

Town Council Meeting

May 10, 2022

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on May 10, 2022, in the Town Municipal building with Vice Mayor James G. Elam, Jr., presiding: Councilmember's in attendance were Ronald Mattox, Johnnie Brame, Christopher Garrett, and Sandra Jones. Also attending were Town Manager Rodney Newton, Treasurer Diane Harding, Town Clerk Vickie McDaniel, Officer David King and Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend. Absent was Mayor Allen Smith and Councilmember Chris Gill.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to go into Public Hearing on the FY23 Proposed Budget. Town Manager Rodney Newton advised this budget includes increases in the minimum water and sewer rates for town customers. The water rate will increase \$1.00 from \$30.50 to \$31.50 with the sewer rate increasing \$2.00 from \$20.50 to \$22.50. These increases are based on repairs at both facilities within the next 12 to 18 months. Mr. Newton advised we are keeping this as low as we can and to reduce the amount of money we will have to borrow.

No comments were made.

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

Vice Mayor Elam called the meeting of the Town Council to order.

The invocation was given by Councilmember Jones followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Vice Mayor Elam asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Town Manager Rodney Newton asked to speak about police recruitment. Mr. Newton also requested a closed session regarding personnel matters. Councilmember Jones asked to speak about alleyways. Vice Mayor Elam added Mr. Newton under Police Report (a) and Closed Session (b). Vice Mayor Elam added Councilmember Jones under Information Item (i).

Citizen Wanda Fix asked to speak to council. Vice Mayor Elam added Ms. Fix under Fire Department (a).

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the April 2022 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to accept the Treasurer's report for April 2022. Motion carried.

Officer David King presented the Police Report. The report showed no activity for the month of April 2022. Officer King advised they are still in the process of updating SHIELD and getting everything entered. 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.

Mr. Newton advised council that interviews for the Chief Police Officer position were held on Wednesday, May 4, 2022 with both the Personnel Committee and Public Safety Committee present. Also, Mr. Scott Coverstone, retired JMU Police Officer as the law enforcement representative. Mr. Newton stated the process is ongoing.

Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend presented the Fire Department Report. They had 94 calls at Station 2 and Station 7 had 19 calls totaling 119 calls for the month of April. There were no questions regarding the Fire Department Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Citizen Ms. Wanda Fix inquired about the ordinance on vehicles. Mr. Newton advised as soon as the Police Department is staffed, we will be working on it. Mr. Newton stated the ordinance has been passed. Ms. Fix advised she has addressed council several times regarding vehicles on 4th Street. Ms. Fix also mentioned an incident a couple of weeks ago on 5th Street. Officer King advised there were charges filed for brandishing a firearm. Ms. Fix stated the police department, nor the town are doing anything, and it is causing the citizens to get very aggravated. Officer King advised the incident was reported.

Informational Items:

- a) Town Manager Rodney Newton provided council with a Right of Way Vacation Request. The request is from Larissa Ambrose for a portion of the 15th Street right of way adjacent to her property at 2509 Washington Avenue. The unused portion will be used as a driveway. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to hold a Public Hearing regarding the property at next months council meeting. Motion carried.
- b) Mr. Newton discussed the police department standby time. Our officers are responsible for standby time either prior to shift or following their shift. For example, for officer(s) on duty from 8:00am until 4:00pm is on call from 04:00am until coming on duty at 08:00am. For officer(s) on duty from 4:00pm until midnight is on call from midnight until 4:00am. These are the hours the officer(s) is required to be available for service in town. Mr. Newton recommended a standby rate of \$3.00 per hour to compensate for time if an officer is called out. Councilmember Mattox with the Personnel Committee advised they have discussed this to try to help with the retention rate of our Police Department. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to adopt the standby rate in the budget process each year. Councilmember Mattox withdraw his motion until Town Manager Rodney Newton can amend the policy. Mr. Newton will provide the amended policy in writing at next month's council meeting.
- c) Mr. Newton discussed the Travel Reimbursement Policy for employees. The Personnel Manual currently states meal rates for breakfast \$5.00, lunch \$10.00 and supper \$15.00. Mr. Newton provided council a proposed policy that ties into the GSA schedule that covers meals, lodging and travel. The meal rates are breakfast \$13.00, lunch \$15.00 and supper \$26.00. Mr. Newton advised new police officer(s) who are hired and travel to the academy for training will be exempt. Council agreed to defer until next months council meeting after review.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the current Utility Deposit Policy. The deposit fee is \$120.00. Mr. Newton advised the water/sewer bills are 45 days behind. In VA Code §15.2-2119.4, the fees for water and sewer services provided to a tenant or lessee of the property owner states that a security deposit that is reasonably determined by the locality to be not less than three and no more than five months of water and sewer charges. The proposed rate for water and sewer for three months is \$54.00 so for three months it is \$162.00, four months is \$216.00, and five months is \$270.00. Mr. Newton advised fees for water and sewer for property owners does not have a section on deposits. Vice Mayor Elam agreed that tenants (renters) pay a utility deposit and it needs to be increased. Motion was made by Councilmember Garret and seconded by Councilmember Brame to approve the utility deposit increase to \$175.00 and do not charge property owners a utility deposit. Motion carried.
- e) Mr. Newton discussed 422 Court Street. The house was removed and the lot is ready to be sold. The town paid \$3,400.00 to purchase the property with approximately \$4,000.00 in town expenses for removal of the house. Mr. Newton recommended to advertise for \$7,500.00 to recoup the towns costs. Motion was made by Councilmember Garratt and seconded by Councilmember Brame to advertise 422 Court Street property. Motion carried.
- f) Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame for a Public Hearing for FY22 Budget Amendments at next months council meeting. Motion carried.

