

May 9, 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

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the general fund budget at 7:03 p.m. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the general fund budget; therefore, Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE WATER FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the water fund budget at 7:06 p.m. No one spoke in favor of or in opposition to the water fund budget; therefore, Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SEWER FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened the public hearing for the sewer fund budget at 7:07 p.m.

Mr. Gene Moorefield, of Lynchburg Avenue, said that since things are increasing in price, is it sound fiscal budgeting not to budget for increases in cost; he said it was a rhetorical question. He also asked if the Town Council feels like the Town has an accounting system that accurately records revenues and expenses by category, so that you know if you are breaking even on water, sewer or garbage. Mayor Jennings said the budget is balanced. Mr. Moorefield said that he didn't think it was a realistic world you are living in if there are no increases in the budget if costs are going up. Town Manager Russell Thurston said that the Town does indeed have a very robust accounting system where expenses can be tracked down to very, very narrow categories. Mr. Moorefield asked how labor was allocated, and Mr. Thurston explained that labor was allocated for every department, including the water treatment plant, the police

department and the garbage truck. Mr. Thurston told Mr. Moorefield that he was welcome to come and get a copy of the Town's annual audit report done by a 3rd party auditor. Mr. Thurston explained that the accounting firm lets the Town know of anything that needs attention, and the Town responds accordingly. Mr. Thurston also told Mr. Moorefield that the water and sewer operations are sourced out to an independent contracting firm to provide the Town's water and sewer services; this firm provides the labor for the waterworks operation. He said the town has received some real cost savings by sourcing this out include maintenance of vehicles for that department, employee costs including retirement, insurance and worker's compensation expenses. Mr. Thurston said that he is constantly looking down the road to see where we can save money; he said the town is currently looking at putting in underground subsurface wells in the Town of Brookneal. He said that could cut down on the labor at the water treatment plant, and save tens of thousands of dollars for the people of Brookneal. He said those are the things he and the staff and Council talk about and work on. He said water and sewer rates may increase one day; he can't promise that, but right now the Town does not need to raise the rates. Mr. Thurston told Mr. Moorefield that the Town runs a very, very tight ship. He said local government in the Town of Brookneal is going to focus on the core services and that is all.

Councilperson Laprade noted that the Council members, in preparation for the budget, meet for months to review actual and projected expenditures taking into account things that might happen. Mayor Jennings noted that there is a contingency fund in the sewer fund and for other expenses the Town has a considerable contingency fund.

Mayor Jennings closed the public hearing for the sewer fund budget at 7:19 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SEWER FUND BUDGET

Mayor Jennings opened another public hearing for the sewer fund budget at 7:20 p.m. and then closed that public hearing at 7:20 p.m. No one spoke during this public hearing.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda for the May 9, 2023, regular meeting of the Brookneal Town Council.

MINUTES

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried, Council approved the minutes for the April 11, 2023 Town Council meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mayor Jennings asked that the May 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 Joseph David, and unanimously carried, authorizing the payment of the invoices for the period of April 12, 2023 through May 9, 2023, in the amount of \$17,524.93.

MR. GARY COWDEN, NOMINEE FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE BROOKNEAL-CAMPBELL COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Mr. Gary Cowden came before the Council to express his interest in serving on the Brookneal-Campbell County Airport Authority Board. Mayor Jennings told Mr. Cowden that this appointment must be a Brookneal citizen. Mayor Jennings said that it was set up that the appointee from this Town must be from Brookneal within the city limits. Mr. Cowden said he was not clear on this, and when he asked Nine Rezai from Campbell County Economic Development about this, he was told that it was approved by Brookneal. He said he was not aware of it being a Brookneal citizen only. Mayor Jennings said that there may be a possibility of an extra appointment. Mr. Cowden thanked Mayor Jennings, and said he looked forward to hearing from him.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Gene Moorefield, of Lynchburg Avenue, asked about disposing of wore out tires in the Town limits. Mr. Crews told him that the Town disposes of tires during spring and fall clean up; spring clean up has already happened. Mr. Crews also told Mr. Moorefield that he could check with Brookneal Tire or Brookneal Auto Repair about disposing of them. He also told him that they could be taken to the landfill in Rustburg for disposal.

