

**February 8, 2022**

## **MINUTES OF THE BROOKNEAL TOWN COUNCIL**

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

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the municipal government of the Town of Brookneal met at the Brookneal Community Building, 261 Main Street, so that social distancing could be practiced properly, with the following members present:

Richard Adams, Mayor

Mark Wilkes, Barbara Laprade, Joseph David, Cynthia Johnson and Scott Fisher, Council Members

Russell Thurston, Town Manager

Bobbie Waller, Clerk/Treasurer

Mike Crews, Public Works Director

Richard Baldwin, Chief of Police

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

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda for the February 8, 2022, regular meeting of the Brookneal Town Council.

### **MINUTES**

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, Council approved the minutes for the January 11, 2022 Town Council meeting.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mayor Adams moved that the February 2022 treasurer's report be filed for audit.

### **RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE JAMES "CHAMP" NOWLIN**

Mayor Adams presented the following resolution of appreciation to the family of the late Mayor James "Champ" Nowlin. Those receiving the resolution were his wife, Mary Ann Nowlin, daughters, Nicole Nowlin Dow and Natisha Nowlin Dews and son in law Christopher Dews.

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION  
IN THE MEMORY OF:  
THE HONORABLE JAMES “CHAMP” NOWLIN**

**WHEREAS**, The Honorable James “Champ” Nowlin did faithfully serve all citizens of Brookneal for thirty years as a vital member of town government beginning in 1992;

**WHEREAS**, James “Champ” Nowlin served on the Brookneal Town Council as an Honorable Councilman from July 1992 through December of 2004;

**WHEREAS**, in January 2005 “Champ” was unanimously appointed by his fellow Councilmembers to the position of Vice-Mayor where he served alongside the Honorable Mayor Phyllis Campbell until her retirement in December 2018;

**WHEREAS**, in 2018 at the request of numerous citizens, “Champ” ran for the office of Mayor and won a competitive race by a wide and respectable margin;

**WHEREAS**, in 2019 the Honorable James Nowlin was sworn into office and became the Town’s first African-American Mayor; also winning re-election in 2021 and served as Mayor until God called him home to eternal Glory December 20<sup>th</sup> 2021;

**MAY IT BE KNOWN**, “Champ” Nowlin not only served on Town Council, he also worked for VEPCO, currently known as Dominion Energy, for over 30 years. He was a member of the Brookneal Lion’s Club, a Board member for Campbell County’s Department of Social Services, a Church Deacon, Treasurer, Organist, Gospel Singer, role-model, mentor, and many other important roles too numerous to list,

**NOW, THEREFORE**, this governing body affirms, Tuesday, February 8, 2022, shall be recognized as a day of appreciation in the memory and honor of:

**James “Champ” Nowlin**, for his outstanding service to the people of Brookneal; let it be known now and forevermore; Brookneal is a better place because of him;

**In Witness Whereof; the Seal of the Town of Brookneal shall be affixed this 8<sup>th</sup> day of February of the year of our Lord Two-Thousand Twenty-Two.**

Adopted this 8<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2022

Attested:

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Honorable Richard Adams Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. Bobbie Waller, Clerk of Council

**PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES**

Be it resolved that motion was made by Barbara Laprade, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, authorizing the payment of the invoices for the period of January 12, 2022 through February 8, 2022 in the amount of \$27,938.01.

## **REQUEST FOR THE COMMUNITY BUILDING FROM SHANNON BURTON ON BEHALF OF WILLIAM CAMPBELL COMBINED SCHOOL BAND**

Shannon Burton, of Nathalie, representing the William Campbell Combined School Band, appeared before Council to request the use of the community building for a dinner/dance she is planning for the band members and their families on March 26, 2022.

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to allow the William Campbell band use of the community building on March 26, 2022 at no charge.

## **REQUEST FOR THE COMMUNITY BUILDING FROM JENNIFER WATSON**

Ms. Jennifer Watson and her husband Lewis Watson, of Red House, appeared before the Council to request the use of the community building for August 6, 2022 from 9 am to 3 pm. She is proposing a youth summit on that date for youth from Campbell County, Charlotte County and Lynchburg. She said that she is trying to help youth in the area by talking about mental health issues and substance abuse issues and to bring more awareness to the peer pressure that children are under. She said she also wants to encourage and be a support to parents. She said she has professionals coming to do breakout sessions with families and groups of children. She said they also want to have entrepreneurship sessions to talk about having a vision and encouraging the youth that they have a purpose. She said food would be provided, and they want to have some fun activities as well. They will be giving away school supplies and backpacks.

