

The regular meeting of the Murphy Town Council was held on January 3, 2022 at 5:00 pm at City Hall.

Town Manager: Chad Simons

Attorney: Mack Cowan

Mayor Tim Radford

Council: Barry McClure, Frank Dickey

Keisha Dockery, Gail Stansell

Barbara Hughes, Charlene Smith

Cherokee Scout was present

Mayor Radford opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance

Public Comment

Mr. Don Hale of Moore House Ministries approached the Council about the need to put a gate or fence up at Sunset Cemetery at night. Mr. Hale stated he witnesses a lot of issues from people going up there during the nighttime hours, and something should be done to fix it. Mr. Hale also encouraged the Town to put benches and shelter at Cherokee County Transit stops throughout town, to help people during inclement weather.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion was made by Hughes, seconded by Smith to approve the December 6, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Tax Releases and Water and Sewer Adjustments

None.

Vote on Amendment to Town Charter to conform to Council-Manager Form of Government

Town Manager Chad Simons said the Council could vote on the matter since a public hearing was held on the proposal last month. Mr. Simons reminded the Council that this should have been completed in 1989 when the Town went to the Council-Manager form of government, but it has never been an issue since the Manger serves as the Town Clerk as well. Mr. Simons said the town may want to help incentivize office staff to enhance their skills and knowledge, and move them through he pay plan in the future. One way they could do this is by separating the manager/clerk position, and promoting someone else to be the Town Clerk.

Motion was made by Stansell, seconded by McClure to approve the Amendment to the Town Charter to conform to the Council Manager form of Government. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of the amendment is posted online at townofmurphync.com, and in the minute book.

Update on Downtown Utility Request for Qualifications.

Town Manager Chad Simons informed the Council that they received three request for qualifications from engineering firms for design services, which will be for the downtown water/sewer line rehab project – which emerged when the NCDOT informed the Town that they will be repaving downtown Murphy in 2023. Mr. Simons said state law dictates that the RFQ procurement process prohibits local governments from acquiring services using pricing. Mr. Simons said McGill Associates, Michael Baker

International, and CTI Engineering submitted the proposals. Mr. Simons said town staff would evaluate the proposals, negotiate a price, and then come back to the Council with a proposed contract for design services.

Discussion on Alleyway Rental Policy

Town Manager Chad Simons said a business inquired about using the town's pedestrian alleyway for special events. Mr. Simons said the Council needed to put something formal together for businesses/organizations to rent the space for future events.

The Town Council discussed the matter at length. Mr. Simons said he would take the Council's input and work with Town Attorney Mack Cowan on developing a policy.

Budget Amendment – Dump Truck

Town Manager Chad Simons said the Town lost two early 90s dump trucks within the past two years, and the 1995 Ford Dump Truck needs a new engine. Mr. Simons said a dump truck is critical to maintenance operations. Mr. Simons said Mr. Stillwell was unavailable to answer questions, but said they had not selected a truck yet. Mr. Simons said they are still evaluating on what would be best for the town moving forward, and they could possibly get a truck that does not require a driver to possess a Class B CDL.

Motion was made by McClure, seconded by Stansell, to appropriate \$90,000 from Utility Fund Balance and increase 30-810 (Utility Maintenance Capital Outlay) by \$90,000 for a new dump truck. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion on Town Council Retreat

Mayor Radford said he thought it would be great for the Council to have a retreat to discuss what they wanted to accomplish in the future. Mayor Radford said they would invite the media, as required, but no action will be taken at the meeting. Town Manager Chad Simons said they had special retreat meetings last year in March at the Fire Department, which turned out well. Mayor Radford said he would send dates to Council Members so they could choose which date they preferred.

Monthly Reports

Motion was made by McClure, seconded by Dockery to approve the monthly reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of the monthly reports are attached in the minute book.

Discussion

Mayor Radford asked the Town Council about their thoughts on the cemetery. Mr. Frank Dickey said the town needed to post signs, and prosecute anyone that doesn't follow the rules for trespassing. Town Attorney Mack Cowan said signs had to be placed. Town Manager Chad Simons said a fence or chain would not be ideal, as the cemetery is located near the River Walk and the highway. Mr. Simons said the police department is busy, and did not need another task to complete at night – especially when it wouldn't do anything to prevent trespassing. Mr. Simons also said there is a pedestrian access point that a gate/chain would not help with.

Ms. Keisha Dockery said people visiting the cemetery would want the Town to do something.

Mr. Simons asked if the Council would be satisfied with closing the cemetery between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. each night.

Motion was made by Dickey, seconded by Stansell to close Sunset Cemetery each night from 9 pm.- 6 am. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Radford advised the Council about his desire to put together joint meetings between both towns and the county commissioners. Mayor Radford he will bring up the idea expressed by Mr. Hale concerning shelter and benches for Cherokee County transit stops.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Hughes, seconded by McClure to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:50 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk: Signed Chad Simons

Mayor: Signed Tim Radford