

Town of Haysi  
Minutes of Regular Town Council Meeting  
August 6, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.

On August 6, 2019, the regular meeting of the Haysi Town Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Haysi Town Hall Municipal Building located at 322 Main Street, Haysi, Virginia.

The following members were present:

PRESENT: Mayor Larry D. Yates  
Vice Mayor Rocky Wood

Council Members:  
Michael Harris  
Tim Wallace  
William "Billy" Counts  
Carter Branham  
Susan Tiller

ABSENT: None.

### **ITEMS # I, II, & III**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Larry D. Yates at 7:00 p.m., and the Invocation was held by Matt Owens and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **ITEM # IV - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

At this time Mayor Yates asked for changes to the agenda as presented. Motion was made by Council Member Billy Counts seconded by Vice Mayor Rocky Wood to approve the agenda as presented. Let the record show the motion on the floor passed unanimously by verbal voting.

### **ITEM #V – PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Yates asked Town Clerk Amanda Perrigan to read the following Public Comment Policy out loud:

A Public Comment Period will be held during the regular Town Council monthly meetings, during Special Called meetings, and Public Hearings. The Public Comment period will be on the Agenda for the meeting. The Town Council asks that speakers only comment on the items listed on the Agenda for the Town Council meeting or Special Called meeting and only comment on the specific reason for the Public Hearing. All comments made during the Public Comment period shall be subject to the following procedures:

- 1.) Anyone who wishes to make a statement during the Public Comment period will register on a sign-up sheet available 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

- 2.) Persons who have signed the register to speak shall be taken in the order in which they are listed.
- 3.) Persons addressing the Town Council are asked to limit their comments to 3 minutes.
- 4.) Speakers will be acknowledged by Mayor Larry Yates in the order in which their names appear on the sign-up sheet. Speakers shall stand at their seat to address the Council and not approach the Mayor or Town Council members. Speakers will start their comment by stating their name and address.
- 5.) Speakers will direct comments at the Town Council as a whole and not to individuals. Public Comment is not intended to require the Town Council to provide any answer to the speaker right away. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be allowed.
- 6.) Speakers will be courteous in their language, tone, and presentation.
- 7.) Only one speaker will be acknowledged at a time. If a large number of people are present to register concerns about the same subject, it is suggested that they might be acknowledged as a unified group and a designated speaker will cover the various points.
- 8.) In the event that there are more people who wish to speak than can be accommodated in the 30 minutes set aside for public comment, the Town Council may extend the period, delay it until the rest of the agenda has been completed, or continue it to the next regular council meeting.

The first person signed up for Public Comment was Matt Owens of 495 Moon Shadow Trail, Haysi. Mr. Owens said that he has lived in Haysi for around twenty-seven years, works for Belcher Insurance and is involved in the Haysi Partners. Mr. Owens said that he was looking for prayers and input on his new business venture. Mr. Owens explained that he purchased the building in town from Teddy and Shelia Bailey and was currently renovating it for several purposes. The first is for Five Rings Financial, which he described as financial wellness program for the community. Five Rings Financial would have an academy where citizens would receive assistance to develop a “diet” to keep them from living pay check to pay check. Mr. Owens said that student tutoring would be offered as part of a literacy program through AARP. The building will house a gym with workout equipment where those insured can utilize the Silver Sneakers Program for fitness. Mr. Owens said that general gym membership will be fifteen dollars a month and ten dollars a month for kids that participate in sports. Mr. Owens continued that the Dickenson County Social Services planned to offer or help with yoga, nutrition, and healthy cooking. His building will operate under the name Enigma Property Management Consortium, LLC. Mr. Owens explained that J.R. and Saundra Hamilton would be operating a moonshine distillery in the building as well and wanted the town to consider an alcohol tax as an additional source of revenue for the town. Mr. Owens stated that the distillery requests a letter of support from the town. Mr. Owens advised that the distillery would not have any waste, would create more jobs including town employees. Mr. Owens stated that he was working with the Small Business Administration on this project, which will have a welcome area in front with snacks too and is estimated to create between five and twenty