Mr. Moorefield also asked about a noise ordinance concerning loud vehicles. He said there are 3 vehicles in Town that continue to make a lot of noise. He said if it is not within the guidelines, he would like to see that addressed. Chief Kolich said the laws had changed on that in 2022 to where it is illegal concerning the exhaust system. Councilperson Laprade asked about where music falls in that area; Chief Kolich said that that would have to be under a town ordinance. Councilperson Francis asked Chief Kolich about checking on the price of a decibel meter to be able to check loud vehicles and loud music.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Robert Kolich, presented the police report for April 2023. He said of the 166 calls for service, 147 were answered by the Brookneal Police Department and 19 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:

- Water Line repairs at the River Ridge Apartments and Ball Park
- Flushed the sewer line on Hunter Road and Terry Road and monitoring sewer lines
- Received two complaints about chickens on C. F. Gray Street May 2 and May 4

- Dixie boys' baseball will be hosting the district tournament starting June 23 and they are looking for volunteers

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Russell Thurston told the Council that he has tried multiple times to contact the owner of the home at 311 Virginia Avenue and has been unsuccessful; he said an adjacent homeowner had come to a prior Council meeting to address this. He said the certified mail sent out was returned as undeliverable. He said he will contact the Town attorney to see how to go about getting that property cleaned up. He said the Town does have the legal authority to compel an owner to clean up their property; the Town can clean up the property and bill the charges to the property owner. Councilperson David asked about declaring the property a nuisance or dangerous property; Mr. Thurston said that could be done. Councilperson Francis asked about applying this statute to the old Southern States (farm store) property as well. Mr. Thurston said he would pursue working on that property as well.

Mr. Thurston said the old surplus 2009 Chevrolet Impala was sold. He also told the Council that the Town continues to see positive trends in revenue for the Town's retail sales tax, cigarette tax, meals tax and the interest income on investments. He said he received architectural plans for the boat landing area, and he said he would get with Vice Mayor Mark Wilkes on those plans. He said the plans include a picnic shelter, parking areas for food trucks, walking trail, and a playground for the kids. He said he is working with the supplier for the new playground at the ballpark; this vendor provides installation as well as safe groundcover such as rubber mulch for the base of the playground area. Mayor Jennings thanked Mr. Thurston and said very well done.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical Development Committee chairperson Mark Wilkes said that his committee has been asked to find appointees for the planning commission. He said that they have 4 people and himself (one Council member is preferred) that will be on the planning commission. He said that he and Mr. Thurston plan on meeting with these prospective candidates and talking with them about their responsibilities; and in June, they will be voted on.

• AIRPORT AUTHORITY APPOINTMENT

Vice Mayor Mark Wilkes said that one of the Town Council members is interested in being appointed to Brookneal's vacancy on the Brookneal Campbell County Airport Authority. Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to appoint Joseph David to the vacancy on the Brookneal Campbell County Airport Authority.

ITEMS FROM TOWN COUNCIL

Councilperson Johnson asked if properties with grass starting to get out of hand is being addressed yet. Mr. Crews said he already has a list of those properties, and he will begin working on it.

Councilperson Francis said that the Centra petition regarding the need for another physician at Brookneal Medical Center has about 1000 signatures right now. He said it does have significant support. He said that while Centra has not agreed to a new doctor yet, they have said they are adding another nurse practitioner for the Brookneal practice. He said there is a meeting with Centra here on Thursday.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Conner Francis, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, Mayor Jennings announced that the May 9, 2023, Council meeting was adjourned.

Bobbie A. Waller
Clerk/Treasurer

Kenneth Jennings
Mayor