

# TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 23, 2023

The Clarksville Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Council members present were Mayor Bruce Woerner, Rick Buchanan, Chris Clarke, Robert Dennis, and Alexander Rawles. Council members absent were Vice-Mayor Danny Pittard and Tammy Mulchi. Staff members present were Town Manager Jeff Jones, Treasurer/Clerk Tara Murphy, and Police Chief Ricky Wilkinson.

## Call to Order

Mayor Bruce Woerner called the meeting to order and provided the invocation.

## Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 were approved with no additions, deletions, or corrections with a motion by Council member Clarke, seconded by Council member Buchanan, and approved by all.

## Presentation of the List of Vendors

The list of vendors paid for April 2023 was presented to Council. Council member Clarke motioned to approve the list of vendors paid for April 2023, seconded by Council member Rawles, and approved by all.

## Presentation of Financial Statements

The financial statements were not presented due to some posting issues with the new software that are being addressed with the company representatives.

## Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## Presentation of Town Operation Reports

The Town Operations report was presented to Council.

Town Manager Jones stated that with Richard Elliott retiring, the Town appointed William Leonard as Director of Operations for Public Utilities and Walter Terry as Director of Operations for Public Works. He stated that Richard Elliott will come back next month for the Town to recognize him. He reported that the 7<sup>th</sup> Street pump station is back operational after the pumps were installed. He stated that the portable pump is also back in service. Town Manager Jones stated that there is another pump issue at the Lake Country Business Park off of Noblin Farm Road. He stated that they hired a contractor to cut trees and over hanging limbs in the Cemetery to prevent possible damages to the tombstones. He stated that there were two stumps removed on 8<sup>th</sup> Street so that the sidewalks can be replaced. He stated that the crew also placed more blocks at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Park because people were ignoring the signs and parking on the beach. Town Manager Jones stated that the Town received a mandate from the federal government to inventory the lead and copper lines in the Town by Oct. 16, 2024. He stated that the lines have to be identified and replaced and there are grants available to help with the cost of replacement. Town Manager Jones informed Council that Mr. Jon Atkinson of 504 Rose Hill Avenue asked if the sidewalk in front of his house could be removed to allow him to put in a driveway and allow for more street parking. Town Manager Jones stated that the sidewalk is in the VDOT right of way and VDOT approves the Town removing the sidewalk.

He stated that the staff will check with the other property owners to make sure they have no issues with removing the sidewalk. Council member Buchanan motioned to allow the Town staff to check with the property owners on Rose Hill Avenue about removing the sidewalk, seconded by Council member Dennis, and approved by all.

## Presentation of the Police Activity Report

The Police Activity Report was presented to Council.

Chief Wilkinson stated that the events went well. He stated that Lake Life Live, Cruise In and the Big Lake Flea market were well attended and had no issues. He stated that the Bass tournament brought a lot of people to town. He stated that Officer Jenkins is at working as a training instructor for the academy this week. He informed the Council that the department received a grant award of \$111,000 through the Dept. of Criminal Justice ARPA program. He stated that the grant will be used to purchase a new vehicle, radar units, tactical lights and shields, and 3 flock cameras to be placed at the Town's perimeter. Chief Wilkinson warned everyone that scams are rampant and to be very careful when receiving phone calls from such things as jails or the IRS. He stated that each year, the Council has to vote on an ordinance received from the Commonwealth Attorney to adopt all of the changes in the traffic and DUI laws so that the officers can enforce them. He presented the ordinance and asked for Council's approval. Council member Buchanan stated that the ordinance does not explain the changes and that he would like to see something stating what he is voting on. Town Manager Jones stated that the staff would try to get something to further show what was being voted on and Mayor Woerner stated that the item would be tabled until the next meeting.

## Economic Development Update

Tara Tuck stated that the Town was awarded a \$2,500 grant by DHCD for a Technical Assistance Grant that will fund the formation of the 501 c (3) Historic Downtown Clarksville for the purpose of revitalizing the historic downtown commercial district. She stated that the steering committee went to Altavista on May 17<sup>th</sup> for a VMS Leadership meeting. Tara Tuck informed Council that two grant applications were submitted on April 28<sup>th</sup>; the \$30,000 Community Vitality Grant for a Wayfinding/Signage Assessment Study and the \$100,000 Resurgence Grant to implement a Façade Improvement Match Program for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Street. She stated that the Eat, Shop, Stay mapping guide went to the printers this week for the paper copies and also online information via the QR code printed on the map. She also informed Council that the Town was awarded a \$20,000 Virginia Tourism Grant to reimburse the June – August photography expense, the Eat/Shop/Stay map and guide and "Thank you" cards and a ½ page ad in the 2024 Virginia Travel Guide. She stated that the map and the cards will be provided in little display stands for the area businesses.

