

# The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

November 9, 2020

7:00 p.m.

APPROVED Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Fred Catlin opened the meeting at 7:02 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. Kuhn requested adding a discussion of a resolution to honor former Town Councilman Ray Gooch for his contributions to the Town under new business and Mr. Bennett requested adding a discussion of the flood plan map under new business. 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 he was saddened to hear about the loss of Ray Gooch. He was an extraordinary man and would come over to Fred's porch and talk about things they did on the Town Council. Mayor Catlin enjoyed his dry sense of humor.

Bob Fasce, General Manager of The Inn at Little Washington, shared that construction on the new café has resumed with a hope of an opening in the summer. There will be a crane parked in front of the Inn January 22 to February 8.

Christmas in Little Washington organizers are sponsoring a Christmas-themed float decorating contest amongst Rappahannock County's six villages. The prize is a live tree planting for the community with the best float. Mayor Catlin urged anyone interested in serving on the float task force to contact the Town Clerk.

Mayor Catlin also reported that Joan Platt has resigned from serving on the Town Council. Anyone interested in serving on the Council should submit a letter of application to the Town Clerk by November 30, 2020. Mr. Bennett said the Town has 60 days to fill the vacancy before it goes to a circuit court judge to make an appointment.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Swift reported the Council will go through the budgets at the next meeting. The bills to be paid are high due to grinder pumps needing replacement and a repair at the wastewater plant. The COVID testing bill was because the Town Clerk was feeling unwell and the auditors were scheduled to arrive at the office that week.

Ms. Kuhn 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: The ARB is scheduled to meet on November 11, 2020.

Town Attorney: Mr. Bennett asked the Council to have a closed session at the end of the agenda. He shared that the Town no longer has any territory on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Plan Map. He spoke to FEMA asking if the Town could withdraw the Town's ordinance. FEMA said additional paperwork would be needed or we may need to hold a public meeting. Mr. Bennett said he would continue to work with FEMA and report back to the Council.

- OLD BUSINESS:

- (a) Review of water and sewer policies: Ms. Swift presented the updated policies. She shared that the Town had guidelines but nothing had been put in writing. She would like to send out the policies in the next water and sewer billing cycle and have them posted on the website. Mayor Catlin thanked Ms. Swift and Ms. Kuhn for their work and asked for a voice vote to approve the policies.

Ms. Kuhn voted "aye"

Mr. O'Connell voted "aye"

Ms. Swift voted "aye"

Mr. Whited voted "aye"

Mayor Catlin voted "aye"

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

- (b) Donation to food pantry: Ms. Swift reported there is \$500 in the budget for marketing. She asked Mr. Bennett if instead of using the marketing budget monies, could the Council approve using general funds. Mr. Bennett responded "yes" since it falls below the 3% threshold requiring a public hearing.

Ms. Swift made a motion to donate \$500 to the food pantry and Ms. Kuhn 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) Ability to take credit cards for payments via Atlantic Union: Ms. Swift shared the Town has received several requests from residents to be able to pay their water and sewer bills via electronic methods. Ms. Swift met with a company that the Town's bank recommended. Mayor Catlin noted there was a monthly fee of \$30. Ms. Swift responded there are different options available. One option is the monthly fee, and 5 cents per transaction plus a 1% processing fee. Another option is a flat fee of \$180 per month and a 10 cent per transaction fee. Mayor Catlin asked if there is a one-time setup fee of \$99. Ms. Swift responded we wouldn't do an option that had a flat fee that the Town would have to pay. Mr. Whited shared that if the monthly fee is \$30 we would save \$300 a year in postage if everyone signed up. He said he would like to do some additional digging into the setup. Ms. Kuhn asked if there were examples of other sites that use this company's service. Ms. Swift responded there are examples that she could share. Mr. Bennett shared that typically entities using a credit card service are responsible for any fees and not the taxpayers. He said you could add a fee for each transaction. Ms. Swift said they would need to see what fees would apply based on the option selected that the users would have to pay. Mr. Whited said we would adjust the fees the users would pay to cover the operating costs. Ms. Swift shared she and Mr. Whited would be looking at this item in-depth and report back to the Council.
- (b) Establishing a holiday decorating committee: Mayor Catlin reported we needed to not only decorate the float but also the Town. Ms. Swift reported the budget for this is \$500. Mayor Catlin said some of that money would be needed for the float. He asked Ms. Swift if she wanted to make a budget for how to allocate the Town marketing funds and Ms. Swift replied that Mayor Catlin could create a budget if necessary. Mr. Whited and Mayor Catlin volunteered to do the decorating.
- (c) Resolution for Ray Gooch: Ms. Kuhn shared Mr. Gooch served on the Town Council from 1987-1998. She said it was a tumultuous time during that period. She shared a personal story that she purchased a farm in Rappahannock in 1988 as a weekender and would read the Rappahannock newspaper. She would read the things Mr. Gooch was reported to have said and thought he was such an honorable man. She said he had such integrity and a passion for the town and its history. She said he wrote an article in February in the Rappahannock News about George Washington and Gay Fairfax and their relationship and wrote let's keep that alive. He lived here for almost 50 years and during his time on Town Council he chaired a committee doing a report on the future of the Town. She asked Mr. O'Connell to share any anecdotes he may have.

