



MINUTES

WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026 AT 6:00 PM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING - 150 EAST MONROE STREET
WYTHEVILLE, VA 24382

1. **RE: ATTENDANCE**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Vice-Mayor Candice Johnson, Councilwoman Cathy Pattison, Councilwoman Holly Atkins

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mayor Beth Taylor, Councilman Joseph Hand, Jr.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Interim Town Manager Chris Slemple, Town Attorney Paul Cassell, Town Clerk Brandi Jones, Human Resources Director Laura Heldreth, Assistant Computer Operations Manager Jeff Hooper, Police Captain Kenny Akers, Police Corporal Kyle Counts, Police Officer Levi Rose, Randy Hamm, Mike Forrest, Lorraine Dunn, Justina Heath, Arthur Johnson, Janet Johnson, Kevin Fox

2. **RE: CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order.

3. **RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**

Vice-Mayor Johnson established that a quorum of Council members was present.

4. **RE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Atkins.

5. **RE: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is the Approval of Agenda. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Councilwoman Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Vice-Mayor Johnson.

6. **RE: 7:00 P.M. RECESS**

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that for informational purposes only, the agenda includes a 7:00 p.m. scheduled recess.

7. **RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **RE: MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF AUGUST 24, 2026**

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is consideration by the Wytheville Town Council to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on Monday, August 24, 2026. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion made by Councilwoman Atkins, Seconded by Councilwoman Pattison. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Vice-Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins.

8. RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. She stated that there were no citizens listed on the sign-in sheet who wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period. Vice-Mayor Johnson noted that if there were any citizens present who did not sign in on the sign-in sheet and they wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period, now would be the time to do so. There being none, she proceeded with the agenda.

9. RE: PRESENTATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL

A. RE: PROPOSED SPLASH PAD UPDATE

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is a presentation by Interim Town Manager Chris Slemp regarding an update for the proposed splash pad. Interim Town Manager Slemp stated that the Town received a notice of award for a grant from the National Park Service, and he noted that the Town's portion will be \$1.5 Million. He explained that \$80,000 for that amount is for engineering work, architectural work, etc. Interim Town Manager Slemp advised that the Town will have to obtain the remainder of Withers Park from the County before it is eligible to receive the grant funds. He commented that he, Staff and Salt and Light representatives met with Carolina Recreation at the splash pad site to discuss design proposals, and that the designs should, hopefully, be received during the following week. Interim Town Manager Slemp continued to discuss the information that was reviewed with Carolina Recreation and additional grant funding for the splash pad in further detail. Vice-Mayor Johnson thanked Interim Town Manager Slemp for this information.

B. RE: PROPOSED EMPLOYEE WELLNESS DAY

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is a presentation by Director of Human Resources Laura Heldreth regarding a request to amend the Town's Personnel Ordinance to add a Wellness Day as an additional benefit for employees. Director Heldreth stated that Councilwoman Atkins had requested that she research a Wellness Day for Town employees. She noted that she asked other localities how they addressed this topic. Director Heldreth remarked that several localities responded to her inquiry and advised that a majority of them did not have a policy addressing this topic. She commented that the localities who did address this topic do not have a separate policy for it, and that their sick leave policy has a day written into it for a "Wellness Day" or "Personal Day" that is included in the employee's sick leave time. Director Heldreth advised that the Wellness Day could be a rest day, relaxation day, or activities that support overall physical and emotional wellness, etc. She stated that employees would not have to state the exact reason for being absent, other than requesting a wellness day or a personal day. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion regarding the information that Director Heldreth presented. She stated that she plans to reach out to Interim Town Manager Slemp regarding her opinions and thoughts on this topic. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired of Director Heldreth regarding if an amendment would have to be made to the Town's current Personnel Policy. Director Heldreth stated that is correct, and that it would amend the Town's Sick Leave Policy to include the Wellness Day benefit. Councilwoman Atkins stated the following: *"Ms. Heldreth, thank you for your research on that and your hard work. Do you mind I get a hard copy? I was trying to write them down. I know you said stress management day, blood work. If I can just come by, and maybe get a hard copy."* Director Heldreth noted that she would put a hard copy of this information together for Councilwoman Atkins. The Council thanked Director Heldreth for her presentation.

10. RE: NEW BUSINESS

A. RE: REQUEST FROM ITALIAN GARDEN CUISINE FOR A ONE-YEAR EXEMPTION FROM VIRGINIA CODE SECTION 10.1-1424.3. - EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE FOOD SERVICE CONTAINERS

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is a Staff Report by Interim Town Manager Christopher Slemp regarding the request from Italian Garden Cuisine for a one-year exemption of *Virginia Code Section 10.1-1424.3. - Expanded polystyrene food service containers prohibited; civil penalty*, due to undo economic

hardship (exemption will expire September 14, 2027). Interim Town Manager Slemph stated that this request is similar to the request that was recently approved from CJ's Pizza. He noted that the law allows the Town to grant a one-year exemption, and he commented that the Town would be allowed to approve one more exemption after this request. Interim Town Manager Slemph advised that Italian Garden Cuisine has demonstrated a financial hardship due to the law that bans styrofoam containers. He commented that Staff is still working with Town Attorney Cassell on a blanket exemption that would address these requests. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if the Council had any questions regarding this request. Councilwoman Atkins stated the following: *"I do. Have you had anybody else reach out, or just Italian Garden?"* Interim Town Manager Slemph stated that no other business has reached out to date. Councilwoman Atkins stated the following: *"I know we had talked about maybe doing some, you know, publicizing and different things like that. Can you tell me where it's been publicized or who we've reached out to?"* Interim Town Manager Slemph noted that the State had publicized through the Health Department, however, the Town is waiting on a blanket exemption that is approved by the Town Council. Councilwoman Atkins stated the following: *"But just wondering. No one, nothing's been advertised?"* Interim Town Manager Slemph explained that the Town is waiting to advertise this as a blanket exemption. There being no further discussion, Vice Mayor Johnson inquired if there was a motion to approve the request from Italian Garden Cuisine for a one-year exemption of *Virginia Code Section 10.1-1424.3. - Expanded polystyrene food service containers prohibited; civil penalty*, due to undo economic hardship (exemption will expire September 14, 2027).

