

Minutes

Town Council Meeting

February 13, 2023

The Town Council held its monthly meeting on Monday, February 13, 2023, in the council room of the Town Hall. Those joining the assembly were: Brian Laine, Mayor; Michael Kessinger, Dennis Mason, Darlene Whiting, Brian Wills, and Frances Chambers, Council Members; Pat Bowden, Fire Chief; David West, SSA Representative; Robyn Croft, Treasurer; Bonita Meyers, Clerk.

Call to order: The mayor called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm, leading all those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call and Adoption of Agenda: The clerk called the roll; all members were present except O.E. Parker, III. Mrs. Whiting moved to adopt the agenda as presented, Mr. Kessinger seconded, and Council voted unanimously by raised hands to accept the motion.

Announcements: None

Minutes: Mr. Wills moved to dispense with the reading of the January minutes and to approve them as presented. Mr. Mason seconded; Council voted unanimously to accept the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Mrs. Croft presented the treasurer's report as follows:

Balance on hand in the General Fund as of January 31, 2023 - \$252,739.76

Bills presented for payment as of January 31, 2023 - \$44,831.51

Mr. Kessinger made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented, Mr. Wills seconded the motion, and Council voted unanimously by raised hands in favor of the motion.

Citizen Statements: Ms. Fay Gay asked about the progress of removing the dilapidated single-wide trailer at 108 Pine Street. Mrs. Whiting assured her the Town had begun the procedure required for code enforcement, including 108 Pine Street.

Committee Reports: Committee Appointments

Fire Department: Chief Bowden presented Council with a copy of the latest hydrant survey and pointed out several hydrants that needed attention. Chief Bowden also presented the following slate of officers: Pat Bowden, Chief; James Rogers, 1st Assistant Chief; and John Rose, 1st Lieutenant.

Sussex Service Authority: Frank Irving addressed the Council to inform them that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors had ordered Davenport to analyze the Sussex Service Authority budget. Davenport indicated the SSA was \$98,000.00 in the red. Mr. Irving insisted it was not an accurate assessment and would send Davenport his budget figures and speak with them tomorrow.

The budget analysis' aim was to see if American Water Company could purchase the Sussex Service Authority. He also announced that Davenport would be meeting with the Sussex County Board of Supervisors soon and that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors had invited all the mayors to the SSA Board meeting. Mr. West was instructed to vote NO until more information is received.

Airport: The mayor reported that all the lights had been inspected and approved by Talbert and Bright and the Department of Aviation. He said the next projects on the agenda are:

- The runway's crack and seal.
- The hanger area's crack and seal.
- The beacon's LED light.

An 80/20 grant from the state will fund these. Mrs. Chambers asked about having the sign painted on the front of the building, and the mayor said that an 80/20 grant from the state could also finance it.

Ballpark/Recreation: the mayor reported that the new scoreboard was installed. River City said the panel box is corroded, which is why the breaker keeps tripping. They recommend upgrading the lights to LED.

Budget/Finance: All budget requests must be submitted to the treasurer by March 10, 2023.

Cemetery: None

Emergency Services/Safety: Mr. Kessinger announced that Mr. Foster, the County Public Safety Coordinator was retiring as of March 1, 2023, and E. Thomas Hicks from the Berkley Group will be acting as interim coordinator.

Personnel: After some discussion, the Council agreed to begin advertising for part-time summer help. The employee would work 32 hours per week from May to September; the minimum age is 16 years old, and the pay rate is \$16 per hour.

Planning Commission: Mrs. Chambers recommended reappointing Pam Wills and Lance Trgina to the Planning Commission with their terms ending in 2027.

Mrs. Chambers also announced that the Planning Commission would begin working on the Comprehensive Plan, which was last updated in 2014. She said she had contacted David Blount, the executive director of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commission and the Deputy Director of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District. Mrs. Chambers indicated that a budget line should be added for expenses.

Mrs. Chambers also said she would attend Property Owner Training on February 28, sponsored by Virginia Gateway Region (VGR) and Retail Strategies.

Property Maintenance: None

Streets/Beautification: Mr. Mason reported that the sidewalk on E Main St. needs to be weeded and cleaned. The mayor recommended that Mr. Mason contact VDOT to schedule a street sweeper.

Utilities: Mr. Chambers met with Nick Garrett at the IGA, who requested to have two light poles set in their parking lot. Mr. Chambers will get two bids to set the poles.

Mr. Chambers attended the January VEMA meeting and recommended a work session to evaluate the utility rates for the fiscal year 2023—2024 due to the rise in costs.

Pole tags have been ordered, installation dates need to be set, and bids obtained to do the work.

Bids for tree trimming were received. Mr. Kessinger motioned to accept the Sales Associates' bid, Mrs. Whiting seconded the move, and Council voted unanimously by raising hands to favor the movement.

Vehicle Maintenance Mr. Wills recommended moving the brush truck to the airport and parking it in a hanger or selling it, as it does not have a generator. Mr. Kessinger made a motion to sell the truck for \$6000.00 or the best offer, Mr. Wills seconded the move, and Council voted unanimously by raised hands in favor of the motion.

Zoning: None

Legal: None

Old Business: the mayor reported he wanted to confirm that the VDOT turning lane, scheduled to be completed soon, was in their budget.

Sussex County Chamber of Commerce Event: Council agreed they needed to get ball game dates before planning the event. It was also decided to create a committee to plan the event. Brian Wills said his wife, Pam Wills, would like to serve on the committee, and Mr. Mason also volunteered.

New Business: Elect Council President – Mr. Kessinger motioned for the Council to table the Council President election until the next meeting. Mr. Wills seconded the move, and Council voted unanimously by raised hands in favor of the motion.

After some discussion about the garbage needing to be picked up as scheduled, Mr. Kessinger motioned to send a certified letter to Bay Disposal requesting better communications or put the job out for bid. Mr. Wills seconded the move, and Council voted unanimously by raised hands in favor of the motion.

Council agreed to accept the reappointment of Pam Will and Lance Trgina to the Planning Commission.

Executive Session – Specified Legal Matters: Council unanimously moved into Executive Session at 8:35 pm to discuss a legal matter for privacy under Section 2.2-3711 A-7 of the Code of Virginia. The committee reconvened at 8:53 pm, all members certifying to the best of their knowledge that only lawfully exempted public business matters for which this executive session was called were heard, discussed, or considered in private.

Adjourn: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Brain M. Laine, Mayor

Bonita JC Meyers

Bonita Meyers, Clerk