Upon motion by Cynthia Johnson, seconded by Scott Fisher and unanimously carried, the Council voted to allow Jennifer Watson to have her youth summit at the community building on August 6, 2022 at no charge.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Linwood Jones, of 110 Charlotte Street, appeared before Council to ask for something to be done about his new neighbor's 8 chickens and 1 rooster. He said that she has cleaned the property up and she is a good neighbor, but her chickens are messing up his yard and digging and messing up his grass with patches. He said they also leave poop on his sidewalk for his grandchildren to step in and make a mess. He also said that one of this neighbor's dogs had chased one of the bus drivers up the street; the bus driver had to call her husband to come and pick her up and take her back to her bus at the school. He said that this could be a hazard with kids coming and going at the elementary school right down the street. He asked the Council if someone could talk to this neighbor and have her put the chickens up or something. Town Manager Russell Thurston said that chickens are not permitted in Town and apologized for his neighbor bringing chickens to Town when they are not allowed. He said he would look into the matter and write her a letter about her violation. Councilperson David noted that this is not an animal control issue, but a zoning violation.

Councilperson Laprade said that something may need to be publicized in the paper about what the ordinance is because there are so many connotations of what is allowed and what is not allowed in terms of animals in the town; she said she believes it needs clarification. She said

the ordinance should be publicized in the paper, along with the potential exceptions and the penalties for violation.

John Gill, of 110 Carson Street, asked to speak. He said that he recently sent an email to make himself available for the nomination for the Town Council seat. He said he brought with him a letter from his step-daughter's therapist. He said he has 6 hens; he said they keep hens under the rules of the county as a pet. They are not allowed to roam free; they have never been free. He said his daughter also has been diagnosed with Tourette's since the letter was written; he said his daughter calms down when around the chickens. Mr. Thurston noted that Mr. Gill has made himself available to serve on Town Council, but at the same time Mr. Gill is in violation of Town zoning laws. Mr. Gill said that he is in violation of town zoning laws, but federal law exempts it. Mr. Gill noted that he has been in violation for less than a year. Mr. Thurston said that he would send Mr. Gill's letter to the Town attorney, and he would take it under advisement. He noted, however, that Mr. Gill was still under noncompliance.

## **POLICE REPORT**

Police Chief Richard Baldwin presented the police report for January 2022. He said of the 150 calls for service, 132 were answered by the Brookneal police department and 18 by the Campbell County Sheriff's office. He said that he received a call from Patriot Supply today, and that he will hopefully be able to work on installing the equipment in the new Explorer next week.

## **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Public Works Director Mike Crews said that there was a water line break during the cold weather on Mattox Street. He also said the new Freightliner trash truck is back in the shop, but the truck is still under warranty.

## **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Town Manager Russell Thurston said that a document to update the Town ordinances is available on the Town website. He also said that American Legal Publishing has quoted the ordinance update to publish the updated code on their online link, and he will work on getting that in the budget for the upcoming year. Mr. Thurston said that he is working on getting the Town of Brookneal sign replaced at the Golden Skillet restaurant; he said he met with the sign company last week, and they are working on it. He said Gary Christie is retiring from the Central Virginia Planning District Commission soon, and he will be attending the Council meeting in March to present his final report. He said that a budget meeting schedule was emailed to all Council members last week, and the first meeting will be February 17, 2022.

Mr. Thurston said that Vice Mayor Wilkes had suggested finding a way to let our citizenry know about certain policies in the Town of Brookneal. He said that there are a lot of new people coming into the Town. He said items such as sewer line care, trash collection and information about animals that are not allowed in the Town limits are just some of the things that are addressed in this flyer. He said he had run a piece in the paper in 2015 like Ms. Laprade was talking about, and he would look at that and work on doing it again.

