

**Narrows Town Council Meeting
March 9, 2020**

Mayor John Davis called the meeting to order. Council members present were Clyde Turner, Jonathan Creger, Tom Garrett, and Joe Goorskey. Councilmember Sarah Thwaites was absent.

Staff members present were Lindsey Caudill, Buddy Kast, Susan Kidd, Cindy Laws, Benji Ratcliffe, Dakota Shrader, and Debbie Thomas.

The attorney present was Mike Bedsaul.

Councilman Jonathan Creger gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of February 10th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Garrett made a motion to approve the February 10th meeting minutes. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Consent Agenda

Cindy Laws introduced herself as the new Library Director at the Iris Brammer Public Library. She has 11 years of library experience as the Library Director at the Peterstown Public Library. She has been employed for the past two years as the Case Manager for Workforce Development in Narrows. When this job opened up she was ready to be a library director again. She has trained on the online circulation system and has been entering books and patrons into the system. On her report for April she will have a list of books that are circulating and a list of programs she would like to implement.

Mayor Davis said the chili cookoff went really well.

Lindsey Caudill said they have had requests for a barbeque cookoff.

Councilman Turner said he would like to commend the rec dept on the Pre-K – 3rd grade boys' basketball. He attended quite a few games and was very pleased with how the rec dept and coaches handled the games.

Councilman Creger said the rec dept has a good program going.

Lindsey Caudill said the Holy Cross students were awesome and they had a really good time while they were here.

Councilman Garrett asked if the heat was fixed at the rec dept?

Buddy Kast said yes.

Councilman Garrett asked if that gets the heating system where it needs to be or are there improvements we need to consider long-term for the heating system? He does not need a full answer tonight but budgeting season is coming up.

Buddy Kast said parts for the boiler are hard to find and they usually have them shipped from Texas. Most plumbers are getting away from fixing older systems. It is probably time to start looking at installing heating and/or cooling units.

Councilman Garrett asked if there are any critical spare parts they should consider purchasing and putting on the shelf for future use?

Buddy Kast said a whole new control module is going to be built into the budget.

Dakoda Shrader said that he, Buddy Kast, and Joe Spears have called numerous times about the roof leaking at the rec dept.

Mayor Davis asked where we stand with the warranty?

Buddy Kast said there is probably an additional 17 years on the warranty.

Mayor Davis asked what the problem was with the roof other than it leaking?

Buddy Kast said it is leaking in the seams.

Councilman Garrett said he believes it is worth having a conversation with the company to say do you want to keep coming out 5-6 times per year for the next 17 years or do you want to look at a better solution to your advantage too?

Councilman Creger said he saw in Susan Kidd's report where the ARC grant is requiring one final piece of information.

Susan Kidd said she received that today.

Councilman Creger asked if there was a timeline for taking any action?

Susan Kidd said they spoke with their rep today and they are pushing to make it happen.

Mayor Davis asked if the recreation grant would cover anything with the disc golf course?

Susan Kidd said that was dealing primarily with Cascades and how to handle overflow and the overuse of it. They want to direct people to other things in the county. She said she would mention the disc golf course to see if there is anything out there.

Mayor Davis said they have been working with Celanese and they are going to be helping with the disc golf course.

Councilman Creger said the mapping system seems to be going pretty well.

Buddy Kast said it is. Engineers were out today with his crew training them on how to take manhole measurements and things like that. The blue dots on the GPS map are done. The red or yellow dots are either under dirt or asphalt and crews have uncovered them so next week they should be able to do those. The green ones mean they are not sure if there is a manhole there or not. That will take some camera work. Data entry will now have to be done. The GPS units should arrive next week.

Mayor Davis asked Buddy Kast about Willow Street and the road to the water tank?

Buddy Kast said he has not had a chance to find out about the property but there is a name on the side of the truck and the town is Potts Creek.

Councilman Garrett said the property belongs to the Calilung's.

