COUNCIL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2023

The first regular monthly meeting of the Mannington City Council, with Mayor Lora Michael presiding, was held February 6, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at city hall. Council members attending were Kris Bates, John Craw, Tim Fluharty and Roger Russell.

Jerry Bush said a prayer to begin the meeting.

The minutes of the last regular and emergency meetings were reviewed. Craw made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Fluharty seconded the motion and all approved.

Robin Smith, representing the Mannington BAD Committee, was present to discuss the future of Valor, the city’s canine. She said the committee’s consensus was that it would be best if he is retrained and still works as a drug dog. She said since the money to purchase him was raised in Mannington, they believe he should stay here. They plan to take Valor to Shallow Creek Kennels to evaluate him to see if he is re-trainable. She said they want what is best for Valor, but it is ultimately the council’s decision since he was turned over to the city in 2021 and is now a city employee. She assured everyone that Valor is safe and is being feed. Mayor Michael said she and the councilmembers agree with the committee. She spoke today to Lt Thomas Mitter of the Preston County Sheriff’s Department, who is a certified dog trainer, and he can evaluate him on Tuesday or Thursday.

Fire Chief Bob Dye said he needs some guidance from the city in regard to the amount of money available to purchase a new fire truck. Michael said she will set up a work session with the fire department to discuss finances. He also played a recent radio transmission with the 911 Center. The interference was so loud, you could not hear the call information. He said something needs done about their radios. Dye reported that his department saved six people last week in house fires with entrapment. Michael said the city was very proud of them.

In Old Business, the first item of business was Ordinance #477 which removes the partisan requirements for poll workers, ballot commissioners and building commission members. Russell made the motion to read the heading only. Bates seconded the motion and it carried. Michael read the heading. Russell made the motion to adopt Ordinance #477. Fluharty seconded the motion and all approved.

The next item in Old Business was the Burt Hill Tank Project. Michael said she would like to go into an executive session later in the meeting to discuss the purchase of property for that tank.

In New Business, the Planning Commission has recommended that Anthony Fluharty and Heather Fluharty be re-appointed to 3-year terms. Bates made the motion to reappoint both to the Planning Commission. Craw seconded the motion and it carried.

The Planning Commission also recommended that Vickie Jarvis be appointed to fill the vacancy on the commission. Bates made the motion to appoint Vickie Jarvis to the Planning Commission. Fluharty seconded the motion and it carried. Her term will expire June 18, 2025.

City Clerk Michele Fluharty distributed information about three firms who handle online payments for municipalities. She said WV Go-Pay is not compatible with Jayhawk, the city’s utility software. The other two were PSN which is the city’s current vendor and Nexbillpay. Both were provided as options by Jayhawk. Fluharty said she and Water Clerk Jennifer Barker attended an online demo with Nexbillpay and both were very impressed with them. She said the only caveat is that if the city switches to Nexbillpay, there will be a $500 migration fee to move our information from PSN. Russell made the motion to accept the proposal from Nexbillpay. Craw seconded the motion and it carried. The state has mandated that the all municipalities must provide electronic payment options for all fees beginning March 2023.

The floor was then opened to any other public comments. Harold Efaw said Valor should stay with Don Sides. Mariah Sides said she agreed that the dog should stay with her father. She said Sheriff Jimmy Riffle told her that typically the dog is retired in similar situations. Efaw and Ray Shadrick said they would each donate $500 toward a new dog and Sides said she would do whatever is necessary to raise money for a new dog.

Mayor Michael asked for an executive session to discuss the land purchase for the new Burt Hill water tank. Russell made the motion to adjourn into executive session. Bates seconded the motion and it carried. The time was 7:43 p.m.

Craw made the motion to reconvene into regular session. Bates seconded the motion and it carried. The time was 8:00 p.m.

In department reports, Chief of Police Jim Rigsby said the guy who broke into the storage buildings and other Buffalo Street buildings is in jail. Part time police officers Phillip Stewart and Tyler Hess started work last week. He will get a schedule to the mayor when the details are worked out. Officer Donnie Wheeler is already qualified, and he will get the other two qualified soon at the range. Rigsby said the 911 Center is encrypting the radio traffic and a new radio will be needed in the Taurus cruiser. Mayor Michael told Rigsby to get the device that will read license plates that he mentioned in a previous meeting. She said they will work out the setup after it is received. She also reported that Manchin’s office notified her that the city will be receiving $66,000 for new cameras.

In Superintendent Ted Nice’s report, he said the Welcome to Mannington sign has been replaced at Flaggy Meadow. It was damaged by a vehicle. The sink hole on Sycamore Road will be repaired tomorrow.

Michael said she spoke to Code Enforcement Officer Randall Jaggie-Moore and he needed some time off, so he has not worked the last two weeks.

City Clerk Michele Fluharty said it is time to have a budget work session. It was agreed to hold the work session prior to the next council meeting at 6:00 p.m.

The outstanding bills were reviewed. Craw made the motion to approve the bills for payment. Fluharty seconded the motion and all approved.

Fluharty made the motion to adjourn. Craw seconded the motion and it carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.