

Town Council Meeting

February 12, 2025

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia was scheduled to meet on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 7:00pm. Due to inclement weather and the governor's declaration of an emergency, the meeting was rescheduled for Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 6:00pm. Notifications of meeting change were posted on the front doors of the Town Municipal building, an alert on the town website, and on Facebook.

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on February 12, 2025, 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., Sandra Jones, 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 Christopher Garrett.

Mayor Smith called the meeting of the Town Council to order.

The invocation was given by Councilmember Mattox followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to go into Public Hearing on the proposed disposition and acquisition of the alley right-of-way on Hunter Rd adjacent to 2408 Nottoway Blvd. Motion carried.

No comments were made.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to come out of Public Hearing. Motion carried.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Town Manager Newton asked to speak about R/E Tax incentives for Fellowship Chair renovations. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Information Items as item (i). Mr. Newton also asked to speak about the VA WARN Resolution. Mayor Smith added Mr. Newton under Information Items as item (j).

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 Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the January 2025 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Treasurer's Report for January 2025. Motion carried. Mr. Newton advised auditor's will be here February 26th and February 27th for our FY24 audit.

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. Chief Lawson stated they had a busy month. They answered 244 calls, issued 29 citations and 15 arrests. Chief Lawson advised we have also hired Mr. J. R. Newman who currently works for Prince Edward Sheriff's office and is a certified officer to fill the recent vacancy. Officer Newman will start March 1, 2025 with the Town of Victoria Police Department. There were no questions regarding the Police Report. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

There was a remote presentation from Flock Safety Systems introducing a solar camera system that captures license plates and vehicle descriptions in real time to better help law enforcement with stolen vehicles, hit-n-runs, missing persons, Amber Alerts, just to name a few. There are over 130 agencies in Virginia who are currently using Flock and over 3,000 automated license plate readers (ALPRs) across the Commonwealth. Lt. Beagle stated these camera's are 24/7 and share information from other agencies if needed. He said these camera's will help us identify perpetrators and give officer's additional resources. Lt. Beagle gave council a few examples of recent activity in the town where they were unable to identify an individual. With these real-time camera's, they would be able to get information on where the individual(s) went or perhaps who they are. Lt. Beagle stated we have a lot of unsolved cases due to outdated technology. He stated the Flock data is stored for 30-days and owned by the Victoria Police Department. Chief Lawson

advised these cameras will be 12-foot off the ground. Lt. Beagle advised the VSP (Virginia State Police) offer a HEAT (Help Eliminate Auto Theft) grant of \$12,500.00 each year. Mayor Smith stated the biggest advantage he saw with this system was officer safety and to prepare them ahead of time. Mayor Smith said we get a lot of pass thru traffic in town at all hours. The cost for six camera's (4 license plate readers and 2 live video cameras), software and analytics will be \$20,000.00. We will have an LPR Policy in place and this is a one-year contract. With the VSP HEAT grant of \$12,500.00, this will cover the bulk of the project. We can apply for the VSP HEAT grant annually. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to purchase the Flock Safety System. Motion carried.

