

## Town Council Meeting

March 11, 2025

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The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on March 11, 2025, in the Town Municipal building with the Honorable Allen D. Smith, Mayor, presiding: Councilmember's in attendance were 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. Absent was Councilmember Ronald Mattox.

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.

Town Manager Rodney Newton introduced to council Mr. Nathan Coey with Moonshot Missions. He will be working with the water treatment plant operators the next two days on ways to help improve our operations. Mr. Coey is from Phoenix, Arizona.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to go into a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission on the Lunenburg/Town of Kenbridge/Town of Victoria Joint Comprehensive Plan for FY2025-2030. Motion carried. Motion was made by Mr. Christopher Tomlinson and seconded by Mr. Rob Williams with the Planning Commission to go into a Joint Public Hearing with Town Council on the Lunenburg/Town of Kenbridge/Town of Victoria Joint Comprehensive Plan for FY2025-2030. Motion carried.

Ms. Lauren Pugh, Planning Director with CRC (Commonwealth Regional Council) provided a quick presentation about the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Pugh advised comprehensive plans are required by VA. State Code, Section 15.2-2223. She explained this is a guide for counties and towns for growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan is reviewed every five years and this year focused a lot on transportation with VDOT approval. Ms. Pugh advised it's data-driven research and analysis with a lot more data for VDOT with expansion and mapping of the transportation department. She informed council of additional special policy areas like Preserving Rural Character and Agricultural Heritage, Water Resource Protection, Smart Growth Zoning, and Corridor Development and Infrastructure Enhancements. Ms. Pugh advised implementation and updating ordinances to align with the Joint Comprehensive Plan and reviewing the Comprehensive Plan more than every five years. Mayor Smith thanked both Lauren Pugh and Town Manager Rodney Newton for all the work they put into this.

No comments were made.

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

Motion was made by Mr. Rob Williams and seconded by Mr. Gill Coffee to come out of the Joint Public Hearing with Town Council. Motion carried.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Councilmember Jones had a citizen complaint. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Jones under Information Items as item

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(d). Town Manager Newton asked to speak about Southern Virginia Small Towns Characterization Initiative BOOMS Project. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Information Items as item (e).

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 Jones to accept the February 2025 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Jones and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Treasurer's Report for February 2025. Motion carried.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. Chief Lawson stated they had a busy month. They answered 253 calls, issued 85 citations and 2 arrests. He advised Lt. Beagle will begin General Instructor School starting next week. Chief Lawson introduced Officer J. R. Newman who is already a certified officer. Officer Newman's first day was March 1, 2025 with the Town of Victoria Police Department. There were no questions regarding the Police Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

Fire Chief Frankie Tanner presented the Fire Department Report. He advised they had a busy month with a total of 133 responses for the month of February for Station 2 and Station 7 due to an increase in fire calls. Chief Tanner provided the Financial Report for January 2025. He informed council the Financial Reports will be one-month behind due to a third-party agency they are using. They are working on a solution for this. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

### Informational Items:

- a) The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Joint Comprehensive Plan for FY25-30. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to approve the Joint Comprehensive Plan for FY25-30. Motion carried.
- b) Mr. Newton discussed the utility billing process again. This was brought up approximately a year ago about changing the billing process for our customers. Mr. Newton explained since our current billings are 45-days out, we are unable to store previous readings. This is an issue when there are high readings and possible leaks. The new meters only store data for 30 days. Currently our meters are read on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and billed the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. Mr. Newton advised when meters are read on June 1<sup>st</sup>, that bill can be paid over twelve months or up front (one time). Then on June 25<sup>th</sup>, the meters will be read again and bills will be mailed on the 1<sup>st</sup> starting July 2025. Letters were mailed out last week to all our customers explaining this change. Motion was made by Councilmember Gill and seconded by Councilmember Brame to move forward with the utility billing change. Motion carried.

