

**November 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, Scott Fisher and Conner Francis, Council Members  
Mike Crews, Public Works Director  
Bobbie Waller, Clerk/Treasurer  
Robert Kolich, Chief of Police  
Absent: Cynthia Johnson, Council Member and Russell Thurston, Town Manager

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Barbara Laprade, and unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda for the November 14, 2023, regular meeting of the Brookneal Town Council with the following addition: 13-A) Closed session under VA Code 2.2-3711(A)(7) for the purpose of staff briefing concerning probable litigation.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Mr. Francis	Aye	Ms. Laprade	Aye
Mr. David	Aye	Vice Mayor Wilkes	Aye
Mr. Fisher	Aye	Mayor Jennings	Aye

**MINUTES**

Upon motion by Conner Francis, seconded by Scott Fisher, and unanimously carried, Council approved the minutes for the October 10, 2023 Town Council meeting, and the October 26, 2023 special meeting of the Town Council. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Mr. Francis	Aye	Ms. Laprade	Aye
Mr. David	Aye	Vice Mayor Wilkes	Aye
Mr. Fisher	Aye	Mayor Jennings	Aye

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Scott Fisher, and unanimously carried, the Council approved the minutes of the personnel committee meetings for the dates of June 8 and June 22, August 23 and 25 and September 13 and 27 and October 11, 2023. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Mr. Francis    Aye    Ms. Laprade    Aye  
Mr. David     Aye    Vice Mayor Wilkes    Aye  
Mr. Fisher    Aye    Mayor Jennings    Aye

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mayor Jennings asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report for November 2023. Motion was made by Conner Francis, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried to approve the treasurer's report for November 2023.

## **PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES**

Be it resolved that motion was made by Conner Francis, seconded by Barbara Laprade, and unanimously carried, authorizing the payment of the invoices for the period of October 11, 2023, through November 14, 2023, in the amount of \$19,388.15.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chaplain Matthew Killmon, representing the Brookneal Volunteer Fire Dept., along with President Tim Lee and other members of the fire department were in attendance. He said they want to make a few things public knowledge. A few things Mr. Killmon relayed to the Council:

- Last year from 8/1/22 to 7/31/23, they answered 133 calls and since 8/1/23, they have answered 33 calls.
- There are 28 active members and it takes at least 2 members to run a call.
- The area they run is not only the Town of Brookneal, but from Whipping Creek and Lewis Ford Road in Campbell County to Midway Road and Mt. Carmel Road in Charlotte County to State Shed Road and Shiloh Church Road in Halifax County and also out to Jenny Ruff's Trail across LP Bailey Hwy in Halifax County. He said this is designated to the fire department by the respective counties, not the fire department itself.
- They are a multi-aid service; a volunteer organization; they do not receive any money from any call they make.
- He wanted to cover a motion that was made at the last Town Council meeting concerning waiving the monthly water bill for the fire department. The monthly bill is \$46 x 2 (one for the old fire house and the one for the new fire house). He said they have never missed paying a water bill, and they don't intend to miss one. He said they did not ask for the waiver; they will continue to pay these bills. He said that the water they use for water suppression is under a guideline of Virginia code that allows the fire department to drain the town dry (including any swimming pools) in the event of an active fire.
- He said it takes water to train firefighters as well as to fight fires.
- He said that a report was done at one time by the fire department on the water that the fire department uses for fire suppression and fire training. That water is pulled from a fire hydrant in front of the fire department. He said they would start that report up again if the Town wishes them to do so.

- He said that if an adjacent fire department is helping them fight a fire, Virginia code allows those other departments to fill their trucks up in Town, so they can bring water back to the BVFD.

Mr. Killmon closed in saying to imagine living in this town without a fire department; he said that you would not be able to afford your homeowner's insurance if there is not a fire department in Town.

Councilperson Laprade said that she was requested by a member of the BVFD to bring up the request of the Town waiving the water bill for the fire department; Mr. Killmon said that request did not come from the line officer committee of the BVFD. Mr. Killmon said they did not request that; he said it would be nice because there is no money from this town that comes to the fire department. Councilperson Francis brought it up again that he thinks the Town should donate the cost of the water to the fire department. He said that it is incumbent upon "us" as elected officials to keep the town's facilities and the town's public safety in order.

Mayor Jennings encouraged the line of communication with the town liaisons to the fire department, Vice Mayor Wilkes and Councilperson David and the fire department to become more active.

