The Mayor assured Ms. Dickson that the grant is specific to water/sewer. She requested for the grant information to be made available in writing for the taxpayers to see.

Mike Nelson asked if the board had decided about helping to fund the amphitheater project. The Mayor asked the board to hold a special meeting to visit the amphitheater.

Mr. Hedrick came to the meeting to discuss the panhandling ordinance. He does not work, have HUD or welfare. Mr. Hedrick stated he is just trying to make a living and he feels like the ordinance is directed towards him. The Mayor stated that the unfortunate fact is the town board voted in the ordinance and that is where they stand on the issue. The board members were concerned about others coming into town to do other various things. Kenny stated complaints were coming from the citizens and the board is obligated to protect the town of Newland and citizens within.

#### **Reports:**

Jessica gave the Finance Officer's report. She mentioned Newland Elementary is asking for donations for a silent auction at their fall festival.

Mr. Bailey gave the administrator's report. Bill mentioned the next meeting will be live, and the previous month's meeting will be added to the channel. We will be doing a resolution to make B Street a one-way street, it will need to be addressed at the next meeting. A citizen has asked about paving and one-waying the alley behind Yellow Mountain. Crosswalk lights need to be addressed with DOT. The Mayor mentioned that he has been discussing via email, he will forward those emails onto Bill. Bill mentioned there have been a couple of falls on our porch, he discussed a plan to reduce that risk.

Kenny mentioned that Mr. Hoilman was skipped over on the agenda.

Mr. Hoilman represented MACJ and associates which gets the town's system ready for a grant, they have applied for a 200K water and sewer grant in the past for the town. The state requires a resolution to be signed to move forward. James made a motion for Bill to move forward MACJ and associates, Kenny seconded the motion, Lauren asked if there were any cost, Bill assured that the funds from the contract

will come from the same source and the Town will not be impacted. All agreed by stating aye and show of hands.

Chief Clawson gave the police report. Unfortunately, the department did not receive the GCC grant this year. Chief Clawson stated that he will be applying for other grants in November. James asked about someone attending a grant writing workshop, Chief Clawson stated he has attended all of them online. Nathaniel Ruppard is the new officer for the Police Department.

Gary Lewis gave the public works report. The grinder was installed on 8/17/2022 and certified on 8/25/2022. It is time to order salt for the roads, Gary is looking into a new type of non-corrosive salt referred to as "sweet mix." The Mayor asked for him to check the refreeze time. Two roofs on the well pump houses need repair. The water currently cannot be shut off on Banner Hill, and it will cost \$30,000 to repair. James Johnson asked if all meters have been converted to digital meters, Gary answered most, if not all have been converted. The Mayor asked if Iron Mountain is the only contractor that we deal with when it comes to water/sewer. Gary answered Iron Mountain is highly trusted in the work they do, and their quotes are comparable to others.

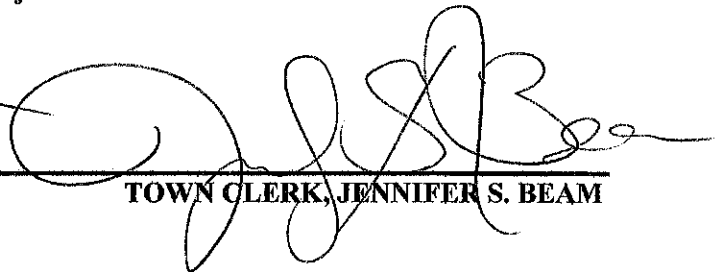

**Council Comments:**

The Board agreed to send T-Shirts in a basket for the silent auction at Newland Elementary.

The Mayor said the town needs to be cleaned up and he did not understand why the board and town employees are bucking. The Mayor continued he ran for Mayor because he wanted to clean up the town.

The Mayor asked where the board stands on resolving the \$1,001.28, and when will the action be taken? Mr. McKinney stated that the board has not yet authorized that. The Mayor asked if the board authorized to pay Butch Hughes \$1,001.28. Christie stated that was a judgement signed by a judge. The Mayor asked Christie if the plaintiff is the Town of Newland, where should the money have gone? Kenny made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Mayor asked Gail how she would go about getting the money back. Gail stated this is not the way to do it and she did not believe the town should be involved in this. The Mayor stated it is the Town of Newland versus Derek Roberts, he has politely asked how to get his money back. Christie stated this was a judgement of the court. Kenny stated this did not need to take place here, attorneys should handle such things as this. The Mayor asked for a second to the motion to adjourn, Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by show of hands and stating aye.

**Meeting adjourned.**



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**MAYOR DEREK ROBERTS** **TOWN CLERK, JENNIFER S. BEAM**