

TOWN OF IRON GATE
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The regular monthly Work Session of the Iron Gate Town Council was held on Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 7pm. Town Council had voted to move the regular work session due to Valentine's Day and an Intergovernmental Meeting the following day.

Present for the meeting and were Mayor Unroe, Councilperson Kawahna Persinger, Vice Mayor Councilperson Richard Erskine, Councilpersons Ashley Nicely, Debbie Harris and Town Clerk/Treasurer Wendy Biggs. Councilperson Prior was absent. Also present was W.L. Armstrong.

The following items were discussed:

Mayor Unroe began by letting everyone in attendance know that there will be two (2) Council seats that will need to be filled. The first is due to the passing of Councilperson James Mays, Jr. on February 8th. The second seat belongs to Councilperson Ashley Nicely and her seat will be vacated on February 25th, due to them moving. We would like to advertise both seats together, since the vacancies are so close. There is another issue we must look at as well. We have 45 days to fill the vacant seats and 45 days for Councilperson Mays' seat would be on Thursday, March 24th. March 24th is exactly one week before the regular scheduled Council meeting. Mayor Unroe then asked Council if they would possibly entertain the idea of moving the March Council meeting a week ahead in order to appoint someone to the two (2) vacant Council seats. If Council is in agreement, then we can put the date change on the agenda for a vote in February's Council meeting. Each Councilperson in attendance agreed that the March Council meeting could be moved ahead a week. The March Work session will stay as March 21st. Mayor Unroe then asked Mrs. Biggs to put that item on the agenda for the February Council meeting.

Mayor Unroe thanked those who were able to attend the services for Councilperson Mays. Everyone will truly miss him and we will also have a Proclamation for him at the February Council meeting. Also at the February meeting, we will have a plaque for Ashley Nicely, who will be leaving Town Council effective February 25, 2022. While we will miss her, we also wish the best for her and her family.

This year the budget will be especially tough for Iron Gate. We have already received information that the employees' health insurance will go up 11.1% and we know that it is likely that our sewer costs will also increase. We are limited with our revenue here, but we also know that we have made it through tougher times. Recently it was discovered that there are some billing issues with Alleghany County and those will hopefully be discussed with them next week. But the facts still remain that we have I & I issues with our sewer system and we are working on trying to remedy that issue.

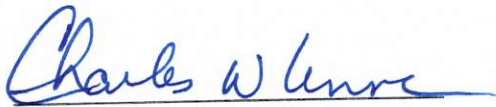
That brings us to an update with Petrus and the situation with them. At this time, we have learned that David Petrus was back here in Virginia and had signed over control of the Botetourt water system to WVWA. If everyone remembers, we had several discussions with WVWA and they had hoped that they would be able to gain control of that particular system, update that system with grant funding from the VDH and then transfer ownership over to the Town of Iron Gate. However, that will not happen because those are residents of Botetourt County and Botetourt County feels that their citizens will not be represented by them. We are now looking into selling water to those customers at a bulk rate contract. As far as the Town of Iron Gate getting any back monies for the water that has been used by the Botetourt residents, WVWA has expressed their concerns about this to the VDH, stating that we never cut off water to those residents even though we were not getting paid. It was and still is the humanitarian thing to do since it was through no fault of the residents themselves. On another front, we have been informed that there will be another round of funding coming from the VDH in March or April, of which we would qualify for and should receive since this funding is for underserved communities. We will be applying for this water funding as well.

We will receive another round in June of ARPA Funding like we did last year. We were able to use a portion of the funds from last year towards the water line repairs on the Tannery Road. We have about \$120,000.00 of the \$151,000.00 from last year and we will add another \$151,000.00 to that, for a total of \$271,000.00. While we have these funds and are able to use them for infrastructure, we still find ourselves in a situation where we are having trouble getting funding for these projects. We had a conference call with the DEQ, VDH, RVARC and other agencies about funding and grants for infrastructure projects. They explained to us that the Town of Iron Gate is questionable in their viability of paying back any funding in the following years- and that is due to the fact that the Town has no good sources of revenue to support paying back any funding. Our auditors had a discussion with us as well about our viability and how much longer the Town would be able to keep going with no good sources of revenue. The residents of Iron Gate can only pay up to a certain point before that comes to a head. We are looking into other ways of possibly getting an engineering firm to maybe see where our greatest area of loss is on our sewer system; try to fund that repair and hopefully see a large enough decrease to be able to do the same in other areas.

Resident W. L. Armstrong questioned about the Simpson case and Mayor Unroe explained that due to the unavailability of a court date this year, the case has been postponed until next year.

There were also concerns voiced over a resident having more than the allowed number of dogs and cats as per the Keeping of Animals Ordinance and their shelter and care. It will be referred to the Town Attorney and Alleghany County Animal Control for further action.

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.



Charles Unroe, Mayor



Wendy S. Biggs, Clerk