

## Town Council Meeting

August 12, 2025

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The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on August 12, 2025, 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, 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.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to go into Public Hearing on the transfer of 1/3 ownership of Victoria Lunenburg Industrial Park from town of Victoria to Victoria IDA in accordance with Virginia Code §15.2-1800 and Budget amendment of FY26 budget in accordance with Virginia Code §15.2-2507. Motion carried.

Mr. Newton advised the Town of Victoria is proposing to transfer 1/3 ownership of Tax Parcels 003A5-OA-01-10 and 334A5 -OA-0-12 located on Old Court Street to the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Victoria. This will allow some flexibility in dealing with any prospects for potential buyers. The county will also be addressing at their upcoming meeting on Thursday, August 14, 2025.

There were no further comments.

Mr. Newton advised we received a SERCAP grant for assistance with some of our equipment at the water plant in the amount of \$49,095.00. We are showing this as revenue and will increase the miscellaneous supplies line from \$19,000.00 to \$68,095.00. The budget amendments do not represent any increase to customer utility bills. Also, we have the Virginia Outdoor Foundation (VOF) grant of \$240,000.00 that we received last year. We have carryover funds of \$204,855.50 and will need to make a budget amendment to carry those funds over as well.

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

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Mr. Newton asked to add the Budget Amendment for approval. Mayor Smith added Town Manager Newton under Information 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 Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the July 2025 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 July 2025. Motion carried..

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. Chief Lawson stated they answered 337 calls, issued 64 summons and five arrests. Chief Lawson advised the flock camera at the stoplight is scheduled to be removed next week. He will work with them to show exactly where it needs to be installed. Officer Hunner Boshier is performing exceptionally well in the academy with no complaints. He began firearm training this week. Chief Lawson advised National Night Out was Tuesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> and was hosted in Kenbridge this year. Victoria PD was in charge of the dunking booth, which was a big hit. We have also started receiving new equipment that we got through grant funding through DCGS. When the new weapons arrive in a couple of weeks, all equipment will be placed in service. Chief Lawson advised he was notified by the DMV that they were awarded the Highway Safety grant for overtime funding and upgrade of their radar units. These funds will also be used to purchase LIDAR devices for the police officers. Chief Lawson advised council the police department will transition over to 12-hr shifts effective, Monday, August 18, 2025 starting from 6a.m. until 6p.m. and 6p.m. until 6a.m. This eliminates on-call time and there will be 24-hr coverage, 7 days a week. Town Manager Newton advised he

will be resuming the supervision of the police department effective Monday, August 18, 2025. There were no questions regarding the Police Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox 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 135 responses for the month of July for Station 2 and Station 7. Unfortunately, there was a residential structure fire on Stuart Avenue. There were no injuries. The Truck-n-Tractor Pull is still scheduled for Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. There were no questions regarding the Financial Report for June 2025. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Mr. Newton presented the Committee Report. He stated the old town shop property located at 1220 Main Street has been advertised for the past 60-days. There were several inquiries online, but no proposals. We did receive two proposals much less than what council was hoping. Councilmember Gill recommended a closed session after the council meeting for discussion of the proposals for property located at 1220 Main Street.

Informational Items:

- a) Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to transfer 1/3 ownership of Victoria Lunenburg Industrial Park from the town to the Victoria IDA. Motion carried.
- b) Citizen Al Powell brought to council that he was willing to volunteer services to start working on cleaning up some of the alleyways at no cost to the town. He would work with Town Manager Rodney Newton to help relieve some of the manpower from the town and funding it takes to pay to do so. Mr. Powell was hoping to get the town to agree. Mayor Smith explained whether you are volunteering or being paid as a representative of the town, the town is still liable. Mayor Smith asked for councils input. Mr. Powell stated as a taxpayer he was trying to get somethings cleaned up and doing it for the town at no cost. Mayor Smith advised we may look into another resolution of how we can get it done but we have some major priorities that had to get done first. The alley ordinances states you can clean-up an alley and adjoining property. The issue is that it is someone else's personal stuff and we don't know exactly where the boundary lines are. Mr. Newton advised Mr. Powell we will pass along to the Street Committee to table for review of the town ordinance and bring back recommendations. Mr. Powell also spoke about a Neighborhood Watch requesting more help from the local police department. Chief Lawson advised he has not seen a Neighborhood Watch committee. Mayor Smith emphasized needing an organized committee for Neighborhood Watch and would like to meet with everyone in this committee. Mr. Powell stated there are about seven people in our community right now. Mayor Smith advised this is something we will have to look at. Mayor Smith advised Mr. Powell to contact the 911 dispatch office at the courthouse for documentation if he does see suspicious activity instead of texting the local police department.
- c) Mr. Newton provided council a letter relating to the water and sewer rates for the Lunenburg Correctional Center. He advised that the water rates have not changed since 2012 and sewer rates have not changed since 2019. Mr. Newton met with personnel from the Department of Infrastructure and Environmental Management back in May regarding services provided to a correctional center. Mr. Newton emailed a rate proposal to Lunenburg Correctional Center on May 16<sup>th</sup> and followed up with another email on July 10<sup>th</sup> with no responses. Mr. Newton's recommendation is we adjust their rates in three phases as follows:
  - 10/1/25 thru 06/30/26:
    - \$28,650.00 for 3,000,000 ML gallons per month
    - \$ 9.55 per 1,000 gallons
  - 07/1/26 thru 06/30/27
    - \$31,500.00 for 3,000,000 ML gallons per month
    - \$10.50 per 1,000 gallons
  - 07/1/27 until next negotiations

