

Town Council Meeting

August 13, 2024

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on August 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., 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. Absent were Councilmember's Sandra Jones and Christopher Garrett.

Mayor Smith called the meeting of the Town Council to order.

The invocation was given by Mayor Smith 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 three proposed Spot Blight Ordinances for the properties listed below and an FY25 Budget amendment in the amount \$106,819.17. Motion carried.

- 24-01 1118 Main Street
- 24-02 1700 2nd Street
- 24-03 1600 9th Street

There were no comments.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame 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 Gill asked to speak about Douglas Aquatics and the pool. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Gill under Informational Items as item (g). Councilmember Brame asked to speak about streets. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Brame under Informational Items as item (i). Town Manager Rodney Newton asked to speak about street closures and Inoperable Vehicle Policy approval. Mayor Smith added Town Manager Newton under Informational Items as item (j) and item (k).

Citizen Chris Garrett had two questions for council. Mayor Smith added Mr. Garrett under Informational Items as item (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 Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the July 2024 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 July 2024. Motion carried.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. He stated they had 112 calls, six arrests and no citations. Chief Lawson advised they are in the middle of switching over to a new computer system. ID Networks has been installed on PC's and licenses have been issued for Mobile Cad systems for in car computers. Mr. Rob Williams is converting all old data from Shieldware to the new system. Mr. Doug Ebbink will be here to train officers on the new system within the next two weeks. Chief Lawson advised Officer Rondell White resigned effective July 23, 2024. Chief Lawson updated on the two new candidates in the academy. They have just completed the driving course and both passed with no issues. The next two weeks will be firearms. Chief Lawson stated they have gotten through the toughest portion of the academy. Chief Lawson advised the new Durango has been delivered and equipment has been ordered. They have begun setting up for installation. Chief Lawson and Lt. Beagle have been working together with the help of P/T officers to keep days to a minimum where deputies must cover without creating too much overtime. Chief Lawson stated they are getting a lot of feedback that officers are not doing their jobs. Most are coming from a third party. Chief Lawson advised to call the Sheriff's Department so that we have a documented record. Also, some investigations have been turned over to the drug task force. National Night Out was a success. Officers spoke with citizens and encouraged them to call 911 or the Sheriff's Department if they see anything. Mayor Smith also reinforced calling the sheriff's department directly and getting it on record. 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 141 responses for the month of July. Chief Tanner advised Tanker 2-1 is not repairable. They were approved through the insurance company and a new pump has been ordered but will not be here until September. There were no questions regarding the Financial Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Mr. Newton provided council a recommendation for changes to the Utility Billing policy. Effective July 1, 2024 one of the laws that was changed this year at the General Assembly has an impact on utility service. The Code of Virginia extended out the time an account can be delinquent. With this, service cannot be discontinued until 45 days past due and if the weather temperature is over 92 degrees. We have added new penalties. Mr. Newton reminded council last year we discussed our billing cycle. Currently, we are already 45 days behind when we bill customers for water usage. We may change our read date to the 25th of each month and bill on the 1st of each month for last month's water usage. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the revised Utility Billing Policy. Motion carried.
- b) Alvin Powell-Grass ordinance- absent
- c) Mr. Newton provided council photos on three properties declaring these properties a public nuisance along with a Spot Blight Abatement plan according to state Code of Virginia and Town of Victoria Policy 2020-036:
 - 1118 Main Street- property acquisition
 - 1700 2nd Street-demolition and removal
 - 1600 9th Street-demolition and removal

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Elam to be blighted and adopt the ordinance for spot blight abatement for 1118 Main Street. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Brame to be blighted and adopt the ordinance for spot blight abatement for 1700 2nd Street. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to be blighted and adopt the ordinance for spot blight abatement for 1600 9th Street. Motion carried.

- d) Mr. Newton advised the FY25 Budget amendment for \$106,819.17 is to increase the sewer line item #21-247-0000 for the SERCAP grant (Revenue) and line item #21-750-7020 Miscellaneous Equipment Purchase (Expense). This is to account for the award we received for the sewer camera. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the FY25 budget amendment. Motion carried.
- e) Mr. Newton discussed two finance items. First for Victoria High School roof town share for \$3,899.00 and the second for the purchase of the replacement police vehicle in the amount of \$21,910.00. Mr. Newton requested \$3,899.00 be appropriated from the Victoria High School fund balance to the current budget. And for the purchase of the police vehicle, be appropriated from unused funds in the General Fund for the Police Department as follows:
 - FY24 vehicle line savings \$ 6,910.00
 - FY22 vehicle line savings \$10,000.00
 - FY21 vehicle line savings \$ 5,000.00

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the budget appropriations. Motion carried.

