

## Town Council Meeting

October 8, 2024

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The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on October 8, 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 Councilmember Brame followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Councilmember Brame asked to speak about the Planning Commission vacancy. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Brame under Information Items as item (a). Councilmember Gill asked to speak about an alley in town. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Gill under Informational Items as item (e). Town Manager Rodney Newton added Mr. Mike Walker with the IDA. Mayor Smith added Mr. Walker under Informational Items as item (c). Mr. Newton also asked to speak about land adjacent to the water filtration plant. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Informational Items as item (d).

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 September 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

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

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. Chief Lawson provided a new report from the new software system, ID Networks. He stated they had 359 calls, twelve arrests and 58 citations. Chief Lawson stated the calls reflecting as unassigned calls were worked by Animal Control and/or Part Time Deputies responding or working in the town that day. They were not assigned to a VPD officer. Chief Lawson continues to work on the color-coding system. Mayor Smith stated he liked the color-coding system and new reports. Councilmember Jones questioned dogs roaming in the town. Chief Lawson advised the Animal Control Officer takes them to the shelter. Councilmember Jones has seen quite a few animals roaming through town. Mr. Newton had a conversation with Animal Control Officer, Ray Elliott, stating his laws are civil instead of criminal, meaning there's much more liability on him. A lot of times when these dogs are roaming by the time he gets there, the dogs are back on the owner's property and nothing can be done. If a neighbor is willing to be a witness when he goes to court, then something can be done. Councilmember Jones inquired about the leash law in town. Mr. Newton explained there is a leash law ordinance in the town off the owners property. 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 122 responses for the month of September. Chief Tanner provided two Financial Reports, one for August and another for September. The Truck-n-Tractor Pull is scheduled for Saturday, October 12, 2024. Gates will open at 4:00pm and the pull starting at 6:00pm. Chief Tanner advised three of their members who work for VDOT will be deployed to southwest Virginia to assist in the clean-up of Hurricane Helene. They will be gone ten days to possibly one month. Another member who works with Chesterfield FD is being deployed to Florida with the swift water rescue helicopter team for Hurricane Milton. Assistant Chief Chris Garrett discussed EMS and the Department of Health recent drug changes. This is a big ongoing issue and it changes everyday. In 2013, Congress voted on the Drug Quality and Security Act put in place by the FDA. During a State Board Pharmacy meeting, it was brought to their attention this new act that's been on the books since 2017 and goes into effect in November 2024. In May 2024, they were notified of this change effective November 2024. Currently, EMS have a drug box on the squad and drugs are disbursed from the box and then turned into the hospital when they arrive with the patient. The hospital would in turn give them a new stocked drug box at no charge. Assistant Chief Garrett explained this new act changes all of that meaning the drugs must be

traced until used on a patient. Their drug boxes are not traceable so they can no longer exchange boxes. We now have to buy, stack and store all of our medications at our cost. There is approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 of medication in one drug box. He explained they now have to have a license to buy drugs. These are Class 2 and Class 5 narcotics and they have until November 2<sup>nd</sup> to put the policy in place. Assistant Garrett advised all medications will be stored at the Victoria station and they are waiting for DEA to do an inspection. It will now be under 24-hour surveillance and the Victoria station will be locked at all times. He stated they were very fortunate to work out an agreement through local pharmacies and distributors, Smith Pharmacy, Cardinal Drug (who has a contract with Lunenburg Medical Center) and an online EMS distribution company. Citizen Mike Walker asked about escalating the policy date to the congressional level. His concern is that the citizen(s) should not have to suffer from this. Assistant Garrett advised the congressional investigation came back and asked for an extension but has been denied. Fortunately, we have an agreement before the deadline on November 2, 2024 but are still waiting on approval. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Mr. Newton had notified council of two vacant positions but has verified that there is only one vacancy to fill. Councilmember Brame nominated Gill Joseph Coffee to be appointed by town council for the Victoria Planning Commission. Councilmember Mattox second to appoint Gill Joseph Coffee to the Victoria Planning Commission. Motion carried.
- b) Councilmember Garrett provided council an itemized list for the pool renovation from Douglas Aquatics. Councilmember Brame inquired about possibly doing some of the items before opening next year. Mayor Smith appointed a committee to explore the priorities that need to be repaired for example, the water leak at the pool. He asked Councilmember Garrett and Councilmember Gill to be on a committee and bring back what needs to be repaired at the December council meeting to see what we can do to remedy these problems. Mr. Newton will also assist with any questions they may have and give access to the pool.
- c) Mr. Michael Walker discussed the IDA project at 300 Court Street which is the renovating of the old Steps building the town acquired in 2020. They are 60 days from finishing the project and have spent approximately \$500,000 so far but will need \$100,000 to get through January 2025. Mr. Newton spoke with the Finance Committee prior to the council meeting and recommended splitting as follows:
  - \$50,000- appropriated from the Park Fund
  - \$50,000- appropriated from the General Fund