Mr. O'Connell said the Town used to be a much more contentious place. He said you used to hear about small towns settling disputes by gun fights and we weren't too far away from that. When Mr. Gooch was on the Council they played rough and particularly in political situations. The Council felt the Town and County were eroding with the influx of new people. Mr. O'Connell felt the Town fell into two camps and with Mr. Gooch being an attorney he had a passion for justice. He stood up to both physical and verbal threats and prevailed. He helped to reestablish trust and Mr. O'Connell shared he doesn't know what would have happened without people like Mr. Gooch. Mr. O'Connell thought one of the goals to end what was perceived as a threat by others was to put The Inn at Little Washington out of business. He felt that Mr. Gooch and Diane Bruce were tremendous allies to see the situation and stand up to the powers-that-be. Town Council meetings were very different in those times. Mr. O'Connell feels that Mr. Gooch is someone to celebrate. He is planning to place a picture of Mr. Gooch in the Town Hall lobby. Mayor Catlin shared we are fortunate we have a town and businesses within the town that have been allowed to prosper because we are standing on the shoulders of great people such as Ray Gooch. He thanked Ray Gooch again for all that he has done.

Mayor Catlin asked for a voice vote for Ms. Kuhn to draft a resolution for Mr. Gooch to present at the next Council meeting.

Ms. Kuhn voted "aye"

Mr. O'Connell voted "aye"

Ms. Swift voted "aye"

Mr. Whited voted "aye"

Mayor Catlin voted "aye"

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

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

Nancy Buntin commented she hasn't seen work being done at the post office site lately. She noticed there was an elaborate drainage system being installed and questioned whether it's necessary. Mayor Catlin responded it has been raining lately and the site needed to dry before work can continue. Ms. Swift said the construction crew could also be waiting for the building inspector. Mayor Catlin said this is the work being done on the retention tank that will be under the parking lot. He said he would find out more information regarding the drainage system and give a report at the next meeting.

Jeanne Kauffman thanked Mr. O'Connell for his work fixing up the old health department building. She asked if there was a committee to handle the issue of maintaining buildings in Town. Mayor Catlin said there wasn't a committee outside the Architectural Review Board. She commented there was a study on the County buildings within the Town and asked if the Town has any input. Mayor Catlin replied that the Town does not have any input. He commented the County had a long-term plan for buildings within the County. Ms. Swift shared the study went to the Board of Supervisors and an outside firm was hired to verify the study. She said the work has begun little by little. Ms. Kauffman said the Town should have some interest in the buildings and Mayor Catlin said he would bring it up with the County Administrator.

Mayor Catlin closed the public forum at 7:46 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION: Mr. Bennett read the first motion, Town Attorney will request Council to consider voting on entering into closed session in accordance with provision of Virginia Code 2.2 3711 a7 to consult with the Town Attorney as to the post office building and site construction a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice.

Mr. Bennett read the second motion, Town Attorney will request Council to consider voting on entering into closed session in accordance with provision of Virginia Code 2.2 3711 e7 with the Town Attorney concerning the legal requirements and issues of any adjustment to the Town boundaries a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice.

Mayor Catlin had a third motion to invite the Town Clerk to the closed session as to both matters. Mayor Catlin asked if each motion needed to be voted on separately or could they be combined into one motion. Mr. Bennett advised if no one had an objection they could be combined. Mayor Catlin asked if anyone on the Council had an objection. There was no objection.

Mayor Catlin made a motion to approve the three motions to go into closed session 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.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:46 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 DECEMBER 14, 2020.

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk

Attachments:

Treasurer's Report

Bills to be paid

Water and sewer guidelines