

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

March 11, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Council minutes

Town Council Meeting

Agenda

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Sullivan called the Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Council members Gary Schwartz, Jerry Goebel, Mary Ann Kuhn, Alice Butler, and Patrick O'Connell were present. Council member Dan Spethmann was absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Laura Dodd were present.

Mayor Sullivan announced the passing of Louise Van Dort on Sunday after the cumulative impact of several strokes. He discussed that she had served on the Town Council and had been active in almost every organization in the County. He discussed that when he first came to the County and attending events and fundraisers she was always present working raising money and organizing thing with her ever present cigarettes. He discussed that she was one of a kind in the sense that she was candid and outspoken, contributed to all kinds of things in the County, was feisty, funny, iconoclastic, and although there were times when someone might want to wring her neck or she might want wring someone else's, she was a very special person who would be missed.

Ms. Kuhn discussed that Ms. Van Dort had been a past Treasurer for the Town, had been named citizen of the year in 1996 for all her contributions to the County, and had been on the Board of Directors of CCLC, the Historical Society, and the Friends of the Library.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that he had known her for years and that back in the twenties she would have been known as a tough broad and that she would have enjoyed the designation.

He discussed that it might be a nice gesture if the Town began to accumulate pictures of people who had passed who had played a real instrumental role in the Town's politics and helping to make it what it was today and perhaps they could be hung in the entrance hall.

He discussed that Ms. Van Dort would be a good start along with Gene Leggett, Claudia Mitchell, and Newbill Miller.

Ms. Kuhn and Mr. O'Connell agreed to work together on the project and all of the Council spoke in favor.

- MINUTES: October 8, 2012: Mr. Goebel made a motion to approve the minutes of October 8, 2012 contingent on some typos and corrections being made as noted by Ms. Kuhn and Ms. Kuhn seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Mayor Sullivan noted that there were no minutes for November and that Ms. Dodd would be making an effort to catch up.

- REPORTS: Treasury Report: Mr. Goebel reviewed the attached Bank Summary Report, the Bills-To-Be Paid List, and the Additional Bills to Be Paid List.

Mr. Goebel discussed that the SunTrust Avon Hall loan bill included a \$25,000 principal pay down as well as interest and that now the SunTrust loan would be a \$5,000 principal pay down plus interest every month.

Mr. O'Connell asked about the high and low range for the meals and lodging taxes.

Mr. Goebel discussed that about \$19,000 was the low and about \$26,000 was the high.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the budget for the year's Meals and Lodging was about \$240,000.

Mayor Sullivan made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Mr. O'Connell seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

- Planning Commission: Chairman Schwartz had no report.
- Architectural Review Board: Mayor Sullivan reported that there was no ARB meeting scheduled.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he was in the process of obtaining figures from the Building Office and that there had been a significant amount of building improvements going on in 2011, 2012, and currently. He discussed that he was going to get exact figures on the amount of money that had been invested in fixing up buildings but he thought it would be multi-millions of dollars and that a significant amount of money had been invested post-wastewater.

- TOWN ATTORNEY: Mr. Bennett had no report.

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• OLD BUSINESS. a). Pump House Repair: Mr. Schwartz discussed that he had spoken with Craig Jebson of Country Water and they had gone through the repair in detail and although the actual cause was not perfectly clear it was probably due to excessive pressure and fatigue in the lines. He discussed that a lot of pipe was replaced along with some valves and that the filters were being by-passed and water was being pumped directly to the reservoir.

He discussed that the new estimate was capped out at \$25,000 which was a lot of money but not really given the wear and tear over the years and the fact that the Town did not have a preventative maintenance program.

He discussed that he had suggested that a pressure relief valve be put in which had been done which should help in the future. He discussed that he was comfortable with the level of repairs and in keeping the Town in water.

Mr. O'Connell asked what the total cost would be.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that it would be about \$25,000 and that the Town would probably need to raise the user rates.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that there was no question that the Town was going to have to raise its water and or sewer rates and that the Town would look at it when going through its budget process and it was just something the Town would have to face.

He discussed that when the sewer system was put in the financial projection had called for an annual increase of 3% in the user charges but that had not been the case.

He discussed that the water rates had not gone up in at least seven years and that the reality was, particularly with the water system, that revenue had not been covering expense. He discussed that what kind of increase it would be he did not know but during the budget process hoped to come up with some alternative ideas.

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c). ARB: Mayor Sullivan discussed that there was an ARB vacancy and that an ad had been put in the newspaper and that the Town was looking for a good candidate.

• NEW BUSINESS: a). ESS Water System Contract Renewal: Mayor Sullivan discussed that this was not the big contract that the Town had with ESS to run the wastewater treatment plant but rather a contract to conduct various lab tests required by law, which ESS had been doing for years and that they were not raising their rates.

After a short discussion, Mr. Schwartz made a motion to approve the ESS Water System contract contingent on approval by the Town Attorney as to form and Mr. O'Connell seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted "yes"	Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"	Ms. Butler voted "yes"

And the motion passed 6-0.

b). Rappahannock County Food Pantry Day: Mayor Sullivan discussed that last year the Town and County had supported various fundraising activities in support of the Food Pantry and that the Board of Supervisors had voted to support a Food Pantry Day on May 11th and he was asking that the Town also pass a resolution (attached) in support and again like last year contribute \$1,500.