Town Council Meeting

August 13, 2024

- f) Mr. Newton advised Mr. J.B. Crenshaw has resigned from the Victoria Planning Commission due to moving out of town. Councilmembers will bring back recommendations at next months meeting.
- g) Councilmember Chris Gill provided council a proposal from Douglas Aquatics for renovation and or improvements of the Victoria town pools. He along with Councilmember Garrett have been working with the contractor for several months. The total renovation price for the pool was \$390,849.00 and for a new Tot pool is \$104,117.00. Unfortunately, Councilmember Gill doesn't see how the town can afford to do this. The last time the pool was renovated was in 1980. Mr. Newton advised Mr. William Pernell reached out to USDA through their community facilities grant program but a stand-alone pool does not qualify for the grant program. Mayor Smith asked what it applies towards. Mr. Newton stated more towards your fire and police stations, or community centers.
- h) Citizen Chris Garrett at 1601 4th Street had a couple of questions for town council. He was working on the roof at Garretts Ground Maintenance on 1414 Nottoway Blvd. when he saw a cat walking down the alleyway and died. Mr. Garrett stopped by the town office where Mrs. Diane Harding informed him the town does not move dead animals. He contacted Animal Control and they do not remove dead animals nor VDOT unless they are in the roadway. Mr. Garrett feels the town should come pickup the animal. Mr. Newton advised we will take care of it. Councilmember Elam agreed the animal needs to be moved. Also, Mr. Garrett provided council photos of the cemetery after the grass was cut whereby a citizen had complained to him that it was unacceptable. Mr. Newton also agreed and will address with town crews.
- i) Councilmember Brame was approached by a citizen regarding paving of side streets. The streets are breaking up with gravel and dirt. Mr. Newton advised that would be VDOT and that falls in their six-year plan. We are not made aware of when they are coming to do slurry or repaving. VDOT is working to minimize dirt roads in the county. Mr. Newton explained at one point Lunenburg County had the most dirt roads in the Commonwealth.
- j) Mr. Newton asked council for permission to submit paperwork to VDOT for road closures for:
- Autumn Days- October 12th
 - Christmas Parade- December 6th

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to submit the road closures to VDOT. Motion carried.

- k) Mr. Newton provided council a revised Inoperable Vehicle Policy. It was found during the recent removal of inoperable vehicles, there were a few things not addressed. This revised policy will give the police officers the guidance needed to enforce the ordinance fairly and consistently across town. They did develop two forms to help with monitoring inoperable vehicles. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the revised Inoperable Vehicle Policy. Motion carried.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton presented council a visual of the new sewer camera. He started working with one of the older lines on Tidewater Avenue. The sewer camera showed debris and some sections if exposed or touched would crumble. Mr. Newton pointed out chunks of asphalt, flushable wipes, grease that the cameras can get stuck on as this is what causes a lot of our blockages. Mr. Newton was able to get a visual about 70' inside the sewer line which showed a hole in an 8" pipe and eventually red dirt. We are looking at options to help minimize blockages. B&B Consultants gave us some pricing to have the pipes cleaned, slip lined and videoed however, some of these pipes may not be a candidate for this due to age and are in such bad shape. He is also still trying to identify where we are getting our water in, etc.
- b) Mr. Newton received an email from Dan Michaelson, a biologist with the Department of Wildlife Resources/Game and Inland Fisheries. They have been contacted and asked about the use of drones at Nottoway Falls. Another officer with DWR had sent back and said there are no regulations or laws for use of drones over DWR waters but have to be

Town Council Meeting

August 13, 2024

flown in accordance with the FAA. Mr. Michaelson did state that any properties which DWR manages must have written permission. Council agreed the drones must be flown in accordance with the FAA.

- c) Mr. Newton updated on the Modest Creek application submitted on August 8th. This is for a bridge replacement and some enhancements around the lake. We will know around the middle of October if we get awarded or not.
- d) Mr. Newton advised on 7th Street beside Victoria Drug, depending on what else happens and getting the trees and bricks removed, the concrete work will start this month.
- e) Mr. Newton advised Lee Electric is currently in town working to build and extend a 3-phase line from 6th Street to Marshall Avenue over to Poorhouse Rd. to make the inner connection for the solar project.
- f) Mr. Newton updated on 300 Court Street. Both Smith's Glass Shop and Victoria Antiques have moved in. Victoria Antiques is planning their first auction on September 28th. Mr. Newton advised HVAC work is still going on and the sprinkler system work started this week. We are planning for an Open House/Grand Opening on Friday, October 11th.
- g) Mr. Newton discussed the Caddis Bldg. There is a lot of work going on with 22 months left on their lien to purchase agreement. The entire front office area has been gutted and this will be the area where they assemble the chairs. In the basement, they have taken out old duct work, install new lights and expanded doorways and put a new roof on the office area. When Fellowship Chair finishes their purchase agreement, they will be buying 5.467 acres from the IDA (basically the land immediately around the building and behind it). IDA will retain a little over one acre over by the tunnel and on the Tidewater side will retain a little over three acres for the parking lot that we set aside for commercial vehicles and reserved for trucks. This will also protect the force main keeping that on the IDA property.
- h) Mr. Newton advised we have a member of the Master Naturalist Group that has adopted the trail around Lunenburg Lake. They have worked two days and got about halfway around the lake. Mr. Newton will invite him to one of our council meetings so he can introduce himself.
- i) Mayor Smith thanked Mr. William Pernell and Chief Lawson for National Night Out. He has heard good returns on the event. The "Farm Use" band was an excellent choice and hope to have them back again. Next year's National Night Out will be in Kenbridge. Town Manager Tony Matthews also thought the event went very well in Victoria.

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

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

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved September 10, 2024

Rodney Newton, Town Manager