

Town Council Meeting

March 10, 2020

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on March 10, 2020 in the Town Municipal building with the Honorable Carol R. Watson, Mayor, presiding: Councilmember's in attendance were Ronald Mattox, Johnnie Brame, James G. Elam, Jr., Christopher Garrett, Sandra Jones and Chris Gill. Also attending were Town Manager Rodney Newton, Treasurer Diane Harding, Clerk Vickie McDaniel, Police Chief H. Keith Phillips and Assistant Fire Chief Chris Garrett.

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

The invocation was given by Councilman Mattox followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor Watson asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Mayor Watson added a closed session at the end of the meeting.

Mayor Watson asked if there were any Conflicts of Interest on matters being discussed on the agenda. Councilman Elam abstained on Information Items 10 (f) Community Center.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the February 2020 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the Treasurer's report for February 2020.

Chief H. Keith Phillips gave the Police Report. Chief Phillips stated they had another busy month with 64 calls, 14 citations and 3 arrests with 7 charges. Chief Phillips stated Officer Tonya Jones is on light duty since March 2, 2020 and is scheduled to go back to the doctor on Thursday, March 12, 2020. Chief Phillips also advised the new Dodge Ram 1500 Pickup Truck has been delivered for detailing and once returned will be installing radios and lights. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Jones to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

Assistant Fire Chief Chris Garrett gave the Fire/Rescue Department Report. He stated they had another busy month at Station 2 in Victoria and Station 7 in Kenbridge. Assistant Chief Garrett provided council the Financial Report. Assistant Chief Garrett also stated the coronavirus cases are being reported closer to us daily. Guidelines are coming from the Department of Health and they are very proactive with the guidelines and have the protective and necessary items needed for their volunteers in stock and are compliant. Assistant Chief Garrett stated they do have all the necessary items in stock. There were no questions regarding the budget. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to approve the Fire Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Mayor Watson advised the resolution that was given to Boy Scout Troop #7538 has been corrected and presented to Boys Scouts Master Mr. David Dalton. Also, a letter of support on the ruling of the Second Amendment Sanctuary was written and delivered.

Informational Items:

- a) Mayor Watson advised we had 282 bus riders for the month of February 2020.
- b) Mayor Watson advised we held our first Autumn Days meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020. This year will be our 40th Annual Autumn Day event. Mr. Newton stated we had twelve people in attendance and the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 7:00pm. Mayor Watson advised they discussed bringing in some new things and possibly bringing back some old things and anyone with ideas to please pass along.
- c) Mr. Newton addressed the Spot Blight Abatement Policy and issues the town has been dealing with regarding deteriorating properties and structures. Mr. Newton, Property Maintenance Inspector for the Town of Victoria, provided council a draft of the Spot Blight Property Policy referencing Code of Virginia 36-49.1:1. It gives a municipality the authority to acquire or repair a blight issue. Mr. Newton will prepare a letter to the property owner(s) that are blight issues. The owner(s) have 30 days to respond with a

written plan to address the blighted property and 90 days to execute that plan. If after 30 days the property owner(s) does not present a plan, Town Manager Mr. Newton can request council to adopt an ordinance based on a plan presented by Mr. Newton to abate the issue. There are three ways this can be done 1) Purchase the blighted property, 2) eminent domain, or 3) deemed a nuisance. Any costs/charges associated with mitigating the property are billed to the property owner(s). If not paid within 30 days, the Town Treasurer will place a lien on the property for the amount of the bill to recoup our costs. Mr. Newton recommended to council to adopt the Spot Blight Abatement Policy with the addition on page 1 "III Procedures" (3), to add a Public Hearing on blighted properties. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to adopt the Spot Blight Abatement Policy.

Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Mattox for a Public Hearing on the three blighted properties scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2020. Motion carried.

- d) Mr. Newton stated we added the Special Use Permit Policy back in December 2019 when we updated and adopted the Zoning Ordinance to handle special use permit applications. Mr. Newton provided council a draft of the Special Use Permit Policy with an application for special use permits. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Special Use Permit Application. Motion carried.
- e) Mr. Newton discussed the recent developments regarding the potential sewer rate increase and upcoming sewer projects at the wastewater treatment facilities. They are gathering data from the west wastewater treatment facility, as well as the east wastewater plant and it will be mid April before the flow data from west will be completed so we can get a true picture of inflow at that facility. Mr. Newton stated early figures for turning the west wastewater facility into a pump station and moving everything to east provided we have capacity, is probably a \$1M to \$1.5M project. About one mile of pipeline will need to be installed. Basically our permit is through 2024 to complete the project. Mr. Newton foresees having to go under another consent order for protection and additional time in late March or early April so we can accomplish our end goal. Mr. Newton stated several figures have been thrown around with both the Finance and Water and Sewer Committees. Currently our average for sewer is approximately \$500,381.00 annually. If we increase the sewer rate by \$2.00 from \$18.50 to \$20.50 and increase the Lunenburg County Prison, as their rate has not be increased since 2012, our sewer revenue will average around \$550,000.00 annually. Mr. Newton advised we have lower sewer billing than many of our neighboring towns. Mr. Newton also mentioned if USDA is used to fund the project, they will enforce a rate increase. Mayor Watson and Councilmembers agreed that we need to increase the sewer rate by \$2.00.

Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Brame for a Public Hearing on the increased sewer rate scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2020. Motion carried.

- f) Councilmember Elam stated the repairs at the Victoria Community Center are 99% complete. Mr. Chad Acors still needs to clean-up the rest of the chimney on the roof. Motion was made Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to convey the community center over to the Town of Victoria. Motion carried. Councilmember Elam abstained.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton advised we are still working to find candidates to make the LOVE sign.
- b) Mr. Newton advised on the STEPS building. The Deed is at the clerk's office for recording and has been signed by the County IDA. Mr. Newton stated the roof on the office building has gotten in worse shape and is getting estimates on repairing the roof. Mr. Newton has had several contacts on leasing the office building and is currently investigating these as they may help generate the revenue to cover the roof expense. Mr.

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Newton advised him and Mr. Kevin Ashworth, Shop Supervisor have discussed not moving everything to the new town shop building and scraping what is not needed.

- c) Mr. Newton advised the town is now a member with VA 811 for utilities and in compliance with state code. We will receive tickets for any excavating or digging within the town limits so Mr. Ashworth and his crew can go out and mark the water and sewer lines beforehand. Mr. Newton stated the fee is \$1.05 per ticket.
- d) Mr. Newton advised after last month's council meeting and discussion of inoperative vehicles, he developed a letter explaining the town ordinance. Chief Phillips then had officers deliver nearly 100 letters to homes in town. Mr. Newton stated the ordinance allows one inoperable vehicle with a car cover, not a blue tarp on the property unless it is enclosed. VPD will be enforcing next month.
- e) Mayor Watson advised Student Government Day will be Wednesday, April 8, 2020 for Central High School students from 9am until noon. They will be visiting local town and county offices to learn more about their responsibilities and operations. All councilmembers are invited to attend.

Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to go into closed session:

- a. Prospective Business and Possible Incentives, according to Section 2.2-3711(A)(5).
CLOSED SESSION MARCH 10, 2020

Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to return to regular session according to Code of VA 2.2-3712(D) 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 unanimous yes. Motion carried.

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

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Carol R. Watson, Mayor

Approved April 14, 2020

Rodney Newton, Town Manager