

Town Council Meeting

November 14, 2023

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on November 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, and Police Chief Camden Lawson. Absent was Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend.

Mayor Smith 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 Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Councilmember Elam asked to speak about vehicle exhaust. Mayor Smith added Councilmember Elam under Informational Items as item (d). Councilmember Garrett asked to speak about the town pool. Mayor Smith added councilmember Garret under Informational Items as item (e). Mayor Smith also asked to speak about the town park and ordinances. Mayor Smith was added under Information Items as item (f) and item (g).

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 October 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to accept the Treasurer's report for October 2023. Motion carried.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the police report. Chief Lawson stated they had 83 calls, two arrests and eight citations. The police department has received all new uniforms. Chief Lawson advised the interview process for another Police Officer will start on Thursday, November 9, 2023 and possibly another interview next week. They have tagged 37 inoperable vehicles in town so far but have not completed the process. Some of the inoperable vehicles have been moved off the property while others were giving information on how to take care of them (covers, getting repaired or scrapped). Chief Lawson updated on the two new Dodge Durango's. Both are in the process of being installed with new lights, cages, etc. Mayor Smith commended the Police Department. Councilmember Elam inquired about a tractor trailer parked on the lot next to the elevated tank. Chief Lawson will investigate it. Also, Councilmember Elam has had several people comment on some town park issues regarding bad language and the smell of marijuana. Chief Lawson advised they have been paying more attention to the park and are taking pictures of trash. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

Town Manager Rodney Newton presented the Fire Department Report. He stated they had a total of 164 responses with 59 calls at Station 2 and 105 calls at Station 7. Assistant Chief Townsend is working on switching over to the new digital countywide public safety radio system effective today. Mr. Newton mentioned the Truck-n-Tractor Pull scheduled for October 2023 was cancelled but has already set dates for next year for June 1, 2024 and the second Saturday in October 2024. 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.

Town Manager Rodney Newton provided council a Thank You note from Mayor Carol Watson for the recent LOVE sign dedication.

Informational Items:

- a) Councilmember Brame nominated Mr. Christopher Tomlinson for the Board of Zoning Appeals to replace Ms. Sharon Harding who recently moved out of town. Mr. Tomlinson has had a lot of dealings with people and is dedicated to his country and town. Retired Sgt. Major Tomlinson worked for Councilmember Brame at Ft. Pickett for a few years and was the best employee he ever had. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded

by Councilmember Mattox to accept the nomination for Board of Zoning Appeals. Motion carried. Town Manager Rodney Newton will let the circuit court know as well.

