SHEPHERDSTOWN FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 02, 2026 – 6:30 P.M.
Town Hall – 104 North King Street

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call 6:30 pm**
2. **Attendance**
    a. Attendance: James Gatz (J Gatz), Marcy Bartlett (M Bartlett), Harriet Pearson (H Pearson)
    b. Staff/Guests Present: Maged Kirollos (M Kirollos)
    c. Errors noted in previous attendance logs: Correction requested regarding spelling of Harriet's name on past documentation.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
    a. August 5th Minutes: Missing from the meeting packet; to be presented at next month's meeting.
    b. August 20th Minutes: Reviewed with corrections:
        i. Correction of Harriet's name spelling.
        ii. Addition of explicit motion and second notation when returning from Executive Session.
    c. Action:
        i. Motion: Approved the August 20th meeting minutes subject to the noted corrections.
        ii. Outcome: Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Grant Application Reviews**
    a. Boots on the Ground Youth Leadership Academy (Multicultural Festival)
        i. Amount Requested: $2,500
        ii. Discussion Points:
            1. Application felt incomplete; lacks detailed project descriptions, event dates, and an expectation of external fundraising.
            2. Clarified that while the organization noted intent to offset costs via fundraising, the current request appears to ask the town to cover the majority of initial costs.
            3. Standard committee practice/expectation established: Applicants or staff representatives should be present at meetings to present applications and answer questions.
        iii. Action/Follow-up:
            1. Application deferred/tabled.
            2. Staff/Committee to gather more data, contact the applicant, and request representation at an upcoming meeting.
    b. Constitution Day Parade
        i. Amount Requested: Up to $1,000 (Estimated food expenses: $500; reimbursement for prior flyer/sign costs, postage, and petty expenditures).

ii. Discussion Points:
    1. Recognized as a positive civic engagement event based on successful participation in previous years.
    2. Noted that any unspent funds from the grant will be returned, as done previously.
iii. Action:
    1. Motion: M Bartlett Recommend approval of the $1,000 grant request. H Pearson Seconded.
    2. Outcome: Motion passed unanimously.
    3. Recommendation: Encourage applicant representation at the Town Council meeting.

5. Policy Discussion: Community Grant Program & Process Improvement

a. Evaluation Criteria: Noted that formal criteria exist and should be consistently applied to grant evaluations going forward.
b. Program Structure Issues Identified:
    i. Current process handles requests on a ad-hoc, month-by-month basis, forcing on-the-spot decisions in front of applicants.
    ii. Total available grant budget line-item pool remains unclear to committee members during evaluation turns.
c. Proposed Process Improvements:
    i. Establish set grant cycles (e.g., quarterly or open period calls for applications with fixed submission deadlines) rather than ongoing ad-hoc submissions.
    ii. Establish a clear total funding budget pool and maximum award caps per application.
    iii. Committee to evaluate all submitted applications in totality against set criteria before issuing recommendations to Town Council.

6. Review of Capital & Expenditure Requests

a. Water Board & Sanitary Sewer Board Capital Equipment Requests
    i. Items Requested: Excavator (Sewer), Lift/Platforms (Wastewater), and related capital equipment approved previously by the Water and Sanitary Sewer Boards.
    ii. Governance & Oversight Discussion:
        1. Questions raised over whether utility capital requests need full Finance Committee and Town Council approval or if Water/Sewer Board approvals suffice.
        2. Consensus reached that Town Council retains ultimate financial liability and oversight responsibility, requiring Council/Finance oversight across all town entities (Water, Sanitary Sewer, Parks, Tree Commission, etc.).
        3. Committee requested full budget documentation packets (Town Hall, Water, and Sanitary Sewer budgets) to properly evaluate cross-departmental debt levels and reserve balances.

iii. Follow-up: Consult town legal counsel (Hoy Shingleton) and administrative leadership regarding proper statutory governance procedures and approval workflows for utility budgets and rate increases.

b. Departmental Expenditure Oversight
    i. Discussion:
        1. Reviewed procedure for major budgeted capital purchases (e.g., garbage truck, police enforcement equipment).
        2. Clarified distinction between daily operational spend authority of department managers vs. major capital line-item execution.
        3. Highlighted the need for clearer transparency and formal project plan reviews before departments commit substantial funds across all town committees (e.g., Parks Commission, Tree Commission).

7. Next Steps & Action Items

a. Minutes: Correct August 20th minutes spelling/Executive Session entries; obtain and present missing August 5th minutes for the next meeting.
b. Boots on the Ground Grant: Staff/Committee to contact applicant for additional details and invite them to present at the next meeting.
c. Budget Documentation: Ensure members receive comprehensive budget documentation covering Town General Fund, Water, and Sanitary Sewer funds ahead of upcoming review sessions.
d. Legal Counsel Consultation: Clarify advisory vs. decision-making roles regarding Water/Sewer board approvals with the town attorney.

8. Motion to move into an executive session under West Virginia law (West Virginia Code § 6-9A-4),

a. M Bartlett moved for an executive session; H Pearson seconded.

9. Adjournment

a. H Pearson moved to adjourn; M Bartlett seconded.
b. Motion to adjourn was unanimous.
c. The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.