

# The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

July 13, 2020

7:00 p.m.

APPROVED Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Fred Catlin opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Council members Mary Ann Kuhn, Patrick O'Connell, Brad Schneider and Joe Whited were present with Joan Platt and Gail Swift absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Barbara Batson were present.
- APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Mr. Schneider motioned the agenda be approved. Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken to approve the agenda:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Mr. Schneider voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Platt and Ms. Swift absent.

- MINUTES: Ms. Kuhn motioned to accept the minutes and Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Mr. Schneider voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Platt and Ms. Swift absent.

- REPORTS:

Mayor's Report: Mayor Catlin had no report.

Treasurer's Report: Mayor Catlin reported the income and expenses for FY 2019-2020. He thanked Ms. Swift, Mr. Schneider and Mr. Whited for their work on the budget.

Mr. Schneider made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and approve the bills to be paid and Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Mr. Schneider voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Platt and Ms. Swift absent.

Planning Commission Report: Mayor Catlin reported the Planning Commission did not meet in June and its next scheduled meeting is July 27, 2020.

Architectural Review Board Report: The ARB did not meet in June and its next scheduled meeting is August 12, 2020.

Town Attorney: Mr. Bennett did not have a report.

- OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business.
  
- NEW BUSINESS:
  - (a) Rescind state of emergency status: Mayor Catlin asked Mr. Bennett if the Town Council needed to extend the state of emergency status. Mr. Bennett advised if the state of emergency was extended for another 90 days it would give the Council the ability to host electronic meetings should it be necessary with the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Catlin made a motion to extend the state of emergency for 90 days and Ms. Kuhn seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted “yes”

Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”

Mr. Schneider voted “yes”

Mr. Whited voted “yes”

Mayor Catlin voted “yes”

And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Platt and Ms. Swift absent.

- (b) Discussion of monument/memorial in Town: Mayor Catlin reported he received three letters, one from a Town resident and the other two from County residents, expressing the desire to have the Civil War memorial/monument removed from the Town.

Mr. O’Connell asked if the statue was on Town property. Mayor Catlin responded that everything he’s heard to date indicates that it is on County property. He shared there are two parts to the statue. The lower portion has a list of County residents who died during the war and the upper portion is a statue of John Mosby and Robert E. Lee. He opened the agenda item for comment.

Liz Monsure, a resident of Rappahannock County, expressed her concern that a small group of radicals who have no roots in the community are pressuring officials to remove traces of its history. She said it’s important to remember this history even if it’s not palatable for everyone.

Robert Gall, a resident of Rappahannock County, said his family has deep roots in the County and the memorial is dedicated to members of his family. He asked the memorial remain.

David Thornhill, a resident of Rappahannock County, said there are five members of his family on the memorial and feels it’s a grave marker since their bodies were not recovered in the War. He asked the memorial remain.

Bill Fletcher, a resident of Sperryville, said there were 115 Rappahannock County persons killed during the War of Northern Aggression. He doesn’t feel the South was fighting for slavery and

instead was defending itself from the attack by northern states. He said he didn't feel the Town Council had any right to have this item on the agenda since the statue is on County property. He said he was angry with the Town for even discussing this issue and was thinking about starting a petition to "decharter" the Town of Washington. Mr. Catlin responded the statue was in the Town boundary and felt it was important to give the public an opportunity to express its opinion. Mr. Fletcher responded the Town has no authority on this issue.

Mr. Bennett reminded the Council that this was not a forum for debate but was a forum for the public to express its views.

Jock Nash, a resident of Rappahannock County, said he was worried about the safety of County residents when there was a Black Lives Matter event held recently on a local farm. He shared his service during the Vietnam War and expressed the importance of remembering those soldiers who died while protecting their country. He has gone to the Civil War memorial and cleaned it and will do whatever possible to protect it.

Nancy Buntin, a Town resident, said she felt it was important to have this discussion so all sides of the issue could express their opinion. She shared she had family members on both sides of the war who died. She felt this statue was different from the ones located in Richmond because it contains the names of soldiers who died during the war.

Ronald Frazier, a member of the Rappahannock County Board of Supervisors, said the Board has already discussed this issue and approved the statue in its current placement. Mayor Catlin asked if this was a recent discussion and Mr. Frazier responded that it was discussed and voted on in 1906 and that was recent enough in his opinion.

Ms. Kuhn asked Mr. Bennett about the legal interest the Town could take on this issue. Mr. Bennett responded that the Town had no jurisdiction on this issue. Ms. Kuhn asked if the Town could pass a resolution stating its opinion on this topic. Mr. Bennett responded the Town could but the County is the government entity responsible for the statue.

Mr. Schneider said he felt the Town did its civic duty by having this item on the agenda and allowing the public to express its opinion. He said he supported having the memorial and feels it is a good representation of history.

Ms. Kuhn shared the monument was one of the 33 sites on the Civil War Trails in the county.

Mayor Catlin said he felt it was important to get perspectives from the public. Mr. Bennett shared the discussion was valuable and having the agenda item was the Town's way of doing its due diligence.

Mayor Catlin closed public comments at 7:50.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:50 p.m. Ms. Kuhn made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. O'Connell seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"  
Mr. Schneider voted "yes"

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

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"  
And the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Platt and Ms. Swift absent.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS August 10, 2020.

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk

Attachments:  
Treasurer's Report  
Bills to be paid