- b) Mr. Newton provided council a draft of Regulation of Alleys. Town Attorney, Robert Clement was present for the meeting to answer any questions. After reviewing the information submitted by several councilmembers it was crafted to meet our needs for the town. Council will need to discuss a period of time within a 24-hour period that shall park or leave vehicles, ATV's, lawn and garden equipment, etc in an alley and a punishable fine per violation. Citizen Alvin Powell questioned the draft provided. Mr. Newton explained tonight's council will be crafting the draft and a Public Hearing will be held at a later date whereby the public can state their concerns then. Town Attorney Robert Clement stated the town may also remove the vehicle, ATV, etc and then charge for it. Council recommended a total period of one hour parked within a 24-hour period and a \$50.00 fine for each violation. Citizen Alvin Powell questioned the time for working in his shop that faces the alley. Town Attorney Clement stated there is no exception for working. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Jones to hold a Public Hearing at the December council meeting. Motion carried. Mr. Newton asked Attorney Clement for a final draft for the Public Hearing.
- c) Mr. Newton provided a draft copy from the CRC on the establishment of a Regional Economic Development Organization. Currently, Lunenburg County is a member of the Virginia Growth Allowance along with Nottoway, Charlotte, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia and Buckingham. This has been in the works for CRC for a while with the intent of bringing business and economic growth and interests to the localities. Mr. Newton has an interview tomorrow and wanted feedback from town council. Councilmember Mattox had several comments regarding how we pay the CRC now and the town doesn't see any participation from it like the county does. The costs are spread across the counties and doesn't see where this would benefit Lunenburg like Prince Edward for example. Also, he is not sure they will have the town's interest at heart in supporting business in the town. Councilmember Mattox provided his concerns to Mr. Newton to pass along in the interview. Councilmember Brame also questioned the investment in sites, parks, buildings and infrastructures to attract, retain and start up businesses. Mr. Newton discussed the downfall for us was the size of the Industrial Park with 28 acres but it has wetlands in it so it all cannot be developed. Mr. Newton also advised one of the things businesses are looking for is a pre-existing building. Mr. Newton will relay councils concerns at the interview.
- d) Councilmember Elam attended the last Board of Supervisors meeting where they adopted a Vehicle Exhaust/Excessive Noise ordinance. He spoke with their attorney and they suggested that both towns (Victoria and Kenbridge) adopt this as well so it will be uniform across the county. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Brame to hold a Public Hearing at the December council meeting on the Vehicle Exhaust/Excessive Noise ordinance after Town Attorney Clement reviews. Motion carried.
- e) Councilmember Garrett updated council on the town pool. He recently spoke with Aquionics and provided them with some pictures of the pool. They had a few questions. Councilmember Garrett will meet with Mr. Newton to address those questions and get back with Aquionics so they can advise what needs to be fixed or changed. Mr. Newton also recommended asking can we switch from chlorine to a salt-based system due to the increase cost of chlorine. Councilmember Garrett will get back with council at the December 2023 meeting.
- f) Mayor Smith discussed the recent complaints at the town park. We have some work that needs to be done in the park and not just the ordinances. We depend on the town employees to do a lot, however Mayor Smith would like for council to recruit people to come out and help with the upkeep of the park, such as picking up trash, adding mulch, etc. Mayor Smith also mentioned The Falls is getting more notoriety. Mayor Smith would like to see more community involvement by all ages and recommended a Spring clean-up in 2024. Councilmember Jones mentioned those who need community service hours. Mr. Newton advised we have used a few in the past but unfortunately you cannot leave them alone to do the work. Councilmembers will get back with Mayor Smith at the January 2024 council meeting with their suggestions.

- g) Mayor Smith discussed ordinances of the town. He mentioned over the last several years, we have had revisions to some. Mayor Smith asked for new residents, is there something we provide to them from the town. Treasurer, Diane Harding advised we give them a “Welcome Letter” that explains a few things about the town. Mr. Newton recommended getting with administration and reviewing what’s being provided to new residents and perhaps adding some things to it before coming back to council in January 2024.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton updated on the sewer project. We are getting close to the end of our consent order, December 31, 2023. The west wastewater plant electrical panel is being built and as soon as we sign off on the pump tests, the pumps will ship on Friday. The generator transfer switch will be here in late November and the wet wall the first week of December. We will have a busy December to meet our deadline but do have a contingency plan we’re working on that if we can’t make the date of December 31st and having the pumpstation operational, we have a plan in place where we will use another pump from a different section and reroute it and stop putting influent into the west wastewater plant. We recently did our five-year renewal with DEQ on the east wastewater plant but not the west wastewater plant. Mr. Newton advised basically we have 90-days from January 24, 2024 to discontinue discharging from the west plant. Mr. Newton stated the force main is finished and tied in. Once this project is complete, council will be able to see how much money we saved by utilizing town resources.
- b) Mr. Newton discussed the recent 4th Street sewer collapse. We replaced 400 ft of 8” pipe sewer line and is completed. Mr. Newton advised we are waiting for pricing from the paving company to repave the entire street. He explained cost to date for this project, except the paving is \$14,265.79.
- c) Mr. Newton advised the utility bills went out on October 31st; however, they were mailed to Richmond instead of coming back to the Victoria Post Office. Town Clerk, Vickie McDaniel contacted our business representative with the USPS, Mr. Ronnie Duncan. He informed Mrs. McDaniel this should not have happened. In the future, we will send a Form 8021 with the utility bills for proper handling and mailing from our local post office. Also, Mr. Newton discussed working with FMS to send utility bills electronically to their email address and reducing the amount we have to mail out to the customers.
- d) Mr. Newton advised we have 20 Hometown Hero’s Banners requested and two individuals that Mrs. Behler is waiting on to finalize the order. The banners will go up next year once they come in.
- e) Mr. Newton reminded council the Christmas Parade will be on Friday, December 1st at 7pm.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Elam to adjourn the meeting.

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

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved December 12, 2023

Rodney Newton, Town Manager