Virginia: **At the regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Chilhowie held at the Municipal Building, November 14, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: **Honorable Gary L. Heninger, Mayor presiding; Councilors Brent Foster, Bob Jeter, Julie Sturgill, P.J. Wolfe, and Shannon Donnelly.**

Absent: **Councilor Bill Clear.**

Also Present: **Mr. Brian Martin, Town Manager; Mrs. Felicia Eller, CMC, Clerk-Treasurer; Andrew Moss, Police Chief; David Haynes, Fire/EMS Chief; Danny Combs, Public Works Director; Luke Lowe, Chief Wastewater Operator; and Stephen Fields; Recreation/Special Events Coordinator.**

Mayor Heninger called the meeting to order. Mrs. Julie Sturgill gave the Invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by P.J. Wolfe, second by Bob Jeter Council approves the regular October 10, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Special Presentation:

- Jim Accurso, Public Affairs Specialist with the Small Business Administration – Mr. Jim Accurso, Public Affairs Specialist with the Small Business Administration, presented Hurricane Relief Loan Programs before Council as part of Hurricane Helene recovery. The Small Business Administration Disaster Recovery is offering long-term low interest disaster loans for property owners, renters, and business owners in Southwest Virginia. The deadline for assistance is December 2, 2024. The Small Business Administration Disaster Recovery is offering three types of loans. Mr. Accurso stated if a business owner determines within the next nine months to have a loss of working capital due to Hurricane Helene they can apply for a working Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Mr. Accurso encourages citizens affected by Hurricane Helene to apply. There is no fee to apply and no obligation to accept if awarded loan. Citizens have sixty days to accept the awarded loan with interest rates at four percent or lower. The first year of the loan will be interest free.

- Davenport Public Finance – Mr. R.T. Taylor, Davenport Public Finance, appeared before Council to discuss the closure of one Revenue Anticipation Note and the issuance of a Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note. Davenport Public Finance conducted Direct Bank Loan Request for Proposals for the Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note on Friday, October 11,

2024. On Thursday, October 31, 2024, Davenport Public Finance received two proposals for the Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note. Huntington Bank provided a proposal for the Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note at 4.89%. On December 10, 2024, the Town will pay off the Revenue Anticipation Note with First Citizen Bank and on December 18, 2024, close on the new Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council Accepts the Proposal from Huntington Bank at the rate of 4.89% for a Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note in the amount of $1,000,000. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Julie Sturgill Council adopts Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of a Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note, Providing for the Sale, from Details and Payment of the Note, and Authorizing Certain Related Actions. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Davenport Public Finance requested to conduct a Comprehensive Financial Review of both the General Fund and Utility Funds. The Comprehensive Financial Review would occur before the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget process and would provide the Town with a solid foundation. The Comprehensive Financial Review will identify structural imbalances in the budget, analyze the monthly cash flows within the fiscal year, provide perspective related to finances by comparing the Town's financial position to other similar Towns/Cities, and assess the appropriate level of Reserves the Town should maintain to avoid the costs associated with issuing Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes. The cost would be capped at $25,000 for Davenport Public Finance to complete the Comprehensive Financial Review.

Closed Session:

- Discussion of Davenport Public Finance conducting a Comprehensive Financial Review-Justification Section 2.2-3711 (A)(7) of the Code of Virginia, as Amended –

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe and unanimously passed Council hereby enters into Closed Session under Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia as amended, to discuss contractual matters. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe and unanimously passed Council hereby enters into Open Session. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Certification of Closed Session

The Town of Chilhowie has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia requires a certificate by the Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Town of Chilhowie hereby certified 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 the closed meeting to which this certificate applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Town Council.

Approved with the following roll call vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Councilwoman Julie Sturgill exited the Council meeting.

Old Business:

- Update on Removal or Repair of Identifies Unsafe (Burned Out) Structurers – Mr. Haynes, Fire and EMS Chief, reported under the Virginia Property Maintenance Code, a Notice of Unsafe Structure for the property at 1404 West Lee Highway and 232 Overlook Drive was posted. The Notice of Unsafe Structure and the Right of Appeal was certified mailed to the property owners. The Town will demolish the structures on December 6, 2024, and place a lien on the property. Mr. Paul Cassell, Town Attorney, will research when contents within the house are still considered valid personal property and when it is allowed to be destroyed.

- Update on Sewer Infiltration and Inflow Project – As of November there are no pending Pay Request for the Sewer Infiltration and Inflow Project. The Sewer Infiltration and Inflow Project is continuing to progress steadily. There have been several places that have been identified that have been relined or the line is in really good shape resulting in cost savings. The Town's staff is working with the Town's Engineering company, Hurt and Proffitt, Contractor, and Public Works to determine the best use of the money that is saved to repurpose it to other parts of the Town where there are Infiltration and Inflow issues. The next progress meeting is Wednesday, December 4, 2024.

- Update on Seven Mile Ford Water Line and Meter Replacement – On Wednesday, November 13, 2024, Mr. Martin, Town Manager and Mr. Don Cole, Chief Water Operator, met with vendors for the proposed radio read meters. The Town's bookkeeping firm and auditors are working diligently to complete the Fiscal Year 2023 Audit. The Fiscal Year 2023 Audit is projected to be completed in January 2025. The Fiscal Year 2024 Audit will not be completed until July 2025. The Virgina Resource Authority loan is expected to close in March 2025. The Seven Mile Ford Water Line and Meter Replacement Project will be delayed until July or August 2025. The Virgina Resource Authority has alerted the Town that Rural Development will require the Town to perform another Parity to close the loan.