After a short discussion, Mr. O'Connell made a motion to pass a resolution making May 11, 2013 the Town of Washington Food Pantry Day and to also contribute \$1,500 to the Food Pantry. Ms. Kuhn seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted "yes"	Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"	Ms. Butler voted "yes"

And the motion passed 6-0.

c). Set a Date for April Budget Work Session:
Council agreed by consensus to continue the meeting to hold a budget work session on Friday, April 5, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.

d). People, Inc. Invoice for Market Study: Mayor Sullivan recused himself and Vice-Mayor Schwartz took over the meeting. Vice Mayor Schwartz discussed that at a prior meeting People, Inc. had asked that the Town pay for half of a marketing study should the SUP not be approved.

Mr. Goebel discussed that there had been a suggestion by Mr. Spethmann that the Town might pay for half of the marketing study but there had been no motion and no vote.

Mr. Bennett discussed that the issue of the marketing study had gone back in forth and the Town had made it clear that it had wanted a study.

After a short discussion, Mr. O'Connell made a motion that the Vice-Mayor draft a letter to People, Inc. explaining that the Town's understanding was that since no vote was taken and since no formal obligation was entered into the Town did not in any way feel responsible for the invoice and Ms. Kuhn seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Vice-Mayor Schwartz turned the meeting back over to Mayor Sullivan.

• OLD BUSINESS CONTINUED: b) Sewer Connection Policy for New Users: Mayor Sullivan discussed that Allan Comp and Selma Thompson were the first home

owners in town to be effected by the specifics for the sewer hook-up policy for new users. He discussed that Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Bennett had worked out how the process was going to work and if went fairly smoothly and now the goal was to codify what the process was to be so that Town and the property owner would know what the policy was. He discussed that Mr. Bennett and Mr. Schwartz had put together a draft policy for the Council's consideration.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that the draft policy updated the existing Sewer Ordinance which discusses existing users and new users to now include new users and new hook-ups. He discussed that the policy included a lot of the same language as the Ordinance and that it discussed the responsibilities of the Town, particularly the installing of piping from the street and the installation of the grinder pot before the property owner could hook up. He discussed that it also discussed the responsibilities of the property owner, which included submitting an application and an easement agreement and complying with Town documents detailing what the property owner was responsible for including that the applicant was responsible for installing electricity and abandoning an existing septic system. He discussed that these additional documents were the same as had been given to existing users.

Mr. Bennett discussed that from a legal perspective the most important point about the policy was that it goes through this technical review and then the Town would get an estimate of the costs and the Town would require the payment of all costs up front before going ahead with any work. He discussed that the only danger was if the estimate was lower than the actual costs but typically the Town would collect that before allowing the homeowner to hook-up.

Ms. Kuhn asked about a time-line and discussed that she felt that there should be a time frame indicated so that the applicant understood when the Town had to respond to their application.

After a short discussion, the Council agreed by consensus to change the policy to state that after the homeowner had supplied all the documents required in items 1 and 2 the Town would respnd to their application within thirty to sixty days unless there were unusual or complex circumstances.

Ms. Kuhn asked that the word Typical be taken out of title and the Council agreed by consensus to that change.

After a short discussion, Mr. Schwartz made a motion to accept and approve the procedures as modified to obtain new or upgraded sewer services in the Town of Washington and Mr. O'Connell seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted "yes" Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes" Mr. Goebel voted "yes"

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes" Ms. Butler voted "yes"

And the motion passed 6-0.

- PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Sullivan opened the public forum.

Ms. Buntin asked what would be the factors in determining the new water and sewer rates.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he did not know what the increase would be but in terms of the process the Town would look at the revenues and expenses this year then the Town would look at next year and how much it would be reasonable to raise the rates. He discussed that there would be a public hearing on any rate increase.

There was a short discussion on how the Council might raise the rates. The Mayor discussed that first the Town should look at what other towns did and how much they charged. He discussed that what he did not want to do was spend so much on a study that

it ate up any increase. He discussed that the Town would have to look at what was the dollar cost to the user and what percentage that would be over the existing rates. He discussed that one of the reasons that the water rates had not been increased in seven years was because the Council did not want to increase the charges when residents were getting faced with significant new sewer charges.

Ms. Kuhn asked when the meals and lodgings taxes had taken effect.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that that had been back in 1990.

Ms. Kuhn discussed that the Town might consider raising the meals and lodging taxes to bring in more income.

Ms. Dodd discussed that the Town loans required that the user charges paid for operations.

Mr. O'Connell asked about repairing the streets.

Ms. Dodd discussed that the Town was obligated to resurface the streets as part of an agreement with VDoT when the sewer system was put in and that the Town had asked that it be put off until after Phase II was completed. She discussed that Warren Ave. and Main St. had been repaved by VDoT as part of their six year plan.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that it was the Town's responsibility to repave and perhaps the Town could get some kind of grant.

Mr. Bennett discussed that it was a condition of the permit to put the sewer in streets but VDoT had indicated firmly that they might forget about the Town repairing the streets.

Ms. Bunting expressed her concern about a rate increase.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that whatever number the Town come up with to raise the rates the Town would do so cognizant of the fact of whether they were reasonable and affordable for the people in the town regardless of whether it was a resident or a business owner.

Ms. Buntin expressed her concerns for her neighbor running a B&B with great expenses and other neighbors on fixed incomes having to pay for an increase.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Town would not be indifferent to the needs of residents and business owners.

Mayor Sullivan closed the public forum.

- CLOSED SESSION:
- CONTINUED MEETING: At 8:35:30 pm Ms. Kuhn made a motion to continue the meeting to April 5, 2013 at 9:00 to hold a budget work session and Mr. Goebel seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Dodd
Town Clerk

Attachments

Bank Summary Report
List of Bills-To-Be-Paid
Additional Bills Paid
Resolution on Procedures to obtain new or upgraded sewer service in the Town of Washington.
ESS Water Contract

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL ON
MARCH 11, 2013