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## City Council approves code enforcement moratorium and more

By: MICHAEL BOWEN  
Publisher

A 30-day moratorium on Code Enforcement fines and water and sewer infrastructure improvement were two of many issues considered at the Monday meeting of the Washington City Council.

Councilman Maceo Mahoney proposed a temporary 30-day moratorium on code enforcement fines for the council's consideration. Mahoney stated that due to the rise in costs of building materials as well as inflation, the council should approve the moratorium. Councilman Larry Hill seconded the motion.

When the matter was discussed, councilman Charles Wagner opposed the motion stating that the council should let the municipal judge do the job he has been selected to do. City Administrator Jerry deBin added that the judge has been flexible with minimal penalties for code infractions. When the council voted on the motion, the moratorium was approved 4-1,

with councilmen Denard, Hill, Mahoney, and Nathaniel Cullars voting in favor. Wagner voted against, and Councilman Andy Anderson abstained.

Using the ARP funds from the federal government, the Council approved the replacement of two high service pumps and the de-chlorination systems in Washington water treatment facilities. While Washington's water and sewer infrastructure needs replacing due to its age, according to Marty Boyd, a representative of Carter and Sloope Engineering Firm, the de-chlorination systems and high service pumps are the two immediate needs that must be met.

Boyd explained that the EPD has changed its "permit to operate" requirements, now requiring that backwash water no longer contain any amount of chlorine. Boyd stated that the Washington water treatment facilities do not have systems that can meet the new EPD requirements. He added that fines could follow if the issue is not promptly addressed. The new system will be automated

and metered. The total cost of a de-chlorination system is approximately \$478,000, according to Boyd

Regarding the high service pumps, Boyd stated that the onset of "Project Sonny" is projected to require Washington's water infrastructure to supply 1 million gallons of water per day. With the current pumps aged 30 years old, Boyd explained that it could

be problematic to not replace the pumps as their estimated lifespan is approximately 45 years. The approximate cost of each high service pump is \$250,000 per pump.

Discussion on the matter revealed that the federal ARP funds would cover most of the projects' cost and enable the city to pay for whatever costs remain.

In other business:

• Mayor deGolian proposed that the council consider modifying the city's current method of representation. Each district would still have two representatives to elect, but deGolian's proposal would remove one district seat from both districts. That seat would be made a seat at-large. The proposal met resistance from Wagner, Mahoney,  
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## Council discovers Code Enforcement case against Larry Hill Calls special meeting to address

In response to the discovery of a municipal court case against Councilman Larry Hill, the Washington City Council has called a special meeting to reconsider the 30-day moratorium they approved Monday night, according to City Administrator Jerry deBin.

Councilman Hill, who owns a condemned house in Washington, has been ordered by the municipal court to demolish it, according to Code Enforcement Director Jimmy Toto. Hill has

also been given a suspended fine. The fine will come into effect if the house has not been demolished by April 12, the court's next session. The 30-day moratorium approved by the council Monday night, according to Toto, will suspend code enforcement fines through April 12. This would supposedly allow Councilman Hill to avoid paying the fine for an extra thirty days. Further, Councilman Hill was one of the councilmen who voted in favor of the moratorium, ac-

ording to Toto and deBin. According to City Administrator Jerry deBin, this is the reason the council will meet to reconsider the moratorium. According to deBin and Toto, Hill allegedly failed to disclose the municipal court situation to the council before voting on the moratorium and further failed to abstain from voting on the motion that benefits him personally. The council will meet March 21 at 6 p.m. at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center.

## County plans to resurface roads in 2023

Road resurfacing, tax release applications, and the weekend's GNCC series were addressed at Thursday's meeting of the County Commissioners.

Nine county roads and three city streets have been selected for inclusion in the regional TSPLOST project list, according to County Commission Chairman Sam Moore. Moore explained by law, the full length of the roads and streets selected for the regional TSPLOST project list must be resurfaced completely. He added that the regional TSPLOST projects are broken up into three "bands," which are distributed over ten years. According to Moore, what roads are missed in the first band will be included in one of the following bands of projects.

According to a list provided by the county at the request of this newspaper, the roads selected for the first round of the regional TSPLOST projects are: Amity Road, Bartram Trace Road, Metasville Road, Newtown Road, Oak Grove Road, Lundburg Road, Stoney Ridge Road, Aonia Road, and Delhi Road. Three city streets have also been included, which are: Liberty Street, Gordon Street, and Hospital Drive.

Additional roads will be selected for batch resurfacing and will be included in the first round of projects. Work is scheduled to begin in 2023 and be completed before 2027.

Moore added that the county will continue to pave with State LMIG funds, and their monthly TSPLOST funds, as normal.

Two tax release applications were considered by the Commission. The first application was from Twin Creeks Timber LLC. Richard Dubois from Twin Creeks Timber and Trey Kelly from Gillis Ag and Timber represented their respective organizations. County Attorney Charles LeGette explained that the two

companies were accidentally double billed for their timber sales, due to both companies submitting separate timber tax returns for the same transaction. After correcting the matter, the companies requested the County write off the second set of bills as they have already paid one set of bills. The release application was approved.

The second application was from Strother Welding. According to Strother, Strother Welding was sold to Anderson and Sons in 2020, which included the equipment and property of the business. Strother explained that he had intended to file a tax release application for 2021 sooner, but several delays resulted in his receiving a bill. He requested the bill be written off in his name. The application was approved by the commission.

EMS Director Blake Thompson reported an estimated 4,600 to 5,000 people visited Washington over the weekend for the GNCC Series races at Aonia Pass. He stated that his medical crews covered the event in case of an accident. He added that four-wheelers competed on Saturday and dirt bikes raced on Sunday.

Thompson also stated that he is looking get a new company on contract to assist with disaster relief as the present contract has expired. He explained that the contract is necessary to keep in compliance with regulations and continued to qualify for grants from FEMA.

Later in the meeting, Moore provided an update on legislation in Atlanta. He stated that there are a lot of bills that will affect the counties. Changes will include adjustments to weight limits on trucks, how timber taxes is collected, regulations for "sludge dumping," and making the position of County Coroner

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Command Sergeant Major Jenkins prepares to lead the tour as Councilman Nathaniel Cullars and other board the bus

## Sergeant Major Samuel Jenkins leads Washington black history tour

Submitted by:  
RICHARD CRABBE

Washington and Wilkes County have a proud history, but the focus of that history is sometimes very narrow. There are many places and stories that have faded away with time; now there's a growing movement to place more emphasis on forgotten contributions made by African-Americans since early times.

Leading a diverse ad hoc group, native son Samuel Edward Jenkins shared his memories of a

long-ago Washington and nearby areas in the county, pointing out significant locations in the black community.

Ed Jenkins is a highly-decorated (Silver and Bronze Stars, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal) 27-year Army veteran, who left Washington to enlist in 1951, and retired as a Command Sergeant Major in 1978, after serving in both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, and numerous duty stations around the world.

Jenkins was born in 1934 — during the Depression — in the

Hilliard Station area, just north of the current airport, but spent his youth on Lexington Road. On a two-hour bus tour, he pointed out many long-forgotten locations that once were part of a vibrant Black community in Washington, in a running narrative that included childhood memories from the '30s and '40s.

He guided the group to rural Hilliard Station Church, where his family worshipped for years, and where many of them are interred. Among others resting  
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