

May 14, 2024

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

Mike Crews, Public Works Director and Interim Town Manager

Bobbie Waller, Clerk/Treasurer

Robert Kolich, Chief of Police

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the general fund budget at 7:01 p.m. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the general fund budget; therefore, Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE WATER FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the water fund budget at 7:02 p.m. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the water fund budget; therefore, Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SEWER FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the sewer fund budget at 7:03 p.m. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the water fund budget; therefore, Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE WATER RATE INCREASE PROPOSED FOR FY25, FY26, FY27

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the proposed water rate increase at 7:04. The proposal is to increase the water base rate by \$2.00 for FY25, FY26, and FY27. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the proposed water rate increase. Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SEWER RATE INCREASE PROPOSED FOR FY25, FY26, FY27

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the proposed sewer rate increase at 7:06 p.m. The proposal is to increase the sewer base rate by \$2.00 for FY25, FY26, and FY27. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the proposed sewer rate increase. Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:08 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Cynthia Johnson, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda for the May 14, 2024, 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 April 9, 2024, Town council meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mayor Jennings asked that the treasurer's report for May 2024 be filed for audit.

PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES

Be it resolved that motion was made by Conner Francis, seconded by Scott Fisher, and unanimously carried, authorizing the payment of the invoices for the period of April 10, 2024, through May 11, 2024 in the amount of \$34,029.92.

COMMUNITY BUILDING REQUEST FROM BROOKNEAL YMCA

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, the Council approved the use of the community building, at no charge, by the Brookneal YMCA on May 30, 2024 for their graduation program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Julie Garrenton, representing the Brookneal Farmer's Market, appeared before Council to request use of the community building lawn on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9 am to 1 p.m. for the rest of 2024. The council had previously approved the use for April only to see how the event turned out. Councilperson Francis said it was brought up at the Brookneal Community Alliance about the lack of restrooms for the Farmer's Market. He said Mr. Garrenton is willing to be the guardian for the restrooms at the community building if they can be accessible to him on those Saturdays. Public Works Director Mike Crews said that they have had multiple problems in the past with having the restrooms open during public events.

Upon motion by Joseph David, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to approve the use of the community building grounds for the farmer's market on the 2nd Saturday of each month for the remainder of 2024 and to allow use of the restrooms during the market times.

Mr. David suggested looking into the cost of a portable bathroom to purchase for the Town's use, and it could be used at the river, the community building and the ballpark. Mr. David said he would look into the costs.

Mr. Tom Keefer, owner of property on Lusardi Drive/Virginia Avenue that was declared a public nuisance by the Council in January 2024, appeared before Council to update them on the property. Mr. Keefer said he had done what the Council asked him to do, securing the building, putting the fence up around the property and obtaining an engineering report that said the building was salvageable. He said he hoped to get into the building and gut it out and see what he can do. Mayor Jennings asked Mr. Keefer if he had a time frame on getting the property cleaned up, to which Mr. Keefer said he had none. He said he has spent about \$9,000 already on the property. Public Works Director Mike Crews said that he disagreed with the engineer's report; he still thinks it is an unsafe structure and it is not sound. He said based on the reports by the fire marshal and building inspector, he still thinks it is unsafe. Mr. Keefer said the building is secure and the engineer says its salvageable; he has done what he was asked to do. Mr. Crews said that he thinks what the Council wanted was a plan of action with times and dates of completion. Mr. Keefer said the building is no longer an eyesore; he said he spend \$1,000 clearing the outside of brush and trees. Mayor Jennings asked Mr. Keefer to confer with Mr. Crews in the next 30 days with a plan of action: Mr. Keefer agreed to do this. Mr. Crews added that he would like to see corrective action to getting the building back up to code. Councilperson Francis asked what the next step would be for the Council to which Mr. Crews replied that the plan of action from the attorney was to put it out for bids for demolition. Mr. Keefer said he would see what he could do. Mr. Keefer noted that the Town had lawyers, and he had lawyers including a good corporate lawyer. He said he has his opinion and the Town has their opinion of what has been done and what was asked of him. Mayor Jennings told Mr. Keefer that the Town was trying to work with him, to please work with the Town.