Motion was made by Councilmember Gill and seconded by Councilmember Brame to loan the IDA \$100,000 to complete the IDA project at 300 Court Street. Motion carried.

Councilmember Elam abstained. Mr. Walker advised they will pay back in the first quarter of 2025. Also, the Chamber of Commerce along with the IDA will hold a ribbon cutting and Open House on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00a.m. for those who would like to attend.

- d) Mr. Newton discussed a parcel of land beside the water filtration plant. It is 7.32 acres adjacent to the town's existing property that is for sale. This will give us room to expand in the future. The property is assessed for tax purposes at \$25,800.00. The Hardy family owns the property and have made an offer of \$16,000.00 plus closing costs which are approximately \$1,300.00. Mr. Newton stated he has walked part of the property and possibly the sale of timber could recoup some of the costs. Motion was made by Councilmember Garrett and seconded by Councilmember Brame to table until the November council meeting for the purchase of the parcel of land. Motion carried.
- e) Councilmember Gill received a complaint from a business owner on the state of the alley across from the town office and all the appliances that have built up back there. She thinks it's embarrassing for her clientele who come from out of town to see the alleyway in this condition as she uses it for her business. Councilmember Gill agrees there should not be that many appliances back there. Mr. Newton will speak with Gallion and Richards Appliances about hauling away.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton provided a presentation on the wastewater project. Mr. Newton spoke about the Grove Avenue pump station. They are still working to isolate the rain inflow and infiltration (INI) issue. We know of issues on Tidewater Ave. and Lunenburg Ave. where a tremendous amount of rain is coming into the system. He has signed a contract with Capital City Services that will bring a vacuum in to clean the lines to help take out all the debris, etc. Once these are clean and we run the camera through them we will decide whether we have to replace the whole main, make a repair or need to do slip lines. Mr. Newton advised all of our flow sensors are focused around the old railroad bed on 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Also, at the old dog pound and Lincoln Avenue, 13<sup>th</sup> St. at Main St., 13<sup>th</sup> at Washington Avenue, 13<sup>th</sup> St. and Lee Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> St. and Lee Avenue. He has another sensor at the end of Garthright subdivision up in the woods looking at another side feeding into that. Mr. Newton provided influent and effluent totals impacted from recent rain. This showed pipes overflowing and manholes full due to a large amount of water hitting the system. Mr. Newton advised on a normal day; 216,000 gallons come into the west wastewater plant. During the month of September, we took in 850,000 gallons of water from rainfall. This is a major problem. Also, after meeting with DEQ we decided not to close the west lagoon now. We need it to pump into and have revised the demolition plan at the west facility. We are currently borrowing a Godwin pump from the Town of Kenbridge to help with the rain flow and dump back into the lagoon. Mr. Newton recommended purchasing on our Godwin pump and requested to use ARPA funds at a cost of approximately \$43,450.00 but is still waiting to see if we can get a quote using a national contract. We currently have \$75,000.00 in the ARPA fund and it has to be obligated by the end of the December 2024. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Elam to purchase the Godwin pump using the ARPA fund. Motion carried. Mr. Newton discussed the east wastewater plant. We have been having issues with the ammonia exceedances. Most of this can be contributed to the leachate we take in from Meridian Waste. With our new permit, we have to have a leachate plan to be able to take this. Mr. Newton advised our revenue from leachate is approximately \$100,000.00 a year. We do not know how much a leachate plan will cost and what will be required to get the ammonia levels down. They were taking two truck loads a day at 8,000 gallons each, but after meeting with DEQ cut it to only one load a day. DEQ encouraged us to work with Meridian Waste to try to take the leachate as it's a short travel distance rather than taking it further down an open road with the risk of something happening. We are working with them on a partnership where some of these costs can be absorbed. This is a long-term revenue stream but we have to be diligent to protect ourselves. Mr. Newton will provide more information at next month's meeting. Councilmember Jones questioned if the leachate we are taking in now is there anyway it could get into our water system. Mr. Newton advised it comes into the wastewater plant and then unloaded at an off tank that feeds it straight into the system and stored in an upright 60-gallon tank. This is the reason for our ammonia issues but it does not affect the water.
- b) Mr. Newton advised Southern Corrosion was here Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup> and drained the ground tank. It was washed out and inspected and no issues were noted during the inspection. We are filling the tank this week and then have to pull a sample to send to the lab for testing before it can be put back online.
- c) Mr. Newton advised at the water filtration plant. The clear well which is the basement to the water plant, is a 52,000 gallon storage tank underneath. This clear well needs to be cleaned just like the water tank. Mr. Newton received a quote from Southern Corrosion for \$3,616.00 and signed the proposal and sent it back to them. He will be working with Southern Corrosion later this week to schedule the cleaning. The water plant will be shut down for 24 hours. Mr. Newton wants to get this added to our maintenance contract so it will stay on a regular schedule to be cleaned.
- d) Mr. Newton is working with B&B Consultants on changing our manganese and iron treatment. We are currently using potassium permanganate at the raw water inlet and it is not doing what it needs to do or having enough contact time for the chemical. We are looking to change over to sodium permanganate and start injecting at The Falls so it has 4 ½ miles to treat and hopefully improve that issue.