Buddy Kast said there needs to be an agreement for the use of the road.

Councilman Creger made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Councilman Garrett seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public

Eric Conley said he is asking to have his water reconnect fee reimbursed (\$75). He changed banks and forgot to write the check for his water bill out of the new account, so the check was returned.

Councilman Creger made a motion to reimburse Eric Conley \$75 for the water reconnect fee. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Debbie Thomas said she is speaking on behalf of Jim Turner. He purchased the house that was formerly owned by Geneva Mullins at 109 Bland Street on October 29, 2019. The first real estate ticket was mailed to the son of Geneva Mullins in Mount Airy, NC. The ticket was never paid because Mr. Turner did not receive it. When delinquent notices were mailed it was still sent to Mount Airy but the son mailed it to Mr. Turner. Mr. Turner is asking to have the penalty and interest waived from the ticket.

Councilman Creger made a motion to abate the penalty and interest from the real estate tax ticket for Jim Turner. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Debbie Thomas said Margaret Meade (her husband John Meade owns SEMCO) called her about having the penalty and interest removed from their delinquent personal property and real estate tax bills due to undue hardship. Mrs. Meade was asked to send something to Debbie Thomas in writing concerning this but nothing was received.

Councilman Garrett asked if this was business property or their personal property?

Debbie Thomas said business.

Councilman Garrett said he would have preferred for council to have been approached 2 days before the taxes were due and been given the chance to work through this.

No action was taken.

Howard Bowers owns the property at 307 Poplar Street and has the problem of the front of his property flooding whenever there is a moderate to heavy downpour. He would like for someone to take a look at it and see what can be done.

Buddy Kast said he will take a look at it.

Communication from Mayor and Council

Councilman Garrett said there was a PSA meeting after the council meeting last month. Finances continue to hold pretty well. The PSA lot tonnage is not changing much and water sales are fairly consistent. The PSA is still working on opening a single convenience center in the Eastern district. They are still discussing the Orchard Well and what should be done there and the big issue is the health department and what they want to do in terms of pumping capability out of the well. The health department has been routinely saying that with 4 wells there has to be a safety factor of 1.8, meaning they can only pump it 14 hours/day.

Councilman Creger said he believed at the last council meeting he was not clear on what signs had misinformation on Route 460. The little blue sign says there is gas available on the town side of the river, which there is not. Susan Kidd has contacted VDOT to see if this can be fixed.

New Business

None.

Attorney's Report

Mike Bedsaul said in council's packet there is a notice from the Virginia Department of Taxation concerning a franchise tax that was paid to various localities that were overpaid. BB&T is now asking for reimbursement of these taxes.

Debbie Thomas said she will send Becky Akers, with the Virginia Department of Taxation, an email tomorrow to find out if the town will receive an invoice and where the check needs to be sent.

Unfinished Business

Susan Kidd presented the water service policy to council. The proposed changes are highlighted and are as follow:

- *Implement a notice like Giles County that the Town will only turn water off once at customers request in order for them to make repairs. Before service is turned back on, customer must install a cutoff valve on premises or pay a \$20 turn on/off fee.*
- *If water service is discontinued for second and subsequent times for non-payment, require a fee of \$150 (double the current fee) in addition to previous (past due) balance.*
- *Implement a notice for possible discontinuance of service after 5 days of written notice by the Town for: Molesting or tampering by the customer, or other with knowledge of customer with any meter, connection, service, pipe, curb cock, seal or any other appliance of the Town controlling or regulating the customers water supply.*
- *No person other than an agent of the Town of Narrows is to enter into a meter box. Any person entering into a meter box without the consent of an agent of the Town of Narrows will be assessed a fee of **\$250** which must be paid in full before water service is continued.*

Mike Bedsaul said a public hearing will have to be held because you are imposing a new fee.

Councilman Creger said this may not work every time but it can certainly be a deterrent.

