

Town Council Meeting

January 10, 2024

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on January 10, 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 Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend.

Mayor Smith 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.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Mayor Smith added properties in town: park, trail, pool under Informational Items as item (c).

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Citizen Ruby Edmonds at 1117 Tidewater Avenue asked to discussed chimney smoke. Mayor Smith added Mrs. Edmonds 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 December 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Treasurer's report for December 2023. Motion carried.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. He stated they had 145 calls, five arrests and seven citations. Chief Lawson also stated for calendar year 2023 they had a total of 2,049 calls, 46 arrests and 173 citations. Chief Lawson advised they are still working on inoperable vehicles and will begin to second tag those that have not been moved. Mayor Smith inquired about computers in the police vehicles. Chief Lawson advised he has a virtual meeting on Friday, January 12th with ID Networks. Mayor Smith advised he was informed of openly smoking marijuana at the Christmas Parade. He asked the police force to be mindful at next years event and patrol through the crowds. Chief Lawson advised Officer Calvin Adams started the police academy January 2, 2024. 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.

Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend presented the Fire Department Report. He stated they had a total of 115 responses with 43 calls at Station 2 and 72 calls at Station 7. Assistant Chief Townsend also stated for calendar year 2023 they had a total of 1,592 responses with 682 at Station 2 and 910 at Station 7. There were no questions regarding the Fire Department Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Gill and seconded by Councilmember Elam to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Citizen Chris Garrett at 1601 4th Street expressed his concern on the regulation of alleys. Mr. Garrett discussed Garrett Ground Maintenance located at 1414 Nottoway Blvd. which is in the center of an alleyway. If a property owner on each side chooses not to maintain the alleys, they will need access to their location on the backside to operate. Mr. Garrett discussed the town owns the alleyways but is not responsible for maintaining them. Councilmember Jones recommended the one-hour parking in a 24-hour period and a \$50.00 fine that was discussed at the November council meeting. Councilmember Mattox recommended the option from Town Manager Rodney Newton taking the time limits out of the ordinance and under such conditions to leave available ten feet of the width of the alley for the free movement of vehicle traffic. Councilmember Elam stated the one-hour timeframe for parking in the alley is undue for the police department. Citizen Wayne Hoover discussed leaving it the way it is. He maintains his alleyways and public safety still uses those alleys. Mr. Newton advised we currently do not have an ordinance on regulation of alleyways. Council discussed removing the word "commercial" and mirroring both commercial and

residential with two-hour parking within a 24-hour period. Mayor and council agreed to table the ordinance for regulation of alleys until next month. Council advised Mr. Garrett if he maintains the alleyways, he could use them for access to the backside of the property at Garret Ground Maintenance.

- b) Mr. Newton discussed Water and Sewer Tap Fees. It has been brought to his attention by VDOT that their regulations do not allow for private utility lines to be located within the VDOT rights-of-way. Currently, the Water/Sewer tap fee for the Town of Victoria is \$300.00. Mr. Newton provided council comparisons of the Town of Kenbridge and Town of Blackstone along with cost estimates for materials for both connections by public works. Mr. Newton recommended an application fee for Water Tap Fee of \$150.00 plus materials and then a Sewer Tap Fee of \$150.00 plus materials. Mr. Newton discussed if we are unable to collect the monies upfront, we could look at an option to allow the customer to pay the Tap Fee and 50% of the material costs and then offer a payment plan for the balance. Mr. Newton advised the customer will be provided with an estimated cost of the materials once public works looks at it. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Elam to accept the Water/Sewer Tap Fee application fee plus cost of materials as recommended by Town Manager. Motion carried. Mr. Newton recommended the payment plan option be at the discretion of the Town Clerk and/or Treasurer.
- c) Citizen Mrs. Ruby Edmonds addressed council on a chimney smoking next door at her house on 1117 Tidewater Avenue. Mrs. Edmonds advised the smoke is coming into their home and they are unable to sleep at night. Mrs. Edmonds advised the houses are very close together. They have found the trap door is broken. Mayor Smith stated the previous owner burned wood with no problems. Councilmember Elam stated it's just smoldering at night. There is no ordinance in the town for a smoking chimney. Town Manager Rodney Newton will look under Property Maintenance and check into it.
- d) Mayor Smith discussed back in November 2023 the town park and trail and re-organizing the Friends of the Park. He asked council if they've had any volunteers thus far or recruitment as he has had a few people inquire about the park. Mayor Smith would like to see more community involvement. He stated there is a church group that walks the trail and has bible studies. These are the type of things we want to encourage. Councilmember Jones recommended collaborating Spring Clean-Up 2024 for the park and the trail. Mayor Smith questioned Blighted Properties in the town. Mr. Newton advised Chief Lawson has a list that falls under trash, etc. Mayor Smith also inquired about the look of the town. He had many people over the holidays with concerns and wants to look into our ordinances on commercial properties as well as residential regarding clean-up and appearance. One property mentioned was on West Court Street. The town does allow livestock on 5 acres or more, but the fencing should look better in town. Mayor Smith advised council to take a look at our ordinances and consider ways of improving the look of the town. He would like to also look at the bathrooms at the pool. Mayor Smith has had several volunteers willing to paint and Councilmember Garrett is working with Aquionics on fixing the pool. Going forward, Mayor Smith will be in the town office on Fridays beginning February 2024 from 9am-noon for those who would like to come see him.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton updated on the sewer project. The wet well at the west plant has been set and the valve vault was set today. We are still online to have the pumpstation operational between February 1st and February 15th, 2024.
- b) Mr. Newton updated on the IDA project at 300 Court Street, old STEPS building. The divider wall has been built on the production floor. He stated HVAC work is starting and is looking at LP tank pricing. We are also inquiring about LP tanks for all our sites in town. Hopefully, by end of 1st quarter we will be wrapping up this project. Mr. Newton advised we are also starting to get tenants in for the IDA.
- c) Mr. Newton discussed real property reassessment that was recently sent out from the Commissioner of Revenue. Once the Treasurer gets the new evaluations from the Commissioner of Revenue, we will look at those and if the tax revenue is more than 1%

Town Council Meeting

January 10, 2024

of last year's, council will have to act on it. Mr. Newton provided council the Code of Virginia §58.1-3321 as this will affect the FY25 budget.

- d) Mr. Newton discussed the recirculating pump at the east wastewater plant. It was put into operation on December 18, 2023. As a result, we have already seen a drop in usage. Prior we were using 20,000 gallons a day. Mr. Newton advised from December 25th until December 28th, we used only 100 gallons a day and have seen reduction in pumping times at the water plant as well. As soon as we close the west wastewater plant, we will drop another 300,000 gallons a month in usage.
- e) Mayor Smith advised a copy of the town's "Welcome Letter" that is given to new residents was provided from the Town Manager. If council has any suggestions for additions to the letter you can email them to Mr. Newton for the February council meeting.

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 February 13, 2024

Rodney Newton, Town Manager