

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 21, 2024

The Clarksville Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. Council members present were Mayor Bruce Woerner, Rick Buchanan, Pat Charles, Chris Clarke, Robert Dennis, and Alexander Rawles. Vice-Mayor Danny Pittard was absent. Staff Members present were Town Manager Jeff Jones, Treasurer Tara Murphy, Public Utilities Director William Leonard, Police Chief Ricky Wilkinson, and Economic Development Coordinator Tara Tuck.

Call to Order

Mayor Woerner called the Town Council meeting to order and provided the invocation.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 16th, 2024 Town Council meeting were approved with no additions, deletions, or corrections with a motion by Council member Dennis, seconded by Council member Buchanan, and approved by all.

Presentation of List of Vendors Paid

The list of vendors paid for April 2024 was presented to Council. Council member Rawles motioned to approve the list of vendors paid for April 2024, seconded by Dennis, and approved by all.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Presentation of Town Operation Reports

The Town Operations report was presented to Council.

Public Utilities Director William Leonard stated that the brush truck is back in service. He stated that the Public Works crew had several sewer and water line repairs. He stated that they also got up a lot of brush due to the storms. He stated that the Waste crew cleaned the sub-basin and the clarifier. Director Leonard stated that Hwy 15 lift station is repaired and back in service. He stated that 4th Street lift station is also repaired and back in service. He stated that the staff continues to work with the contractors at the Waste Plant on the reactor for the upgrade and the work at Kinderton Country Club. He stated that the staff continues the development of the new operators and that is going well. Director Leonard stated that the staff is currently working on maintenance of the Mill Village lift station.

Presentation of the Police Activity Report

The Police Activity Report was presented to Council.

Police Chief Wilkinson stated that the fraud class Sergeant Drew Jenkins and Benchmark Bank held was a good class and needs more attendees to make people more aware of the fraud and scams. He stated that the department will begin e-citation training virtually.

He stated that once the training is done, a practice e-citation has to be submitted to the Supreme Court for approval before the department can actively issue e-citations. He stated that in June the department has firearms training. He stated that the first Cruise-In was held, but the first Lake Life Live was rescheduled due to rain for June 8th. Chief Wilkinson stated that May 15, 2024 was National Police Memorial Day and last week was National Police Week. He stated that the community was really supportive giving the department lots of treats. He stated that he and the Town Manager have been working on the resolution for the Glen Lawson Memorial. He stated that once VDOT approves the resolution, the resolution will be presented to Council for approval and have the family present at the same time to honor Officer Glen Lawson.

Economic Development Update

Tara Tuck, the Economic Development Coordinator, informed Council that the Town was awarded an \$18,000 grant from Virginia Tourism Corporation to assist the businesses with the 2025 ads in the State Tourism guide and the social media campaign for the destination marketing to Wake County, NC. She stated that she received a \$2,500 scholarship to offset the costs for the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute. She also received a scholarship for \$250 for the Virginia Economic Development Association summer meeting and the Main Street Awards luncheon is part of this meeting. She stated that Virginia Living magazine has a "Best of Virginia" each year and Hite's got best clothing store, Cooper's Landing Inn & Traveler's Tavern got best bed and breakfast, and Clarksville got the best Love sign. Ms. Tuck stated that the 2025 Brochure/map update work in underway to update the businesses, and add public parking and shuttle stops. She stated that she is working with the county on Loyal Brew, a trail app company to form a Wine, Brew, and Whiskey trail with Mecklenburg and Halifax to have a regional trail and a presence on the app.

