

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

April 13, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Fred Catlin called the Town Council (TC) meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Council members Patrick O'Connell, Brad Schneider, Gail Swift and Joe Whited were present with Mary Ann Kuhn, absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Barbara Batson were present.
- APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Ms. Swift requested item e "Set date for additional budget work session" be removed. A roll call vote was taken to approve the amended agenda:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Mr. Schneider voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- MINUTES: Ms. Swift requested that "Planning Commission" in paragraph two of the Mayor's report be changed to "Architectural Review Board". Mr. Schneider motioned to accept the amended minutes with the requested change and Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell "abstained"

Mr. Schneider voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

And the motion passed 4-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- REPORTS:

Mayor's Report: Mayor Catlin thanked Fawn Evenson, Linda Webster, Rito Garcia and all the other people responsible for the wonderful job they did investing in the Town by organizing the planting of the cherry blossom trees, dogwoods and redbuds during the week of April 6.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has finished reviewing the plans and has made recommendations on how to address the wetlands at the site for the Post Office in Town. The updated plans were sent to the U.S. Postal Service for approval and submitted to USACE for final approval by May 1. The post office task force has met twice to work with the developer to improve the aesthetics of the building by suggesting changing the pitch of the roof to match other buildings in the area, installing a standing seam metal roof instead of an asphalt roof and installing a better gutter system. These changes would need to be paid for by private funds because they exceed the original budget for the building. The developer hopes to start construction in May 2020.

Mayor Catlin explained this should be the last in-person TC meeting during the stay-at-home order issued by the Governor but there were many agenda items that did need to be covered

including an emergency meeting ordinance that would allow future meetings to be done remotely.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Swift shared that since a lot was accomplished at the budget work session she didn't feel an additional work session was needed. She reported that Mr. Schneider will do a detailed line item review of the wastewater and water draft budgets and make recommendations. Then a final review would be made by Ms. Swift, Mr. Whited and the Town Clerk and an updated draft budget would be sent to the Council for review.

Ms. Swift noted that the February 2020 Treasurer's report was in the provided TC packets but that she is still working on the March 2020 report and will send it to the Council once completed. She also shared that each Town bank account now has its own debit card to eliminate the need to transfer funds for purchases among the three accounts (General, Wastewater, and Water).

Mr. Whited shared there is limited flexibility with deferring the Federal loans but there is a possibility of refinancing the loans to get a better interest rate. He is working with Virginia Resource Authority (VRA) to defer the May 1, 2020 loan payment. VRA is open to deferring the payment and while this may increase the Town's future payments, he was still working with VRA on a final solution. Mr. Whited also shared he was researching options for possibly renegotiating the Town's other loans and will report his findings to the Council.

Ms. Swift made a motion to approve the bills to be paid and Mr. O'Connell seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	
And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.	

Planning Commission Report: Ms. Swift reported that she was unsure if the Planning Commission would meet this month.

Architectural Review Board Report: Drew Mitchell reported the ARB did not meet in April.

Town Attorney: Mr. Bennett reported that incurring new obligations by renegotiating current loans may incur a fee up to \$10,000 and he cautioned the Council to keep that in mind moving forward. He also reported he was asked to look into new legislation amending the Virginia Human Rights Act and provided a detailed summary of the statute to the Council. Mayor Catlin asked if the Town's ordinance should reflect the language in the statute. Mr. Bennett suggested using similar language.

Mayor Catlin motioned to have the language of the Town's ordinance align with the recently passed Virginia Values Act (Senate Bill 868), Discrimination: prohibited in public accommodations, etc., causes of action. Mr. Schneider seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- OLD BUSINESS:

- (a) Approve Financial Procedures: Ms. Swift reviewed the financial procedures currently used by the Treasurer and Town Clerk.

Ms. Swift made a motion to approve the financial procedures and Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- (b) Annual Town Contribution to local non-profit: Ms. Swift suggested the Town contribute \$500 to the Rappahannock Food Pantry and wait until June 2020 to decide what to do with the remaining \$1,500 budgeted for this line item.

Ms. Swift made a motion to approve the contribution to the Rappahannock Food Pantry and Mayor Catlin seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- (c) Non-discrimination ordinance: was discussed and voted on during the Town Attorney report.

