

OLDE TOWNE PEARISBURG

REGISTER

March 2015

One of Pearisburg's and Giles County's most recognizable features is our courthouse. And, as with all historic structures, it has changed a bit over time.

When Giles County was formed in 1806, the first court met in a log house belonging to George Pearis adjacent to his dwelling on the New River. Court met in this building until June 11, 1806, when the court ordered that the next meeting would be held in the house to be erected by James Aldridge on one of the public lots.

James Aldridge built a square, one story log house with a front door, but no windows. This building stood on Church and Main Streets, where the old Methodists Parsonage stood. The log building was used as a Courthouse until 1810, when a stone building was erected in the "Courthouse Square." The log building was still standing in 1832 and was called the "Old Courthouse."

In a Giles County deed book, an agreement was recorded on September 11, 1807 between Henry Smith and Sampson Smith of the County of Greenbrier, Virginia and Thomas Shannon, David French, David Johnston, Christian Snidow, and Isaac Snidow, Trustees of the Town of Pearisburg to build a courthouse on the public square of Giles County.

The walls were to be made of stone. The building was to be forty feet long and thirty feet wide and two stories high. The first story to be fourteen feet high from floor to joist; the second story to be ten feet in height from floor to joist.

The said courthouse was "to be finished in every respect in form and figure quantity and quality and as neat and complete a manner in every respect as

the courthouse in Greenbrier County in proportion to the size except a late amendment made to the Judge's seat by John Phillips." The outside painting was to be similar to that of the painting of the Greenbrier courthouse.

The courthouse was to cost seven hundred and fifty pounds to be paid in the following manner: one thousand dollars to be paid in nineteen months from this date (1807), deducting two hundred dollars in part payment of a certain amount of land and lots which had been sold to the Smiths provided the courthouse was raised and covered over; then seven hundred and fifty dollars to be paid in two years and four months, provided the courthouse is finished. This would be approximately three years and one month from September 11, 1807. The stone courthouse stood on the site of the Confederate monument, and faced Main Street. It was finished in 1810, and was used until after 1834. The courthouse was surrounded by a "lattice" and "closeboard fence."



In July, 1834, the county court of Giles appointed John H. Rutter, Phillip Vass and Theodore Jordan to examine the courthouse and report to the court on it's condition. The committee reported to the court that they had thoroughly examine the courthouse and found it to be in a bad state of decay and impossible to repair. The committee recommended that the courthouse had to be replaced, "as it could not stand longer than one year."

On September 29, 1834 the county court appointed Commissioners with full power to contract for the erection of a courthouse with a Clerk's office included. The court fixed the sum of the building construction to be at \$5,000. The new building was made of brick and on September 26, 1836, the court accepted the new building.

Throughout the years since then, additions have been made to the rear and the beautiful columns and front entrance were added facing Wenonah Avenue. The interior has also been remodeled on several occasions but nearly 180 years it still stands as a beacon and reminder of Giles County's past.

HISTORICAL ASIDE: "In 1900 I moved to Free State, an area located between Narrows and Pearisburg. It's name had been changed to Bluff City. The residents of Free State used a mountain spring for drinking water and for washing. At that time there was no electricity. The residents of Free State were mostly Black with one white family. There were no hard surfaced roads at this time and the means of traveling was by horse and buggy," --- Mary F. Perry

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

Volunteers for Communities –Holy Cross	February 28-March 6
Daylight Savings Time Begins	March 8
Pearisburg Town Council Meeting	March 10
GOOD FRIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE	April 3
Pearisburg Town Council Meeting	April 14
GRAND OPENING of the Pearisburg Community Market	May 2
Town Council Meeting	May 12
Pearisburg Community Market—live music event	May 21
Memorial Day	May 25
Pearisburg Town Council Meeting	June 9
Pearisburg Community Market—live music event	June 18
Pearisburg Festival in the Park	June 19-20
Giles County Relay for Life	June 26

PEARISBURG TODAY

Opening Soon! Pearisburg Community Market

The Town of Pearisburg will see the Grand Opening of the Pearisburg Community Market on May 2, 2015. The market will operate on the third Thursday of each month and every Saturday. Each open Market date will have a theme. There will be a National Strawberries and Cream Day, Blueberry Muffin Day, National Relaxation Day, Lemonade Day and many more. These will be posted online and Facebook and advertised in many local papers. Along with the themes, there will be demonstrations from artisans, children's activities, live music and much more. We hope to see everyone at the market!

If you are interested in becoming a vendor at the market please contact Ron Holdren at vaappleman@gamil.com, for food, beverage or plants. If you are an artisan interested in becoming a vendor contact Lynne Hazelwood at lynne.hazelwood@pearisburg.org.

