TOWN OF MARLINTON

Marlinton Town Council
March 3, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes

Location: Municipal Building Auditorium with Zoom and call-in options.

Mayor Sam Felton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Mayor led the Council and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Recorder called the roll.

Present:	Sam Felton, Mayor	Mary K. Clendenen, Recorder
	Tina Barkley	Tom Miller
	Olivia Dean	Joe Smith
	Scott Gibb	
Absent:	None	

Reading and Approval of Prior Council Meeting Minutes: The Council reviewed the minutes of the February 3, 2025 Regular Meeting and the meetings of the Beautification Committee and Personnel Committee which were both held on February 20, 2025.

- Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes as presented. Tina Barkley seconded the motion. **Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Mayor's Report: Mayor Felton reviewed his monthly report with the Council. A new pickup with a snowplow was purchased from Mitchell Chevrolet.

Hear Public Input: Kristy Lanier, owner of Dirtbean Café and Bike Shop, said she had received a letter dated February 26th from Building Inspector, Bruce VanMeter, instructing her to move a camper from the Cemetery Road property owned by the Town. She said she had been camping near the water tower over the weekend to get away from her neighbors, who were causing a disturbance. The camper got a flat tire and she was attempting to get it repaired. She came to the Town Office to file a complaint against her neighbors and let the Town know her camper was there and that it had a flat tire, and afterward she received the letter. She said she felt she had been harassed for the past three years by the Town. Mayor Felton replied that the Cemetery area is not a camping area, and Mr. VanMeter had not been aware of her situation. He advised Ms. Lanier to call law enforcement if she is having issues with her neighbors. He also said he will have signs posted to advise the public that camping is not allowed in certain areas.

Herby Barlow, Chief of the Marlinton Fire Department, asked the Council if they had a plan to test, repair, and paint the fire hydrants. Fred Hypes, of Thrasher Engineering, was in attendance, and said his firm would work out a plan with the Town to get this testing performed as part of their work with the water system design.

Committee and Department Reports: Bruce VanMeter reported that progress was being made on removing several dilapidated buildings in town through DEP grant funding. He said the next project is the El Poca Motel building. He is also working with the state conservation officers on a project for repairing the flow of Marlin Run and with the Army Corps of Engineers to clean sediment out Knapps Creek that is causing water drainage issues in town. The Mayor added that the sediment in the river is also creating water issues.

Mary Clendenen reported that the Beautification Committee met on February 20, 2025 and prioritized upcoming projects. Haning flower baskets will be purchased again this year. The new picnic shelter, playground equipment and a memorial at Roger L. Trusler Memorial Park were the second priority. The gazebo lot needs new flower beds and landscaping and the gazebo is in need of repairs. At Discovery Junction, painting and replacement of flowers is

needed. The Mon Forest Bear needs to be painted. Also discussed were Main Street improvements including planting trees in empty planters and future replacement of street lamps and posts. To date, the Town has received $27,100 in donations toward the cost of the picnic shelter.

Mrs. Clendenen also reported that the Personnel Committee met on February 20, 2025 to prepare recommendations for employee wages for the coming fiscal year to be presented to the Council later in this meeting.

Unfinished Business:

1. **Discuss and/or Act on Third and Final Reading of Changes to General Penalty Ordinance:**

   - Joe Smith moved to approve the ordinance changes on the third reading. Tina Barkley seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

New Business:

1. **Discuss and/or Act on First Reading of Proposed Bond Ordinance authorizing the issuance of not more than $800,000 in aggregate principal amount of combined waterworks and sewerage system Design Revenue Bonds, Series 2025 A (West Virginia CWSRF Program); not more than $3,750,000 in aggregate principal amount of combined waterworks and sewerage system Revenue Bonds, Series 2025 B (West Virginia CWSRF Program/Principal Forgiveness); and not more than $6,325,000 in aggregate principal amount of combined waterworks and sewerage system Revenue Bonds, Series 2025 C (West Virginia CWSRF Program), collectively the "Series 2025 Bonds". The Series 2025 Bonds will be issued in three series, the first of which Series 2025 A Bonds will be used to (i) to pay a portion of the costs of design, and other pre-construction activities of certain additions, betterments and improvements to the existing public sewerage system of the issuer; and (ii) to pay costs of issuance and related costs. The Series 2025 Bonds are payable solely from revenues to be derived from the ownership and operation of the combined waterworks and sewerage system of the Town.**

   Susan Riggs, bond counsel for this project, attended the meeting and explained the bond ordinance. A second reading and a public hearing prior to the third reading will be required before the bond ordinance can be approved. The loan repayment term will be for a period of 40 years and the interest rates are very favorable. She said a binding agreement for the funding sources is needed prior to submitting the application to the Public Service Commission. Fred Hypes, of Thrasher Engineering, was also present and he explained that Marlinton will have substantial cost savings by doing both projects simultaneously. This will keep the expenses for repaving the streets at a minimum.