- \$33,000.00 for 3,000,000 ML gallons per month
- \$11.00 per 1,000 gallons

Proposed Sewer Rates

- 90% of the water bill
- 10/1/25 thru 06/30/26 - \$25,785.00
- 07/1/26 thru 06/30/27 - \$28,350.00
- 07/1/27 until next negotiation - \$29,700.00

Motion was made by Councilmember Garrett and seconded by Councilmember Elam to accept the recommendation for the Lunenburg Correctional Center water and sewer rate adjustments in three phases. Motion carried.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. William Pernell advised we have community events and recreational reports for this month. The community centre concert starring Mr. Red Volkart was an amazing show. We were lucky to have the VCA help us bring somebody to the community and if they continue to get their funding for next year, we hope to have him back. Our Skate Night on July 25<sup>th</sup> was a success and our next Skate Night is scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6pm until 9:30pm. We have also gone ahead and scheduled Skate Night once a month for the remainder of the year. Mr. Pernell advised Benchmark Community Bank has reached out and wants to sponsor or co-host an upcoming Skate Night and maybe cook hotdogs and hamburgers or buy the first people's 30 tickets. Mr. Pernell has begun the planning process for the Autumn Days Festival scheduled for Saturday, October 11, 2025. We've already heard from Freckles and Friends Petting Zoo and lining up pony rides. We are working on solidifying a vendor for inflatables and axe throwing. Mr. Albert Gerbino with the WSVS is working on doing the Cowboy Show for the festival at no expense and is waiting for their boards approval. Mr. Pernell advised we've already had a handful of vendors sign up for the event. He has applied for the Thriving Communities grant with Norfolk Southern requesting funding for our Rails Without Limits project. The goal is to add a completely ADA compliant and accessible playground section to our Victoria Railroad Park. This section will include a wheelchair accessible swing set, a sensory musical element and a port side play system featuring a transfer deck, two slides and several other interactable features. We also including two wheelchair ramps to access the playground. If our grant application is approved, AAA State of Play will handle the delivery and installation. The total will be approximately \$50,000.00. Mr. Pernell stated if we do not get the grant we do not have the funding. There will be a Blues and Barbecue in the park on August 31, 2025 from 1pm until 5pm to raise money for the Community Resources Services Food Pantry. Mr. Pernell advised the next Food Truck Rodeo is scheduled for Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. We are still waiting on a solidified lineup for that event. Mr. Newton advised starting next month there will be a section added to the council books regarding community events and the recreational report.
- b) Mr. Newton discussed the Poorhouse Solar Project that was approved several years ago. Mr. Erby informed him that Summit Ridge, who is the owner and developer of the solar project received the permission to operate certificate from Dominion for that facility. They still have some landscaping and erosion sediment control work to be done and road repairs that have to be completed. Mr. Newton advised it's getting closer to the end of the project.
- c) Mr. Newton discussed the VFW sewage pumpstation land project. Mr. Rick Dunn has surveyed the land and is working on the final plat of the new VFW parcel. Once that is done, we will work with the attorney on getting the deed drawn up. The pumpstation is still operational. Mr. Bill Gary is still monitoring it as we are having a few issues with the pump.
- d) Mr. Newton updated on the wastewater project. The Tidewater sewer project has been finished except for some final tidying up around clean outs along the road and our work area behind the church. Lanco Paving finished the paving about a week and a half ago. There are now clean-outs at the edge of the road for all those lines. Mr. Newton stated they have seen a significant decrease in the amount of water going to the Park Avenue pumpstation. He applauded the Public Works department for a great job and saving the

town a lot of money. We have identified on 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Washington and Lee Avenue another place that we're getting a large amount of stormwater in.