## **DISCUSSION ON FILLING THE TOWN COUNCIL VACANCY**

Mayor Adams noted that the vacant seat on Town Council occurred when he took over as Mayor after the death of Mayor Nowlin. His Council term does not end until 2024, and whoever is chosen would serve until then. Councilperson David said that Conner Francis has always been interested in politics since he was a kid; he followed former Mayor Phyllis Campbell around. He said Conner has worked in Richmond and Washington with Congressmen, and he has attended many Council meetings. He said he didn't know where the Town could find a better person for the position than Conner. Mayor Adams said he wanted to make an expeditious effort to fill this vacancy, but at the same time keep the Council balanced as it has been the last few years between gender and race. He said that he has talked to Laverne Canada about the vacant council seat, and she was interested. He said Laverne has been in the community for many years and has served on the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Jimmy Harper advocated for Mr. Conner Francis to fill the open seat. He said Conner has so much to give to this town, and he would be excellent on Town Council.

Mayor Adams said that he had asked if the Council would defer a decision on this Council vacancy until March. Mr. David said that he thought that the Council said that they did want to appoint someone as soon as possible; Ms. Johnson concurred with this since there is a deadline for appointing someone. Councilperson Laprade felt that in fairness to all individuals that have expressed interest, that all individuals need to be looked at before a decision is made.

After much discussion, Councilperson Johnson made a motion to appoint Conner Francis to the open Town Council seat. The motion received a second from Councilperson David but was interrupted by Mayor Adams and Councilperson Laprade. Councilperson Laprade said to be fair to the two candidates present, she would like to hear from them both. She asked that Conner Francis come forward and talk about the Town and introduce himself. Mr. Francis told the Council that he has looked to James Nowlin and Phyllis Campbell as role models all his life. He said that since the rumor of this appointment has been open since the death of Mr. Nowlin, he has been approached by numerous citizens and business owners. He said that he has had a devotion to this Town council by coming to meetings and getting to know Town Council members. He said he has a passion for this town, and a family history that goes back several generations. He said public service is in his blood and when this vacancy occurred, he wasted no time in expressing his interest. He said he is ready to serve in any pleasure that the Council sees fit.

Mr. John Gill also came up and introduced himself. He said he grew up in New York, and he moved here 3 years ago. He said he is a veteran, and he grew up doing service projects such as helping rebuild communities in Mexico and Guatemala after earthquakes. He said he was raised to serve his community. He said he loves it here, but he sees some issues such as vacant storefronts. He said that he read online recently about the possible closing of William Campbell, and he became really concerned because that is one of the reasons he chose to live in Brookneal was because of the schools. He said he thinks he could help this town. He said this community needs to be made more attractive to young families to help save the schools. He said a vibrant business community would attract those people. He said he knows how to work to solve problems.

After the two individuals talked, Mayor Adams noted that there was a motion on the floor, which Ms. Johnson clarified was to appoint Conner Francis to the open vacant seat on the Town Council to which Mr. David again seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Ms. Laprade	Aye
Ms. Johnson	Aye
Mr. David	Aye
Mr. Wilkes	Aye
Mr. Fisher	Aye

Therefore, the motion to appoint Mr. Francis to the vacant Council seat was unanimous.

**REQUEST FOR TRANSFERS OF APPOPRIATION**

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Cynthia Johnson, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to approve the following transfers of appropriation.

**REQUEST FOR TRANSFERS OF APPROPRIATION**

**To: Brookneal Town Council**

**Date: February 8, 2022**

The following **Appropriation Transfers** are requested for **FY2022:**

<u>Category---Revenue</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Other—Misc. Revenue—01-1899-1300	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,820.70	\$ N/A
<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Legal & Professional—01-1204-3002	\$ 500.00	\$ 4,020.70	\$ 0.00

To cover the costs of legal fees for real estate collections (the Town will receive this money back)

**Respectfully requested by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Councilperson David asked about appointing someone to be the chairperson of the Finance and Planning committee since Mr. Adams is now the mayor and is considered the ex-officio of each committee. Mayor Adams officially appointed Councilperson Laprade as the Chairperson of the Finance and Planning Committee and the Chairperson of the personnel committee.

## **ITEMS FROM TOWN COUNCIL**

Councilperson Laprade said that she is going to try to revive the motel committee since they have not met since the study was completed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Cindy Johnson, and unanimously carried, Mayor Adams announced that the February 8, 2022, Council meeting was adjourned.

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Bobbie A. Waller  
Clerk/Treasurer

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Richard Adams  
Mayor