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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### Marina Lease Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the engineering plans are close to completion and the staff is waiting to hear on the erosion control plan and the land disturbance permit.

### Sewer Plant Improvement Project Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the bids for the Sewer Improvement project came in over budget at 4.79 million and the Kinderton Pump station part came close to budget at \$492,000. He stated that the Town award segments, but the staff is talking back with Rural Development to see what the next steps will be and the possibility of getting additional funding. He reminded the Council that the interim financing was just extended 18 months, so the staff has to proceed quickly.

## Update Search Grant – Water Plant Expansion

Town Manager Jones stated that the staff received the Search Grant for \$30,000. He stated that the town staff is working with Dewberry, and the Utilities Committee on the design phase of the project, the water and sewer lines and the water tank farms. He stated that Microsoft continues to work on approval and funding for the next phases of enhancements and expansion of the utilities project.

## Financial Software Implementation Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the Edmunds software implementation is complete. He stated that the first utility billing is complete and the bills are mailed. He stated that the utility bills are correct. However, there are some issues with the posting of transactions to the general ledger and Treasurer Murphy is working diligently with Edmunds to resolve the issue so that accurate financial reports can be presented for approval.

## Upcoming Events

Town Manager Jones presented the schedule of events. He stated that the Wine Festival was rescheduled to May 27<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the Memorial Day ceremony will be Monday at 11 a.m. He stated that the next Lake Life Live concert is in June as well as the next Cruise In.

## Planters Warehouse Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the contractor has received the permit to move forward with the storm drainage issues. He stated that he hopes that Haase will mobilize and continue work on the project very soon.

## Property Maintenance

Town Manager Jones stated that 19 properties have been identified, 8 addressed, 3 in-process and 8 still need to be addressed. He stated that if any of the Council wants to discuss the information presented last month regarding the building codes and other possible steps to take in relation to properties, to get in touch with him.

## Verizon Water Tower Lease Arrangement

Town Manager Jones stated that he contacted Verizon and they are looking at their options, and he is still waiting to hear back from Verizon.

## Dominion Power MOU Request

Town Manager Jones reminded Council that Dominion Power has requested approval of a memorandum of understanding to modify their franchise agreement with the Town of Clarksville which allows them to run power infrastructure through the town limits of Clarksville and to add running fiber infrastructure through the Town on Dominion's existing power infrastructure. He stated that Dominion is providing the fiber backbone (middle mile) so that Empower (Mecklenburg Electric) can provide high speed internet (last miles) to residents of Mecklenburg County including some areas of Clarksville. Town Manager Jones stated that he discussed the MOU with the attorney and he feels that the MOU is not adequate to do what Dominion is trying to do. Town Manager Jones stated that the attorney suggested that an ordinance would be needed in this situation. Town Manager Jones asked Dominion if they had any such ordinance and he is still waiting to hear back from them.

## Fire Truck Update

Town Manager Jones informed the Council that the equipment that was to be purchased when the fire truck was ordered has not increased in price by \$40,000 and the Fire Department has requested any help the Town can offer. He stated that the budget did include a few months of the debt service for the truck if it had been delivered sooner. Town Manager Jones stated that the staff suggest repurposing some of the debt funds to help with the purchase of the truck equipment. Town Manager Jones requested Council's approval to use \$20,000 of the debt service to help with the purchase of the truck equipment. Council member Dennis motioned to use \$20,000 of the debt service funds for the fire truck equipment, seconded by Council member Buchanan, and approved by all.

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## NEW BUSINESS

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### Cove Project – Phases I

Town Manager Jones presented maps showing the proposed Cove Project Phase I. He stated that the project will be done in a phased in approach. He showed pictures of a sidewalk walkway from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street meeting another sidewalk walkway off of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street leading down to the 16-boat slip dock system. Town Manager Jones informed the Council that an application for a \$435,000 DCR grant was submitted. He stated that the grant funds if received will be combined with the Town's budgeted ARPA funds of \$150,000 and \$70,000 that Mecklenburg County has agreed to contribute to the project. He stated that the staff will hear back on the grant between June and August.