Motion made by Councilwoman Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Atkins, Vice-Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Pattison.

B. RE: ST. MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD FALL FESTIVAL STREET CLOSURE REQUEST

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is a Staff Report by Interim Town Manager Chris Slemph regarding the request of John Baxley, Office Manager of St. Mary's Catholic Church, to close Fifth Street, between Main and Monroe Streets, on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., for the St. Mary the Mother of God Fall Festival. Interim Town Manager Slemph stated that the Safety and Events Committee met regarding this request, and that they would recommend that it be approved. He noted that it is a minimal street closure with minimal disruption. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of John Baxley, Office Manager of St. Mary's Catholic Church, to close Fifth Street, between Main and Monroe Streets, on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., for the St. Mary the Mother of God Fall Festival.

Motion made by Councilwoman Atkins, Seconded by Councilwoman Pattison. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor, and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Vice-Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins.

C. RE: REAPPOINTMENT TO THE WYTHEVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is a Staff Report by Town Clerk Brandi Jones regarding the reappointment of a member to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority. Town Clerk Jones stated that this is just a reappointment, and she noted that it is for a four-year term for Lisa Anderson to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority. She commented that Ms. Anderson has agreed to serve on the Housing Authority, again, if so desired by the Council. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was a motion to reappoint Lisa Anderson to the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a four-year term expiring September 8, 2030.

Motion made by Councilwoman Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor, and there being no

opposition: Voting Yea: Vice-Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins.

11. RE: REPORTS

A. RE: STAFF TIME - INTERIM TOWN MANAGER CHRIS SLEMP

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is Interim Town Manager - Staff Time. Interim Town Manager Slemp stated that the 9/11 Memorial Service was recently held at the Wytheville Meeting Center. He noted that he would like to thank all those who came together for this special day. Interim Town Manager Slemp advised that he would like to say how much he appreciates Reverend Cox's work on the program, and that he thinks Reverend Cox deserves a special shout out for all his work and dedication to make the service come together. He continued to express his appreciation for all the hard work that went into the event.

B. RE: STAFF TIME - TOWN CLERK BRANDI JONES

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is Town Clerk - Staff Time. Town Clerk Jones stated that she did not have anything to discuss at this time.

C. RE: STAFF TIME - ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER ELAINE HOLETON

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is Assistant Town Manager - Staff Time. She stated that Assistant Town Manager Holeton was not present for this meeting, therefore, she would proceed with the agenda.

D. RE: COUNCIL MEMBER TIME

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that the next agenda item is Council Member Time. She inquired if Councilwoman Pattison had anything that she would like to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Pattison stated that she did not have anything to discuss at this time.

Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if Councilwoman Atkins had anything that she would like to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Atkins stated the following: *"I think Mr. Slemp looked at my notes. Actually, I was going to say it was a tremendous job that everyone did and had taken part in the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony. The people who served on the committee, everyone that attended, all the first responders back 25 years ago, and also the first responders still interactive now in help in our community. I also want to thank the Meeting Center for all the work behind the scenes, such as setup, take down, and also the programs. Awesome job, and also for the County for live streaming it and putting it out there on for everybody to see. So, and that's all. Thank you."*

Vice-Mayor Johnson stated the Committee for the 9/11 Memorial Program knocked it out of the park. She noted that it was awesome, and that everybody did a great job. Vice-Mayor Johnson commented that she appreciated everybody coming together, being unified on the same accord, and that it was truly an honor and a privilege to serve as Mistress of the Ceremony. She stated that Ms. Gaona did a wonderful job and everyone who participated did a great job. Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that she is thankful for a community that memorializes and recognizes the 9/11 tragedy that took place.

12. RE: CLOSED SESSION

A. RE: CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE SECTION 2.2-3711 (A)(1) - PERSONNEL MATTER

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that it would now be necessary to enter into a Closed Session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) for the discussion, consideration, and interview of a prospective candidate for appointment, specifically an applicant for the Building Code Appeals Board. She inquired if there was a motion to go into a Closed Session.

Motion made by Councilwoman Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being

none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote:
Voting Yea: Councilwoman Atkins, Vice-Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Pattison.
(6:22 p.m.)

13. RE: RECONVENE AND CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that a motion and second was necessary to return to open session; and, to adopt the following resolution certifying the business conducted in closed session, as follows:

RESOLUTION - CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, the Wytheville Town Council has convened a closed session on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and,

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Wytheville Town Council that such closed session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wytheville Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open session requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed session to which this certification resolution applies; and, (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Wytheville Town Council.

Motion made by Councilwoman Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Atkins, Vice-Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Pattison. Voting Nay: None. Absent During Vote: Mayor Taylor, Councilman Hand, Jr. (6:28 p.m.)

14. RE: APPOINTMENT

Vice-Mayor Johnson advised that no action would be taken at this time regarding the appointment for agenda item 14A.

15. RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be discussed, Vice-Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting. (6:30 p.m.)

Candice N. Johnson, Vice-Mayor

Brandi N. Jones, Town Clerk