- e) Mr. Newton and Chief Water/Wastewater Operator, Grayson Townsend traveled to Saltville, VA due to a request from the VAWARN (Virginia Water and Wastewater Response Network) having problems with storm drainage. They spent the day running the sewer camera trying to figure out the problems. Mr. Newton advised they were very appreciative and we have some video to send back to them to try to help them a little bit more.
- f) Mr. Newton discussed blighted property at 1118 Main Street. Our attorney, Mr. Rennie advised he's ready to move forward with the process for getting a court date. Mr. Newton anticipates that he will start next week. To date, we have spent \$20,835.00 in the process of trying to take care of this piece of property.
- g) Mr. Newton updated on the Modest Creek bridge project and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation grant (VOF) which we received last year \$240,000.00 for the bridge replacement. The engineering work is complete and the title insurance will be completed as soon as the survey is done. Mr. Newton is working with Mr. Rick Dunn to see if he is able to do the survey in a reasonable amount of time. Once this is done, the title insurance releases the money to us. To date, we have spent \$35,000.00 on this project and are waiting on a date next week to meet with a representative from the bridge company to start moving forward with the design of the bridge.
- h) Mr. Newton provided council information from VML/Vaco Finance. They are a financial services arm of the Virginia Municipal League and Virginia Associations of Counties. They offer several different services, financial planning for capital projects, and equipment lease-purchase financing. Mr. Newton advised there is a cost but maybe something we want to look at down the road. They also offer investment avenues. One is a VIP Stable Liquidity Pool and basically it's for working capital. Currently, their yield on this particular investment is 4.41%. Last month we got only 2.15% on the Benchmark Sweep account. They also offer one-to-three-year high quality bonds. To participate you have to pass an ordinance and we would need to do a Public Hearing next month and council could adopt it from there. Mr. Newton mentioned to Councilmember Elam and Treasurer, Diane Harding, and they think it would definitely be something to look into. Mr. Newton recommended to council to advertise for a Public Hearing to adopt this ordinance to join the pool.
- i) Mr. Newton discussed fire hydrants. During the last flushing cycle, we had a list of fire hydrants we have been working on. Some of them were minor but some will need extensive work or maybe even replacement. Mr. Newton advised there is one on Poorhouse Road at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> Street that's out of service due to it's on a four-inch line and by health department rules, we cannot use that hydrant because it will draw water back in. Most of them are marked and as we are doing our hydrant flushing, we're trying to keep an eye on it.
- j) Mr. Newton provided council a copy of the service line letter about the undetermined type of material the service lines are made out of. This is a requirement of the lead and copper rule at the EPA level. This rule requires, at some point in time, the town to identify the service lines for water to residents, not only our portion from the main to the meter, but also from the meter to the house. Mr. Newton advised letters were mailed out this week advising our customers that some of the service line materials remain undetermined.
- k) Mr. Newton advised the Modest Creek pumpstation is back online. They pumped about 700 gallons a minute for approximately four hours on July 8<sup>th</sup> to flush the line. They will be looking to possibly use occasionally as a source for the water.
- l) Mr. Newton updated on the water plant. The four new turbidimeters have been installed and are operational. These are for settled water, Filter 1, Filter 2, and finished water. The pH sensors and alkalinity sensors should arrive within the next month and we hope to get



that operational by September 2025. He is still working with Moonshot Missions on some plant issues. Nathan is scheduled to be here the week of August 26<sup>th</sup> to help us with some things.

- m) Mr. Newton provided pictures of the concrete basins at the water plant. The engineering firm has confirmed that the alkali silica reaction (ASR) is what's causing the concrete to breakdown. Unfortunately, Mr. Newton found they were having the same problem in 1984 since the plant was built in 1970. The engineers opinion is that this structure is reaching its end of service life. The short-term solution is to construct a new concrete wall inside the basin to provide a barrier from the water and reinforce the basin. Their estimated project cost is \$75,000.00 to \$100,000.00. This will cause a loss of capacity in that basin of approximately 5,000 gallons of water. Right not, each basin holds between 82,000 and 84,000 gallons of water. The long-term solution is to construct new basins which is an estimated cost of \$2.5ML to \$3ML. They would then have to have all new instrumentation and plumbing. Mr. Newton provided a proposal slide with pricing to rehab the existing facility. The total estimated cost is \$520,000.00. The General Assembly passed a \$25ML one time grant program through the Clean Water Revolving Fund. Mr. Newton will be attending a class next week in Richmond with the VDH to learn more about it. It is due by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 and requires a 25% match. Mr. Newton recommended applying for this grant with council's approval. Hopefully, this short-term solution can buy us another 10-15 years but we will eventually have to begin planning for a new facility in a long range plan. Mr. Newton also discussed the current water rate. Our rate is \$35.00 per 3,000 gallons. By this grant, it has to be at least 1% of the median household income. Victoria's median household income as provided by the Commonwealth Regional Council is \$48,769.00. If we were to get this grant, we would be working towards \$40.64 rate per month. Mr. Newton will work on the grant application per town council approval. Mr. Newton was not sure of the turnaround time.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to go into closed session for discussion of negotiations for the sale of the 1220 Main Street property pursuant to VA Code §2.2-3711(A)(29).

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to return to regular session according to Code of VA Section §2.2-3712 and to certify that only business matters identified in the motion to convene and those lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed. By show of hands, all voted unanimously, yes. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to work with the Smyth Group to determine a selling price for the 1220 Main Street property, Lots 1-6. Once the selling price is determined, it will be offered to the highest bidder from the town's previous efforts to sell it. If that offer is declined, the Smyth Group will market the property for the town. Motion carried.

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 September 9, 2025

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Rodney Newton, Town Manager