



May 8, 2023
7:00 p.m.
Approved Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Whited opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Council members Drew Beard, Fred Catlin, Jean Goodine, Patrick O’Connell, Brad Schneider, and Gail Swift were present. Town Attorney Martin Crim and Town Administrator/Clerk Barbara Batson were present.
- APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Mr. Catlin made a motion to approve the agenda and Mr. Beard seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted “yes”	Mr. Fred Catlin voted “yes”
Ms. Goodine voted “yes”	Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”
Mr. Schneider voted “yes”	Ms. Swift voted “yes”
Mayor Whited voted “yes”	
And the motion passed 7-0.	

- MINUTES: Ms. Goodine asked to add “a gift” to the last sentence of the Mayor’s report and change the word “ineligible” in the third paragraph on page four to “eligible”. Mr. Catlin motioned to accept the amended minutes for April 10, 2023 and Ms. Goodine seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted “yes”	Mr. Fred Catlin voted “yes”
Ms. Goodine voted “yes”	Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”
Mr. Schneider voted “yes”	Ms. Swift voted “yes”
Mayor Whited voted “yes”	
And the motion passed 7-0.	

REPORTS:

Mayor’s Report: Mayor Whited shared that Mr. Joe Wenk passed away last week. Mr. Wenk was a longtime contractor for the town. He always took pride in his work and worked hard to keep the town looking good. Mayor Whited asked for a moment of silence to remember Mr. Wenk.

Mayor Whited thanked Mr. Drew Mitchell for his work on organizing a 4th of July celebration at Avon Hall. The celebration will take place on July 1, there will be additional information to follow in the Rappahannock News.

He also shared that he received complaints from two residents regarding fireworks being held in town. He shared that Town Council had approved guidelines on 7/21/21. Since 2020 there have been 12 total displays, and looking at the number of displays, he didn’t feel there was a need to revisit the issue.

Treasurer’s Report: Ms. Swift reported last month \$15,000 was spent on the water main leaks on Piedmont Ave and behind the Sheriff’s office.

Town Attorney: Mr. Crim reported he has received the draft conservation easement for Rush River Commons. He is waiting to see the baseline documentation for the report. He also received the bond form for the development of the Rush River Commons property. Mr. Crim also reported that the Boundary Line Adjustment is ready to go to the Committee of Local Government, he is just waiting for guidance from town on how they'd like to proceed.

Zoning Administrator: Mr. Steve Gyurisin was not present and submitted a written report.

Public Works Task Force: Mr. Schneider shared he's been trying to find someone to give him a quote for engineering the water line from the pumphouse to the water reservoir. He is also working on gathering priorities for future work needed on the water and wastewaters systems. He suggested the town look into finding a grant writer to help the town finding funding for infrastructure projects. He also shared there were two water leaks on the main line, one on Piedmont Ave and the other on Porter St. near the sheriff's office.

Planning Commission (PC): There was not a report.

Architectural Review Board (ARB): Ms. Deborah Harris reported that at the February meeting they elected new officers. Ms. Harris was elected as the Chairperson; Mr. Wes Kerr will remain Vice Chair and Mr. David McKnight will serve as the Secretary.

1. OLD BUSINESS:

(a) Economic Development Authority (EDA)

Mayor Whited reviewed the draft ordinance forming the EDA. Ms. Swift and Mr. Schneider suggested removing section 3 and just approve forming the EDA and electing the board members and terms. Ms. Swift and Mr. Schneider felt it was better to separate the ordinance and have section 3 as a resolution, setting up guidelines for the EDA. She felt the EDA could setup guidelines at their organizational meeting and then submit those to town council. Mr. Schneider also felt that the guidelines should not distinguish between business types and should apply equally for anyone conducting business in town. Ms. Swift also suggested that "tax rebates" should be removed and that "grants" should be used instead.

Mr. Catlin said in his opinion section 3 is only a suggestion and the EDA has the authority to throw the guidelines out and establish their own set of rules. He felt the ordinance should stay as one document instead of making section 3 a separate document. He also suggested adding the requirement that the EDA would need to submit an annual report to town council.

Ms. Goodine asked what if the EDA could decide on different guidelines than currently in the draft ordinance and Mr. Crim responded that the TC could not restrict the EDA.

Mr. Beard said although the guidelines aren't binding that it's the original intent of establishing the EDA and felt it was important to leave them in the ordinance. Mr. O'Connell asked what happens if a business is issued a grant and then closes business shortly after. Mayor Whited said that's why the guidelines are tied to the physical property.

Mr. Schneider and Ms. Swift again said that section 3 was not needed. Mayor Catlin said it signals to the public that the TC thinks this issue is important. Ms. Swift said that she wants to use the term

grant instead of tax rebate. Mr. Schneider shared that the town had a lot of expenses coming up to continue its work on the water and wastewater systems. He feels the town needs any additional revenue coming in. Mayor Whited responded that new businesses are needed and the EDA encourages that to happen.

Mr. Catlin motioned to remove section 3 of the ordinance and replace it with a requirement that the EDA submit an annual report, and approve the board members and terms as listed and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

The members of the board would consist of:

- For a term of one year, Mr. Tommy Bruce
- For a term of one year, Ms. Mary Ann Kuhn
- For a term of two years, Mr. Klaus Peters
- For a term of two years, Ms. Wendy Murdoch
- For a term of three years, Mr. John Fox Sullivan
- For a term of three years, Ms. Jean Goodine
- For a term of four years, Mr. Joe Whited

Mr. Beard abstained

Mr. Fred Catlin voted “yes”

Ms. Goodine voted “yes”

Mr. O’Connell abstained

Mr. Schneider voted “yes”

Ms. Swift voted “yes”

Mayor Whited voted “yes”

And the motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Beard and Mr. O’Connell abstaining.

