

Town Council Meeting

February 13, 2024

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on February 13, 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 Elam followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Town Manager Rodney Newton asked to add Planning Commission reappointment. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Informational Items as item 10(g). Mr. Newton also asked to add a request for vacation and conveyance. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Informational Items as item 10(h).

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 Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the January 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Jones to accept the Treasurer's report for January 2024. Motion carried.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. He stated they had 85 calls, one arrest and 14 citations. Chief Lawson updated council on Police Officer Calvin Adams. Officer Adams is currently attending the CVCJA and is at the top of his class. Chief Lawson advised they are still working on inoperable vehicles and will begin getting letters out to property owners. Mayor Smith commended Chief Lawson and stated two officers were very active for the month. There were no questions regarding the Police Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Jones and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

Fire Chief Frankie Tanner presented the Fire Department Report. He stated he is proud to be working with the town. Mayor Smith thanked Town Manager Newton and Fire Chief Tanner for the annual fire banquet last weekend. There were no questions regarding the Fire Department Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Town Manager Newton provided council the last revision from Decembers council meeting by Town Attorney Clement on the proposed alley ordinance. Councilmember Mattox requested to add to the Exceptions, section (b) or the designated agent when granted a written permit. Councilmember Mattox also recommended the time period should be left up to the discretion of the Town Manager or designated agent. Councilmember Jones recommended mirroring closer towards the ordinance with a two-hour parking within a 24-hour period instead of increasing the hours. Councilmember Jones stated we have been working on this since August 2023. Mayor Smith suggested removing the wording per (days, week, month). Town Manager stated that was linked more to the number of written permits. Councilmember Mattox asked Chief Lawson for his input. Chief Lawson recommended striking the two-hours within a 24-hour period and there shall not be any parking or leaving such unit without a written permit. Councilmember Garrett recommended 8-hours in a 24-hour period and no more than twice a year. Councilmember Mattox questioned Exceptions item (c). Mr. Newton advised that will go away. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Garret to accept the changes to the draft ordinance:
 1. No person shall park or leave such unit in an alleyway
 2. Exception permit:
 - a) no more than 8-hours in a 24-hour period
 - b) no more than twice a year
 - c) upon written permission from the Town Manager or designated agent.

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Councilmember Jones opposed. Motion carried.

- b) Citizen Alvin Powell wants to start a neighborhood watch again. He spoke briefly with Chief Lawson prior to the council meeting and they will have a department meeting to discuss putting up signs. Mr. Newton will provide the town ordinance for street signage.
- c) Mr. Newton provided council information on the preliminary Real Property Assessments and effects on taxes. It shows real property in the Town of Victoria increased 19.29% with the recent assessment. The total land value and improvements in town increased from \$72,126,800.00 to \$86,038,300.00 for 2024. Mr. Newton advised the Code of Virginia allows up to a 1% increase in revenue at the current tax rate without having to adjust rates. Mr. Newton advised our real estate is \$131,126.52. He advised to stay under the 1% the rate will need have to be dropped 0.1526. Also, if council decides to go higher than 0.1526, we will have to have a Public Hearing before budget. Councilmember Elam suggested leaving the current tax rate to 0.18 and giving the monies to both the Fire and Police Departments. Mr. Newton advised we would be looking at roughly \$25,040.70 in revenue and recommended adding an apparatus line item for FY25 for the VF&R of \$12,500.00. The line item will stay there so it continues to build. Chief Tanner appreciated Mr. Newtons recommendation. Also, splitting the remainder with the police department and adding a Capital Improvement line in General Ledger as we have a lot of structures that fall under the general fund. Motion was made by Councilmember Gill and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the recommendations and leave the rate at 0.18. Motion carried. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Brame to hold a Public Hearing at next month's council meeting. Motion carried.
- d) Mr. Newton provided council photos of the Victoria Police Department roof. Chief Lawson informed Mr. Newton back in January during a rain, that there was a significant leak from the roof of the building. Mr. Newton met with Mast Enterprises and they prepared a proposal for council review. The estimate of the work is \$22,879.80 to restore the roof and provide more slope on the lower rear roof, remove the old chimney and the antenna tower on top of the building. The roof will carry an 18-year warranty. Mr. Newton recommended the Finance Committee will need to meet to discuss an appropriation from the general fund. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to proceed with repairs to the police department roof. Motion carried.
- e) Mr. Newton provided council photos of the Victoria High School where the roof has also begun to leak causing a portion of the ceiling in the library to collapse. Mr. Newton advised a large amount of water is pooling in that area and cannot drain. Mast Enterprises gave Mr. Newton an estimate of \$41,899.00 to repair the entire roof of the building. After meeting with the Victoria High School Preservation Group, there is currently \$15,999.47 in the Victoria High School Fund. Mr. Mast can repair half the roof for half the cost at \$20,949.50. They will be meeting again prior to the March council meeting and Mr. Newton will advise council what they have financially and make a decision.
- f) Mr. Newton discussed the sewer line ordinances. He noted a few months ago we ran into a situation with VDOT and our ordinance which states that the homeowner was responsible for the maintenance of the entire service line to the town sewer main was in conflict in policies with VDOT. A private utility line is not allowed to be on VDOT right-of-way so basically, we must start treating them like a regular water line. Mr. Newton recommended changing the ordinance Sec. 32-489 that the homeowner shall be responsible for maintenance of the entire service line to the VDOT right-of-way or town right-of-way closest to the sewer tap. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the sewer line ordinance change and hold a Public Hearing at next month's council meeting. Motion carried.
- g) Mr. Newton advised they failed to reappoint Mr. J. B. Crenshaw on March 1, 2023 to the Planning Commission. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to reappoint Mr. Crenshaw to the Victoria Planning Commission. Motion carried.