jobs over the next ten years. Mr. Owens pointed out that the distillery would not be a bar; customers will purchase the product and leave to consume it, so there will not be a large consumption on property. In fact, he pointed out, that it would be the same as FasMart, White Ridge, or JDM. Mayor Yates asked when Mr. Owens planned to be open for business. Mr. Owens answered the middle of August is the expected time for the gym, a couple of weeks for the Five Rings Financial portion, which will have Mommy, Money, and Me as its first program. Mr. Owens added that meals would be purchased for those in need from local restaurants. Council Member Billy Counts asked about the hours of operation. Mr. Owens answered that the gym would be open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week accessible by keypad entry and showers would also be available for use by members. Mr. Owens stated that he was not looking for a big profit, but wanted to help the community and change the Ballard Health statistics that ranked our area as having the worst health. Mr. Owens said that he would improve on his business as time progressed, but felt it important to open sooner and make improvements as he went rather than get everything in perfect order first.

The second persons signed up for Public Comment was J.R. and Sandra Hamilton of Road Branch in Clinchco. Sandra Hamilton began by stating that she attended Haysi High School and was a former corrections officer, who works for the Department of Motor Vehicles now and the moonshine distillery was her idea. Mrs. Hamilton said that she wanted to create jobs. Mrs. Hamilton said that the business was regulated and she thought it would “do well.” Mrs. Hamilton also encouraged the town council to consider an alcohol tax for additional revenue and asked for a letter of support. J.R. Hamilton explained the byproduct and added that the distillery would open with four jobs and they wanted to keep those local. Mr. Hamilton added they intended to purchase their supplies locally too. Mr. Hamilton said that he was from Clintwood, but has been in Haysi for nine years. Mr. Hamilton explained that he wanted his children to stay here and wanted other businesses to come in and do well too. Mayor Yates asked if they had any regulation problems. Mrs. Hamilton answered that it was a long process, which takes about thirty to sixty days for the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority and six to nine months for the Federal Authorities to give approval. Council Member Michael Harris asked when they expected to be open for business. Mrs. Hamilton answered that they were required to have one product that sells through the ABC stores, so she hoped to be open by the end of the year, but the investigation process is extensive too. A general discussion was held about their moonshine production. Mayor Yates asked to whom a letter of support would need to be addressed. Mrs. Hamilton answered her attorney and stated that their business name is DownHome Spirits, LLC. Mr. Hamilton thanked the town council for their time. Mayor Yates stated that he could write the letter. Motion was made by Council Member Carter Branham seconded by Council Member Billy Counts to approve a letter of support for DownHome Spirits, LLC from the Town of Haysi. Vice Mayor Rocky Wood, Council Member Carter Branham, Council Member Billy Counts, and Council Member Michael Harris voted aye while Council Member Susan Tiller and Council Member Tim Wallace voted nay. Let the record show the motion on the floor passed by verbal voting.

**ITEM # VI – APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Prior to the meeting council had received for consideration of approval a copy of the following prepared minutes:

- July 2, 2019 Regular Town Council Meeting

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Rocky Wood and seconded by Council Member Carter Branham to approve the minutes of the meeting on July 2, 2019 as presented. Let the record show the motion on the floor passed unanimously by verbal voting.

**ITEM # VII – FINANCIAL REPORT**

At this time the council was presented for approval the following:

- June 29, 2019 through July 31, 2019 Financial Report listing: beginning balance, revenue, expenditures and ending balance.
- June 27, 2019 through July 31, 2019 itemized listing of expenditures including checks # 14967-15023 & deposits
- June 27, 2019 through July 31, 2019 Profit & Loss Report
- Current payables to date for review

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Rocky Wood seconded by Council Member Billy Counts to approve the financial report. Let the record show the motion on the floor was passed unanimously by verbal voting.