Mr. John Fox Sullivan shared he felt it was important to have more specific guidelines. He didn’t think there was a lot of clarity on what the EDA can do. Mayor Whited said they would discuss it at their organizational meeting. Mr. Sullivan asked if the EDA would also have access to the town attorney and Mayor Whited said they would.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

(a) Public Hearing for the FY 23-24 budget

Mayor Whited opened the public hearing at 7:39 p.m.

Mr. Sullivan said the town has been fortunate to have a dramatic increase in meals and lodging taxes and federal money to work on infrastructure improvements. He asked how much in the last 4 years has been put to these improvements. Mayor Whited responded that \$135k in federal money from the American Recovery Plan Act was used on the water and wastewater systems and the town has invested \$700k in funds. Mr. Sullivan expressed that he thinks the town should take more credit for their investment in the town’s infrastructure. Mr. Schneider thanked Atrium for their outstanding work on the system and Ms. Goodine thanked Mr. Schneider for his stewardship of the systems.

Mayor Whited said in July 2023 there would be work done on the water valves in town that may cause the town to be on a boil water notice. This work on the valves would help the town to isolate shutting over water to sections of town instead of the entire town. Further information will be coming out about this work.

Ms. Murdoch asked how much the repairs for the water leak on Piedmont cost and how much water was lost. Mayor Whited responded the cost was approx. \$8,000 and the town lost about 60,000 gallons a day for 5 days.

Mayor Whited closed the public hearing at 7:47 p.m.

(b) Transportation Alternative Grant: Mr. Catlin shared that this grant is from the Virginia Department of Transportation and there is currently a pre-application process open between May 15 and August 15. He's looking to receive feedback from TC on priorities they'd like to see included in the town's application. He shared that the grant requires the town to provide 20% of the funds, he's hoping donors can be found, like with the post office enhancements. He provided the following 7 projects that he'd like TC to consider, he feels the first four are priorities and the last three are on a wish list.

1. Install a sidewalk down Warren Ave from Gay Street to the post office.
2. Install a sidewalk on the west side of Main Street from Middle to Porter Streets.
3. Install a sidewalk on the eastern extension of Porter Street to Mt. Salem Ave (along the side of the courthouse).
4. Extend the sidewalk along Mt. Salem Avenue from where it currently ends to the driveway of the Washington School House (567 Mt. Salem Avenue).
5. Replace the brick sidewalk on Gay Street, in front of the courthouse.
6. Extend the sidewalk on Main Street down to Foster Harris House and the Middleton Inn.
7. Install a treatment of brick crosswalks in the square in front of The Inn at Little Washington.

Ms. Goodine asked how much these projects would cost. Mr. Catlin said he would work on an estimate to present to TC next month. He was hoping to have input from TC on the priorities. Mayor Whited asked if a list of all the projects could be included on the application and the town could later remove items once cost estimates were known. Mr. Catlin said he estimates installing a sidewalk on Warren Ave to the post office would cost \$80k to \$100k and the town would be responsible for 20% of the cost. He thought the first four items would cost between \$150k to \$200k but he would work on getting a more accurate estimate and present it at the next meeting. Mayor Whited asked Mr. Catlin to begin the application process.

Mr. O'Connell said there was a dangerous hole on Main St. that needed to be repaired. Ms. Batson responded that she did report it to VDOT and they were scheduled to repair it next week.

PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Whited opened the public forum at 8:05 p.m.

Ms. Murdoch said she was speaking for Ms. Joan Platt. Ms. Platt shared with her that embers were flying into her yard during the recent firework display the Inn hosted. She feels that fireworks should be banned in town, or at a minimum that silent fireworks or drone displays be used.

Mayor Whited closed the public forum at 8:06 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION: Mayor Whited motioned to enter into closed session in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.2-3711 A.1 of the VA Code for discussion of appointment of a public officer,

specifically the town attorney and he invited Mr. Crim and Ms. Batson to stay. Mr. Catlin seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted "yes"	Mr. Fred Catlin voted "yes"
Ms. Goodine voted "yes"	Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"
Mr. Schneider voted "yes"	Ms. Swift voted "yes"
Mayor Whited voted "yes"	
And the motion passed 7-0.	

OPEN SESSION: Mayor Whited asked the council if to the best of each member's knowledge, that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Mayor Whited moved for Mr. Crim to continue to serve as the town's attorney and Mr. Catlin seconded, and a roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Beard voted "yes"	Mr. Fred Catlin voted "yes"
Ms. Goodine voted "yes"	Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"
Mr. Schneider voted "yes"	Ms. Swift voted "yes"
Mayor Whited voted "yes"	
And the motion passed 7-0.	

Mr. Catlin moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Beard seconded, and a roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Beard voted "yes"	Mr. Fred Catlin voted "yes"
Ms. Goodine voted "yes"	Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"
Mr. Schneider voted "yes"	Ms. Swift voted "yes"
Mayor Whited voted "yes"	
And the motion passed 7-0.	

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS
June 12, 2023.

Barbara Batson, Administrator/Town Clerk

Attachments:

Zoning Administrator's report
Draft Economic Development Authority Ordinance