

Town Council Meeting

March 14, 2023

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on March 14, 2023, 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., Christopher Garrett, Sandra Jones and Chris Gill. Also attending were Town Manager Rodney Newton, Treasurer Diane Harding, Town Clerk Vickie McDaniel, Police Chief Joel Manning 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. Councilmember Brame asked to speak on safety. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Brame as item 10(b) under Informational Items. Town Manager Rodney Newton asked to speak on Capital Improvement Plan, History and Tourism and surplus equipment. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton as items 10(c), 10(d) and 10(e) under Information Items. Citizens Tacarra Marchman and Sonya Blackwell asked to speak about sponsoring an event in the park. Mayor Smith added them as item 10(f) under Informational Items.

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 February 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 February 2023. Motion carried.

Mayor Smith and Chief Joel Manning welcomed both full time police officers Justin Beagle and Joseph Behler to the Town of Victoria PD. Mayor Smith advised always be professional, respectful and follow your leadership. He has heard a lot of good things about the police department and looks forward to working with them. Town Manager Rodney Newton announced Officer Rondell White will be joining the PD as a F/T Officer effective April 1, 2023. Officer White has been working as a P/T officer since July 2022. Chief Manning praised the new department and all their hard work. Chief Manning also thanked Town Manager Rodney Newton, Treasurer Diane Harding, Town Clerk Vickie McDaniel and Police Secretary Sue Behler.

Chief Joel Manning presented the Police Report. He stated they had a busy month with 244 calls, 47 citations and four arrests. VPD officers apprehended an individual living in the town of Victoria with a Capias FTA warrant in Brunswick County. VPD officers made a vehicle stop for a wanted individual from Chesterfield County and transported the subject to Piedmont Regional Jail. Chief Manning thanked Mrs. Sue Behler who has been diligently training and entering in Shieldware, making this the first month of full reporting in all categories in their case filling system. Town Manager Rodney Newton advised of a DCJS grant opportunity. He stated \$152,000 has been allocated to the Town of Victoria and we must justify the need for it. Mr. Newton and Chief Manning worked on their narrative for the grant which is due by March 24, 2023. The plans are to purchase two vehicles, applying for mobile data services, laptop computers to put inside all police vehicles and if funds are available, looking at in-car camera systems. Mr. Newton advised we should know by mid-May 2023 of approval. There were no further questions regarding the Police Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones 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 123 responses with 52 calls at Station 2 and 71 calls at Station 7. There were no questions regarding the Fire Department 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:

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- a) Mr. Newton discussed the new zoning of the property at 300 Court Street (STEPS). With the recent renovations of using as the town shop and possibly two tenants, the property will be better zoned as General Commercial instead of Light Industrial. Also, zoning at the old shoe factory may need to be addressed as well. This property is also zoned as Light Industrial but may be better served as being zoned General Commercial. Mr. Newton stated all adjoining property is zoned General Commercial and this could be a significant selling point. Council agreed with Town Manager Newton to change the current Light Commercial zoning to General Commercial. Mr. Newton will pass along to Mr. Lee Smyth to use in his marketing of the old shoe factory.
- b) Councilmember Brame discussed the burning laws. Mr. Brame stated the Virginia burning law is no burning permitted before 4:00pm effective February 15th until April 30th.
- c) Mr. Newton provided council a draft last month of the Capital Improvement Plan for the Town of Victoria. Councilmember Mattox had some recommendations he would like to add. First was the Lunenburg/Victoria Industrial Site on Court Street. Councilmember Mattox recommended clearing the trees and develop the site into a flat and ready to build site for the two 14 acre lots already proposed. Second is Lunenburg Lake. We need to work to secure funding and permission to either raise the dam or dredge the lake to increase our water supply. Also, repair the pumps, intake line and pumphouse and maybe looking at fixing up the old sediment pond.
- d) Mr. Newton advised council he has talked with Mayor Smith and they would like to take the office out in the front lobby and open it up. We currently have two display cases and would like to turn it into a historical area for the town. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to proceed with the renovation. Motion carried. Councilmember Mattox added a few ideas to try to preserve the town history. He discussed providing electricity service to both Virginia Railway buildings in the park and replace the windows and doors on the yard office building. Also, work on the inside of the yard office building with better lighting, shelves and display cases to show some of the railway history. Councilmember Mattox suggested additional signs with pictures and descriptions of the VGN Depot, Roundhouse, etc. Councilmember Mattox mentioned Rails-to-Trails and completing unfinished trails to Merryman Drive. We had gotten permission for the side trail around the airport and looping back around to the old reservoir but will need a drainage pipe. Then the side trail to Lunenburg Lake. Councilmember Mattox agreed with Mayor Smith's recommendations at last month's meeting locating pictures of old buildings in town and may want to come up with a standard design. As well as the Falls, develop a trail below the dam on both sides and build an access road and parking lot below the bridge. Lastly, develop Friends of Victoria Railroad Park and Trails whereby volunteers will help keep the trails clean, etc. Mayor Smith agreed with soliciting for volunteers for the Friends of Victoria Railroad Park and Trail. Councilmember Jones liked the ideas but mentioned for the last three years, we have been talking about getting the trail fixed across Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Newton advised Councilmember Jones that it's already in the Capital Improvement Plan and once we get the sewer project completed, it's on the list to be done.
- e) Mr. Newton advised of two DMV printers in the office that we are no longer using:
- Lexmark T640 model -serial number 791WMMW
 - Lexmark T640 model- serial number 791KNTL
- Mr. Newton asked council's permission to surplus these items. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to proceed with the disposal of the two Lexmark T640 printers. Motion carried.
- f) Citizens Tacarra Marchman and Sonya Blackwell with "Klassy Divas" spoke to council about a possible fundraiser in the park on Saturday, September 2, 2023. It will be called "The Heavy Hitters of Soul". Their goal is to bring revenue to the town with a crowd of approximately 2,000 people. Ms. Marchman explained tickets will be sold for those 21 and older if alcohol will be allowed. Mrs. Blackwell advised Mr. Lewis is the founder of itsdoable.org and it's a non-profit organization that serves the at-risk youth of the community. Mrs. Blackwell explained they are throughout North Carolina and looking to

