

Town of Pennington Gap  
Council Meeting  
October 24, 2022

**Record of attendance:**

**6:00 PM**

Mayor: Larry Holbrook

Council: Jill Carson  
Gary McElyea  
Jeff Martin - Absent  
Terry Pope  
Jimmy Warner

Town Manager: Keith Harless - Absent

Assistant Town Manager: Brian Skidmore

Treasurer/Deputy Clerk: Tina Rowe

Town Attorney: Greg Edwards - Absent

Clerk: Karen Maggard - Absent

Police Chief: Jesse Jones

Powell Valley News: Rick Watson

1. Mayor Holbrook called the meeting to order and opened the public hearing at 6:00 PM.
2. Prayer and pledge- Tina Rowe led the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance
3. **Agenda**-Terry Pope made a Motion to accept the agenda with the addition of Mitch Kennedy to Citizen's Recognition. Jill Carson seconded the Motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

4. **Approval of Minutes**- Larry Holbrook made a Motion to approve the minutes of September 19, 2022, Regular Meeting and the Recessed Minutes for September 27, 2022. Jimmy Warner seconded the Motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

5. **Pay bills**-Mayor Holbrook made a Motion to pay the bills as presented with the addition of a 2022 Homestead Trailer for \$5345 from O'Quinn. Terry Pope seconded the Motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

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6. **Citizen's Recognitions** – Mitch Kennedy gave an update on the Ballad Health as follows:  
**10,000 patients seen in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of reopening the Lee County Hospital;**  
**5,000 outpatients seen for scans, xrays, etc;**  
**Indian Path opened a new Niswonger Children's Hospital in Oct 2022 – App 80 kids p/day;**  
**Workforce Challenges such as Labor Shortages – RN vacancy rate 60-70%, Physician Shortages;**  
**Ballad has made Investments in their team with \$120 M in wages with a 4% wage increase with a starting pay for nurses around \$22 - \$27 p/hr;**  
**Expanding Sports Medicine Program at Lonesome Pine Hospital including Physical Therapy, starting Nov 7<sup>th</sup>;**  
**College of Health Sciences being explored at Mountain View**

Jill Carson said she was pleased with the care that she's received from Ballad recently since she has been in most of their facilities over the past year. She said the patient care was wonderful!

Terry Pope asked about the plan for the old Big Stone armory.

7. **Unfinished business:**

- a. **Close Public Hearing** - Mayor Holbrook closed the Public Hearing at 6:17pm.
- b. **Redesignate Agricultural Areas** – Mayor Holbrook explained that the Planning Commission voted to eliminate the agricultural designation on residential zoning except on properties already in ongoing agricultural use and also to add garden plots for non-commercial use to residential. Terry Pope made a Motion to adopt the redesignation. Jill Carson seconded the Motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

- c. **Schedule Bridge Naming** – Brian did not have any information.

8. **New Business:** None

9. **Monthly Reports:** Monthly Reports – Water, Sewer, Treasurer, Public Works, Police Dept., Fire Dept. Lee Theatre, Parks & Recreation (reports in council packets)

10. **Administrative Reports-** included in packet Mayor Larry Holbrook/Keith Harless/Tina Rowe/Brian Skidmore

- a. **Treasurer's Report-** Tina Rowe said that tax tickets were mailed October 5, 2022, with a due date of December 5, 2022. She said that PVNB was the low bidder on a loan for a

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Parks and Rec vehicle. Terry Pope made a motion to finance the parks and rec vehicle with PVNB for 60 mos at 4.46%. Jimmy Warner seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

b. **Assistant Town Manager's Report-** EMS staff has ran 43 calls in 30 days and are now operating 2 crews at 12 hour days from 8a-8p.

c. **Town Manager's Report-Absent**

11. **Projects**

A. **ARC Business Center/Conference Center**

B. **Infrastructure Revitalization Fund Planning Grant**-in review

C. **Historic designation**-Terry said it was moving forward and will finalize in June 2023

D. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Repair grants-**

- i. DEQ/Lane Group-Original Cost was \$1.6M, now it's at \$3.9 M. There are no ARPA funds available for Plant upgrades. The project is under review now.
- ii. SSES Grant- Moving Forward
- iii. WW Pump Station Upgrade-DEQ/Lane Group -
- iv. N. Fork Powell River Sewer Crossing – DEQ/Mattern & Craig – Approved for \$1.0M from ARPA infrastructure funds.

