

Town Council Meeting

May 14, 2024

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on May 14, 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 Councilman Brame followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to go into Public Hearing on the FY25 Budget Proposal. Motion carried.

Town Manager Rodney Newton advised a correction to the total budget amount advertised in the newspaper should have been \$2,521,000.00. It was advertised as a total of \$2,420,750.00. Each fund of the budget was correct but missed adding one fund to the total. Mr. Newton explained the largest increase was in the water fund due to increase in chemicals, chlorine, sodium fluoride and potassium permanganate costs of operation. Mr. Newton advised our water rate was raised to \$30.50 in 2019 and to \$31.50 in 2022. If we followed inflation, this year's rate would have been \$37.28. The proposed water rate increase for the FY25 Budget Proposal is \$35.00 per 3,000 gallon minimum.

There were no comments on the FY25 Budget Proposal.

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

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Councilmember Jones asked to do a presentation. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Jones under Informational Items as item (i). Town Manager Rodney Newton asked to speak about the sidewalks along 7th Street beside Victoria Drug. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Informational Items as item (j).

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 Jones to accept the April 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the Treasurer's Report for April 2024. Motion carried.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. He stated they had a very busy month with 84 calls, eight arrests and four citations. Chief Lawson advised we have hired a new employee, Mr. Steven Winslow effective June 1, 2024. Mr. Winslow will be attending the CVCJA beginning June 20, 2024. Chief Lawson advised Mr. Calvin Adams will be graduating from the academy on June 12, 2024. Councilmember Jones questioned when the officers make their rounds there is a truck parked in the alleyway for two to three days are they notifying them. Chief Lawson explained they do check the alleyways. 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. He advised they had a total of 131 responses for the month of April. Chief Tanner advised they have had some building maintenance issues with the a/c unit at the gym and a bay door damaged at the Victoria Station at no fault so insurance will cover. Also, the a/c unit at the Kenbridge Station will need to be replaced and this will not be covered by insurance. Chief Tanner advised they will have two Truck-n-Tractor Pulls this year. One is scheduled for June 1, 2024 with currently 24 sponsors. The second one will be on October 12, 2024 to coincide with Autumn Days. There were no questions regarding the Financial Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Jones and

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seconded by Councilmember Elam to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Mr. Newton inquired about the Planning Commission nominations. Councilmember Mattox asked to table to next month's June council meeting.
- b) Ordinance enforcement- Alvin Powell. Not present
- c) Neighborhood Watch-Alvin Powell. Not present.
- d) FY2025 Budget Proposal will be voted on at the June council meeting. Mr. Newton discussed the water rate minimum going to \$35.00 per 3,000 gallons. That will be the only part of our utilities that will be changing this year. Also, Mr. Newton advised we will start having to pay for commercial trash at the Lunenburg Landfill. Both the towns of Kenbridge and Victoria have been notified that we are not in compliance with the host agreement with Meridian Waste in the county. Therefore, if localities continue to dump commercial trash there will be a tipping fee charged. This will apply to all businesses in town that trash service is provided for. Mr. Newton advised we average 3 to 5 tons of trash weekly with our commercial customers. This costs \$30.00 a ton. If we look at a 5-ton average this will equate to \$7,800.00 a year not including operational costs. The Town of Kenbridge has a 4-tiered rate for commercial customers and Mr. Newton recommended commercial customers who use two 95-gallon cans or less to a \$25.00 monthly fee. Those customers who use three 95-gallon cans will be \$37.50 and customers using four or more or the equivalent to that, will be \$150.00 a month. Councilmembers agreed and this will be added to the June council meeting to start July 1, 2024 with the new FY25 Budget.
- e) Mr. Newton advised the property located at 1118 Main Street has been designated for spot blight and a letter will be mailed this week. The owner will have 30 days to respond with a plan. The spot blight process has been initiated with an end goal of mitigating the problem through any means available through the Town of Victoria Spot Blight Policy and will bring back to council in the August meeting if the owner doesn't respond.
- f) Mr. Newton advised Mr. William Pernell was recently hired as the Executive Secretary/Events Coordinator. Mrs. Diane Harding, Treasurer stated he recently completed the DMV training and is now DMV certified to work with the public. Mr. Newton stated he is running the town's website now, our Facebook page and has added an Instagram account. Also, Chief Lawson mentioned Mr. Steven Winslow coming on as a new police officer for the town June 1st and Mr. Matthew Schumaker will start Thursday, April 16th as new water plant operator. Mr. Newton advised Mr. Schumaker will begin school in either July or August 2024.
- g) Mr. Newton discussed the Poorhouse Solar Project. In May 2021, council approved a conditional use permit with a three-year limit for the start of construction. The land disturbance permit will be issued this week and a building permit in the next couple of months. This month is the 36th month on the conditional use permit. The plan is to have it completed by the end of 2024. Mr. Newton recommended to council to extend the construction period for one year until May 2025. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to extend the construction period until May 2025. Motion carried.
- h) Councilmember Garrett advised he and Councilmember Gill met with Douglas Aquatics last week while the pool was drained. They took pictures and made some recommendations. Councilmember Garrett will bring back the full report once he receives it but recommendations were made for now to sandblast the pool and pressure line so it will not have to be repainted. Mr. Newton wants to know with the current filtration system can we look at converting it to salt water since the price of chlorine is so high and what the cost would be. Mr. Newton advised we will be opening the pool May 25th as is and looking at the Aquatics recommendations in the winter.

