

Town Council Meeting

March 12, 2024

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on March 12, 2024, in the Town Municipal building with the Honorable Allen D. Smith, Mayor, presiding: Councilmember's in attendance were Ronald Mattox, Johnnie Brame, James G. Elam, Jr., Sandra Jones, Christopher Garrett and Chris Gill. Also attending were Town Manager Rodney Newton, Treasurer Diane Harding, Town Clerk Vickie McDaniel, Police Chief Camden Lawson and Fire Chief Frankie Tanner.

Mayor Smith called the meeting of the Town Council to order.

The invocation was given by Mayor Smith followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to go into Public Hearing on (1) Real Estate Taxes and (2) Sewer Line Maintenance Ordinance. Motion carried.

Citizen Mrs. Gloria Allen asked about the Sewer Maintenance ordinance. Town Manager Rodney Newton explained our current ordinance reads the homeowner is responsible from their house to the main. Since VDOT has changed the rules on who can do construction within their right-of-ways, we are changing our ordinance so the town is responsible from the main to the edge of your property. Mr. Newton advised it benefits the citizens as it takes part of the sewer maintenance off the citizen(s) and puts it on the town.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to come out of Public Hearing. Motion carried.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Councilmember Mattox asked to add Mr. Robby Batte to speak about Nottoway Falls. Mayor Smith added Mr. Batte as item (h) under Informational Items. Town Manager Rodney Newton asked to add IDA reappointment. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Informational Items as item 10(i). Mr. Newton also asked to add Planning Commission replacement. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Informational Items as item 10(j). Citizen Ms. Barbara Wilson asked to speak about property disrepair. Mayor Smith added Ms. Wilson under Informational Items as item 10(k).

Mayor Smith asked if there were any Conflicts of Interest on matters being discussed on the agenda. There were none.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the February 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer Diane Harding advised the Treasurer's report for February 2024 will be presented at next month's meeting.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. He stated they had a very busy month with 98 calls, twelve arrests and seven citations. Chief Lawson advised they mailed 25 letters to property owners regarding town ordinances and are receiving good feedback from the citizens. They are still working on getting more letters out to property owners once Chief Lawson is back in the office. Councilmember Brame asked who will be acting chief while he was out of the office. Police Supervisor Diane Harding advised Officer Beagle will be in charge until Chief Lawson returns to work. There were no questions regarding the Police Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

Fire Chief Frankie Tanner presented the Fire Department Report. Fire Chief Tanner apologized for not having the Financial Report in the council packets. He advised they recently upgraded their software for finances and provided council the new Financial Report tonight. There were no questions regarding the Fire Department Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

