

Minutes Outline

Town Council Meeting

August 14, 2023

The Town Council held its monthly meeting on Monday, August 14, 2023, in the council room of the Town Hall. Those joining the assembly were Brian Laine, Mayor; Oscar E. Parker, III, Council President; Frances Chamber, Michael Kessinger, Dennis Mason, Darlene Whiting, Brian Wills, Council Members; Robyn Croft, Treasurer; Bonita Meyers, Clerk.

Call to order: The mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 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.

Mr. Wills moved to adopt the agenda as presented, and Mrs. Whiting seconded; the Council voted unanimously by raised hands to accept the motion.

Announcements: None

Minutes: Mr. Mason moved to dispense with the reading of the July minutes and the August 3, 2023, called meeting minutes, and to approve them as presented, Mr. Parker 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 July 31, 2023 - \$212,029.86

Bills presented for payment as of July 31, 2023 - \$32,550.32

At the council meeting, Mrs. Croft announced that the final payment for the loan to Towne Bank is due this month. She also informed the Council that the auditors will conduct their annual review next week. Additionally, it was mentioned that we had received the yearly true-up amount of \$65,100.21 from VEMA.

Mr. Kessinger motioned to accept the treasurer's report as presented, Mrs. Chambers seconded the action, and the Council voted unanimously by raising hands in favor of the move.

Citizen Statements: Limited to 2 minutes per speaker

- 1) Paul Rogers expressed gratitude to the Council for sponsoring the Sussex Southampton baseball team. He boasted that this team achieved the greatest success of any team in 20 years, with a final record of 13-8-1. He also mentioned that newspaper articles will be published soon in Sussex Surry Dispatch and two other publications.
- 2) Sheriff Giles gave an update on the investigation into recent breaking and entering incidents. Investigators are pursuing two persons of interest and are asking for the public's assistance. If you notice anything suspicious, please report it. Sheriff Giles also suggested that all new businesses in the Town should be required to install surveillance cameras. The Va State Police and Inland Game and Fisheries are also helping with the investigation.
- 3) Ed Rumler, the Project Developer for Clenera, spoke to address the concerns laid out in the Blackwater Solar Farm opposition resolution presented to the Sussex County Board of Supervisors by the Town of Wakefield. He acknowledged that they had reviewed a copy of the resolution and wanted to address some of the concerns raised. He also wanted to highlight the concessions they had made in response to some of the concerns.

- a) To address the concerns of dangerous chemicals, he stated that computer chips would replace the hazardous chemicals instead of using cadmium batteries.
- b) A thorough review of road use will be conducted before and after construction, and any resulting damage will be repaired. Additionally, a bond for road damage is required to be posted.
- c) Regarding erosion and drainage channels, the DEQ has set minimum requirements to follow during construction. It's important to note that they aim to steer clear of sensitive areas. Additionally, a \$2 million bond must be put up during construction. The most extensive area of development spans 300-400 acres.
- d) A mature vegetation buffer of 150 feet will be preserved to maintain property values. This will ensure that the farm is not visible and does not affect the surrounding area.
- e) Solar farms rarely experience fires, but in the event of a fire emergency, first responders will have access to adequate water sources for fire retardation.

Many people from the Town and surrounding County attended the meeting. They thoroughly questioned Mr. Rumler and voiced their grievances and concerns about the Solar Farm.

Committee Reports:

Fire Department: No Report

Sussex Service Authority: No Report

Airport: No Report

Ballpark/Recreation: No Report

Budget/Finance: No Report

Cemetery: No Report

Emergency Services/Safety: Mr. Kessinger shared two quotes from Sheehey Ford for a new police vehicle to be used by the additional officer assigned to the Town. After a brief discussion, Mr. Parker motioned to accept the 2021 Ford Police Interceptor for \$34,786.20. Mr. Wills seconded the motion, and the Council unanimously approved the purchase.

Personnel: No Report

Planning Commission: Mrs. Chambers reported that the Planning Commission accepted the bid from the Crater District Planning Commission to work on the Comprehensive Plan.

Property Maintenance: No Report

Streets/Beautification: The discussion brought two issues to Mr. Mason's attention. The first issue pertains to the cracked sidewalk surrounding the water meter located on Church Street. The second issue relates to the stop sign at the intersection of Railroad Ave and Wilson Ave, which has been hit and is now leaning onto the adjacent building. Mr. Mason has assured all that he will investigate and address both matters.

Utilities: A Utilities Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 6:30 pm at the town hall.

Vehicle Maintenance: No Report

Zoning: No Report

Events: No Report

Legal: No Report

Old Business: No Report

New Business: No Report

Executive Session: None

Adjourn: **With** no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Brain M. Laine, Mayor

Bonita JC Meyers

Bonita Meyers, Clerk