Mr. Thomas McElhone, of Brookneal, addressed the Council concerning the public works department working in the roadways of the Town of Brookneal. He said on November 6 he observed the town backhoe taking up one lane of Wickliffe Avenue in front of the fire department. He said there were no signs posted warning of anything being in the road. He said they were forcing traffic to go around the backhoe in a blind curve right at the fire department. He said there was no flagman, no traffic control at all. He said this is a very bad liability for whoever was in charge and for the Town. He said the 2<sup>nd</sup> incident was when they were fixing a hole in the roadway on Lynchburg Avenue; he said they had a road work ahead sign out and a men working sign and a cone putting traffic into the center turn lane; he said there was no signage, no cones, nothing on the other end to let oncoming traffic know there was traffic coming into that lane. He said he didn't know if they don't know the proper layouts for traffic control or if they just choose not to do it. He said it is an issue that could potentially catch the Town of Brookneal up in a lawsuit. Councilperson David and Mayor Jennings suggested calling VDOT to handle signage for the Town when Town employees are working in the roadway since that falls under VDOT authority.

Mr. Dean Monroe, of Elite Recycling, appeared before Council for some clarification on "something". He said he had a check in his hand for a water bill for his sprinkler system. He said he was okay to pay any water bill this Town sends. He said that once that check gets cashed, he is likely going to file a FOIA request to see if the Town charges everyone else in this Town for their sprinkler system. He said they used a lot of water flushing out the system and testing the system. He said a piece of equipment hit one of their water lines and cracked it, so they did have a water leak. He said he wants to be treated like everyone else in this town. He said the Town Council now has advanced knowledge of this because he believes he is being discriminated against. He said they have other buildings with fire protection, and they have never paid for it. He said there is no way to get a drop of water out of the line.

Mayor Jennings announced that Mr. John Vincent is giving a free Thanksgiving dinner on Thanksgiving Day at 1:00 p.m. to anyone that wants to come.

## **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Robert Kolich, presented the police report for October 2023. He said of the 153 calls for service, 126 calls were answered by the Brookneal Police Department and 27 by Campbell County Sheriff's office. He said Halloween went well in the Town without any incidents.

## **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Public Works Director Mike Crews presented a written report which contained the following items:

- The maintenance department has done asphalt patching on the streets where water leaks were repaired
- The maintenance department has finished fall cleanup for this year
- VDOT has completed road maintenance on Radio Road, and some ditch work for storm drainage and erosion control
- The maintenance department will be putting up Christmas decorations this week.
- Trash pickup will be picked up on Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> in observance of Thanksgiving Day.
- Trash pickup will be picked up on Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> in observance of Christmas Day.
- Last Thursday the town was notified by the fire marshal and the building inspector that they received a complaint about an unsafe structure on Virginia Avenue. It has been posted that the structure is unsafe. The owner must make the necessary plans of action for the unsafe structure.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT #2**

Mr. Wayne Tribble, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant of the Brookneal Fire Department, said that he is the operator of the fire trucks. He said his biggest concern is that person that is trouble and called 911 initially; he said if someone is trapped in a burning house and they run out of water. He said they just need to know who they need to call when they need water at 2 a.m. in the morning.

## **ITEMS FROM TOWN COUNCIL**

Councilperson Francis said that small business Saturday is November 25, 2023. He said the Brookneal Community Alliance is hosting a business after hours networking event on December 14, 2023 at 6:30 at the Drugstore Grill.

Councilperson Laprade said she believed that Mr. Keefer may have a financial hardship in taking care of his property issue on Virginia Avenue that was mentioned in the public works report. She asked that some assistance be explored for Mr. Keefer. Ms. Waller said town attorney Tripp Isenhour is going to review this issue and once he lets her know, she will advise the Council of his recommendation.

**CLOSED SESSION UNDER VA CODE 2.2-3711 (A) (7) FOR THE PURPOSE OF STAFF BRIEFING CONCERNING PROBABLE LITIGATION**

Upon motion by Barbara Laprade, seconded by Scott Fisher, and unanimously carried, the Council voted to go into closed session under VA Code 2.2-3711 (A) (7) for the purpose of staff briefing concerning probable litigation.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Ms. Laprade	Aye	Mr. Fisher	Aye
Mr. David	Aye	Mr. Francis	Aye
Vice Mayor Wilkes	Aye	Mayor Jennings	Aye

## **CERTIFICATION**

Upon motion by Mark Wilkes, seconded by Conner Francis, and unanimously carried, the Council came back into open session.

Mayor Jennings called for a vote certifying that only those items were discussed as allowed under VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(7) for the purpose of staff briefing concerning probable litigation.

Voting was as follows:

Mr. Francis	Aye	Mr. Fisher	Aye
Mr. David	Aye	Vice Mayor Wilkes	Aye
Ms, Laprade	Aye	Mayor Jennings	Aye

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Conner Francis, seconded by Joseph David, and unanimously carried, Mayor Jennings announced that the November 14, 2023, Council meeting was adjourned.

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Bobbie A. Waller  
Clerk/Treasurer

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Kenneth Jennings  
Mayor