E. **Water treatment plant structural repair grant-**

- i. USDA/Mattern & Craig-Brian said the project was still in the discovery phase. Trying to determine if it is feasible to proceed without having the plant shut down for 7 days during construction.
- ii. WTP Telemetry Upgrade-VDH/Mattern & Craig-
- iii. Phase 2 Meters – Have been approved for Phase 2 but will take 6 months to get meters in. There will be around 800 meters purchased.

12. **Town Attorney-Absent**

13. **Council Member reports**

14. **Jill Carson** – Jill said that it was a wonderful experience to be the grand marshall of the Tobacco Festival parade. To go from being a girl from Boston to being grand marshall, she felt so honored. She said it was a memorable experience and thanked the people of Lee Co. Jill said the theme of this year's VML conference was "Civility" – Working together and respecting those we work with. She was proud to say that the Town and County had a successful meeting. She said Economic Development is Vital to improve the quality of life and environment. She said an attorney from Charlottesville talked about federalism and the Dillon rule and autonomy which controls what localities can and cannot do. She said the Town received lots of compliments on the display set up at the conference. She said the mayor of BSG won the raffle. She said VML will be in Pennington in November to take pictures. The next meeting is December 1, 2022, in Roanoke. She and Ron were invited to speak about the Origins project in Richmond.

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**Larry Holbrook** -Congratulated Jill Carson on being the new President of VML.

**Gary McElyea**-Also congratulated Jill Carson on being the new President of VML. He said it's amazing to watch Jill in action at the VML Conference and serving on committees. He said the Town of Pennington Gap gets recognized when she speaks.

**Terry Pope**- Reported that he and Brian Skidmore went to the Board of Supervisors Meeting. He said they were receptive and pleased with how we were trending and it was nice to get input. He said to be thinking about what to do about Spearhead Trails. He spoke about the Pump Station Project – SWVA Energy & Dev Authority and wants to see how it will impact us. He suggested that Brian keep up with it. Tree lighting will be on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Terry made a motion for Loretta See to light the tree. Roll Call Vote as Follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

15. **Closed session**- At 7:02 PM, Terry Pope made a Motion to go into executive session pursuant to;

**2.2-3711(A)(1):** *Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals...*

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(3): Acquisition & disposition of property.** *Provides an exemption for: Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.*

**Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(5)** *Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.*

**Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(6)** *Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected.*

Mayor Holbrook seconded the Motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

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At 7:52 PM, Terry Pope made a Motion to reconvene to regular session. Gary McElyea seconded the Motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

Terry Pope made a statement to attest that nothing was discussed during closed session other than the issues stated. Roll call vote as follows:

Jill Carson	Aye
Gary McElyea	Aye
Terry Pope	Aye
Jimmy Warner	Aye
Larry Holbrook	Aye

16. Mayor Holbrook made a Motion to adjourn at 7:53pm. Terry Pope seconded the Motion. Vote was unanimous.

  
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MAYOR LARRY W. HOLBROOK

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TINA ROWE, DEPUTY CLERK

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

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

**WHEREAS**, 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Council of the Town of Pennington Gap, Virginia that such closed session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the Town of Pennington Gap, Virginia hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in 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 by the Council of the Town of Pennington Gap, Virginia.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mayor Larry W. Holbrook  
Terry K. Pope  
Gary McElyea  
Jill Carson  
Jimmy Warner

NAYS: (for each Nay vote the substance of the departure from the requirements of the Act should be described)

ABSENT DURING VOTE: Jeff Martin  
ABSENT DURING CLOSED SESSION: Jeff Martin  
MEETING DATE: October 24, 2022

  
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MAYOR LARRY W. HOLBROOK