- g) Mr. Newton advised we still have only received one quote for the LOVE sign. The quote has gone up to \$10,442.74 and would be for a 6'x 8' aluminum with vinyl sheeting sign. We can apply for a reimbursement grant with the Virginia Tourism Corporation up to \$1,500.00 to apply towards the cost. Motion was made by Councilmember Garret and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to proceed with the LOVE sign purchase. Motion carried.
- h) Mr. Newton advised we replaced the truck at the wastewater sewer plant last month due to increased maintenance on the existing 2001 truck. Mr. Newton asked to surplus the 2001 Chevrolet pickup. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to sell the 2001 Chevrolet pickup. Motion carried.
- i) Councilmember Jones discussed alleyways. Councilmember Jones explained the town would cut the alleys on a case-by-case basis and not close the alleys in case of emergencies. The alleyways were cut until Jasper Love retired and understands now the equipment is broken. Councilmember Jones asked if the equipment could be repaired and if not, the town advertise in the newspaper that this service is no longer offered by the town. Councilmember Brame stated he thought the property owner cleaned up the alleyway. Councilmember Jones said it was changed. Vice Mayor Elam asked to research the minutes. Mr. Newton will add to next months council agenda.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton updated on the park and bathrooms. Mr. Newton stated we are still waiting on some of the bathroom fixtures and anticipates getting them painted this week. Also, three large trees were removed in the park due to the ice storm. The two large cedar trees that were cut down beside the flagpoles will be replaced with something more manageable between 10' to 12' in height. Councilmember Garrett asked to look into the condition of the swings in the park too.
- b) Mr. Newton advised we have contracted with BCS to bore a conduit from the small pavilion to the grey building to allow us to run electrical cable as well as provide a power source for the LOVE sign.
- b) Mr. Newton met with a B&B engineer at the water plant the week of April 25th to look at the flow meter issues. With his help, they were able to get one of the flow meters that was inoperable back to working properly. We still need to replace the flow meter on the finish water line that is leaving the plant, so we know how much water is pumped into town. B&B is developing a bid specification for a turnkey project for replacement of the current Venturi tube system that was installed when the plant was built in 1970 with an ultrasonic flow meter so the operators will be able to see on their panels.
- c) Mr. Newton advised Mr. Kevin Ashworth returned to work on Monday, May 9, 2022.
- c) Mr. Newton reminded council of Music in the Park Friday, May 13, 2022 weather permitting. The Tobacco Road Band will be performing and concessions provided by the local soccer league.
- d) Mr. Newton advised tomorrow, Wednesday, May 11, 2022 is Student Government Day. We will have two students stopping by the town office if any councilmembers would like to come by between 9:00-11:30am.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to go into closed session for discussion on:

- a. In accordance with VA Code §2.2-311(A)(3) for the discussion of acquisition of land for public purpose or disposition of publicly held land where discussion in open session would jeopardize councils bargaining position.
- b. In accordance with VA Code §2.2-3711(A)(1) for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment,

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promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, discipling or resignation of specific public offers, appointees, or employees of any public body.

CLOSED SESSION May 10, 2022

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to return to regular session according to Code of VA §2.2-3712 to certify that only business matters identified in the motion to convene and those lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed. By show of hands, all voted unanimous yes. Motion carried.

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

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

James G. Elam, Jr, Vice Mayor

Approved June 14, 2022

Rodney Newton, Town Manager