expand to Virginia. They give back to the community with bookbag drives, Christmas giveaways, etc. They will be hiring local vendors, staff and law enforcement. The event will include DJ's, bands and food vendors. There will be activities for the children as well. Councilmember Brame questioned where they would hold the event. Mrs. Blackwell explained in the Victoria Town Park from 2:00pm until 9:00pm with a hired security company and proper licensing for the event. Town Manager Rodney Newton recommended the organizer, Mr. Lewis meet with town council. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to consider the fundraising event. Motion carried.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton updated we were approved for an IDA Planning Grant in the amount of \$30,000 for Mr. and Mrs. Collin Brown for the renovations of the old hardware store on 8th and Main Street. This will assist them in some of their architectural drawings and assessment of hazards that may be in the building. Mr. Newton stated the funds must be used by the end of July 2023.
- b) Mr. Newton updated on 300 Court Street (STEPS). The hole in the floor has been filled with dirt and plans to pour concrete in the next coming weeks. He stated openings for the new doors for the front should be here later this week. IDA has met with one tenant for approximately 8,000 sq. feet of the facility and negotiations are underway with another possible tenant.
- c) Mr. Newton advised they are still waiting on the estimate for the second pump at the water plant. The repair, cleaning and inspection of the elevated tank was pushed back to Monday, March 20, 2023. The tank will be offline for several days. Mr. Newton congratulated our waterworks department for receiving the 2022 Excellence in Waterworks Operations/Performance Award at the gold level.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the sewer project. We were notified last week that we were not awarded the DEQ ARPA Sewer System Grant. The force main construction is scheduled to begin Monday, March 20, 2023 beginning at the west plant and working up Grove Avenue. Mr. Newton provided the preliminary drawings of the pumpstation for the west facility for those who were interested in viewing. The estimate for this project is \$920,000. Mr. Newton recommended we take this on as a construction by town forces with help as needed with electrical or any other services we may need. While meeting with Sam with B&B Consultants he pointed out it was its very hard to find someone to bid on jobs due to contractors working with Microsoft. Mr. Newton stated we are moving forward with B&B Consultants preparing the drawings and specifications but will not be going out for bid. The plan is to have it operational by December 31, 2023 and we can stop putting anything into the west facility. Our goal for the west facilities final closure date is June 2024.
- e) Mr. Newton followed up with council on the equipment purchase from Mr. Ed Brown in the amount of \$145,000 for the CAT 924G Loader, bulldozer, pipe and fittings, chains, slings and accessories. Mr. Newton with finalize the purchase by the end of the week with equipment in hand within the next two weeks. Once the loaders in service, they will advertise selling of the backhoe.
- f) Mr. Newton advised at the Board of Supervisors meeting last week, several received an email from Mr. Gordon Erby. This was in reference to a project he worked on in 1995 to build a new dam and raise the level of the dam at Nottoway Falls. Mr. Erby wanted to bring to their attention, B&B Consultants provided him an estimate at that time of \$22M.
- g) Mr. Newton updated on a list that Councilmember Brame generated several years ago on our sewer pumpstation generators. He stated anything in green has been taking care of and in yellow is in progress. Most of these pumpstations just had a red light on the outside or a buzzer. We have installed one at the Garthright Pumpstation and have purchased two more that have come in. These have a high-volume alarm that will send text messages and the new pumpstation at west will have the same. Mr. Newton advised we have installed a generator at Marshall Pumpstation and purchased one here at the

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brick pumpstation but that has not been installed yet. We have purchased a generator for the small Park Avenue Pumpstation so that only leaves the Jenkins Pumpstation (on KV Road) that needs a generator.

- h) Mr. Newton advised on the FY24 Budget. We received our health insurance rates recently with an increase of 1.82% (\$12.00 a month per employee). Mr. Newton will be getting the Budget vs. Actual report to the Finance Committee and looking at May 2023 for a work session.
- i) Mr. Newton advised the Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, April 8th in the Victoria Railroad Park starting at 10:00a.m.

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

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved April 11, 2023

Rodney Newton, Town Manager