

# The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

October 12, 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, Gail Swift and Joe Whited were present with Joan Platt and Brad Schneider absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Barbara Batson were present.
- APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Ms. Swift motioned the agenda be approved. Mr. Whited seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

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

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

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

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

- REPORTS:

Mayor's Report: Mayor Catlin reported that construction has begun on the new post office. He thanked everyone involved getting the project to this point. Special thanks go to former Mayor John Sullivan, Rappahannock County Administrator Garrey Curry, Town Attorney John Bennett and the Town Council. He also thanked the residents for their assistance and patience. The construction will hopefully be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Mayor Catlin also reported that because of COVID-19 restrictions the Christmas parade was canceled for this year. The local villages will have a float decorating contest and each float will be located in their respective community. The winner of the float contest will receive a tree for planting in the spring. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be in Town on December 6.

He also shared there are currently five street lights burned out that will be replaced on Wednesday. Routine maintenance will be performed on the water system on October 13, 2020 from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. and residents should minimize usage during that time. He also thanked

Paul Reisler for all his work on installing the new sound system in the Town Hall and Gail Swift for her assistance with the new system. Mayor Catlin sent condolences to the family of long-time Town resident, Maude Roy who recently passed away.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Swift reported the first CARES Act reimbursement check will be signed on November 2. She shared that some items are backordered but she would like to have an idea in the next 10 days on how much money the Town will be able to turn back over to the County. Mayor Catlin asked if there is anything we can do to prepare for any additional federal monies coming. Ms. Swift responded there wasn't anything at this point and that any future monies would come through the County.

Ms. Swift reported the annual audit will take place on October 19-20. She also reported she has spoken with Rick's Welding to give the Town an estimate on replacing the railing at Town Hall. She also shared she would follow-up with Brad Schneider about scheduling a tour of the wastewater treatment plant with the Town Council. Ms. Swift asked Mr. O'Connell if he'd like William Lester to be invited on the plant tour. Mr. O'Connell confirmed he would like Mr. Lester to attend.

Ms. Swift made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and approve the bills to be paid and Mayor Catlin seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

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

Planning Commission Report: There was no report from the Planning Commission.

Architectural Review Board Report: There was no report from the ARB. The next meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2020.

Town Attorney: There was no report from the Town Attorney.

- OLD BUSINESS:

- (a) Drought Management: Mr. O'Connell distributed additional information to the Council. The last meeting of the Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force was in 2019. Mayor Catlin shared his understanding is the Governor declares whether drought conditions are in effect. Mr. O'Connell confirmed that was true but drought conditions do not have to be placed statewide and can be implemented for localities. Mayor Catlin asked if the County had rules in place if a drought were declared. Mr. O'Connell responded that the County doesn't have leeway that the restrictions would come from the State.

Mayor Catlin asked if other towns have rules they put in place once drought restrictions have been declared. Mr. O'Connell said the first step is a voluntary water conservation activity which

is reported to reduce water usage by 5-10% and that usually resolves the problem before needing to implement an emergency plan.

Mr. O'Connell shared it would be good to have our water table tested again. The ground water was thought to be polluted due to the number of drain fields. He felt it might be a good idea for some areas to have an artesian well to water gardens to help conserve water. Mr. O'Connell also shared another water reduction measure would be to harvest and reuse rainwater. Mayor Catlin asked where we should test the groundwater. Mr. O'Connell replied there are several wells around town we can use for testing. He volunteered to do testing at one of his wells and he will bring back the results at the next meeting.

Ms. Kuhn shared the County has a joint water supply plan for the County and the Town of Washington and it addresses, among other things, drought management responses. It was updated in the last year and a half. Mayor Catlin asked if the Town is incorporated in the plan. Ms. Kuhn replied that the town is incorporated throughout the plan. Mayor Catlin thanked Mr. O'Connell for all the information he gathered for the Council. He thanked Ms. Kuhn for the research she did and finding out about this resource.

- (b) Planning Commission vacancy: Mayor Catlin reported Constance Bruce a recently arrived resident has responded to the vacancy. Ms. Kuhn said she looks very qualified.

Mayor Catlin made a motion to appoint Constance Bruce to the Planning Commission and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

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

- NEW BUSINESS:

- (a) Water and Sewer Policies: Ms. Swift presented documentation outlining the current water and sewer policies. Ms. Kuhn suggested adding late fees and information about what residents should do if they have questions or are disputing their usage. Ms. Swift said she would work with Ms. Kuhn on revising the policy. Mr. Whited asked if we should make this an ordinance and Mr. Bennett replied it can be adopted as a policy and it doesn't need to be an ordinance. Mr. Whited suggested bringing the updated policy to the November meeting and suggested adopting it in 2021.

- (b) Town Holiday Celebration: Mayor Catlin stated there are CDC guidelines that should be made available to the public regarding trick-or-treating. Although Halloween isn't a Town sponsored event if it does affect the safety of residents and visitors. He shared the following CDC recommendations: (1) pass out treats outdoors if possible, (2) setup a station with individually wrapped treats, (3) wash hands, (4) always wear a mask (5) have children wear a cloth mask (6) stay six feet away from others. Ms. Swift suggested sharing these guidelines with the Rappahannock News.

Mayor Catlin shared the Town normally holds a holiday celebration the Sunday after the Christmas In Little Washington parade, which would be December 13 this year. He opened the topic for discussion with the Council. Ms. Swift suggested the party be canceled this year because the Town could not safely accommodate the number of people and follow State COVID guidelines. Ms. Kuhn suggested the Town should still do something to commemorate the holiday and Ms. Swift suggested the Town still be decorated. Mayor Catlin confirmed the holiday party would be canceled and the Town would still be decorated for the holidays. Ms. Kuhn suggested using the holiday party budget to do something for town residents such as delivering poinsettias to each Town resident. Mayor Catlin suggested donating that money to the food pantry. Ms. Swift said she did not have the budgeted number available at this time and suggested moving this to the next month's agenda. Mayor Catlin agreed.

PUBLIC FORUM: At 7:41 p.m. Mayor Catlin opened the meeting for public comment.

Ms. Nancy Buntin shared that in Sunday's Washington Post newspaper there was an article about 27 restaurants that are making it work during COVID and that The Inn at Little Washington was on the list.

Mr. Whited shared the temporary sign for Harris Hollow Road has been installed.

Mayor Catlin thanked Mr. Whited on behalf of the Town for purchasing and planting mums in the barrels throughout the Town.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:45 p.m. Mayor Catlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

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

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS November 9, 2020.

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk

Attachments:

Treasurer's Report

Bills to be paid