Fire Chief Frankie Tanner presented the Fire Department Report. He advised they had a busy month with a total of 151 responses for the month of January for Station 2 and Station 7 due to an increase in fire calls. Chief Tanner advised the Financial Report for January will be in next month's packet. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Jones to approve the Fire/Rescue Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill on the alley right-of-way located behind 2408 Nottoway Blvd. Motion carried.
- b) Councilmember Mattox and Councilmember Jones with the Property Committee met with Mr. Mike Walker, Chairman of the IDA who requested an extension on repayment of the loan to the town until July 2025. They had a very informative meeting on things they have worked on and what they will be working on in the future. The Property Committee wants to move forward with the lease agreement for 300 Court Street. Councilmember Mattox made the motion to approve the new lease agreement for the town shop represented by the IDA with terms of \$3,000.00 a month for 10-years starting March 1, 2025, to accept the plan schedule of \$70,000.00 advance loan to the IDA starting June 15, 2025 over the next five years, to postpone the \$100,000.00 loan repayment until July 1, 2025. Councilmember Jones second the motion for the terms of the lease agreement. Motion carried.
- c) Mr. Newton advised two members of the IDA should have been reappointed in October and November 2024. Mr. Mike Walker for a term of October 1, 2024 until October 1, 2028 and Mr. Jeremiah Fix for a term of November 1, 2024 until November 1, 2028. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to accept the two reappointments. Motion carried.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the utility billing process. This was brought up many month's ago about changing the billing process for our customers. He advised that due to the change in the Code of Virginia regarding utility cut-off's there are a lot of dates to keep up with. The new meters only store data for 30 days. Currently our meters are read on the 1st of each month and billed the 1st of the following month. Mr. Newton recommended when meters are read on June 1st, that bill will be paid over the FY26 fiscal year. This will give the customers twelve months to pay this one bill. Then on June 25th, the meters will be read again and bills will be mailed on the 1st starting July 2025. Mr. Newton provided council an example of a minimum bill of \$68.50 divided by 12 months = \$5.71 bringing the total bill to \$74.21. This will not be the case with all our customers as some use over the 3,000-gallon minimum. 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. Councilmember Elam advised sending letters to customers explaining this rather quickly and again closer to the July 1st billing. Mr. Newton agreed and also suggested William do an article on our webpage. We will work on getting letters out as early as next week and revisit at the March council meeting.
- e) Mr. Newton advised Town Attorney Robert Clement submitted his resignation effective immediately. Mr. Newton has reached out to one attorney and Mr. Clement has contacted a possible replacement. Mr. Newton hopes to have a recommendation at next month's council meeting.

- f) Mr. Newton discussed how 6th Street Solar would pay the town a sum of \$50,000.00 to go towards road improvements, parking lots, etc. At that time, council wanted to use those funds to fix the parking lot across from the library, behind Bliss of Lunenburg, and the telephone office. Mr. Bruce Nunn with Lanco Paving gave us an estimate of \$38,000.00 to completely pave and line the parking lot and also tie back into the entrance. We have received the \$50,000.00 from 6th Street Solar. Mr. Newton had Mr. Nunn come back and look at another parking lot across from the Victoria Baptist Church along Washington Avenue and this is a joint venture between the Town of Victoria and Victoria Baptist Church. Mr. Newton does not have the cost yet but will be split 50/50 with Victoria Baptist Church. Mr. Newton asked councils permission if the costs comes back no more than \$12,000.00 can he proceed to have both public parking lots paved and lined. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Gill to proceed with paving and lining the parking lot behind Bliss of Lunenburg and 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.
- g) Mr. Newton advised the Joint Comprehensive Plan for 2025-2030 has been completed and is available for review. A printed copy is available in the town office and a link on the county's website. There will be a joint Public Hearing with town council and the Planning Commission on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. We are looking for approval by the end of March.
- h) Mr. Newton discussed Fellowship Chair located on Court Street. They are in a lease to purchase agreement with the IDA that is set to terminate June 2026. Fellowship Chair has notified the IDA they want to accelerate ownership of the building between now and June 2025. Fellowship Chair has invested approximately \$2M in the building. The IDA is requesting town council for Fellowship Chair to take advantage of the Real Estate incentive program. Mr. Newton advised this property has not been on the tax roll since 2010. The Real Estate incentive program is over five years. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to approve the R/E incentive program for Fellowship Chair. Motion carried. Mr. Newton advised he also met with the county IDA today and they are offering their enterprise zoning on Real Estate taxes as well.
- i) Mr. Newton provided council information about VAWARN. This is a utilities network that helps prepare for disasters and recovery. If you are able to join, you can send people to help them and if we need help, we can apply for it and receive help from them. Mr. Newton stated there is no cost to join and asked council to make a resolution allowing the Town of Victoria to join VAWARN. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Gill to pass a resolution for the town to join VAWARN. Motion carried.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton discussed the Community Centre. Since we have finished 300 Court Street and Victoria Antiques has moved out, we have had several events held there for fundraisers, birthday parties, and increasing interest in opening it back up for public skating. Mr. Lee Smyth was present and has held two fundraisers at the Community Centre so far. Mr. Newton stated there is a big desire to open back up to the public on a regular basis. He advised with the skates we have now that it's not really an option. If we decide to open it back up for skating regularly, we will need someone to manage it and run the back room. Mr. William Pernell contacted four different skate vendors to look at options for updating our skate inventory. He found a company called Riedell Rental Skates that provides unisex skates which would increase the availability of sizes at a cost of \$132.00 each. We are looking to purchase 100 skates which totals \$13,200.00. They offered 20% down (\$2,640.00) with the balance to be paid in 24-months(\$440.00) with 0% interest. Mr. Newton stated we do not have it in the budget this year, but with as much interest in the Community Centre now, we could reflect in next years budget. Councilmember Elam suggested a fundraiser to help raise funds for the down payment. Mr. Pernell advised the skates are under warranty throughout the payment plan. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to move

