

**March 12, 2019**

**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:

James Nowlin, Mayor  
Barbara Laprade, Mark Wilkes, Richard Adams, Cynthia Johnson, Phyllis Campbell and Joseph David, Council Members  
Richard Baldwin, Chief of Police  
Russell Thurston, Town Manager  
Bobbie Waller, Clerk/Treasurer  
Mike Crews, Public Works Director

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Richard Adams, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda for the March 12, 2019, 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 12, 2019 Town Council meeting and the March 5, 2019 physical development committee meeting.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mayor Nowlin asked that the March 2019 treasurer's report be filed for audit.

**PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES**

Be it resolved that motion was made by Cynthia Johnson, seconded by Phyllis Campbell, and unanimously carried, authorizing the payment of the invoices for the period of February 13, 2019 to March 12, 2019 in the amount of \$32,195.51.

**POLICE REPORT**

Police Chief Richard Baldwin presented the police report for February 2019. He said of the 75 calls for service, 65 were answered by the Brookneal Police Department and 10 were answered

by the Campbell County Sheriff's office. He said that someone broke into the girls' concession stand at the ball park and stole 4 expensive softball bats and some other items; he said they are working on this case, and it has been advertised on Crime Stoppers.

### **PRESENTATION BY BARBARA LAPRADE ON BEHALF OF THE BROOKNEAL WOMAN'S CLUB**

Councilperson Barbara Laprade on behalf of the Brookneal Woman's Club expressed gratitude for the work the law enforcement officers do in Campbell County and here in the Town of Brookneal. She presented care packages to Chief Baldwin for him and each of his police officers. The care packages consisted of snacks, bottled water, Chapstick, Kleenex and other assorted items.

### **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Public Works Director Mike Crews said that he would be conducting interviews for 2 full time positions that are open, 1 in public works and 1 at the water treatment plant. He said that the Dixie Youth Boys and Girls opening ceremonies will be April 13, 2019 at the ball park. He said the fencing work has been completed at the ball park, and it looks real good. He said they have just about finished cleaning up leaves at the cemetery. He also thanked Dominion Energy for working on the batting cages at the ball park; he said they donated their equipment and manpower to do this job. He also said that Curt Mason of Virginia Carolina Paving is going to do volunteer work on the parking lot also.

### **SPRING CLEAN UP WEEK MARCH 25-APRIL 5, 2019**

Mr. Crews also announced dates for spring clean-up as March 25-April 5, 2019. He said they would pick up brush (cut to 4 ft. lengths), batteries, appliances, dried paint cans and other items during this 2 week period.

### **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Town Manager Russell Thurston told the Council that the staff is still working on the Town budget. He said the water/sewer fund is balanced, but the general fund needs some more work to make it balance. He said he is working on the VML insurance renewals that are due this Friday. He said that a 3% increase has been added to the budget just in case since he is not sure of the rates for FY20.

Mr. Thurston discussed the FY18 audit with the Council. He said anytime you apply for grants, the town audit is examined. He said Campbell County also has to examine the audit to release funds to the Town. He noted some general fund information from page 7 of the audit about net change in fund balances of \$75,494. He said this means that the Town's checkbook saw a \$75,494 increase. He said this comes from cost cutting, cost savings, going after people who insist on not paying their taxes, savings on equipment purchases and services, the police department managing their resources well, etc. He said the maintenance guys will fix things themselves and save the Town money. He said that USDA mandates that the Town keep a

reserve fund of about \$800,000. He said that on the water and sewer side, the water side showed a tiny bit of operating profit, but there was about an \$18,000 loss on the sewer side.

Mr. Thurston said he went back and checked on the house and senate bill that allowed the town to charge a deposit on new water accounts and to hold landlords responsible for their tenant's debts that are left unpaid. He said that that bill was passed 40 to nothing in the Republican controlled Senate and in the house; it was passed 100 to nothing. He said he understands the complaining from the landlords, but this is an epidemic problem across the Commonwealth. He said the laws were put into place to protect the localities. He said that every household in this community ends up paying the bill when the landlord lets his tenant skip out on the Town and not pay their bills.

### **APPROVAL OF FY18 AUDIT**

Upon motion by Richard Adams, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to approve the FY18 audit as presented.

### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Vice Mayor Adams said that the FY20 budget needs some more work on the general fund side but the budget will be presented at the April 9, 2019 Council meeting.

- **INCREASE IN COMMUNITY BUILDING FEES**

Physical Development Committee Chairperson Mark Wilkes said that the committee met and discussed the organizations and individuals that use the community building free of charge after a suggestion at the one of the budget meetings that they do so. He said that after looking at this issue, they realized that many of these organizations donate items, clean up and contribute to the community building. He said they felt like they could not charge these groups. He said they decided to look at the rental fees instead for those individuals who have birthday parties, family reunions, weddings, etc. and increase those. He said their recommendation was to increase the rental for the entire building from \$200 to \$300 and for each part; dining room/kitchen or auditorium increase from \$100 to \$150. He said the deposit would remain the same at \$200, and the out of town rates would remain the same at \$400 deposit and \$400 rental for the entire building.

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to increase the rental fee for the community building for in town users by \$50 for each part (from \$200 to \$300 for the entire building and for the dining room/kitchen or auditorium from \$100 to \$150) effective July 1, 2019.

### **ITEMS FROM TOWN COUNCIL**

Councilperson Laprade said that another meeting was held by the committee working on the motel project. She said that since that meeting they had contacted a gentleman named Joe Boatwright from USDA which has a grant available to fund the feasibility study; the deadline for applying is March 29, 2019. She said at their meeting, the participants were given packets to try

to evaluate community assets and identify potential stakeholders who might be interested in joining the project or adding something to it.

Councilperson Phyllis Campbell noted that she was getting many positive comments on Mr. Thurston's letter in the Union Star this past week.

Councilperson David said that a lot of people have been asking him about Day in the Town and how they miss it already. He asked had anybody talked about taking it over. Mrs. Waller told him that the library has requested information about what was involved, and that was sent to them, but they have not responded yet.

Councilperson Wilkes asked about delaying the business license due date to March or April to help some of the businesses that struggle in the early winter months. He said he had talked to Mrs. Waller and Mr. Thurston; they agreed it would not be a problem, and that it would be good for the businesses. Mr. Thurston said that he needed to check on the ordinance and see if a public hearing would need to be held.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brenda Short of Guthrie's Hardware came to ask the Council to be steadfast and "dig your feet in" concerning all this "political do away with the township situation". She said that there is evidently a lot going on, and everything that has come out of the town office has been quite positive. She said that she thought when you hear "no double taxes" it sounds good but then once you start peeling off the layers of that "onion", it starts stinking and even makes you cry. She said these people are not thinking about what is under those layers and what they are going to lose like who is going to cut the grass, manage the cemetery, or deal with the water system. She said that the county does not want the Town anyway; she said the high school is a prime example. She thanked whoever got Mr. Smith to replace the glass in his window on Main Street. She asked what could be done with abandoned businesses that have dirty windows and old signage; they look bad. She encouraged the Council to fine them, make them clean up their properties, wash their windows and put displays or posters in them advertising possibly Red Hill. She asked about fining the property owners that don't keep their properties up. She also said she agreed with the Council passing the ordinance concerning water deposits and holding landlords accountable for their tenants' bills.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Phyllis Campbell, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, Mayor Nowlin announced that the March 12, 2019 Council meeting was adjourned.

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Bobbie A. Waller  
Clerk/Treasurer

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James Nowlin  
Mayor