

TOWN OF IRON GATE  
P. O. BOX 199  
IRON GATE, VA 24448  
Telephone No. 862-0770

The regular monthly Work Session of the Iron Gate Town Council was held on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 7pm, at Town Hall. The meeting was moved up a week due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Present for the meeting were Mayor Craig, Councilpersons Kawahna Persinger, Debbie Harris, Jennifer Tyree, Mikki Curtis; Vice Mayor Councilperson Richard Erskine and Town Clerk/Treasurer Wendy Biggs. Guests for the work session were Jimmy Jeffries and Gordon W. (GW) Reynolds.

The following items were discussed:

Mayor Craig asked Richard Erskine to present the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Craig began by welcoming everyone. The first order of business was to discuss the trash ordinance. Recently the Town crew had some difficulties in collecting the trash during the normal Thursday pick up. Some cans were so heavy, that it took two of them to get the can to the truck to dump it; other cans were missing lids and had water in them and others had bags past the ordinance weight limit. Mayor Craig has suggested a letter be sent to all of the residents regarding these issues and the Council was in agreement. There were also a few comments about missing lids and everyone doing their part with placing lids on trash cans, whether emptying or filling them. Mayor Craig also noted that the ordinance had been missed in getting updates as far as fees go, since the last rate reduction for trash in 2021 was not updated in the ordinance. Mrs. Biggs will update the ordinance to reflect the fee changes. Councilperson Vice Mayor Erskine also noted that only certain things be taken down to public works separate from regular trash pick-up. Things such as yard debris should be separate from regular trash; tires and household appliances are not allowed at our Public Works and need to be taken to the County Transfer Station.

Mayor Craig explained that we will need to run an RFP (request for proposal) ad for engineering services for the upcoming funding that we hope to receive from the DEQ and the ODW. Our current contract with engineering firm, T & L (Thompson & Litton) is set to expire on March 4, 2023. This ad will need to be placed in the newspaper and we will also place it online with the Alleghany Journal and our Facebook page.

A reminder that we have a Zoning Administrator position available. Brenda Lindsay, who has the position currently, has decided to retire from it on January 31, 2023. Mrs. Lindsay has done that job for many, many years. We may have someone who is interested in the seat and we think that if they apply for the position, that they will do a very good job. Councilperson Tyree then asked the question about the pay for the Zoning Administrator's position; Mrs. Biggs stated that she was told by Mrs. Lindsay that it was a \$25.00 fee per application for the Administrator. Mrs. Biggs noted that Mrs. Lindsay did that position as a volunteer, never accepting the pay. Councilperson Tyree then also reminded everyone that the Mayor was to receive a stipend each month and that Mayor Craig was entitled to that stipend. Mayor Craig stated that he did not want the stipend each month and that he wasn't in the position for that purpose. He would cover that as well in the first Council meeting of the year at the end of the month.

Mayor Craig then read the one (1) letter of interest submitted for the Council seat. The letter was from Gordon W. (G.W.) Reynolds, who lives on Chalybeate Avenue with his wife and two children. After reading the letter, Mayor Craig introduced himself and then asked Council and Mrs. Biggs to do the same. Councilmembers explained that while this is a volunteer position, it is also an important position in the Town. Some had many years of experience and some were fairly new, but all agreed there was a lot to learn and that it's all worthwhile to serve your community. With that, Mayor Craig reminded everyone that will need to vote on Mr. Reynolds' possible appointment at the next Council meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Also at the next Council meeting, Council will need to vote on disbursing the grant funds from the Commonwealth's Department of Fire Programs that the Town received in December of 2022. By law, the funds have to be held in a Town account for 30 days and then by majority vote of Council, be disbursed to the fire department. The amount to be disbursed to the fire department is \$15,000.00. Councilperson Persinger noted that it was up from the \$10,000.00 that they used to receive, which was likely welcomed income for the fire department.

Mayor Craig also explained that he attended a meeting earlier in the day for the AHEDC (Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation) regarding pad ready sites. A pad ready site is a site that has things like water, sewer, electric, gas (if available) and other amenities for businesses looking to come into the area. Such sites can be already existing, like the Hercules building or a re-purposed school, etc. or they can be constructed by clearing the space, running amenities to the site and building a foundation for a business to come into. The discussion at the meeting today was in regards as to where they were with Triangle hill and the Commerce Center in Low Moor near the YMCA. In the discussion, information was also brought up about block grants (CDBG) and Mayor Craig hopes to be able to apply for that type of grant in the future, hoping that it would benefit the Town of Iron Gate.

Mayor Craig noted that the contracts with the Town Attorney, Jared Jenkins and the Alleghany County Sheriff's Department would both need to be renegotiated. He has read over both contracts and hopes to speak with both parties soon about those contracts.

Mayor Craig then asked if there was any other business to discuss. Councilperson Vice Mayor Erskine reminded everyone that any information that was discussed in closed session, remained in closed session. Mayor Craig noted that if we went into closed session for legal discussion, then we could only discuss the legal discussion and nothing else. Councilperson Vice Mayor Erskine also explained that once Council comes out of closed session, a statement is made that no other business was discussed and Council would need to vote on closing the session and then vote on coming back into an open session. Once that was done, then Council may or may not need to vote on the discussion. Mayor Craig commented that the discussion was still in confidence.

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.



Gary Craig, Mayor



Wendy S. Biggs, Clerk