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- a) Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to accept the Real Estate Taxes as discussed. Motion carried.
- b) Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to adopt the Sewer Line Maintenance ordinance. Motion carried.
- c) Mr. Newton discussed the Victoria High School roof replacement. Total roof replacement cost is \$41,899.00. Mr. Newton advised between the town and the Victoria High School Preservation Foundation that they have approximately \$22,000 to \$23,000 available to use for the project. Mr. Mast advised he can repair half of the roof now. Mr. Newton is working on a letter to help with a Capital Funds Improvement drive to raise the remaining \$20,000.00. Mr. Newton recommended to council to contract with Mr. Mast to repair half the roof in June 2024 with the possibility of repairing the entire roof if able to raise the monies. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Jones to proceed with Mast Enterprises in repairing the Victoria High School roof. Motion carried.
- d) Councilmember Jones and Councilmember Garrett with the Street Committee provided council a viewer's report on the request for vacation and conveyance of property located near the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Tidewater Avenue. Councilmember Jones advised the Street Committee studied the site and saw no issues with the vacation and conveyance request. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Gill to have a Public Hearing on the request for vacation and conveyance at next month's council meeting. Motion carried.
- e) Town Manager Newton provided council a copy of a resolution for adopting the recently upgraded Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. He advised the new tornado siren and one of our generators at the sewer pumpstation were paid through a mitigation grant. Mr. Newton stated it's required by the Code of Virginia to be updated every five years so we are in the update period now. He advised for the most part, it stayed the same but will need council to pass the Mitigation Plan adoption. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to approve the resolution for the adoption of the upgraded Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Motion carried.
- f) Mr. Newton met with the Finance Committee and based on the work our town maintenance shop has done with the sewer project and the money they have saved the town Mr. Newton recommended to council a raise for the entire town crew to compensate them for their work. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Elam to accept the maintenance shop salary adjustment. Motion carried.
- g) Mr. Newton advised the FY25 Budget Work session will be on Monday, April 8, 2024 at 6:00pm.
- h) Mr. Robby Batte with Shutterbatte Photography discussed creating a non-profit organization to help with the upkeep of The Falls area. Mr. Batte stated there's been an increase in traffic there and on the internet. There have been a few followers and some have traveled out of state taking pictures and visiting Nottoway Falls. Mr. Batte reached out on Facebook and has already received about 30 names of people who want to help. He proposed to council starting a non-profit group "Friends of The Falls". Mayor Allen suggested holding a meeting and getting some input from the people who are interested in helping. Mr. Newton advised our town crews will be moving equipment out there to do millings, cut the ditches along side of the road and re-direct some of the drainage to take care of the ruts. Both Mayor Smith and Councilmember Mattox will help set up a meeting with Mr. Batte to spear this group. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to proceed with creating a non-profit organization "Friends of The Falls". Motion carried.
- i) Mr. Newton advised Mr. Jay Dayton's term on the IDA is expiring and he has agreed to serve another term. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to reappoint Mr. Dayton to the IDA Committee. Motion carried.

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- j) Mr. Newton advised Mr. Raymond “Doc” Holliday will not be able to serve on the Planning Commission due to health issues. We will need to find another representative to fill his position on the Planning Commission and bring back to next month’s council meeting.
- k) Ms. Barbara Wilson provided council a photo of a house across the street from her on Virginia Avenue. She purchased her home from a couple who renovated four houses on her street. However, since she has lived there the house across the street has not been touched. The siding is missing on parts of the house and water has been leaking causing black and green mold in the house. She stated its just unsightly. Ms. Wilson advised the owner has two properties on the same block. This house is livable but the other property is not. She is concerned with the safety of the people and bringing down the value of homes around her. The owner lives out of state and Ms. Wilson would like the town’s help. Mr. Newton is also the Property Maintenance Manager and will look at this and see what the town can do.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton met with Animal Control Officer Ray Elliott and the subject of feral cats was mentioned. Officer Elliott does a program every year called Ruff-n-It and offers a program to help control feral cats called Trap, Neuter and Release. He has seen an increase in the number of calls related to these cats but is limited as Animal Control Officers are not mandated by the state and there are no ordinances on handling feral cats. This program allows officers to trap feral cats and take them to a veterinarian to have them spayed or neutered and have an ear clipped for identification. The estimated vet cost for each cat is \$130.00. Once the ear is clipped, they can track those cats and possibly trap again to get another rabies shot. These cats typically live in colonies and are territorial. Mr. Newton proposed the town donate to the Ruff-n-It program to help fund the Trap, Neuter and Release fund and Mr. Elliott will start trapping in town to help control them. Mr. Elliott will provide the town with receipts for the cat(s) handled through his program. Councilmember Jones questioned this is not done through the county. Mr. Newton advised there are no laws against cats. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Jones to donate \$650.00 to the Ruff-n-It Program. Motion carried.
- b) Mr. Newton advised the annual Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, March 30th at 10:00am. Mr. Newton thanked Susan Behler, Councilmember Jones and Citizen Mrs. Vonzella Hack for getting all the eggs ready. Mr. Newton advised they will begin hiding all the eggs at 8:30am. Mrs. Behler also mentioned Bliss of Lunenburg will be there making cotton candy.
- c) Mr. Newton advised council “Spring Clean-Up Day” will be Saturday, April 13, 2024 for the town. They will meet at 9:00am at the flagpole in the park.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the Comprehensive Plan. This is another five-year plan that has to be updated. There will be two community meetings for community input. The first meeting will be Monday, April 15th at 6:30 at the Kenbridge Town Office and the second will be held on Monday, April 22nd at 6:30 at the Victoria Public Library.
- e) Mr. Newton advised council to ride over the 10th Street cut-over. There are ditches on both sides, pipes under the trail and the road is drivable. Mr. Newton is hoping we get some more paving in town and possibly get some gravel as this will help tremendously.
- f) Mr. Newton advised the town office position for Executive Secretary/Police Records Clerk closed on Friday, March 8, 2024 and we received eight applications. They will be meeting with the Personnel Committee to set up interviews next week. Also, the Water Plant vacancy closes on Friday, March 15, 2024. We have had several applications picked up at the town office. Mr. Newton advised Phil Pegram and Andy Ward, with help from Grayson Townsend, have been working to keep things running.
- g) Mr. Newton discussed the sewer project. We started almost four years ago with a copper issue at the east wastewater plant and issues at the west wastewater plant. In 2020, we had an engineer start developing the new wastewater pumpstation on Grove Avenue. We also installed a new pista grit at the east wastewater plant and rebuilt the mechanical bar