Mrs. Tuck stated that the Historic Downtown Clarksville She stated that Historic Downtown Clarksville applied for \$15,000 Main Street/DHCD Community Vitality Grant (CVG) for the Wayfinding Implementation (sign fabrication and installation) and it requires a 50% cash match for a total \$22,500. Ms. Tuck stated that HDC applied for a \$60,000 Small Area Revitalization Project (SmARP) grant and it was awarded. She stated the grant will be used for a Historic Downtown Clarksville Master Plan consultation and an RFP will be needed. She stated that several properties/buildings have begun work under the façade improvement grant and received reimbursements. She stated that that she continues to work with the consulting firm on mapping the area and determining the best placement for signage in and around Town and developing parking areas. Ms. Tuck stated that the businesses along Virginia Avenue are participating in a Bubble Up Clarksville as a seasonal beautification project.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Marina Building Update & Award

Town Manager Jones stated that the contract has been signed with J. E. Burton Construction and they will begin excavation June 3rd. He stated that Dominion moved the electricity underground.

Sewer Plant Improvement Project Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the team, including Mayor Woerner, closed on both loans \$602,000 and \$928,000. He stated the loan funds have to be exhausted before any grant funds will be used for the project. He stated that the DEQ grant funded the KCC pump station and sewer line upgrades. Town Manager Jones stated that the interim financing with Benchmark Community Bank has been paid off. WACO is actively excavating the 35' hole for the reactor tank, laying base stone to get ready for the base slab. He stated they also began the preliminary work on the digestors. Town Manager Jones stated that the KCC project is 70% complete. He stated that Dominion has to move the power to test the new pump station and the contractor has to move a manhole.

Update Water Plant Expansion & Distribution System Upgrades

Town Manager Jones stated that Dewberry, the Utilities Committee, Microsoft, and Mecklenburg County continue to work on the engineering and plans for the water plant expansion and the water and sewer line replacement projects that include pump station upgrades and the construction of the water tank farms. He stated that the Lakeside and Boyd's corner pump stations easements have been approved by the Corps of Engineers and received; and the new owners of 7Eleven have received the easement documents for review. He stated that WACO has 95% of the submittals done for the pump station that are due by May 31st. He stated that the contractor plans to begin work on the foundation and footers for the elevated tanks. He stated that the contractor is working on the submittals for the ground storage tanks. He stated that Dewberry is waiting for final approval from VDOT and the Corps of Engineers for the design for the Hwy 58 Bridge utilities and the construction will be in the summer of 2024. He stated that the water plant expansion design is in process. Town Manager Jones stated that there will be some water needs for testing in January 2025.

VA Brownfield – Site Assessment & Planning Grant Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the firm has completed the testing work at the Burlington property and they are working on the report and the Town should have the report any day.

Planters Warehouse Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the contractor has had 4 to 5 crews working on siding, the plumbing and HVAC, and insulation and sheetrock. He stated that the stairs installation is next week.

Cove Project - Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the team met with the Corps of Engineers. He stated that Dewberry is working on permitting and licensure. He stated that the engineering and design are in process with 50 % completion planned next month. Council member Buchanan stated that he would like for the Council to see the design at 50%.

Calendar of Events & Tentative Road Closure Schedule

Town Manager Jones presented a list of the upcoming events and the road closure schedule. He stated that next week is Memorial Day and the remembrance ceremony. He stated that the Flag Retirement ceremony will be held on June 14th. He reminded everyone about the July 4th parade. He stated that the Chamber of Commerce is actively planning for Lake Fest.

Mural on Chamber of Commerce Building Update

Town Manager Jones informed the Council that all of the murals for each Town have been completed. He stated that Tina Morgan worked to get a better artist for the mural project that is a better fit. He stated that the Chamber building is ready for the art work. He stated that the staff will have to talk to the Council members individually to get approval on the art work planned for the Chamber of Commerce building.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Amendments

Treasurer Murphy stated that the Town of Clarksville had two insurance claims for incidents where mop heads were lodged in the pumps of the Rose Hill lift station and the Forest Hill lift station causing the pumps to need overhauling or replacing. She stated that the pump at the Forest Hill lift station was over hauled at a cost of \$13,132.66 and the Town is responsible for the \$1,000 deductible. She stated that the pump at the Rose Hill lift station had to be replaced at a cost of \$24,926.64 and the Town had to pay the \$1,000 deductible on that claim too. Treasurer Murphy stated that the Town received \$12,132.66 for the Forest Hill lift station pump overhaul and \$23,926.64 for the Rose Hill lift station replacement. She stated that if it pleases Council, these funds need to be appropriated into the 2023-2024 budget as well as the offsetting expenditures.

