

## Town Council Meeting

September 12, 2023

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The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on September 12, 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, Town Clerk Vickie McDaniel, Chief Camden Lawson and Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend. Absent was Treasurer Diane Harding.

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

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to go into Public Hearing on (1) Parking of Commercial Vehicles in Residential Districts and (2) Enterprise Zone Expansion. Motion carried.

Town Manager Rodney Newton advised a revision was made to parking of commercial vehicles in residential districts. Mr. Newton also advised the Enterprise Zone Expansion was approved back in February 2023, but resolution had to be within six months and it had passed.

Citizen Michael Bland at 1705 2<sup>nd</sup> Street addressed council on parking of commercial vehicles in residential districts. Mr. Bland questioned what was the problem with commercial vehicles in a residential area? Mr. Bland is an owner/operator of a commercial vehicle and runs a business at his residence. He has been parking his tractor trailer there for the past eight years. Mayor Smith asked Mr. Bland had he acquired a Conditional Use Permit with the Town of Victoria for his business. The town has its own Zoning Ordinance. It was found Mr. Bland does not have a Conditional Use Permit with the town but with the county. Mayor Smith explained there are designated areas for these vehicles to be parked. We have multiple big vehicles parked and running in the early morning or late hours at night in residential sections. Others have damaged sidewalks. Mr. Newton advised the parking lot at the end of the Caddis Building on the corner of Tidewater Avenue is zoned industrial. The IDA owns the parking lot and we are working to fix the lighting. This is zoned for commercial parking. Mayor Smith explained it's not just noise but safety as well and this is a problem all over town. Councilmember Jones asked Mr. Bland where his vehicle was parked. Mr. Bland stated it's parked on his property. Mayor Smith explained again it's commercial vehicles in residential areas.

Citizen Christine Duffer has complained multiple times about Mr. Bland. There are three trucks there all the time and the noise has gotten out of control. Mr. Bland drives up and down the road, blowing the horn at times before parking. Mrs. Duffer explained the tractor trucks run at different times at night, waking her daughter. She is in a residential area and wants peace and quiet. Mrs. Duffer stated the business needs to be run in a business section of town.

Mr. Newton discussed the Enterprise Zone Expansion. This was approved back in the February council meeting for 59.54 additional acres to the Town of Victoria but has since passed the six-month resolution period.

No comments were made on the Enterprise Zone Expansion.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Gill to come out of Public Hearing on the (1) Parking of Commercial Vehicles in Residential Districts and (2) Enterprise Zone Expansion. Motion carried.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any additions to the meeting. Town Manager Rodney Newton advised he had more items to add to the Town Manager Update. Citizen Brian Reed at 200 KV Road asked to discuss rapid COVID tests in the Town of Victoria. Mr. Reed's wife recently caught COVID. When speaking with the insurance company, they requested a copy of the COVID test. They called around to local doctor's offices and could not get a rapid COVID test. Mr. Reed advised council there is nowhere to go in this town and have a rapid test done. Mr. Newton advised the Virginia Department of Health handled all the rapid testing during the pandemic. Mr. Newton also stated we do not have the resources to get that type of supplies.

Bliss of Lunenburg asked to update council on the mural. Mayor Smith added Bliss of Lunenburg as item (e) under Informational Items.

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 August 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

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

Chief Camden Lawson presented the Police Report. He stated they had 115 calls, seven citations, and nine felony arrests. Chief Lawson advised both new Dodge Durango's are here. The department has all the laptops in and have been issued to officers for day-to-day use. Chief Lawson advised they are in the process of going with ID Networks and plan to go live November 1, 2023. New police uniforms were ordered and should be here anytime. Also, the two Land Use Permits for the Autumn Days Festival and Christmas Parade have been turned in to VDOT. Mr. Newton advised both road closure permits are back from VDOT. Chief Lawson had computer training with Tracer recently through DCGS. Councilmember Jones asked Chief Lawson how the certified Police Officer interview went. Chief Lawson advised they had the interview and are trying to finalize a date for the new officer to start with the town. Mayor Smith presented Officer Beagle with a token of his appreciation for a job well done for completing the academy and full-time employment with the Town of Victoria. Officer Beagle was unable to attend the June council meeting. 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.