   Olivia Dean said the Town has a loss of treated water each month of approximately 46%. She was concerned that the Town needed to stop the loss of water before the rate increase is implemented. Mayor Felton replied that, with a 100-year- old system and lack of ability to isolate leaks due to failed valves, a loss rate near 50% is expected. Fred Hypes replied that the work being done during this project will address much of the water loss. Ms. Dean also said water sold directly from the water plant needs to be metered, and sewage lines to unoccupied residences need to be capped so those property owners do not have to pay sewer fees. She said the initial rate increase will not be significant, but she is concerned about the final rate increase that will occur when the project is complete. She asked if Rod Lowe had considered the reduction in loss of treated water when he calculated the projected cost to operate the system in the future. Mayor Felton said the rate increases will need to be implemented to get the Town to the point where the system corrections can be made. Fred Hypes said there is no such thing as a water system with absolutely no leaks, and the reduction of water loss will not fully be known until the line replacements are completed.

   Cassandra Lawson, of Region IV Planning and Development Council, participated via Zoom and said she understood Ms. Dean's hesitance to charge higher rates to the public, but she stressed that this is the only mechanism to proceed with the projects. She recommended

that the public send their questions concerning the funding and future rates to the Mayor so she can prepare the answers for the next meeting.

- Joe Smith moved to approve the first reading of the ordinance. Tina Barkley seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2. **Discuss and/or Act on First Reading of a Proposed Ordinance providing for monthly billing of rates, charges and fees for sewer services, and providing for increased rates, charges and fees for sewer services for all customers of the municipally owned and operated sewer utility of the Town of Marlinton, Pocahontas County, West Virginia. The increase is necessary for the payment of system operations and debt service in order to ensure that continuous, safe and adequate sewer service is provided to all sewer customers.**

   - Joe Smith moved to approve the first reading of the ordinance. Scott Gibb seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Discuss and/or Act on First Reading of a Proposed Ordinance providing for monthly billing of rates, charges and fees for water services, and providing for increased rates, charges and fees for water services for all customers of the municipally owned and operated water utility of the Town of Marlinton, Pocahontas County, West Virginia. The increase is necessary for the payment of system operations and debt service in order to ensure that continuous, safe and adequate water service is provided to all water customers.**

   - Joe Smith moved to approve the first reading of the ordinance. Scott Gibb seconded the motion**. The motion passed unanimously.**

4. **Discuss and/or Act on Planning Committee for the Nation's 250th Birthday Celebration on July 4, 2026:** Joe Smith requested permission to head a committee of citizens consisting of nine members to plan and raise funds for this celebration.

   - Tina Barkley moved to approve the committee to be headed by Joe Smith. Olivia Dean seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. **Discuss and/or Act on Monday Lick Trail Grand Opening Celebration May 16-18, 2025:** Mayor Felton said the Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Bureau is planning this event, which will include camping at Stillwell Park.

   - Olivia Dean moved that the Town Council work with the Convention & Visitors Bureau and allow camping at the park for this event. Tina Barkley seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. **Discuss and/or Act on Opening of Alley Leading to 817 10th Street:** Olivia Dean, in the capacity of a citizen, asked to open an unused alley beside her residence leading to her lot at 817 10th Street. She plans to develop camper rental lots there and needs access through the alley. She said she and Jacob Dunbrack would pay all expenses to open the alley. Some of the Councilmembers wanted to look at the location before taking action on this request, so the Council scheduled a special meeting for March 10, 2025 to take action on this request.

7. **Discuss and/or Act on Advertisement for Request for Bids and Specifications for Picnic Shelter at Roger L. Trusler Memorial Park:** Mayor Felton presented the proposed design for the picnic shelter and said he had prepared the bid specifications. A request for bids is to be advertised in the Pocahontas Times, with bids due by March 14, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

   - Tina Barkley moved to approve the advertisement requesting bids for the picnic shelter. Olivia Dean seconded the motion. **The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

8. **Discuss and/or Act on Changes to Employee Wages for Fiscal Year 2026**: Joe Smith moved that the Council go into Executive Session to discuss wages (Exception 2A). Mary Clendenen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Scott Gibb and

Olivia Dean abstaining. Scott Gibb and Olivia Dean recused themselves from this portion of the meeting.

Upon returning to regular session at 9:59 p.m., the Mayor asked for a motion concerning wages.

- Joe Smith moved to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendations for wages for the July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 fiscal year. Tom Miller seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Olivia Dean and Scott Gibb rejoined the meeting after the vote was taken.

Approve Invoices/Payment of Bills:

- Joe Smith moved to approve the bills for payment. Tina Barkley seconded the motion. **The motion passed by unanimous vote, with Mary Clendenen abstaining from SecuriTech's invoice.**

Adjournment: As there was no further business, Mayor Felton adjourned the meeting at 10:01 p.m.

Sam Felton

Sam Felton, Mayor

Mary K. Clendenen

Mary K. Clendenen, Recorder