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- c) Mr. Newton advised we still do not have a permanent Town Attorney at this time. Attorney Frank Rennie with CowanGates is assisting the town right now and also the county attorney. Mr. Newton will keep council updated on a possible replacement.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed last month the \$50,000.00 from the Poorhouse Solar Project and using those funds to fix the parking lot across from the library, behind Bliss of Lunenburg, which is a town public parking lot. Council approved to fix the parking lot at a cost of \$36,000.00 to completely pave and line the parking lot and also tie back into the entrance. Mr. Newton hopes they will start on this next week. Mr. Newton also discussed the parking lot across from the Victoria Baptist Church which is a joint venture (50/50) between the Town of Victoria and Victoria Baptist Church. Mr. Newton advised the quote came back for \$23,000.00 repave and line the parking lot. If town council and Victoria Baptist Church approves, it will cost \$11,500.00 each. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Jones to proceed with only if all parties agree to splitting costs of paving the lot across from Victoria Baptist Church. Motion carried. Mr. Newton advised the next church meeting will be Wednesday, March 19, 2025. Councilmember Jones inquired about using the remaining \$500.00 to line the parking lot at the Victoria Town Park. Mr. Newton will look into this.
- e) Councilmember Jones provided photos of a citizen complaint regarding a sewer line laying exposed on top of the ground at 1109 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Newton advised unfortunately there's not much that can be done. This is on the homeowner. Mr. Newton advised the town picks up at the VDOT right-of-way according to our town ordinances. Councilmember Jones asked Mr. Newton to contact the homeowner to explain this.
- f) Mr. Newton provided council a grant that CRC is studying to provide to southside communities. The BOOMS (Building Opportunities on Main Street) study is basically identifying towns and counties with historic designation. The Town of Kenbridge already has some historic designations. This is a three-year project that is being partially funded through the Tobacco Commission with some DHCD funding and the Va. Main Street program. Mr. Newton advised the localities first share of the project would be approximately \$2,000.00 for FY26. The next phase would be around \$2,500.00 for FY27. Mr. Newton asked council would they be interested in this BOOMS study. It can be very restrictive and is geared towards the businesses. Councils decision was no.

### Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton updated on the wastewater project. He advised they are still chasing the storm water problem. This week they are moving materials to Tidewater Avenue for preparation of that project. The manholes came in Monday and are moving pipe and gravel to get ready. They will start on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street and go all the way to West 10<sup>th</sup> Street putting in new manholes and sewer lines. Mr. Newton advised it may affect traffic flow as they will have to close the road.
- b) Mr. Newton updated on the water plant. The hazardous material that was approved last month has been picked up and removed. They continue with clean-up and preventive

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maintenance at the plant. Mr. Nathan Coey with Moonshot Missions is here and will be working with the plant operators tomorrow and Thursday. They will be looking at ways to enhance operations at the water plant. Mr. Newton provided council a proposal from Master Engineers & Designers for the structural assessment of the concrete walls and sedimentation of the basins. Mr. Newton provided photos of the basin and concrete wall at last month's meeting. It seems to be the same areas that were repaired in 2005. It will cost \$11,000.00 to get the assessment done. With this, they will be doing core samples to test for alkali-silica reactivity (ASR) which could be causing the deterioration. Mr. Newton informed council that one basin holds 82,000 gallons of water and if that wall was to collapse it would be a big issue and leave us with just one basin to treat water. Mr. Newton is requesting guidance on the proposal cost. Councilmember Garrett suggested using the parking lot funds for the Victoria Baptist Church for the basin repairs. Treasurer Diane Harding explained those funds have been allocated for street and parking lot repairs. Motion was made by Councilmember Garrett and seconded by Councilmember Brame for Town Manager Newton to work with the Finance Committee and move forward with the proposal. Motion carried.

- c) Mr. Newton discussed the Modest Creek bridge replacement. We were awarded a VOF Grant in the amount of \$240,000.00. The preliminary contract has been started.
- d) Mr. Newton advised we have gotten a proposal from VaCorp on insurance for property, workman's comp, etc. and are waiting on the proposal from VRSA to compare. We need to set-up a budget work session. In the past, we had the Public Hearing in May so we will need to advertise in April. Our regular council meeting is on April 8, 2025 and we usually meet for the work session prior to the April council meeting. Council agreed to meet on Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:00pm.
- e) Mr. Newton updated on the town shop. They have moved most of the fittings and wraps and now have a very organized storage area. During the past week, we have received several inquiries about the property. Council will need to decide if we want to sell the property or not. Councilmember Elam and Councilmember Brame advised to sell the property as is. Mr. Newton advised some want to fix up the old town shop and use it. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Brame to hold a Public Hearing at the April council meeting to sell the property at 1220 Main Street. Motion carried.
- f) Mr. Newton advised we will have a Food Truck Rodeo in the park Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:00pm until 8:00pm. There will be five food vendors there.
- g) Mr. Newton advised the Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00am in the park.
- h) Mr. Newton advised Music in the Park will begin April 18, 2025 from 6:00pm until 9:00pm. Mr. William Pernell is also working with a potential concert through a grant program at the Victoria Community Centre in July 2025.

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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.

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Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

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Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved April 8, 2025

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Rodney Newton, Town Manager