

TOWN OF IRON GATE
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The Iron Gate Town Council held a Work Session on July 15th, 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting officially began at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Councilperson Jennifer Tyree, Councilperson Debbie Harris, Councilperson Kawahna Persinger, Councilperson Brandon Marshall, Vice Mayor Richard Erskine, and Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior

Absent: G.W. Reynolds

In Attendance: Jimmy Jeffries

Mayor Craig spoke about the Public Works crew being on vacation last week. He (Mayor Craig) also approached council with speaking to Trey and giving him three months, (until October 15th), to get his license or he will be replaced. Councilperson Harris stated that Trey getting his license shortly after his employment with the town was part of the stipulation. Mayor Craig told town clerk/treasurer Ashley that he would get with her about drafting a

The Mayor said he wanted to make council aware that there were questions called into Clifton (to Wendy) asking why the Mayor had the dump trailer at his house. Mayor Craig stated that Wendy let Ashley know and she told those people to call Iron Gate for future inquiries. The Mayor also told town clerk/treasure Ashley Prior to add the \$30 fee for using the dump trailer to his water bill.

Mayor Craig and council spoke about the speeding in Iron Gate. Mayor Craig said that deputy Ailstock is about halfway through his time with the sheriff's office before he can come back, and he will be down her in August patrolling. Mayor Craig commented that the town will experience déjà vu when Deputy Ailstock is patrolling due to old town of Iron Gate police car that is sitting in his driveway.

Mayor Craig commented on golf cart driving in Iron Gate. Councilperson Tyree said it is legal. Mayor Craig stated that Virginia State Police states it is not legal. Mayor Craig then said it is legal in certain towns, i.e. Virginia Beach and they will need to have a special license, tag, and everything. Mayor Craig said he is looking into a side by side so the public works crew can have it for their work. Councilperson Marshall stated you still have to have a driver's license to drive a side by side. Mayor Craig agreed.

Mayor Craig mentioned that the Public Works crew hasn't been cutting grass due to everything dying. Mayor Craigs discussed the grass nuisance ordinance change regarding the \$30 fee charge to \$150 administrative fee for paperwork processing and certified mail. Mayor Craig went on discussing the council did not establish fees for the equipment. Mayor Craig stated he came up with and of course leaves it open for council to discuss. He went on to say if it's too much or too little the council can discuss and change. The fees will include; tractor (\$100/hour), mower (\$75/hour per mower), weed eater and/or chainsaw (\$50/hour), and the fuel (\$8 per gallon). Mayor Craig said that the Public Works guys will then turn their time into Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley along with what equipment was used and she will charge accordingly. Councilperson Persinger asked to clarify if the Public Works crew uses the tractor, if it will be \$100 until the project will be complete or just \$100 and hour. Mayor Craig then stated it would be \$100 per hour while the tractor is in use. Councilperson Persinger stated that the people need to take care of their own property. Mayor Craig then stated that when the \$150 fee was established, that was the point, and that these fees are not to make money off of people, but to make property owners take care of their own property. Mayor Craig then stated that there will be certain circumstances that will pop up where if someone has surgery or the elderly that just can't get out and do it, as long as they make an attempt to notify us and let us know what is going on, then we can always help find them someone who can take care of their grass before the Public Works crew has to go do it. Councilperson Persinger said she wasn't under the impression that the mowing fees had changed from \$30 to \$150. Mayor Craig then showed Councilperson Persinger the Ordinance. Councilperson Marshall commented that he feels the fuel fee should be included in all the fees. Mayor Craig stated he understands what he is saying and has thought about that, however you take the tractor and start cutting the grass and

it's tall and there is a brick on the ground. The mower runs over the brick and breaks the spindle on the tractor, the spindle for the John Deere is \$700. Councilperson Marshall stated that he doesn't think \$16 will cover the cost. Mayor Craig stated it won't but the point is to make the towns people take care of their own property. Councilperson Marshall agreed. Mayor Craig read from the Ordinance see attached copy of Ordinance that is highlighted. Councilperson Harris asked if it is all inclusive. Mayor Craig stated no and there is an "and," meaning we can contract someone to come and cut the grass and add an administrative fee of \$150. Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior asked if she would need to mail/post a notice letting the towns people know. Councilperson Marshall said it will be in the paper. Mayor Craig said it has already been in the papers, all this is doing is setting the fees for the equipment. Town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Prior asked if she needed to mail/post a notice about the fees. Mayor Craig said no because the ordinance has already been published. Councilperson Harris stated its public knowledge.