MOTION CONCERNING NUISANCE PROPERTY OWNED BY MR. KEEFER ON LUSARDI DRIVE/VIRGINIA AVENUE

Councilperson Francis made a motion to give Mr. Keefer a 30-day extension to form an action plan and meet with Mr. Crews on that action plan, with concrete steps to move forward; the plan should be presented to Council at the next meeting in June. The motion was seconded by Scott Fisher and was unanimously carried.

311 VIRGINIA AVENUE

Mr. James Rocco, of 309 Virginia Avenue, wanted an update on 311 Virginia Avenue from the last Council meeting. Ms. Waller said that the owner called her on May 9th, 2024, which was the end of the 30 days he was given to form a plan. He said he had a plan, and he said he was going to email it. Ms. Waller said she has not received anything; she said she called him today and emailed him, but he has not responded.

Joseph David made a motion to put out for bids to demolish the house and restore the lot to the ground. The motion received a second from Conner Francis. After some discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion failed 4-2 with Ms. Johnson, Mr. Wilkes, Ms. Laprade, and Mr. Fisher voting nay and Mr. David and Mr. Francis voting aye.

Ms. Laprade said that her concern is if Mr. Terrebonne comes up with a plan in the next few days. She said she does not have a problem with at some point demolishing it. She said to send him a certified letter with a final notice. Mr. David said that the Town sent him the first letter almost 2 years ago.

Upon motion by Conner Francis, seconded by Cynthia Johnson, and passing with a 5-1 vote, with Councilperson David voting nay, the Council voted to give a 7 day period from today for an email response containing a fundamental plan for the property from the owner of 311 Virginia Avenue; this also stipulates that if there is no response in 7 days, the Town will move forward with getting bids for demolition of the property.

Mr. James Rocco, also addressed the Council about 233 Virginia Avenue, which he says is having a lot of police activity lately. He said he is concerned about his daughter getting off the school bus near that property. Police Chief Robert Kolich said that the police has only answered 2 calls for service at that address. Mr. Rocco asked about a nuisance law in the town regarding so many calls to a residence in a certain period of time to which Mr. Kolich said he was not aware of anything like that.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Jeff Carpenter, owner of the Department Store Antiques, said that with 8 thriving businesses at the end of Main Street as well as the community building, there is very little parking. He said he took it up himself to approach the Bank of Charlotte County, the owner of the vacant Wells Fargo bank property about using the parking lots they own. He said the Bank of Charlotte has give the town permission to use those lots for overflow parking. He said the bank has liability insurance on that property, and they don't want any rent for it. He said if the town would approve using that is an overflow parking lot, the bank would like the town to put up a sign saying, "overflow parking". Mr. Carpenter suggested painting lines for cars and cleaning up the property a little bit. He said he was asking the Council to consider the offer from the Bank of Charlotte. He also asked about using the gravel lot between the Inconvenience Store and the community building for parking and put up a sign there that says parking available. Mr. Crews said that he had spoken with Mr. Carpenter about it earlier, and he does not agree with putting up signs saying municipal parking on the bank property. He said the businesses should put up signs for overflow parking. After more discussion, Mayor Jennings referred this matter to the physical development committee. Mr. Carpenter also said that he found out that the property owner of the Staunton River Plaza is going to do some clearing of trees and overgrowth on the hill near the highway.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Robert Kolich presented the police report for April 2024. He said of the 172 calls for service, Campbell County answered 16 of those calls and the Brookneal Police Department answered 156 of those calls.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Public Works Director Mike Crews said the following in his report:

- The Office of Drinking Water presented Brookneal waterworks with a Silver 2023 Excellence in Waterworks/Performance Award.
- He said an inspection was done on the Phelps Creek Reservoir Dam on 4/26/24, but he has not received a report.
- He also said he hasn't received anything concerning the traffic impact study that VDOT did on Main Street.
- He said the asphalt and old basketball goals have been removed from the ball park in preparation for the new pavilion.
- He said the Town purchased a used Ford F250 truck for the maintenance department.
- He said he met with Southern Corrosion 5/2/24 for a quote on the downtown water tank and discussed what it will take to get the tank back online.
- He said he met with Garber-Lowe Fence contractor for the fence at the community building on the right-hand side of the dining room parking lot.
- He said they will be testing 3 sites in the town for disinfection by-products as required by the Office of Drinking Water.

