

Minutes
Town Council Meeting
November 13, 2023

The Town Council held its monthly meeting at the Town Hall's council room on Monday, November 13, 2023. In attendance were Brian Laine, Mayor; Oscar E. Parker, III, Council President; Frances Chamber, Michael Kessinger, Dennis Mason, Darlean Walker, and Brian Wills, Council Members; Pat Bowden, Fire Chief; Robyn Croft, Treasurer; Bonita Meyers, Clerk.

Call to order: The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: The Mayor opened the public hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Proposed Utility Rate Increase: The official public hearing had to be rescheduled due to an incorrect meeting date that was published. Nevertheless, as some members of the public were already present, Mr. Chambers, the Utility Committee Chairman, took the opportunity to explain the purpose of the proposed rate increase. He clarified that the increase was due to the higher rates passed on by Dominion Energy to VEMA and, consequently, to the VEMA constituents.

Close Public Hearing: The Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:35 p.m.

Regular Meeting Call to order: The Mayor called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., 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. Kessinger moved to adopt the agenda as presented, and Mr. Mason seconded; the Council voted unanimously by raised hands to accept the motion.

Announcements: None

Minutes: Mr. Wills moved to dispense with the reading of the October Council minutes and the October 25 called meeting minutes and to approve them as presented; Mrs. Chambers seconded; the 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 October 31, 2023 – \$207,352.79

Bills presented for payment as of October 31, 2023 – \$24,289.89

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

Committee Reports:

Fire Department: None

Sussex Service Authority: None

Airport: The mayor reported that the runway crack and seal repair work is underway. The runway will be closed this week through Friday and all of next week as well.

Ballpark/Recreation: None

Budget/Finance: None

Cemetery: Mr Wills reported that the overgrown holly trees were removed from the cemetery.

Emergency Services/Safety: Mr. Kessinger announced that the Sheriff's Department will conduct CPR classes for all Town employees. The class is three hours long and costs \$50.00 per person. Mr. Garrett from the Wakefield IGA expressed his interest in extending the offer to other businesses as well.

Mr. Kessinger also reported that the new deputy will start work on December 15, which is the start of the next pay cycle.

Personnel: None

Planning Commission: During the Comprehensive Plan Update, Mrs. Chambers presented a draft survey that comprised of 25 questions. The survey will be sent out along with the January utility bill. Respondents can provide their input by scanning the QR code in the survey or mailing it to the Town Hall.

After the presentation, Mr. Parker proposed accepting the draft survey in its current form and sending it out with the January utility bill. Mr. Wills seconded the motion, and the Council unanimously voted in favor of it by raising their hands.

Property Maintenance: Today, Mrs. Croft represented the Town of Wakefield in Civil Court for the final Property Notice of Violations hearings. The properties at 110 Pine St., 127 E. Main St., and 220 E. Church St. were under review. The Judge approved the Town's request to proceed with eradicating the blighted properties.

Streets/Beautification: Mr. Mason has reported receiving complaints about the garbage needing to be collected as scheduled.

Utilities: The Utility Committee Chairman, Mr. Lane Chambers, has confirmed that the contract for the generator purchase has been signed. He mentioned that he needs to review the pole attachment agreement once more before sending it out. However, he did indicate that the pole audits could be arranged with Charter.

Vehicle Maintenance: None

Zoning: None

Legal: None

Old Business: The Wakefield Peanut Harvest Festival was a success, and Mr. Mason expressed gratitude towards all the participants for their help. He also mentioned receiving several compliments about the event.

New Business: None

Executive Session: None

Adjourn: Since no other matters would be addressed, the meeting concluded at 7:24 p.m.

Brain M. Laine, Mayor

Bonita JC Meyers

Bonita Meyers, Clerk