There have been workshops for grower/producer and buyers held that were coordinated with the Virginia Cooperative Extension. These have had good attendance and we hope they will create many filled spaces within the market.

There are new partnerships being formed with Carilion for cooking classes in the Farm to Fork program. These classes would address issues such as diabetic, gluten free, and heart healthy cooking. We are excited to have these offerings. Classes are being scheduled now for the next quarter which will resume in April. Please follow us on Facebook and our website at www.pearisburg.org for complete information on upcoming classes.

The Community Market will offer many opportunities. We are currently seeking Market volunteers. To find out more about this please contact Lynne Hazelwood at 540-921-0340. A Volunteer application can be found on the town's website at www.pearisburg.org.



We have developed this logo and slogan that will be tied to the Farmer's Market and cooking classes.

Pearisburg Farm to Fork

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Growing Local, Cooking Fresh

This activity has been made possible as a result of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farmers Market Promotion Program grant awarded to the Town of Pearisburg Farm to Fork Program.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Pearisburg Recreation Department is currently being restructured. There will be no disruption of programs during this transition. Citizens will still be able to register their children on line for sports. Registration dates will also be posted on the town's website, Facebook pages along with being advertised in the Virginian Leader. For information about upcoming programs or to reserve a room at the Community Center please call 540-921-0340 or 540-921-1222. Ken Vittum, Town Manager, will be overseeing the department until further notice. Anyone wishing to coach or referee/umpire upcoming sports should contact Vittum.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Town of Pearisburg is now participating in the DMV Stop Collection Program. If a citizen has Delinquent Personal Property Taxes with the Town of Pearisburg, the citizen will be notified by the Town with a letter of opportunity to pay the taxes within 30 days. Failure to do so will result in a DMV Stop placed on the citizen's vehicle account through the DMV office. The citizen will not be able to obtain a current vehicle registration until the debt is satisfied with the Town of Pearisburg. Once the debt is paid in full, the DMV Stop will be removed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding Town taxes please call 921-1222.

TIPS FROM YOUR BUILDING INSPECTOR

Important tips to remember for green and sustainable living

- * Heating and cooling uses more energy dollars than any other system in the home. Approximately 43% of utility bills cover heating and cooling.
- * Close curtains and shades at night to keep warmth in and keep them open during the day.
- * Try new lighting control techniques like motion sensitive or time off switch lighting.
- * Replace ordinary light bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs. If every household replaced just one bulb America could save enough energy to light nearly three million homes.
- * Install a programmable thermostat to keep your home comfortable warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
- * Replacing windows can save between 7% and 24% of the household heating and air conditioning costs..
- * Choose energy efficient appliances. Look for ENERGY STAR certified products when replacing appliances. Choosing energy efficient products can save approximately \$400 a year and reduce greenhouse emissions.
- * Regularly change the filters in the heating and cooling systems of your home or office as dirty filters can cost up to \$5 extra per month, overwork equipment and result in dirtier indoor air. Consider purchasing electrostatic filters which are washable, long lasting, and provide cleaner air. Clean or change filters more often if smokers or pollution sources are present.

FESTIVAL IN THE PARK

Planning is well underway for the annual Festival in the Park. Save the dates and plan on joining friends and neighbors for a fun and exciting celebration on June 18-20. The Farmers' Market and summer concert series will start the weekend off on Thursday evening. Come out and shop the market and listen to some great music. Tentative plans are to move the annual Car Show to Thursday as well.

In Friday evening the music will occupy the main stage and food vendors will have lots of good eats. The carnival rides will be expanded and open that evening as well as all day Saturday. So be sure and come out for the evening and picnic on the front lawn.

The all day festival on Saturday will include music, food, games, rides, and crafts. From morning to late into the night there will be lots of things to do. Plans for another fireworks display are also in the works. You won't want to miss out on this years festivities.

We are also pleased to announce that the Virginia special display commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War will be at Festival on Saturday. The expanded tractor trailer contains displays on compact, home life, slavery, and other interesting components of the Civil War. Don't miss this one time only opportunity to take in this display. Look for more information on this display and the Festival as we get closer to June.

ART GRANTS

The town is partnering on two projects to bring public art to the community. The projects are being funded by a Local Challenge Grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Pearisburg is partnering with the Giles County Arts Council on these projects. At the February council meeting approval was given to move forward with sports related murals on the building behind the Community Center. This building used to house the alternative education program when the facility was a school. It is currently used for storage and will become a picnic shelter in the future. Tacie Jones and Melissa Zeppa were chosen to create this project from the four proposals submitted.

