

Mayor

Doris Underwood

Commissioners

Christopher Carlson

Edward Lowery Jr.

Daniel McColl

Tony McVickers

Benjamin Mahaffey

Attorney

Sarah Price



Town Clerk/Finance Officer

Raymie Day

Utility Clerk

Lana Penfield

Interim Chief of Police

John Micheals

Public Works Director

Joe Penfield

Code Enforcement Officer

Tina Odom

TOWNHALL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES August 19th, 2025

The following board members were present at the workshop

Mayor Underwood

Commissioner McColl

Commissioner Mahaffey

Commissioner Carlson

Commissioner Lowrey

The following members of the board were not present at the workshop

Commissioner McVickers

Mayor Underwood called the meeting to order at 18:29

Commissioner McColl lead the invocation

Overview

- Chief of Police hiring process update: 23 applicants reviewed, interviews scheduled for early September.
- Interview process: 3–6 candidates to be interviewed, panel and dates to be finalized.
- Pay plan for new chief: options discussed, consensus on a \$2,000 annual step increase.
- Sewer line project: DOT requirements, cost escalations, and grant cycles discussed.
- Community event proposal: food truck festival logistics, fees, and insurance requirements debated.
- Alcohol sales in town: board discusses petition process, community input, and legal thresholds.
- Retirement funds transfer.

Chief of Police Hiring Process: Applicants, Interviews, and Pay Plan

- Mr. Branden of DV8 has reviewed 23 applicants for the chief position as of today.
- Interview board members and interview dates (between September 2–5) need to be finalized.
- Board has decided that Commissioner Lowery, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Mahaffey and Mayor Underwood will be the hiring board and interview dates will be Sept 4th and Sept 5th, 2025. Interviews will start at 0900.

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- Two pay plan options provided: group to select preferred option.
 - Board decides the even number increases option (\$2000 step) over the % increase option for the hiring of the new chief.
 - Interview process will include 18 questions; candidates will be graded on responses, personality, and qualifications.
 - Raymie has been designated as the Hiring Manager for the new candidate.
 - Hiring manager will send out interview letters/emails/messages to all the candidates.
 - Hiring Manager will handle the paperwork and certification transfer with the assistance of a DV8 consultant.

Sewer Line Project: DOT Requirements, Costs, and Timeline

- Mr. Honeycutt states the sewer line project requires encroachment approval for 3-4 main areas within DOT right-of-way.
- South Fayetteville section: new sewer line would be placed 3-4 feet further into road; limited placement options due to road, curb, power poles, and right-of-way constraints.
- DOT requires active shoring (e.g., sheet piling, soil nails) for deep trench excavation, increasing costs up to triple for affected sections.
- Board expresses concern about project delays due to back-and-forth with DOT on plan details, especially regarding pavement encroachment and hardship justifications.
- Mr. Penfield states his concerns that the project will not be completed in time (December 2026) to use the ARPA funds.
- Mr. Penfield mentions the option of fixing the issues with the sewer vs replacing it all.
- Mr. Honeycutt states the target construction start by end of year; completion by end of next year remains plausible.
- Well 4 is up and running and seems to be functioning well.
- Mr. Penfield raised concern that the well project will also not be started in time to use the ARPA funds as this project has not been to bid or broken ground.

Community Event Proposal: Food Truck Festival Logistics and Fees

- Catering business owner proposed a fall community event with food trucks and vendors in Parkton.
- Uncertainty exists regarding rental fees, insurance coverage, and property ownership for event location.
- Standard vendor fees discussed: \$50 per food truck, \$25 per vendor; options include flat land lease or per-vendor fee.
- Town insurance currently covers only July 4th and Trunk or Treat events; additional insurance or certificates could be required for new events.
- Event approval will depend on the property ownership confirmation, insurance arrangements, and submission of a detailed event proposal.

Alcohol Sales in Town: Petition, Board Views, and Community Input

- Commissioner Lowrey states alcohol sales have not previously been discussed by the board, and it is a topic frequently brought up by citizens.
- Commissioner Carlson raises concerns about selling alcohol due to lack of a police presence.
- It was stated that liquor tax revenue alone in Hope Mills was \$67,000 and that bringing even a small portion of income to the town will help increase revenue for other projects.
- Petition requires 35% of 403 registered voters (142 signatures) to bring issue to vote in November or the board can also pass the resolution to put it on the ballot, but the board must be unanimous. Commissioner Carlson states the vote will never be a possibility as he will never vote for it.
- Mrs. Odom introduces the option to hold a public hearing for the citizens to speak on the decision to buy alcohol in town.

Property Acquisition and Building Use Discussion

- Mayor Underwood brought up the option to purchase the Ruritan property that is currently sitting vacant.
- Mayor Underwood requested Mrs. Odom (Code Enforcement) conduct research on the building to find out the value for a purchase offer.
- Commissioner Carlson asked what the intent would be for the building.
- Suggested use: community center with meal services and rental income.
- Building requires significant repairs, including roof and unfinished interior. Decision on purchase depends on repair costs and comparison with other property options.
- Commissioner McColl stated that because we have other offers currently out it would be in the town's best interest to wait for any other offers to purchase until the town receives word on the offer to purchase the maintenance building.

Maintenance Building Update/EMS building Purchase

- Mrs. Odom stated that the offer to purchase the maintenance building fell right before the county's last meeting.
- No decisions about purchasing other buildings or breaking ground on a new building will be made until the county has its next meeting in September.

Retirement

- Request was made for official approval to transfer funds for payment.
- Transfer involves moving money from main high yield account and water/sewer high yield account to cover retirement employee expenses.
- The board states the need to go into a closed meeting for HR purposes.

Adjournment

- Mayor Underwood requested adjournment. Commissioner Carlson made a motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Mahaffey seconded the motion. All in favor and board moved into closed session at 20:31.