APPROVAL OF THE FY23 AUDIT

Cynthia Johnson made a motion to approve the FY23 Audit report from Creedle, Jones & Associates Accounting firm. The motion was seconded by Barbara Laprade and was unanimously approved.

REQUEST FOR TRANSFERS OF APPROPRIATION

Upon motion by Barbara Laprade, seconded by Mark Wilkes and unanimously approved, the Council voted to approve the following transfers of appropriation.

REQUEST FOR TRANSFERS OF APPROPRIATION

To: Brookneal Town Council

Date: May 14, 2024

The following **Appropriation Transfers** are requested for **FY2024**:

<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Recreation—Electric—01-7104-5101	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 1,072.21
<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>DECREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Town Manager—Salary—01-1201-1000	\$ 2,000.00	\$62,570.00	\$ 40,588.71

To cover costs of electric bills for the ballpark that have gone over budget for FY24

<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Streets—Vehicle Supplies—01-4102-5408	\$ 10,000.00	\$11,800.00	\$ 1,109.34
<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>DECREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Town Manager—Salary—01-1201-1000	\$ 10,000.00	\$52,570.00	\$ 30,588.71

To cover costs of F250 pickup truck for the public works department

<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Airport—01-4302-5804	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 0.00
<u>Category---Expense</u>	<u>DECREASE</u>	<u>New Total</u>	<u>Balance in Account</u>
Town Manager—Salary—01-1201-1000	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 50,570.00	\$ 28,588.71

To cover costs of F250 pickup truck for the public works department

Treasurer

Date

PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Ms. Tracy Meisenbach, of 527 Cook Avenue, said that if the Town is moving toward demolition of the house on Virginia Avenue, she thought it would be a good idea to have the town men clean that yard up first to save costs on demolition. She said it would give the town a chance to have some historic preservation photos of the outside of that building taken since people have been upset that the owner let the property molder. She said that there is a lot of stuff that could possibly be salvaged including antique wood work, and this could be sold to recoup funds. Mr. David said that he didn't think the town could take out anything for salvage since it is someone else's property.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no committee recommendations.

ITEMS FROM TOWN COUNCIL

Mr. Francis noted that the quilt shop grand opening on May 4, 2024, was a big day for the Town of Brookneal with tons of people in town for that event. He said he thinks parking is important for Main Street businesses, and he hopes the physical development committee will work on that. He said that Delegate Eric Zehr was in town last week for a Campbell Connects meeting at the Drugstore Grill. Mr. Zehr spoke to the group. Mr. Francis said the mayor, himself and Mr. Zehr had a discussion where Mr. Zehr committed to having a roundtable discussion on opening the 501 corridor and getting the secretary of transportation down here to have a discussion about that. Mr. Zehr also addressed the Amish population concern in the area; no one wants

them to be injured on the highway. He said the fish hatchery was highlighted in the conversation with investments needed in the waterfront which is an asset for the town.

Mr. David said he is working with the economic development group called CEDS. He wants everyone to be thinking about a branding for the town. He said it was suggested by a realtor at that meeting that Brookneal would be a great retirement community, nice and quiet place to live with things to do. He also mentioned that in 1978 the Town of Brookneal made an agreement with Campbell County to be in halves with everything on the Brookneal Campbell County Airport. He said the town was thriving at that point in time. He suggested meeting with the county board of supervisors and county administrator and renegotiate the town's input with the airport.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Conner Francis, seconded by Mark Wilkes, and unanimously carried, Mayor Jennings announced that the May 14, 2024 Council meeting was adjourned.

Bobbie A. Waller
Clerk/Treasurer

Kenneth Jennings
Mayor