- (d) Funding proposal: Mayor Catlin suggested a method be put in place that would allow donations to be made to the Town for improvements while providing some confidentiality of the donation amounts. He reviewed a funding proposal that explains the process for the Town receiving donations that would allow transparency of the contributors while protecting their rights to privacy regarding donation amounts. The Council would approve projects to be created by the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation who would collect the donations and allocate them as defined. The Foundation does publish an annual list of donators. The Fund uses three different advisors. In February 2020 it had a 24% return on investment and in March 2020 it lost 18.5%. The foundation charges two fees, an administrative fee of \$150 and an investment fee of .85%. The Council would identify the need for the Town and is the only entity that can authorize the release of funds. Mayor Catlin proposes that once the funds have been approved for release by the TC, the funds may be spent by a majority vote among the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Treasurer. A monthly report will be given of expenditures at TC meetings. Mayor Catlin discussed the urgent need to have this process put in place so the Town could receive funds for prospective changes to the Post Office plans.

Ms. Swift expressed she thought it was a great way to make improvements to the Town. Mr. Whited suggested creating two additional sub codes for the beautification of the Town and the restoration of Town Hall.

Mayor Catlin made a motion consisting of three parts:

- approve creating an organization fund with the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation
- approve creating sub codes for enhancements to the post office construction, town beautification, and Town Hall restoration
- empower the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Treasurer to spend the funds by majority vote once approved by Town Council

Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”	Mr. Schneider voted “yes”
Ms. Swift voted “yes”	Mr. Whited voted “yes”
Mayor Catlin voted “yes”	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- NEW BUSINESS:

- (a) Authorize Public Hearing for FY 20-21 Budget:

Ms. Swift asked Mr. Bennett if the public hearing to approve the FY 20-21 budget needed to be an in-person meeting or if it could be an electronic meeting if the current emergency situation was still in place for the June TC meeting. Mr. Bennett replied that the statute clearly states that the Town needs to allow the public an opportunity to speak so it may be possible to have an electronic public hearing. Mayor Catlin suggested authorizing a public hearing during the June 8, 2020 TC meeting. Mr. Bennett advised that the Council couldn’t vote at the public hearing and a second meeting would need to occur to vote on the budget. He also advised since the Town is required by law to approve the budget by June 30, 2020 that it could be discussed during an electronic meeting.

Mayor Catlin motioned to authorize a public hearing for the FY 20-21 budget on June 8, 2020 and hold a special Council meeting on June 15, 2020 to vote on the budget and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”	Mr. Schneider voted “yes”
Ms. Swift voted “yes”	Mr. Whited voted “yes”
Mayor Catlin voted “yes”	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- (b) Protocol for annual charitable contribution: Mayor Catlin reviewed a proposal for establishing a procedure whereby local charitable entities can request donations from the Town. The entity would submit an application including the amount of funds requested, the proposed use of funds, evidence of its 501 (c)(3) status and its latest Profit and Loss statement to the Town Clerk by February 1 of each year. The Council would review and vote on the recipient(s) at the April TC meeting and the check would be presented at the May TC meeting.

Mayor Catlin motioned to approve the process for submitting an application for Town charitable contributions and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”	Mr. Schneider voted “yes”
Ms. Swift voted “yes”	Mr. Whited voted “yes”
Mayor Catlin voted “yes”	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- (c) Emergency Meeting Ordinance: Mr. Bennett informed the Council that the Town does not have a policy for emergency electronic meetings. He reviewed a draft ordinance and said it would be good for 60 days and recommended the Council consider making it permanent after that. It requires that the remote meeting information be advertised so the public could join. He also cautioned that the ordinance would need to be followed precisely.

Mr. Whited motioned to approve the Emergency Meeting Ordinance and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

Mr. Bennett reviewed the resolution to designate a Director of Emergency Management.

Mr. Schneider motioned to approve the Director of Emergency Management resolution and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

- (d) Town Council vacancy: Mayor Catlin shared there is still a vacancy on the TC and that an application in the form of a letter of interest should be submitted by mail or email to the Town Clerk.

- Public Forum: Mayor Catlin opened the Public Forum.

Drew Mitchell shared he will be hosting a virtual happy hour for the Town this Friday at 6:00 p.m.

- ADJOURNMENT: At 7:56 p.m. Ms. Swift motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. O'Connell seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mr. Whited voted "yes"
Mayor Catlin voted "yes"	

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Kuhn absent.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS May 11, 2020.

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk

Attachments:

Additional Bills Paid

Bills to be Paid

Financial Procedures

Non-discrimination ordinance
Funding Proposal
Protocol for annual charitable contribution
Emergency meeting ordinance
Director of Emergency Management resolution