New Business:

- Update on Hurricane Relief – The Town continues to recover from Hurricane Helene. The Public Works Department has hauled off more than 40 dump truck loads of debris. With the help of The Town's Engineering Consultants and staff, the Town is back to full operations on both water and wastewater. A temporary bypass system was installed to bypass the three broken aerial crossings. Virginia Risk Sharing Association came to inspect the damage from Hurricane Helene and determine what is covered by the Virginia Risk Sharing Association and what will not be covered. It was determined that all damage that occurred within the flood zones will not be covered by Virginia Risk Sharing Association. The security fence at Widener Springs is an exception due to being deemed wind damage.

- Christmas Bonus – Every year Council is gracious enough to give the Town's employees a $400 Christmas Bonus. The Christmas Bonuses are included in the Town's Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Mrs. Eller requested the Council to authorize the Christmas Bonuses to be administered during the next payroll cycle. Mayor Heninger stated the past few years Council has gifted the employees a $25.00 Food City gift card for Thanksgiving and a $50.00 Food City gift card for Christmas, and he would like to see this continue.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council approves the Employee Christmas Bonus, $25 Food City Gift Card for Thanksgiving and $50 Food City Gift Card for Christmas. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Celebrity Bagging – The United Way Celebrity Bagging is scheduled for Tuesday, November 26, 2024, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Food City in Chilhowie. It was requested for the Town will match any contribution up to $50.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council approves the Town to match each donation up to $50 . The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Smyth County Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner - The Smyth County Chamber of Commerce is hosting their Annual Dinner on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Holston Hills Country Club.

- Update on Police Department Vacancy – The Police Department received eleven applicants for the open Police Officer position. The Police Department is moving forward with seven candidates and will perform a physical training test on Saturday, November 23, 2024. Interviews for the candidates will be held a week after the physical training test and Chief Moss invites any Council member to attend.

- Planning Commission Upcoming Vacancies – There are two members of the Planning Commission that their four-year term is expiring in December 2024. Mrs. Eller spoke with Mr. David Blevins and Mrs. Donna Blevins, and both requested to be reappointed for another four-year term to serve on the Planning Commission. Mr. Jim Paine is moving outside the Town limits and is resigning from the Planning Commission, leaving a vacant seat. Council members were encouraged to serve on the Planning Commission.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council reappoints Mr. David Blevins and Mrs. Donna Blevins to an additional four year term to serve on the Planning Commission. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Revision of Personnel Rules and Regulations – Mr. Martin and Mrs. Eller have found several items in the current Personnel Rules and Regulations Handbook that need to be updated and/or amended. Mr. Martin is requesting to refer this matter to the Finance and Personnel Committee on Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council refer this matter to the Finance and Personnel Committee on Tuesday, November 19, 2024. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Department Reports:

Mr. Martin, Town Manager, reviewed the Town Manager's Report. The Wellspring Grant Funding Opportunity offers funding through the HOPE grant and IMPACT grant programs. If Council has any ideas for projects for the Town to pursue, to inform Mr. Martin so he can develop a plan to move forward.

The Town held the Veterans Day Ceremony on Monday, November 11, 2024. Mr. Martin congratulated everyone on their re-election, and stated he looks forward to working with each Council person.

Wednesday, November 13, 2024, Mr. Martin and staff met with the Washington County Service Authority for the first time in over two years. Mr. Martin stated he would like to see the Town attend quarterly meetings with the Washington County Service Authority to build a strong relationship between both entities. At the request of Mayor Heninger, Mr. Martin contacted the USDA Wildlife Service Office in Christiansburg to inquire about possible solutions to deter black buzzards that roost in certain areas of the Town. Mr. Chad Fox, USDA Wildlife Service, provided a couple ideas to help deter the birds.

Mrs. Felicia Eller, Clerk/Treasurer, reported the Town's Christmas Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, December 8, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the Old High School. Mrs. Eller discussed the account balances with Council.

Mr. David Haynes, Fire and EMS Chief, reported the Fire Department has a vacant position and is currently going through the process of hiring the right candidate.

Andrew Moss, Police Chief, requested the Town to match each donation up to $50 for each donation made during the No Shave November. The money raised during No Shave November will go to the Santa's Elves, Shop with a Hero event.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council approves the Town to match each donation up to $50 for Santa's Elves. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Mr. Stephen Fields, Special Events/Recreation, thanked Mrs. Stephanie Porter-Nichoals, Smyth County News and Messenger, for the Veteran's Day Celebration article published in the Smyth County News and Messenger. On Saturday, December 7, 2024, the Town will host its Christmas Parade at 11 a.m., Christmas Bazaar at the Old High School from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the Christmas Tree Lighting at 6:30 p.m. The Grinch will be at the Farmer's Market for photos from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Chilhowie Jazz Band will perform at the Chilhowie Public Library at 7 p.m.

Motion by P.J. Wolfe, second by Bob Jeter Council adjourns this meeting at 8:27 p.m. The motion was approved with the following recorded vote:

Bill Clear	Absent	Shannon Donnelly	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Bob Jeter	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

_____Mayor
Gary L. Heninger

_____Clerk
Felicia Eller, CMC