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screen. Mr. Newton provided council with the preliminary report for the new pumpstation which was a little over \$1M. They went back over it and refigured with the work done by town employees; we have spent approximately \$400,000.00. On the force main which starts at Grove Avenue and goes almost to the east wastewater plant, the preliminary report was \$972,000.00 to build. Town employees built it for a little over \$200,000.00. Mr. Newton advised this was done during normal working hours and no overtime ending up saving the town over \$500,000.00. The west closure has been started and the lagoon is down about three feet. The preliminary report to close the west plant was at approximately \$128,000.00. We bought the bulldozer which will take up a lot of this cost but is needed for what the town needs to do. Mr. Newton advised we will have to buy a permit because we are disturbing more than one acre of land at \$3,400.00, lime to cover and help dry it out and possibly some dirt. He foresees all of this coming in under the \$128,000.00 as well. He advised the cost of a new mechanical bar screen at the east wastewater plant was approximately \$530,000.00 but had it rebuilt for \$83,000.00. We bought the pista grit brand new. When you look at the entire project estimated at \$3.1M, right now we are at \$250,000.00 and expected to spend \$1M if there are no major issues. Mr. Newton discussed I&I (Inflow and Infiltration) meaning rainwater is getting into our system. He advised the new pumpstation cannot handle a high volume of water. Mr. Newton provided council photos of an iTracker which is an ultra-sonic sensor that collects data from a manhole based on the flow. You take these sensors to areas that are taking in water and work your way down until you get to the manholes that are causing the problem. Mr. Newton also provided photos of crawlers, which is a camera system that can help us determine what's going on. The crawler has two lasers you use to measure and can see what the pipe looks like. Mr. Newton discussed Redzone Robotics at last month's meeting where they would come in and video the lines. He stated we have 20 miles of sewer line in the town. It would cost \$195,000.00 for Redzone Robotics to do this just one time. The iTracker is \$2,625.00 each and Mr. Newton advised he believes six iTrackers would give them the capabilities to start breaking down our system. This would be a total cost of \$15,850.00. They will provide onsite training and continuous support for the cloud service to update with an annual cost of \$480.00 a unit. Mr. Newton asked council for \$15,850.00 from the ARPA Fund to buy the sensors. However, the crawler camera system is \$106,819.17. This is cheaper than Redzone Robotics and we would be able to use it at any time. Motion as made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Gill to purchase the six iTrackers and look into the crawler camera system and bring back more information at next month's council meeting. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to adjourn the meeting.

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting.

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved April 9, 2024

Rodney Newton, Town Manager