### Presentation of the Budget 2023-2024

Town Manager Jeff Jones thanked the Budget Committee for their help with the 2023-2024 Budget. Town Manager Jones discussed the highlights of the proposed budget. He stated that there was an 8.6% increase in the employee health care cost this year. He stated that the budget is proposing a 6% salary increase. He stated that the VRS rate did not increase this year. Town Manager Jones stated that the budget reflects some effects from the State mandated minimum wage increases, increased costs for goods and services as well as the increase in demand for certified employees. Town Manager Jones stated that the Worker's Compensation insurance mod rate decreased from 1% to .86% and the commercial insurance realized an overall 8.76% increase. Town Manager Jones stated that the budget includes the business development coordinator becoming a full-time employee as well as making a couple of the part-time employee's full-time. He stated that the current revenue collections have been stable and better than projections. He stated that the Real Estate assessed valuation for 2023-2024 is up 4% and an increase of 4.5% in Personal Property. He stated that the meals tax and lodging tax have come in better than projections as well as business licenses and sales tax. He stated that the budget reflects the return to pre-pandemic revenue projections and the American Rescue Plan is incorporated into the budget. Town Manager Jones stated that the budget also reflects increases in Community Center rentals and the return of the bingo proceeds. He stated that the new fire truck loan is included in the 2023-2024 budget. He stated that the Community Center loan resets in 10/2024. He stated that the Town will also have to plan for the impending Marina Building financing. He stated that there is no proposed increase in the garbage rates.

Town Manager Jones stated that in working with the Water Fund budget, he stated that water consumption is returning to pre-pandemic levels, and there is increased operating costs and the minimum wage increase. Town Manager Jones stated that there is a proposed increase in the Water rates this year of 8%. He stated that there is no proposed increase in the Sewer rates this year since the consumption is returning to pre-pandemic usage. He stated that the sewer improvement project will occur in this budget cycle and increased costs are a concern this year as well as the demand for certified staff.

Town Manager Jones discussed the plans for the upcoming year. Town Manager Jones stated that there are still plans to develop a tourism strategic plan and an economic development strategic plan.

Town Manager Jones stated that the Planters Warehouse Project will be completed this year with the new plans. He stated that the staff will formulate a development plan for the renovations to the Town Hall as well as work on the Cove Project Phase I.

Town Manager Jones presented categorical budgets and discussed more details of the proposed 2023-2024 budget. Treasurer Murphy stated that the total proposed revenues for the General Fund are \$4,371,594.34. He stated that the changes to the revenue line items are based on receipts throughout the year as items like meals tax and lodging tax as well as the ARPA funds. She stated that the total proposed expenditures for the General Fund are \$4,257,012.48 with a proposed contingency of \$114,581.85.

Treasurer Murphy stated that the total proposed Water fund revenues are \$755,421.74 and the total proposed Sewer Fund revenues are \$3,539,175 for a total of \$4,294,596.74. He stated that the Sewer Fund includes the funds for the sewer improvement project. He stated that the total proposed Water fund expenditures are \$705,165.29 and a proposed contingency of \$50,256.45. Treasurer Murphy stated that the total proposed sewer expenditures are \$3,454,868.67. He stated that the proposed Sewer Fund contingency is \$84,306.33.

Town Manager Jones stated that the budget will be advertised on May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>. He presented the budget calendar to hold a special meeting on Thursday, June 8, 2023 for the public hearing and first reading of the proposed 2023-2024 Budget. He stated that the final approval of the budget will be during the June 20<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

## Closed Session

Mayor Woerner received a motion from Council member Clarke that Clarksville Town Council convene in Closed Session pursuant to Virginia State Code section 2.2-3711(A) (1 & 3) to discuss items pertaining to personnel and property, seconded by Council member Rawles, and approved by all.

After ending the Closed Session, Mayor Woerner took a roll call vote, as follows, verifying that Council only considered items that are lawfully exempt from the Freedom of Information Act and only items identified in the motion for the closed session.

Council member Rawles	Aye
Council member Buchanan	Aye
Council member Clarke	Aye
Council member Dennis	Aye

## Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Bruce F. Woerner, Mayor

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Tara Murphy, Treasurer/Clerk