The Town is also partnering with Renew the New and the Giles Arts Council on a project to create sculptures using materials that have been removed from the New River as part of the annual clean up days. In February a total of eight artists submitted proposals to be evaluated. The Arts Council will review these and select up to four artists to complete works. The Town Council will review the selected designs in March and once approved work will begin. It is hoped that the works will be ready for display at Festival in June. Later the pieces will be permanently mounted in town.

Plans are also being finalized for a summer concert series to be held on Thursday evenings as part of the new farmers' market. The Arts Council will partner with the town in choosing bands and performers for this series. Citizens will be encouraged to attend the market and concert and enjoy a picnics on the lawn of the community center.

The Pearisburg Art in Public Places projects were made possible by Local Government Challenge Grants awarded by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and matching funds contributed by the Town of Pearisburg.

Mayor's Corner

2015 is shaping up to be an eventful year. I was so pleased with the success of the Christmas celebration in town. It was wonderful to see all the trees and decorations. I especially thank all the businesses that stayed open to help make the Friday Christmas Stroll successful. If you missed it, plan to be included this coming year.

We will see the opening of the Pearisburg Farmers' Market in May. Along with the Farm to Fork classes and other plans coming together, I think this will be a great new shopping opportunity for everyone. We are planning music and other entertainment for the Market. Be sure to watch for the grand opening.

Although elections are not until November the petitions are available now and must be turned in to the Election Commissioner in early June. There are three council seats that will be on the ballot as well as many Giles County elected positions. If you are 18 years old, be sure to register to vote.

Council looks forward to the opportunities and challenges this year and will work hard to make Pearisburg a better place to live and work. If you have suggestions or comments please let me know.

Robert L. Dickerson

mayor@pearisburg.org

Community Center Repairs

Town council is moving forward with removal of asbestos from under the building. This work will include removal of two boilers that have asbestos insulation around them. The asbestos has prevented access to areas where plumbing needs to be repaired and limited ability of town personnel to make needed repairs. Drewco, Inc. has been awarded the abatement contract and will perform the work in March.

Once the asbestos is removed the broken pipes will be repaired and heat restored to the classroom areas of the building. During the work the entire building will be closed and no one will be admitted to any part of the building. It is anticipated that the building will be reopened around April 1.

Other work on the building may be phased in over time. The full cost of upgrades exceeded \$2 million and council felt that this exceeded the town's capacity at the present time to acquire additional debt. Council hopes that the repairs will allow additional time for paying down existing debt and for planning the full renovation project to be budgeted in the future.



P R O P E R T Y R E A S S E S S M E N T

Giles County is completing the reassessment of real estate. This process occurs every four to six years. Once the total assessment is known the tax rate would be adjusted up or down to reflect the new assessment. State law allows a locality to set a rate that will result in collection of no more than 101% of the pre-reassessment amount. This adjustment is not considered a tax increase/decrease, but an adjustment of the current rate.

Past reassessment have shown increased property values and resulted in a decrease of the tax rate to adjust for the value. This year the total value is decreasing by about 6% and would result in an increase in the tax rate to offset the lower value. Initial figures show the rate would increase about \$.02 per \$100 in value. The average tax bill would remain the same but individuals may see increased or decreased tax bills depending on the individual assessment of properties. Council will be considering this as part of the annual budget process and setting the tax rate by June for the upcoming fiscal year.

A L T E R N A T E S P R I N G B R E A K

Once again Pearisburg will play host to a group of college students on spring break. The Holy Cross students will be in town February 28 to March 6. As part of the Volunteers for Community's Alternate Spring Break Program the students spend a week doing community service projects and experiencing life in another area of the country.

This year the students will work on development of a walking trail on Dogwood Farms, built a handicap ramp, and several other projects. In the evenings the students visited the local Museum, sing karaoke, and have a personal experience with Chef Katelyn Dinger making desserts. Local groups and churches provide meals and interacted with the students. When not working , the students will hike to Angel's Rest and the Cascades and visit Mountain Lake Lodge.

Please call the town office if you would like a schedule of student activities so that you could join them to help make their experience memorable.

P E A R I S B U R G F A R M T O F O R K

Since the launch of the Pearisburg Farm to Fork Program in April of this year, over 100 local residents have had the opportunity to sample many different classes. Classes are being scheduled now and will include cast iron cooking, canning, pie crust and scone making. Please watch our website and Facebook for a complete listing of opportunities to join us in the kitchen.

To register call 540-921-0340 or visit Farm to Fork at www.pearisburg.org for an up to date listing of classes.

Pearisburg Farm to Fork

~ COOKING FRESH, GOING LOCAL ~