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- e) Mr. Newton advised Moonshot Missions will have a team coming here October 21<sup>st</sup> and October 22<sup>nd</sup> to observe our water filter operations to learn about their work and see where they can help us. Their goal is to help us improve our operations at the water plant and Mr. Newton already has a list of things for them to take a look at.
- f) Mr. Newton updated on the Blighted Properties from last months meeting:
- 1118 Main Street- no response from property owner. He met with the town attorney to initiate domain proceedings and an offer letter will go out later this week to start that process.
  - 1720 2<sup>nd</sup> Street- received correspondence from the property owner from New Jersey with current pictures showing grass has been cut and bushes trimmed but no remediation to collapsing part of structure. They stated in the letter they were trying to sell it. No further action has been taken.
  - 1600 9<sup>th</sup> Street-no response from property owner and no further action has been taken.
- g) Mr. Newton received from VML a form letter asking Congress to do emergency supplemental appropriations to help funding for the communities affected by Hurricane Helene. Councilmembers agreed to send the letter from the town supporting the Hurricane Helene victims.
- h) Mr. Newton discussed upcoming events. Open House and ribbon cutting at 300 Court Street will be Friday, October 11, 2024 at 10 a.m. The building will be open and he encouraged those to come out and see the work that has been done. Also, our Annual Autumn Days Festival will be Saturday, October 12, 2024. Mr. William Pernel was present and advised we have nearly 50 food and non-food vendors this year. An inflatable bounce house, baseball and basketball games, Freckles & Friends Animal Sanctuary doing a petting zoo and pony rides. Also, we will have a pet parade and J.B. and the Get Down Browns will be the featured band. There will be a cornhole and horseshoe tournament for those who would like to participate. Mr. Newton stated William has put a lot of time into this event. The event is from 9:00am until 3:00pm. Mr. Newton advised Trunk-r-Treat will be Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup> from 5:30pm until 7:00pm.
- i) Mr. Newton advised that the CRC Freedom of Information workshop certificates were in the council packets for those who attended. He did put in a recommendation for two separate sessions so some do not have to sit through both next time.
- j) Mr. Newton advised on projects in town. All plans have been approved by a third-party engineer for the Poorhouse Solar project and a building permit issued once all the documents have been received by the county building inspector. Once the building permit is issued, the solar company has 90 days to issue the town a check for \$50,000.00. Also, a building permit has been issued for McDonald's however, he received notification today that construction has been pushed back until May 2025. It will be located beside the Dominion Va. Power substation where the tree's are currently.

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

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

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Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

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Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved November 12, 2024

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Rodney Newton, Town Manager

