

**March 14, 2023**

**MINUTES OF THE BROOKNEAL TOWN COUNCIL**

**7:00 PM – The regular meeting of the Brookneal Town Council**

The municipal government of the Town of Brookneal met with the following members present:

Kenneth Jennings, Mayor

Mark Wilkes, Vice Mayor

Barbara Laprade, Joseph David, Cynthia Johnson, Scott Fisher and Conner Francis, Council Members

Russell Thurston, Town Manager

Mike Crews, Public Works Director

Bobbie Waller, Clerk/Treasurer

Robert Kolich, Chief of Police

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Joseph David, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda for the March 14, 2023, regular meeting of the Brookneal Town Council.

**MINUTES**

Upon motion by Joseph David, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, Council approved the minutes for the February 14, 2023 Physical Development Committee Meeting and Town Council meeting.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mayor Jennings asked that the March 2023 treasurer's report be filed for audit.

**PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES**

Be it resolved that motion was made by Conner Francis, seconded by Cynthia Johnson, and unanimously carried, authorizing the payment of the invoices for the period of February 15, 2023 through March 14, 2023, in the amount of \$31,581.08.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carolyn Zimmer, of 116 Charlotte Street, appeared before Council to propose the Town do a "LOVE" sign here in Brookneal. She said the Virginia State Arts Foundation will reimburse up to \$1,500 for a sign. She suggested that it be put on Main Street, and she said that it would help bring tourists to the area because they go around the state looking for these signs to take pictures with. She also suggested a mascot for the Town of Brookneal to help get the arts foundation involved to get "artsy" people here. She said it would be a good gimmick to get people to come to Town. Ms. Zimmer also asked the Council to check on the vacant lot area behind her house on Charlotte Street. She said the area is overgrown, and it is encroaching on her backyard. Councilperson Francis commented that he did check on the "LOVE" sign after Ms. Zimmer's request at a committee meeting last week. He said it is a big tourist attraction for people to take pictures with. He said localities theme these signs to their area, such as recycled items from Elite that might be related to tobacco, the river, or Brookneal.

Per Vice Mayor Wilkes, Jennifer Watson was supposed to appear before Council to request the community building for June 24, 2023 for a church youth event. She was not in attendance.

- **COMMUNITY BUILDING USAGE BY JENNIFER WATSON JUNE 24, 2023**

Upon motion by Joseph David, seconded by Conner Francis and unanimously carried, the Council voted to approve the use by Ms. Watson on June 24, 2023 at no charge.

Dr. Bill Jones, of Brookneal Medical Center, appeared before Council to address his retirement from Centra Health in June 2023. He said that Centra Health does not plan to replace his position. He said the practice grew in 1995 to 3 physicians and another one was recruited soon afterwards. He said the practice is now down to 2 physicians and 2 nurse practitioners for an area that is approximately 60,000 people within a 30 miles radius. He told the Council that this is not good. He said in 2017 he was before this same Council addressing the need for another doctor, and Centra did get another doctor back then. Dr. Jones said that "your voice" is something that needs to be heard by his current employer. He said he is majorly concerned about his patients. Dr. Jones said he has 1280 patients that will cease to have a provider on June 30. Councilperson Francis is working on a task force to address the physician shortage. Councilperson Johnson is going to be on this task force, and Councilperson Francis is working on recruiting other citizens.

## **POLICE REPORT**

Robert Kolich, Chief of Police, presented the police report for February 2023. He said of the 127 calls for service, 114 were answered by the Brookneal Police Department and 13 by the Campbell County Sheriff's office.

## **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Public Works Director Mike Crews presented a written report to the Town Council. Included in the report were the following items:

- 3 water meters remaining to be installed-- Food Lion, Brookneal Elementary and Family Dollar must set up a schedule for installation
- Dixie Girls & Boys have started practices for their season

- 2010 Kenworth trash truck in the shop for repairs
- Spring Clean up will be March 27<sup>th</sup> through April 7<sup>th</sup>
- Broken pipe being repaired at Booker Road Pump Station
- Coastal Fiber LLC is running underground and overhead fiber optic cable from Brooke Street to the cell tower below the nursing home

## **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Town Manager Russell Thurston presented a written report to the Town Council. Included in the report were the following items:

- I am continuing to work on getting 311 Virginia Avenue cleaned up. The original letter mailed came back as undeliverable. I will send out certified mail this week which is required before legal action can be taken by the Town to clean up the property.
- I am working on another notice of violation addressed to Stewart Smith owner of 120 Church Street and 214 Old Main Street. The letter is here tonight and I will get your signatures before I put the letter in the mail.
- Continuing to work on the Town Budget for FY 23-24. I don't see any major problems with the general fund budget, but the water and sewer budget is a bit more challenging. The biggest issue there is the rapidly increasing cost of materials for treating the water.
- I have passed along the proposed revisions to the plan for the new playground area and will meet with the landscape architect next week.
- The new Mexican restaurant seems to be off to a good start.
- The old Roark warehouse, and former Staunton River Community Church which was recently purchased by Amy and Will Mayer will hold their first auction on Saturday, March 18 at 2 p.m.; please support our local businesses and let them know we are glad they have chosen Brookneal.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO APPOINT BOB GILLESPIE TO THE VACANT POSITION ON THE BROOKNEAL-CAMPBELL COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

Town Manager Russell Thurston told the Council that Nina Rezai, Campbell County Economic Director and the overseer of the Airport Authority, asked him to add this appointment to the Town Council agenda for the March meeting since the authority has not had enough members for a quorum to conduct a meeting. He said that Mr. Bob Gillespie of Gladys is a doctor new to the area, and he is very interested in aviation and serving on the airport authority to add value to the airport.

Councilperson Francis said that since the Town contributes to the airport with taxpayer funds, he did not feel comfortable with a vote on this tonight. He said he would prefer to bring Mr. Gillespie in and hear from him to make sure they are doing their due diligence as representatives of the community. Councilperson David concurred with Mr. Francis, and said he would prefer someone from Brookneal in this position on the board.

- **TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE BROOKNEAL CAMPBELL COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

After much discussion, the Council decided to appoint Mayor Jennings as a temporary appointment to the Airport Authority for 90 days until a permanent person can be found. The motion was made by Joseph David, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried.

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Physical Development Committee Chairperson Mark Wilkes said he met with Thomas Short of the Brookneal Dixie Youth organization at the Brookneal ballpark, and his committee all agreed with the placement of the indoor facility being built by the Dixie Boys and Dixie Girls organizations.

## **ITEMS FROM TOWN COUNCIL**

Councilperson Francis said that the Brookneal Volunteer Fire Department is having their annual marathon again on April 1, 2023. He also said the Brookneal Community Alliance has started their membership drive, and they will have applications available at local businesses. He said 246 The Main has a sold-out show for Alice in Wonderland the next 2 weekends.

Councilperson Johnson said that the Brookneal Community Alliance is sponsoring an Easter Egg hunt at the Brookneal Ball Park on Saturday, April 8 starting at 10 a.m.

Councilperson Laprade said the Brookneal Woman's Club would like to see the flag pole at the community building moved closer to the building in the improvement project plan for the property. She also said that they would like to see a light installed to shine on the flag when it is moved.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Conner Francis, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, Mayor Jennings announced that the March 14, 2023, Council meeting was adjourned.

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Bobbie A. Waller  
Clerk/Treasurer

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Kenneth Jennings  
Mayor