Assistant Fire Chief Grayson Townsend presented the Fire Department Report. He stated they had a total of 139 responses with 51 calls at Station 2 and 88 calls at Station 7. Assistant Chief Townsend advised they are working towards the upcoming Truck-n-Tractor Pull scheduled for October 14, 2023 for those who are interested in helping with the event. They have training coming up in October and most of the classes are full. Also, the VFD will be hosting a memorial service for the Southside Firemen's Association on Saturday, October 28, 2023. Mr. Newton will provide council the information about the dinner. 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.

Informational Items:

- a) Councilmember Jones with the Street Committee discussed the request for vacation and conveyance of W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Councilmember Jones and Councilmember Garrett reviewed the property and recommended council approval of the request as long as it meets the town regulations and zoning requirements. Motion was made by Councilmember Jones with the Street Committee and seconded by Councilmember Elam to accept the vacation and conveyance request of W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Motion carried.
- b) Mr. Newton advised if council does decide to accept the revision of the Commercial Vehicle Parking Ordinance, we will need to rescind the previous version that was approved earlier this year and replace it with the current version to go into the Town Ordinances (Section 30-174). Councilmember Jones questioned the Conditional Use Permit approved awhile back for a business in town where trucks were allowed to park on the street. Mr. Newton advised parking was only for a short period of time. Mr. Newton stated for a Conditional Use Permit, the Planning Commission would meet and make a recommendation to town council to vote on the request in residential areas and then hold a Public Hearing. Conditional Use Permits allow those to work around those if approved. This is normally a 60-90-day process. Motion was made Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the revisions made to the Commercial Vehicle Parking Ordinance and rescind the previous version approved earlier this year. Councilmember Jones questioned if we accept this, citizens can apply for a Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Newton explained they can apply under the conditions of the permit. Motion carried.

- c) Mr. Newton discussed the Enterprise Zone Expansion formality of re-adopting with new dates for the resolution that was approved in February 2023 expanding the 59.54 acres. Motion was made by Councilmember Mattox and seconded by Councilmember Brame to accept the Enterprise Zone Expansion. Councilmember Garrett abstained. Motion carried.
- d) Councilmember Jones with the Street Committee advised her, along with Councilmember Garrett met about the alleys being blocked. Councilmember Jones explained they did observe some of the alleys were blocked by tractors, boats, and a tent while others were not taken care of. The Street Committee suggested a work session to discuss the alleyways and get advice from our Town Attorney, Robert Clement. Mr. Newton will check with the Town Attorney and get some available dates to bring back to council for a work session and be publicly notified as well. Citizen Alvin Powell stated it was probably his tractor in the alleyway. He has a work area back there and at anytime the tractor can be moved. Councilmember Jones explained there was no way you could get through the alleyway behind Mr. Powell. Mayor Smith explained when a committee is established to look into an issue, they look at overall issues. The Street Committee went out and looked at all the alleyways and brought back to council to have a work session. Mayor Smith advised this issue is going to be studied by council. Mr. Powell advised the day they came by he was working on one of the tractors. However, Councilmember Jones advised she drove by two weeks later and the tractor was still there blocking the alleyway.
- e) Mr. Newton advised last month Bliss of Lunenburg came to council for a mural for the side of the building. After the meeting, there were some concerns about the first panel. Treasurer Diane Harding worked on some of the issues from council. Miss Teresa Bagley has made some edits to the first panel. Miss Teresa Bagley provided council a revision of Panel 1. Miss Ellie Shortridge presented the second panel representing climate change. Councilmember Brame suggested a change to the climate change panel 2. Councilmember Elam suggested moving the hands-on Panel 1 to a different location, possibly higher instead of at the bottom on the street level so it would not be easily vandalized. Miss Bagley thinks it will be harder to move and understands the potential of vandalism but believes it will be considered a positive thing. They have even discussed putting up cameras. Mayor Smith asked to add something for our veterans to the mural. Councilmember Brame asked to see an American Flag on the wall. Mr. Newton recommended they start working on the Love sign (3<sup>rd</sup> Panel) and he will work more with Miss Bagley on Panel 1. The wall has been pressure washed and repainted.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton updated on the sewer project. The force main pressure test is underway and materials for the pumpstation have been ordered. He advised construction will start as soon as those materials arrive. We do have a deadline of December 31, 2023 on a consent order from DEQ. Mr. Newton advised both our wastewater permits expire January 2024. We are working with DEQ to extend the west WWTP for 60 days, so we don't have to meet new requirements. He's hoping we will be able to de-water that lagoon and close it down before then.
- b) Mr. Newton advised council the past few weeks have been tough on some of our town's employees. Mr. Kevin Ashworth lost his grandmother, Ms. Marjorie Newcomb. Mr. Grayson Townsend lost his father-in-law, Mr. Michael Beck and Mr. Jon Coffman, who was a retired water plant operator for the town passed away last week.
- c) Mr. Newton advised we were awarded \$33,500.00 from the Southeast Community Assistance for the replacement of water pumps back in December 202 at the water plant. The cost was \$45,129.00. This grant will be used towards that leaving a balance of \$11,629.00 which we will need to do a Public Hearing and budget amendment. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to accept the grant from the Southeast Community Assistance for the water pump replacements. Motion carried.
- d) Mr. Newton discussed the water deficit for the town. With the new flow meter, we know how much water the plant is putting out. For June they averaged 244,000 gallons a day