Council member Buchanan asked how something like this could happen. Town Manager Jones stated that some businesses that use mops for cleaning are near the lift stations and they get in the sewer lines somehow. Council member Dennis motioned to appropriate the insurance claim funds as well as the offsetting expenditures into the 2023-2024 budget, seconded by Council member Clarke and it was approved by all.

Presentation of the Budget 2024-2025

Town Manager Jeff Jones thanked the Budget Committee for their help with the 2024-2025 Budget. Town Manager Jones discussed the highlights of the proposed budget. He stated that there was an 6% increase in the employee health care cost this year. He stated that the budget is proposing a 5% salary increase. He stated that the VRS rate did increased by 22% this year. Town Manager Jones stated that the budget reflects some effects from the 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 to .93% and the commercial insurance realized an overall 5% increase. He stated that the current revenue collections were better than projections. He stated that the Real Estate assessed valuation for 2024-2025 is up 23 and tangible personal property values increased 9.5%, however, business personal property values decreased 17%. Town Manager Jones stated that the tax rates remain the same, but the increase in the real estate tax assessments will necessitate the need for a separate public hearing on the increase. 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 with interest rates increasing, interest revenue will be better this year. He stated that the budget reflects the American Rescue Plan is incorporated into the budget. Town Manager Jones stated that the budget also reflects the return to pre-pandemic revenue projects for Community Center rentals and the return of the bingo proceeds. Town Manager Jones stated that the budget reflects the debt service for the fire truck and the payoff of the Community Center balloon loan.

Town Manager Jones stated that water revenues this year are better than the projections and the water tank rental revenue continues. He stated that the Water Plant & Infrastructure Expansion Project continues in the upcoming year. He stated that there is no debt restructuring at this time. He stated that budget reflects increased costs for fuel, supplies, chemicals and services as well as labor costs.

Town Manager Jones stated that sewer revenues came in better than projections. 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 the marina building construction will finish this year. He stated that the Town will continue to work with Tara Tuck on the Main Street Program by completing the façade grant and way finder programs as well as a possible marketing program. He stated that work needs to be done to update the comprehensive plan.

Town Manager Jones stated that the Town will have to provide some startup funding for the 503-C Historic Downtown Clarksville operating funds as well as provide a stipend for the Executive Director and the Treasurer. He stated that the Town will continue to help Tara Tuck with rebranding and marketing/promotions. Town Manager Jones stated the budget includes continuing to pay the \$5 per call to the firemen as well as provide some funding to help with replacing fire equipment. He stated the Police Department need another car to replace one of the older spare cars and they want to upgrade the car camera system as well as install a video system in the Police Department for surveillance and to support chain of custody. 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 2024-2025 budget. Treasurer Murphy stated that the total proposed revenues for the General Fund are \$5,729,253.23. 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 \$5,589,832.21 with a proposed contingency of \$139,421.02.

Treasurer Murphy stated that the total proposed Water fund revenues are \$791,242.09 and the total proposed Sewer Fund revenues are \$5,840,143.13. She stated that the Sewer Fund includes the funds for the sewer improvement project. She stated that the total proposed Water fund expenditures are \$725,626.07 and a proposed contingency of \$65,616.02. Treasurer Murphy stated that the total proposed sewer expenditures are \$5,751,963.76. She stated that the proposed Sewer Fund contingency is \$88,179.37.

Town Manager Jones stated that the budget will be advertised on May 29th and June 5th. He presented the budget calendar to hold a special meeting on Thursday, June 6, 2024 for the public hearing and first reading of the proposed 2024-2025 Budget. He stated that the final approval of the budget will be during the June 18th 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 Charles, 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
Council member Charles	Aye

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Bruce F. Woerner, Mayor

Tara Murphy, Treasurer/Clerk