\$2,640.00 from the Victoria Committee Centre fund to purchase the skates. Motion carried.

- b) Mr. Newton updated on the wastewater project and I&I (inflow and infiltration) issue. He advised they will be meeting with DEQ on Thursday, February 20th regarding leachate and what options we have on future storage, etc. Mr. Newton said Mr. Grayson Townsend is planning to attend this meeting with him. He also advised on the Tidewater Avenue project. The pipe has been delivered and new manholes ordered. He is still waiting on paving costs to repair the 1,000-foot project. Mr. Newton stated we are still taking in a lot of water (I&I).
- c) Mr. Newton updated on the water plant. Mr. Nathan Coey with Moonshot Missions rescheduled and plans to be here on March 10, 2025 to work with the plant operators. Mr. Newton met with the staff on January 25th at the water plant to discuss some issues and get their feedback. The sludge vacuum has not been working so they have washed the basin out and got it back moving, clean-up of the entire plant has started, and a trailer outside that has scrap metal. During the clean-up process in one of the storage rooms there were unused chemicals. Mr. Newton received an estimate from Clean Management Environmental Group of \$7,800.00 to dispose of these hazardous chemicals. Mr. Newton asked if council was willing to appropriate \$9,000.00 from the General Fund to pay for this. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to dispose the hazardous chemicals and appropriate \$9,000.00 from the General Fund to Miscellaneous to cover the costs. Motion carried. Mr. Newton also met with a structural engineer regarding the basin wall. He provided photos of the basin and concrete wall. A lot of what's peeling off is what was repaired in 2005. The structural engineer is working on a proposal for the repair and hopes to have at the upcoming March council meeting. Mr. Newton provided council a list of goals for the water plant and once they meet with Nathan they will prioritize the list. Mr. Newton is working with SERCAP on updating our Emergency Operations Plan. Mr. Newton also discussed last year's water deficit and why this occurred. He now has a better understanding and provided council a slideshow on raw water treated compared to finished water delivered. The figures being used were not correct. This also showed increases in chemical and electricity costs. He stated we are trying to get our plant back to efficient operation, using instrumentation, and data feed.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the Modest Creek bridge replacement. We were awarded a VOF Grant in the amount of \$240,000.00. The engineering costs is at \$100,000.00 which leaves \$140,000.00 to do the bridge. Once we get the plans written up and the land in a conservation easement, VOF writes the town a check for \$240,000.00. Mr. Newton advised we will have to do quarterly reports on how we spend the funds. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to proceed with the Modest Creek bridge replacement project. Motion carried.

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.

Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved March 11, 2025

Rodney Newton, Town Manager