which is \$7.320M a month. In July, we were averaging \$255,000 gallons a day which is 7.650M a month. Mr. Newton advised in June we billed for 5.218M gallons. That's a loss of \$16,000 a month. In July, we had 2.1M gallons not billed for (\$17,000 a month). Mr. Newton explained over a 12-month period that's a \$204,000 loss. Chief Water Operator Phil Pegram was able to account for 1M gallons of that in the processing of wastewater (442,000 gallons at the west facility and 609,000 at the east facility). As the west plant will go away in January 2024 and at the east plant, we are working on a reclamation project whereby we will reuse water from the plant instead of finished water. Mr. Newton advised the town pool uses about 290,000 gallons a month. If you subtract those from the 2.1M, we have 800,000 gallons unaccounted for. In talking with B&B Consultants 5%-6% is the goal unaccounted in a system. We are 5%-10% (775,000 gallons) so we are within 25,000 gallons. Mr. Newton thinks part of that is keeping the tanks from overflowing and if we take the cost of what we are using at wastewater, it would be \$9.90 a month that is not recovered. Another plus for closing the west wastewater facility and changing at the east facility should result in approximately 1 to 1.5 hours less pumping per day.

- e) Mr. Newton advised the fire hydrant at Court Street and Roanoke Avenue has been out of service for a while because the connection was blown out. Public Works is working on a schedule now to replace the hydrant, but we think it's on a 10" main with no valve. They will dig and expose during the day and then go in at night once Timmy's closes and traffic is down to do the replacement. This may cause loss of water pressure and discolored water due to the size of the water main.
- f) Mr. Newton discussed Blighted Properties at:
  - 1600 9<sup>th</sup> Street
  - 1700 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

We have sent notices for spot blight and abatement plans are due back by October 12, 2023.

- g) Mr. Newton discussed the town had to demolish a building several years ago on Main Street across from Benchmark Community Bank. It cost the town \$20,904.66. To date, cost has not been recovered. Mr. Newton did go on August 28<sup>th</sup> to testify at a Debts and Demands hearing for that estate and is hoping to hear something back about it.
- h) Mr. Newton advised First Citizens has begun repairs to the front of the building where the ATM was. Following up from our last meeting, plans are to put up a 4'x6' fixed pane window where we can put a 70" TV to run announcements.
- i) Mr. Newton advised it's time to redo the Joint Comprehensive Plan between the county and two towns. This will be done with assistance from Commonwealth Regional Council and a committee will be selected in the near future. The Town of Victoria's share is \$8,333.00 spread across two fiscal years, and we already have that budgeted.
- j) Councilmember Jones inquired about Hometown Hero's Banners. Mr. Newton advised Mrs. Sue Behler is still working on them and the deadline for applications is September 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

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Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

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Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved October 10, 2023

Rodney Newton, Town Manager

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