**ITEM # VIII - NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**ITEM # IX – OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**ITEM # X – UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Police Department Monthly Report-Interim Chief Bobby Edwards (See Attachment)

Interim Chief Bobby Edwards reported thirty-seven calls for the month of July and read off the hours worked on the report. Interim Chief Edwards advised that Officer Synthia Viers quit on July 31, 2019 and he rehired Brent Wallace and Grant Garrett as part time officers. Interim Chief Edwards said that Officers Wallace and Garrett will start work again in the next couple weeks. Interim Chief Edwards answered questions on the police report regarding a scam at New Peoples Bank, a missing hiker at the Breaks Interstate Park, fast ATVs, and animal complaints in Fork Bottom. Mayor Yates asked Interim Chief Edwards to give an update on the grants. Interim Chief Edwards said that he had applied new grants;

first to employ a part time officer for eighteen months at twenty-four hours a week, another for ten thousand dollars on codification to digitize and update town ordinances, another for a four year full time officer starting with a twenty-five percent match then increasing over the four year period, another for a bucket truck harness, chaps, and medical supplies from Virginia Risk Sharing Association, so the police department can be listed as an EMS agency.

### Haysi Volunteer Fire Department Monthly Report

Chief Rocky Wood reported two car fires, one house fire, four motor vehicle accidents, two med flights, four rescue assists, one missing hiker, and one alarm at Sandlick Elementary School. Mayor Yates asked if the department had calls on electric air vehicles. Chief Wood answered “not really.” A general discussion was held on those vehicles. Chief Wood advised that he was working with Interim Police Chief Bobby Edwards on the First Responder License. Mayor Yates asked if he anticipated needing extra bays on their building. Chief Wood answered that he didn’t know at this time, but was waiting to see what happened with the Haysi Rescue Squad.

### **ITEM # XI - MAYOR COMMENTS**

Mayor Yates reported the following:

- Mayor Yates reported the opening of the Russell Fork Trail had a good turnout and was a good trail. He said that he rode the trail on ATV prior to the opening.
- Mayor Yates advised that Synthia Viers had ended her employment at the town for a position with Dickenson County Sherriff’s Office.
- Mayor Yates informed council members that the Four County Transit Quarterly Report was included in their board packs this month.
- Mayor Yates stated that he is waiting to hear more on the Appalachian Regional Commission Grant and would love to get the project bid in sixty to ninety days from now.
- Mayor Yates also advised that the town had again applied for a Recreational Trails Program Grant through the Department of Conservation and Recreation for seven hundred thousand dollars and should know a decision in October. He stated that the town has two hundred thousand currently to work with on the Riverwalk project. Johnnie Branham mentioned his problems with the water line creating “pot holes” and other issues on his property. Mayor Yates said that he had showed the sidewalk project to contractors, but didn’t have luck getting a response. However, Mayor Yates will contact the Virginia Department of Transportation to see if they can assist Mr. Branham.
- Mayor Yates also reported that Shawn Wallace will fix the damaged mural on the side of the Haysi Supply Co. building in the autumn. Council Member Billy Counts commented that the last touchup on the mural lasted about five years. Matt Owens asked for an update on the streetlights. Mayor Yates answered that Appalachian Power had received one, but was waiting to receive the other before beginning

installation, so the work could be done at the same time. Vice Mayor Rocky Wood requested the Mayor ask the Virginia Department of Transportation about the railroad crossing near the Haysi Volunteer Fire Department too because it was in bad shape. Council Member Billy Counts requested the Mayor ask about the ditch across from Pizza Plus as well.

**ITEM # XII - COUNCIL COMMENTS**

None.

**ITEM # XIII – ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to be brought before the Council, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Rocky Wood seconded by Council Member Susan Tiller to adjourn the meeting. Let the record show the motion was passed unanimously by verbal voting and the meeting was adjourned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Larry D. Yates, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk