

**Town Of Iron Gate**  
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The Iron Gate Town Council Meeting was held October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall

Vice Mayor Erskine gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was then cited.

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

**Present:**

Mayor Gary Craig, Vice Mayor Richard Erskine, Councilperson Jennifer Tyree, Councilperson Kawahna Persinger, Councilperson Brandon Marshall, Councilperson G.W. Reynolds, and Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior. In attendance for the community are, Michael Jeffries, Jimmy Jeffries, and Paul and Pamela Handwerk, Paul and Joyce Anderson, Michael Prior, Brenda Lindsay, and Attorney Jim Guynn. Also present, Jennifer Bailey of the Alleghany Journal, David Crosier of the Bath County Recorder, Joe Dashiell of WDBJ 7, and Deputy Todd Ailstock.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mayor Craig stated he needs a motion to add to the agenda, a closed session under legal 2.2-3711 Item 7. at the end of the meeting. A motion was made by Vice Mayor Erskine, and seconded by Councilperson Reynolds. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”  
Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”  
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”  
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”  
Vice Mayor Erskine – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously to add a closed session at the end of the meeting. Mayor Craig stated that when council goes into closed session, they will not be voting on anything, there is nothing to discuss after the closed session tonight, and there will be some things that come available at a later date.

Mayor Craig said for approval of the minutes on the regular council meeting minutes, on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, we did not have enough for quorum for a work session on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Craig said that everyone has received their packets, and asked if anyone has any comments, questions, or concerns. Councilperson Persinger said she came down yesterday and mentioned to Ashley that after the Debbie Harris’ letter where she resigned from her position, the first line of the paragraph underneath says

councilperson Persinger asks for her resignation. Councilperson Persinger said I did not ask for her resignation, what I asked for was when did she turn in her resignation. I mentioned that to Ashley and she corrected it to her copy, and she didn't send it out to anyone else, I wanted to let everyone know that I didn't say that. Mayor Craig said she mentioned that earlier to me too, and that is what was said. She asked when the resignation was given, and then I think we asked when her resignation went into effect, which would have been that night after we voted. Everyone can make their corrections to their packets and Ashley you have made the corrections to the others. Town clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior stated yes. Mayor Craig asked anyone had any other questions, comments, concerns, or changes. Hearing none, Mayor Craig asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was made by Councilperson Tyree and seconded by Vice Mayor Erskine. Mayor Craig said all of those in favor signify by saying "Aye." Hearing no opposition, motion carries to approve the minutes.

### **Receipts and Disbursements:**

Mayor Craig stated that council has received the receipts and disbursements in their packets. Mayor Craig asked if there were any other comments, questions, or concerns, there were none. Mayor Craig asked to get an approval of the Receipts and Disbursements. Motion was made by Councilperson Persinger and seconded by Councilperson Marshall. Mayor Craig said all of those in favor signify by saying "Aye." Hearing no opposition, motion carries to approve receipts and disbursements.

Mayor Craig stated everyone has seen the payment of the bills. Mayor Craig then asked if there were any questions, comments, or concerns on payment of the bills. Hearing none, Mayor Craig then asked for a motion to pay the bills as money becomes available. A motion was given by Vice Mayor Erskine, and seconded by Councilperson Reynolds. Mayor Craig said all of those in favor signify by saying "Aye." Hearing no opposition, motion is approved to pay the bills as money becomes available Ashley.

### **Mayor's Report:**

Mayor Craig said the town crew have been getting things taken care of for the winter, and have taken care of the last of the grass cutting. Then they will be moving on to leaf reduction as it gathers. Mayor Craig said with winter coming in, it is getting darker earlier so please watch out for the kids while you are driving after dark. Also tomorrow is Halloween and a lot of kids will be out, if you have to be out driving, please make sure you keep an eye out for them. Mayor Craig asked Deputy Todd Ailstock if he would out tomorrow evening. Deputy Ailstock said he is scheduled to work on the road for Halloween, and that he would try to make a trip through the town from time to time, but he has other areas that he has been assigned to. Mayor Craig stated he understands that Deputy Ailstock will be around as he can and to please use caution and watch for the kids. If anyone sees anything out of the way please give the sheriff's department a call. Mayor Craig said that is all I have for the mayor's report. Councilperson Tyree said as far as winterizing make sure they winterize the bathrooms, and concession stand at the park, those are usually the problem areas. Mayor Craig said we haven't done that yet; we are going to take the meter out. Then we will blow the lines out from the inside, and next year put the meter back because we had a good leak last year. Councilperson Persinger asked if the new lawn mower also need to be winterized. Mayor Craig said no it doesn't, it is in the shed. Vice Mayor Erskine asked if the River Park is closed. Mayor

Craig said yes, the River Park is closed and locked. Mayor Craig asked if anyone has any comments, questions, or concerns. Hearing none, Mayor Craig moved on to the next Public Comment.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

### **Public Comments:**

Mayor Craig asked Ashley if there were any Public Comments. Ashley stated no. Mayor Craig asked if anyone has any comments, questions, or concerns. Hearing none, Mayor Craig moved on to the next Public Comment.

### **Old Business:**

Mayor Craig said the water project award bid meeting was held at Town Hall. Mayor Craig apologized to Councilperson Persinger for not taking her call during the meeting when she phoned in. Mayor Craig stated he did not put Councilperson Persinger off on purpose. Councilperson Tyree stated I can attest to that. Mayor Craig said Councilperson Tyree was there and some of the numbers were unbelievable. Councilperson Persinger stated they probably wanted all of the money. Mayor Craig said pretty much, it's either they wanted all the money, or they didn't have time to do the job and wanted to outbid themselves. However, the job did get awarded to Hammond and Mitchel. During the first week of November, we will be getting together with them again to sign the paperwork for them to get started. Councilperson Persinger asked how much that bid was. Mayor Craig said it is five hundred and some thousand. There is a list and we will get each council member one. Mayor Craig asked Ashley if she has the amount on her folder in the office. Councilperson Persinger said if they will be starting in November, did they give us a completion date. Mayor Craig said there is not an actual completion date, there is a date they have to be completed by. Councilperson Persinger asked what that date is. Mayor Craig said he would need to look at the bid and get back with you later. Councilperson Persinger said was anything discussed about possibly being able to put some of that new piping across the tracks on Tannery Road. Mayor Craig said there was not enough money for that. It was under the addendum, and under that there was not enough to do other projects. Councilperson Marshall said that was a bypass for in case something happened. Mayor Craig said right. Mayor Craig then received the paper from Ashley and began reading. The first bid opened was Hammond and Mitchel, the base bid was 528,175.40, the added of alternate 1, which is to cross the tracks with the loop system, was 378,186.00, the added of alternate 2, which is to upgrade the meters and the meter read system, was 349,356.00. Councilperson Persinger asked Mayor Craig to repeat the last amount. Mayor Craig said that Ashley will make a copy for you in just a moment too. The second bid opened was A.R. Coffee, the base bid is 833,270.00, the added of alternate 1, to cross the tracks with the loop system is 484,150.00, and the meter read system came in at 452,350.00. The third bid was Aaron Figball, the base bid is 870,532.00, the loop system for across the tracks was 304,450.00, alternate 2 was the meter read system of 294,499.00. Councilperson Persinger said as far as the meter reading system is concerned is that the one that has been discussed to where it is here in the office. Mayor Craig said yes,

the guys will have a laptop and be able to go around and it will read the meters. Councilperson Persinger asked if that is something that can be put on the back burner, and possibly do the piping or the switchover on Tannery Road. Mayor Craig said we don't have enough to do the switchover to Tannery Road. Councilperson Persinger said even if we leave out the meter reads. Mayor Craig said the alternate, with those base prices, we don't have enough money to do either of the alternates. Councilperson Marshall said once they bid on it, then you have to stick to it. Mayor Craig said right now we are not doing across the river or the meter reads right now. The only way we will be able to do the meter reads is if we can do a vendor bid and our guys put the meters in themselves. Mayor Craig said the town is still seeking council seats. We had no interest shown for the vacant council seat for Councilperson Harris, and we are still seeking both. Mayor Craig then asked if there were any comments, questions, or concerns. There were none.

### **New Business:**

Mayor Craig spoke on the number of tickets that were written between August 18<sup>th</sup> through September 11<sup>th</sup> and the hours that Deputy Ailstock worked during that time. Mayor Craig asked Deputy Ailstock if some of those have went to court. Deputy Ailstock said yes, we went to court October 21<sup>st</sup>, I think the court dismissed or took under advisement for three of those cases, the rest either paid or went to court and pled guilty that day. So far for the month of October, as of today, I have issued thirty-six summonses for the month. I had some from September 15<sup>th</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup> but I do not have those with me. The majority of them are speeding tickets, I had a couple for no driver's license, and I had one reckless driving ticket where a gentleman came through running fifty-nine, the majority of the tickets were between forty-eight to fifty. Mayor Craig said Deputy Ailstock is writing the tickets and then we are at the mercy of the court. Councilperson Persinger asked if Deputy Ailstock has been able to catch anyone Commerce Ave or are you sitting on 220. Deputy Ailstock said I sit on 220, I sit on Commerce from time to time, but I have not had anyone come through speeding for the time I am there. There are one or two that speed on that road and we try to catch them however, when they come through it is very random. Councilperson Persinger thanked Deputy Ailstock.

Mayor Craig said the town has several refunds coming back from the department of taxation. That is where Ashley tried to get caught up when she was first hired and actually over paid a little. Councilperson Tyree said speaking of taxes. Mayor Craig said taxes are at the printer, I personally called the other day and was told they will be here this week. No offense, but I laughed at Ashley because we were told that last week. They are supposedly at the printers, once the printers get them done, the printer is mailing directly to us. Hopefully they will be here in the next day or so, if not it will be next week. Councilperson Tyree said I haven't gotten mine from the county either. Mayor Craig said that is what I'm saying, we get ours from the county. Councilperson Tyree said right, and it's still going to be due in December, correct. Councilperson Persinger said December 5<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Craig said yep, unfortunately. Mayor Craig then asked if there were any comments, questions, or concerns. Mayor Craig thanked everyone for coming out tonight. Councilperson Tyree asked if council needs to vote to accept the bid for Hammond and Mitchel. Mayor Craig said no, under law it is the lowest qualified licensed contractor. Mayor Craig said remember Tuesday November 5<sup>th</sup> is election day and I encourage everyone to come out and vote. Also, time changes Sunday night so you will fall back and get a little more rest. Mayor Craig asked if anyone had any other comments, questions, or concerns. Councilperson Persinger said yes, we need to go ahead and set the meetings. Mayor Craig said yes. Councilperson Persinger said we might as well go ahead and set them for the rest of year so everyone is on the same page. Mayor Craig said Work Session will be November 18<sup>th</sup>, and Council Meeting falls on Thanksgiving Day. If everyone is okay with it, we can move it back a day to November 27<sup>th</sup>. Councilperson Persinger asked if anyone on council is going out of town for

Thanksgiving. Hearing everyone will be in town, Council Meeting was moved to November 27<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Craig said if everyone wants to go ahead and set December's, the Work Session will be on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Councilperson Persinger said we usually don't have a meeting after that, because December 16<sup>th</sup> is usually when we have the Town's Christmas party. Mayor Craig said we don't. Well do we have it on the weekday or the weekend. Councilperson Persinger said no, we have it that week day. Mayor Craig said that's on a Monday December 16<sup>th</sup>. Councilperson Persinger said it is the Fire Department that has theirs on the weekend. Mayor Craig said yes, we have our on the December 21<sup>st</sup>. We can have it on December 16<sup>th</sup> if everyone is good with that. Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior asked if that is the Work Session. Mayor Craig said that is for both. Councilperson Persinger said that is usually held down at the Fire Department where the Town has their Christmas party. Mayor Craig said I guess being that we are under new business we should probably discuss that real quick. Councilperson Marshall asked if we should wait until after Thanksgiving. Mayor Craig said no we can go ahead and get it out of the way because if we were going to have it then we need to book something, and I need approval to do it. Councilperson Persinger said the first question would be does the town have the funds for that. Mayor Craig said I don't know if we have the money for it or not. I don't know how much it is going to cost. Councilperson Persinger said maybe we ought to table that and look at some finances before. Mayor Craig said or we can just have a meeting and be done. Councilperson Persinger said it's what council wants to do. Vice Mayor Erskine said are we going to give the employee's any bonus. Mayor Craig said that needs to be discussed too, it's always been a tradition. Councilperson Persinger said yes. Mayor Craig said I know it was in the budget, Wendy said she put it in the budget. Councilperson Marshall asked for the guys. Mayor Craig said no, for everything. Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior said if you all want a Christmas dinner, I can make it happen. Councilperson Persinger said maybe you can find out how much was set aside in the budget for that Christmas dinner, and send everyone an email or give everyone on council a call and let us know. If we wait to late and we decide to have one the caterer's might already be taken. So, if you can get on that this week and let us know. Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior said I will get on that tomorrow. Councilperson Persinger said that will work, is that okay with the mayor. Mayor Craig said absolutely. Mayor Craig then asked if there was anything else. Councilperson Tyree said the biggest question she has been asked is when is our Christmas Parade. Mayor Craig said the Christmas Parade has been out. We don't have a Christmas Parade; the Fire Department has a Christmas Parade. It is the same as every year and is the second Saturday of December, line up is at 11am on Tannery Road, and the Parade starts at noon. The Parade is scheduled for Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Mayor Craig asked for a motion to go into closed session under legal VA Code 2.2-3711 Item 7. A motion was made by Vice Mayor Erskine, and seconded by Councilperson Marshall. 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”

Vice Mayor Erskine – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously. We are entering closed session, and when we enter back into regular session, we will swear that we discussed nothing but the legal matter at hand, and we will make a motion to adjourn.

Mayor Craig states the time is 8:30 pm and I would like to get on record that we discussed nothing but legal matters, under legal VA Code 2.2-3711 Item 7. A motion was made by Vice Mayor Erskine, and seconded by Councilperson Marshall. A roll call vote was taken.

Councilperson Tyree – “Yes”  
Councilperson Persinger – “Yes”  
Councilperson Reynolds – “Yes”  
Councilperson Marshall – “Yes”  
Vice Mayor Erskine – “Yes”

The motion carries unanimously.

Motion to adjourn was made by Vice Mayor Erskine and seconded by Councilperson Persinger. Mayor Craig said all those in favor signify by saying aye. The motion carried unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

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Gary A Craig, Mayor

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Ashley C Prior, Clerk