Jimmy Jeffries asked if the state is going to be held responsible to mow and weed eat their land. Mayor Craig stated we cannot sue the state, the town has already gone that route and we can complain but there is no legal standpoint we can take with them. Jimmy Jeffries stated that the town cannot make the lady across the street where all those vehicles are parked that has all that grass under them, who is responsible for that, the town. Mayor Craig stated from what he understands the town should be cutting it. Mr. Jeffries stated what is wrong with you people, we don't have anybody in this town here that can pay that kind of money. Ninety percent of the time, like that lady across the street has a problem, the neighbors come and mow it. Mayor Craig stated like he said a while ago is that there will be certain circumstances that come up and the reason all this was changed to begin with was when I first took over and came on council, previous Town Clerk/Treasurer Wendy Biggs, was billing 12 or 13 times a billing period. People would call town hall and ask Wendy what if they don't cut it, Wendy would say that the town would bill them \$30 and cut it and those people would say just send them a bill. This isn't to try and get money from people, this is a "this is what is going to happen if you don't take care of your property." Councilperson Persinger and Councilperson Harris stated they both agreed with Councilperson Marshall regarding taking off the fuel price of \$8. Councilperson Persinger stated that she refers to that as price gouging.

Council continued the grass ordinance discussion. After not being able to come to a decision, council decided to table the grass ordinance until the next work session.

Mayor Craig stated he was not at the last work session, but he did listen to it, and asked if council wanted to bring up the discussion regarding chicken fees. Council discussed chicken, (grower's permits), how many people in the town who has chickens, the yearly fee, and one-time fee. After not being able to come to a decision,

council decided to table the chicken fees, (grower's permit), discussion until the next work session.

Mayor Craig asked if council would like to talk about the cat and dog fees. Councilperson Tyree said that the town should drop the fees for the cats and dogs too, fair is fair.

Council discussed fees for cats and dogs, (Keeping Animals Ordinance), and after not being able to come to a decision, council decided to table the cats and dogs, (Keeping Animals Ordinance), discussion until the next work session.

Mayor Craig asked if council would like to put any of what they spoke about, (Grass Ordinance, Grower's Permit, Keeping Animals Ordinance), on the agenda to be voted on at the council meeting, or would they like to continue the discussion at a later date. Councilperson Persinger stated she would like to discuss it more. Councilperson Tyree asked if there was a rush to change them. Mayor Craig stated no. Councilperson Marshall said then they could take their time discussing. Mayor Craig told town Clerk/Treasurer Ashley to go ahead and send the letter to everyone stating that their chicken fees are due this year that way we can see who pays and who doesn't. If they don't pay then they are in violation.

Councilperson Tyree commented that she spoke with the former Clerk/Treasurer Jodi Watts regarding having some items that needed to be picked up and she asked what the pick-up fee was. The former Clerk/Treasurer told Councilperson Tyree that she wouldn't be charged due to the Iron Gate transfer station being closed after business hours. Mayor Craig then asked what she needed picked up and that the previous Clerk/Treasurer was correct, there is no fee for the Public Works guys to pick up a washer or scrap. The fee comes into play with the dump trailer. It's a \$30 fee per load on that trailer that is to be added to the water bill when you use it.

Having no further business to discuss, the Work Session concluded at 9:00pm. Council will adjourn again on July 25th, 2024 at 7:00pm.

Gary A Craig, Mayor

Ashley C Prior, Clerk