- h) Mr. Newton provide council a letter from Mr. Ronnie Williams requesting vacating and conveying the town right-of-way to the old mill site at the corner of Tidewater Avenue and W. 6th Street. There is a piece of town property that curves through the middle of it. Mr. Williams plans to split the property into five lots and build five homes. Mayor Smith appointed the Street Committee to review and come back with recommendation at next month's council meeting.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton provided council with photos of the new pumpstation. Mr. Newton commended the public works department for an outstanding job. The generator is not set yet and once everything is completed; we will look at getting a quote for putting a roof over everything. Councilmember Brame asked if DEQ gave guidance on this project. Mr. Newton advised it was designed by B&B Consultant's, Inc. at a cost of approximately \$60,000.00. They have pumped clean water for the past three days and if all goes well tomorrow, the conversion will be finished and influent into the west lagoon will cease. They will continue to treat 24-hours a day out of the east lagoon and discharge to Couche's Creek. Mr. Newton is still waiting on our closure plans for the two lagoons. He also discussed removing two of the three buildings standing and then grading down to possibly plant pine trees for future revenue and from having to keep maintained. Mr. Newton advised we still have ARPA funds available after this project.
- b) Mr. Newton discussed the Lunenburg-Kenbridge-Victoria Comprehensive Plan renewal. This has to be done every five years. It is \$50,000 contract and we are responsible for approximately 25% that will be spread over two fiscal years and is a budget item we currently have \$4,000.00 in. Mayor Smith is representing council while Mrs. Linda Walker is representing the Planning Commission and Mr. Newton, along with a representative from the Town of Kenbridge and the county serve on this. Mr. Newton advised this could be an 18 to 24-month process.
- c) Mr. Newton advised the airport repaving is complete and we will have some expenses coming in for it. The airport is open but the lighting will need to be updated soon.
- d) Mr. Newton provided a video of a sewer collection system by Redzone Robotics. They are autonomous robots with front facing cameras that review pipeline conditions. Approximately 80% of our pipeline issues are reactive. Redzone Robotics takes all the specs and rates your pipe from one to five. It allows the town to take the footage and determine those in need of repairs or replacement. The Town of South Hill is six months into working with this and states its very valuable information. The town has approximately 20 miles of sewer line ranging from 6" to 18" piping. The quote to do the entire system is \$195,000.00 however, they will breakdown in sections over several years. Mr. Newton is reaching out to Sercap and DEQ for grant opportunities. We also have in the Utility Improvement Fund 22 approximately \$34,000.00 and then possibly ARPA funds left over. Mr. Newton advised council to keep this in mind as this is something we really need to look at in the future.
- e) Mr. Newton advised Thursday, February 15th Court Street between Main Street and Tidewater Avenue will be closed due to replacing the siren on top of the water tank. The motor burned up when we lost a transformer in the pump house behind the town office. Lewis Welding and Construction will be handling the siren replacement.
- f) Mr. Newton advised we have been looking at propane prices with moving out to the old STEPS building. Mrs. Sue Behler contacted AmeriGas, Parker Oil, Southern States in Amelia and Service Plus. Mr. Newton advised we will be switching from Parker Oil Company and Southern States to Service Plus at a .20 per gallon savings. Also, their price to do the work at the STEPS building was much cheaper.
- g) Mr. Newton advised council that Mrs. Sue Behler will be leaving the town effective February 21, 2024. She has accepted a job with the county. We will start advertising for her position next week.

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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 March 12, 2024

Rodney Newton, Town Manager