

March 18, 2015

Town Manager

The Town Council met on Monday March 16th in a work session to receive an update on the Town's Power Purchase Program, discuss a CDBG grant application, and discuss an RFP for towing services initiated by our Police Department.

The Town has been recognized for two years running as the providing the lowest residential electric rates in the Commonwealth and for three years running as the municipal provider with the lowest residential electric rates. The Town is able to provide low, stable rates through our program whereby the Town partners is electric generation projects to obtain a significant portion of our base power needs and purchases the remaining base power needs from other sources three years in advance of our need. Joe Waltz, our Director of Energy Services, presented the Town's program to Council and indicated that our rates will remain very competitive as we continue to seek cost effective energy sources.

The Town will work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission to apply for a Community Development Block Grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to conduct a study on possible improvements to the Town's downtown area. The grant application is for \$35,000 to evaluate the Downtown and to develop facade guidelines. The ultimate goal of the planning grant is to allow the Town to seek additional CDBG grants to implement a facade enhancement program in the future.

The Council also discussed a Request for Proposals that the Town will be advertising to find interested service providers to respond to requests from our Police Department for towing of vehicles. The Town currently maintains a list of tow providers that rotates as incidents occur. The Town has received complaints from some residents about high towing fees. The RFP will allow the Town award a contract to a number of firms based upon their fee to provide towing services.

The next meeting for Town Council will be a regular meeting scheduled for Monday, March 23rd.

As always, please feel free to contact this office with any ideas or suggestions to improve how the Town provides service to our community.

Department Updates

Last Week:

Our Planning Department processed 11 Zoning permits, 0 sign permits, 2 Business Licenses, and 6 Code Violation actions. Staff attended a meeting about a proposed business on Main Street and met with citizens about development issues. The Planning Commission is reviewing streetscape enhancements to South Street and will discuss at their March 18th meeting. The Planning Commission has reviewed the 2015-2016 Capital Improvement Program and provided comments for Council's consideration, has recommended approval of a draft Ordinance Amendment for Tourism Zones, and has recommended approval to amend the Ordinance for sandwich board signs. The Town Council considered the Ordinance Amendments for the sandwich board signs and the Tourism Zones at their March 9th meeting with a second reading on March 23rd, and will continue discussion regarding the Ordinance Amendment to the Land Development & Subdivision Code, Chapter 148 at a future work session. The Planning Director will present a Grant Proposal opportunity to Town Council on March 16th. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will continue discussions on the update to the Plan.

Our Police Department continued to provide patrol and enforcement within the Town. This week the Police Department received 640 calls to our Dispatch Center, our officers responded to 357 calls for service, issued 67 traffic citations, 1 DUI arrests, and 12 traffic accidents.

Our Environmental Services crews conducted maintenance on the sanitary sewer system as needed. Our crews also conducted maintenance on the water system as needed. The Town experience n/a water break due to cold temperatures. Our Street Maintenance crews continued assisting the Energy Services Department with the installation of an access road at Hilda Barbour Elementary School and installed n/a signs. The Horticulture Division conducted horticulture maintenance throughout the Town. Our Building and Grounds Division conducted maintenance at our Town facilities. Our Fleet Maintenance Division performed n/a preventative maintenance services, conducted n/a State inspections, conducted n/a jump starts, repaired n/a flat tires, and other unscheduled repairs to vehicles and equipment. Our Solid Waste Division collected n/a on-call collections as requested.

Crews at our Wastewater Treatment Plant performed routine maintenance and operations. Crews at our Water Treatment Plant oversaw upgrades at the plant where the contractor poured the new floor and performed routine maintenance and operation.

Our Energy Services Department reported 1 outage last week: a 28 minute outage on March 14th that affected 30 customers on High Street due to a tree limb. Crews continued work on the distribution lines from the Riverton Substation and continued to maintain our electrical system.

Our IT Department conducted training for the Town's new online job application process, developed the RFP for Police In-Car cameras, resolved the Finance server contract issues, and continued work order completion.

Our Visitor's Center met with VTC to discuss cooperative marketing opportunities, arranged an ad for USA Today Saluting National Parks Special Edition, mailed 403 information requests, coordinated with groups about an Earth Day/Appalachian Trail event, continued discussion of updates to the Battle of Front Royal Driving Tour, the Visitor's Guide and the Walking Tour, and investigated other advertising opportunities. Staff welcomed 315 visitors to the Center and had 11,564 visits to our website.

Our Finance Department processed 2,091 payment receipts, mailed 384 delinquent utility bills, processed 129 move-in/move-out work orders, disconnected 79 utility accounts, in addition to their normal work activities. We also processed 692 drive through payments, 33 Saturday drive through payments, 73 on-line utility payments, and 4 on-line tax payments.

Our Risk Management Department processed 0 employee injury claims and e citizen claims.

Our Human Resources Department advertised numerous positions and received applications for those already advertised. The Town currently has 6 full-time, 1 part-time open positions and 4 seasonal positions, with 2 full-time offers pending and 0 part-time offer pending.

Upcoming Week:

Our Planning Department will attend a meeting about a lot subdivision, attend the Planning Commission Meeting and Work Session, attend the NSVRC meeting, and meet with citizens with zoning questions.

Our Police Department will continue to patrol the Town.

Our Department of Environmental Services plans to conduct preventative maintenance throughout Town.

Our Department of Energy Services will hold the monthly safety meeting and conduct routine maintenance of various lines and substations throughout our service area. Crews will be working on the distribution lines from the Riverton Substation.

Our IT Department will continue routine maintenance of the Town's network and computer systems.

Our Tourism Department will continue to welcome visitors.

Our Risk Management and Human Resources Departments will continue address safety and personnel issues.

Civic Events

Samuels Public Library has numerous events scheduled throughout the week. Information can be found <http://www.samuelslibrary.net/>

The Town Council will meet at 7:00 pm on Monday, March 23rd in a regular meeting in the Warren County Government Center.

Yard waste collection by the Town will resume Wednesday, March 25th.

The Town will conduct our bi-monthly Business Forum at 6:00 pm on Thursday, March 26th in the Council Chambers at the Town's Administration Building.