- i) Councilmember Jones presented Councilmember Brame with a Certificate of Achievement for 20 plus years on the Victoria town council. Councilmember Brame was very appreciative.
- j) Mr. Newton provided council photos of the sidewalks on 7th Street beside Victoria Drug. This was part of the StreetScape Phase 1. You could see where the sidewalks are unlevelled and settling. Mr. Newton proposed taking out the mulch bed and trees as well as the bricks and drain and putting stamped brick concrete with red stain. He stated this is a high traffic area. He received a quote for \$6,825.00 for repairing both sides with town employees removing the mulch, trees, etc. We currently have \$10,000.00 in the General Fund for Streets. Councilmember Garrett advised it is not hard to fix and would like to take a look at it. Council tabled until next month.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton discussed the Comprehensive Plan. The first community meeting was Monday, April 15th at the Kenbridge Town Hall and the second was held on Monday, April 22nd at the Victoria Public Library. Later in the week, the citizen survey will be available online at the Victoria Public Library, both Town Offices and some businesses.
- b) Mr. Newton advised on April 30, 2024 the discharged from the west lagoon ceased. Nothing else will be dumped into Couches Creek. The closure plan is in its final stages and received its blessings from DEQ and the Southside Water Conservation District. We will need to purchase a Land Disturbance Permit as the sludge will have to be taken out. Mr. Newton advised Lunenburg Landfill will take the sludge for a fee of \$36.00 a ton. This will be a long process and the last major part of the closing. The power to the old plant has been disconnected and some demolition to the buildings will begin soon.
- c) Mr. Newton updated on the Victoria High School roof project. A total of \$21,645.00 has been raised by the capital fund drive with donations still coming in. This may possibly raise enough money to complete the entire roof project at one time while leaving some reserve in both funds. Mr. Newton anticipates June 1, 2024 starting this project.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the new town shop project at 300 Court Street. Things are progressing well with completion in sight. He advised painting is underway and HVAC is scheduled soon. He hopes two of the tenants will be in by July 1st. As far as looking at the town's move of its maintenance shop we will need to address the storage of equipment. The main building there now is in bad shape and doesn't meet the needs for storage. We will also need shelter to store pipes as long as 21 feet. Mr. Newton provided council photos of the old building and a graphic of a 140x40 storage building with approximately 10 bays. The IDA has agreed to take down the old white storage building to make room for the storage structure. Mr. Newton requested to use funds from the current budget for shop lease agreements along with other savings to purchase the equipment shed prior to the end of the fiscal year and then purchase the storage shed after July 1st using some of the same funds in next years budget. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Elam to move forward with tearing down the old white building and installing a new equipment and storage shed. Motion carried.
- e) Mr. Newton updated on Nottoway Falls. Town employees have been working on the driveway and parking lot. They will be cutting ditches to help redirect the water flow as this is an ongoing project.
- f) Mr. Newton was invited to Washington, D.C., Tuesday, May 7, 2024 to represent the Town of Victoria in a U.S. WASH Convening. The meeting involved water access gaps, challenges, opportunities and solutions. Moonshot Missions asked T.M. Newton to sit on a panel with them to discuss how they have handled wastewater issues for the town. Mr. Newton stated this was a good opportunity to get the town some recognition.
- g) Mr. Newton advised Music in the Park is scheduled for Friday, May 17th from 6:00-9:00pm featuring Chap Cash and Danny Dalton. We will also have El Taco Loco as our food vendor. He will set-up in the park at noon on Friday for those who would like to stop by earlier.

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- h) Mr. Newton advised the Victoria pool will be opening on Saturday, May 25th.
- i) Councilmember Elam has been approached by parents wanting newer playground equipment. A lot of it is duplicated (swings, etc). They will study and bring back to council. Mayor Smith mentioned a pickle ball court possibly at the old basketball court.

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

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

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved June 11, 2024

Rodney Newton, Town Manager