

Town Of Iron Gate
P.O. Box 199
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Iron Gate, VA 24448
Phone: (540) 862-0770

The Iron Gate Town Council Meeting was held December 26th, 2024 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall

Councilperson Reynolds gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was then cited.

The meeting officially began at 7:01 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Richard Erskine, Councilperson Jennifer Tyree, Councilperson Kawahna Persinger, Councilperson Brandon Marshall, Councilperson G.W. Reynolds, and Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior. Absent is Councilperson Neil Hardesty. In attendance for the community are, Jimmy Jeffries, and Paul and Pamela Handwerk, Norvella Burrell, and Michael Prior. Also present, Jennifer Bailey of the Alleghany Journal, Christopher Mentz from the Virginian Review, and Deputy Todd Ailstock.

Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Erskine stated he needs a motion to approve the minutes from the November Council Meeting. change the agenda, on a utility adjustment under new business. A motion was made by Councilperson Marshall, and seconded by Councilperson Tyree. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”

Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”

Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”

Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously to change the approve the minutes.

Receipts and Disbursements:

Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to approve the Receipts and Disbursements. A motion was given by Councilperson Persinger, and seconded by Councilperson Marshall. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”
Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Erskine stated there was a water leak on Christmas day that was taken care of by Public Works. Councilperson Tyree asked about the leak. Mayor Erskine stated it was at The Rusty Hinge. Mayor Erskine moved on to Committee Reports.

Committee Reports:

Mayor Erskine asked if there were any committee reports and there were none.

Public Comments:

Mayor Erskine asked if there were any Public Comments. Ashley said there were none. Mayor Erskine moved on to Old Business.

Old Business:

Mayor Erskine asked if Councilperson Persinger had the letter. Councilperson Persinger stated that the Work Session/Council Meeting on December 16th was invalid. Councilperson Persinger then read a letter from Jim Guynn Jr, who is an attorney from Roanoke, Va.

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

It was a pleasure to meet with you on November 27th. On behalf of our firm, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss your legal needs.

Following up on our conversation, our firm would be honored to serve as town attorney for the Town of Iron Gate... As we discussed our fees are based on time spent and bill at the rate of \$200.00 per hour. It is my understanding that your do not anticipate that one of our firm members will be required to attend town council meetings but it is understood that we bill our time on a portal basis. That is, we bill at our hourly rate for travel time to and from Iron Gate from our offices in Salem. We bill expenses at cost. For example, we bill automotive travel at the IRS rate per mile. We generally do not bill items that we consider overhead, such as computer aided legal research, normal postage, long distance telephone, fax, etc. However, to the extent we advance or extend funds on behalf of the Town such as filing fees, court reporter fees, etc. we will bill those on a straight pass through basis.

We understand that we will serve at the will of council. At any time, council may determine to terminate our services and be responsible for payment of fees to that point. Likewise, our firm has the option to resign as town attorney at any time with appropriate notice consistent with our ethical obligations.

In our experience as local government attorneys, we have found that having one point of contact at the local government serves that best interested of the client and the firm. That is, it is better for the Town and our firm for one person to be responsible for giving us assignments or requesting us to do legal work. This way you can keep track of the volume of legal work and will not be surprised by our monthly bill. Please let us know who will be our point of contact.

We look forward to working with you. Please sign a copy of this letter in the space provided below and return it to us to signify your agreement with our terms.

Very truly yours,

Guynn Waddell, P.C.

Mayor Erskine said that Councilperson Persinger will read her letter of resignation from council to fulfill her role as Mayor beginning January 1st, 2025. Councilperson Persinger stated this is the letter I wrote on December 16th, 2024.

Dear Mayor, Council Members and Residents:

This letter is being written to notify you that I will be tendering my resignation as a councilmember effective Tuesday December 31st, 2024 at 11:59pm.

This is necessary as I will be assuming the duties of the Mayor of Iron Gate on January 1st, 2025 for a two year term.

I look forward to functioning in this capacity and serving the residents of Iron Gate.

Sincerely,

Kawahna Persinger

Mayor Erskine moved on to New Business.

New Business:

Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to accept Jim Guynn and his law office as our legal counsel. A motion was given by Councilperson Marshall, and seconded by Councilperson Persinger. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”

Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”

Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”

Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Mayor Erskine presented a utility adjustment to council. Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to adjust the sewer portion on the utility bill. A motion was given by Councilperson Marshall, and seconded by Councilperson Reynolds. Mayor Craig asked if there were any comments, questions, or concerns, there were none. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”
Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to accept a utility payment plan. A motion was given by Councilperson Marshall, and seconded by Councilperson Tyree. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”
Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to approve the resignation of Councilperson Persinger as of December 31st, 2024. A motion was made by Councilperson Reynolds, and seconded by Councilperson Marshall. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”
Councilperson Persinger – “Abstain”
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to approve moving the work session in January from the 20th, to the 13th due to the Martin Luther King Jr Holiday. A motion was made by Councilperson Persinger, and seconded by Councilperson Tyree. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”
Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Mayor Erskine asked if there were any letters of interest for the council seat. Councilperson Persinger said Mrs. Norvella Burrell turned one in. Councilperson Persinger added she was informed an ad had to be ran in the paper before reading the letter of interest at tonight's meeting. Council can read all of them at the same time at the next work session. Mayor Erskine mentioned council does have a new member and they are out sick tonight. Councilperson Persinger said Neil Hardesty was court appointed to fill Debbie Harris' council seat. Mayor Erskine asked if that is a two-year term. Councilperson Persinger said he will fill the seat until the election in November of 2025, where Iron Gate will need to have a special election. If Neil is interested, we will need to add him to the ballot and if he is elected, he will continue for the four-year term.

Councilperson Persinger said that council spoke regarding Mr. Handwerk's building and upon reviewing the paperwork Brenda Lindsay said to leave it as is. Mr. Handwerk said he appreciates it. He heard a rumor that he was going to do diesel repair and he doesn't know anything about that kind of work. Councilperson Persinger said that particular area where the house is, is not zoned for business. If you decided further down the road you want to open a business you will need to come to council and get a license. Mr. Handwerk said he doesn't plan on running a business out of his home.

Mayor Erskine said the next council meeting will be January 30th, 2025.

Mayor Erskine asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Marshall, and seconded by Councilperson Reynolds. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – "Yes"

Councilperson Persinger – "Yes"

Councilperson Reynolds – "Yes"

Councilperson Marshall – "Yes"

The motion carried unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Richard Erskine, Mayor

Ashley C Prior, Clerk