Mayor Davis asked if they could just be criminally charged?

Councilman Garrett said the problem with that is the policy says the homeowner is responsible for this amount of money if it is done. The homeowner could get in their meter box and say they did not do it.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said you would have to have proof to criminally charge them.

Mike Bedsaul said you could still criminally charge them even though you have the policy in place so you would not be losing anything. You could hold a public hearing to approve this policy as part of the budget process.

Councilman Creger made a motion to hold a public hearing to discuss the water service policy changes. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Lindsey Caudill said they received the contract from Accord Pools for the splash pad. They first said he would be under budget by \$2,500 and they are now going to be asking for \$135,000. When she first asked them about the initial payment of \$81,000 he stated it was because he needed to get everything together they needed to begin the process. She sent the contract to Mike Bedsaul and he and his colleague looked it over. She sent Stefan an email and asked him about the additional \$6,500. He replied that this is for pouring the

floor for the equipment shed and a 4' sidewalk around the splash pad and stated these were things he discussed with her after the meeting. She does remember this discussion but thought it was included in the \$128,500 price.

Susan Kidd said she and Buddy Kast were on that conference call and they were under the same impression.

Mike Bedsaul said the first page of the contract states "Construct 1500 square foot splash pad \$128,500". The extra \$6,750 is not listed until the 3rd page. The first issue is they would like some direction from council as to the misunderstanding between the town and the contractor over whether the additional work was included in the original contract price of \$128,500.

Lindsey Caudill said the money they will have for the splash pad is \$130,000 but they will need an additional \$5,000.

Mike Bedsaul said the contract also needs some things added to it. It did not contain anything about insurance requirements and that needs to be in there. There is also no listing of warranty information. There are also some procurement provisions that should be listed and it should incorporate by reference the town's request for proposal because it contained a lot of the terms. The contract could be finalized within a few days. He is asking council if they would like to approve the contract tonight and have Susan Kidd to sign it when it is finalized. The other option would be to adjourn tonight's meeting to a time they could meet next week to review the contract and approve it.

Buddy Kast said they discussed the sidewalk in the conference call but he does not understand why they need a concrete sidewalk when there will be asphalt around the splash pad.

Councilman Garrett there will be a concrete-to-asphalt joint that will have to be done to make it look presentable.

Buddy Kast said his men could pour the concrete.

Councilman Garrett asked why this was the preferred vendor?

Lindsey Caudill said the only other contract they received was \$50,000 over budget.

Councilman Goorskey said he has a few concerns. This contractor has one if not two violations with DPOR (Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation). He tried to pull them up on his phone but those can be searched. There has been at least one disciplinary action taken with them but he does not know what it is. In the contract it states he will do the electrical and bonding but he is not licensed for that so he will have to have a 3rd party do that. Anyone that wants that amount of money up front tells him they do not have money to operate. He would say give 15% up front and split the remaining payments into 25% amounts.

Buddy Kast said he would seriously consider installing a cinderblock structure instead of wood.

Councilman Creger asked if Accord Pools provided any references?

Lindsey Caudill said they did one in Fayetteville and they gave good reviews.

Mike Bedsaul asked Lindsey Caudill if she read the review from Fayetteville online or did she actually speak to them to see how they were to work with?

Lindsey Caudill said she read it online.

Mike Bedsaul said she may want to contact them.

Councilman Garrett said if all of this is resolved they can meet next week.

Lindsey Caudill said she will contact him tomorrow and discuss the things they talked about tonight.

Mike Bedsaul said he can email or call him.

Matters for Consideration by Council

Susan Kidd said council is being asked to give a donation to the Giles-Narrows After Prom 2020. Last year they gave \$250.

Councilman Creger made a motion to donate \$250 to the Giles-Narrows After Prom 2020. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Susan Kidd said council is being asked to reappoint Terry Nicholson and Jerry Rhodes to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilman Creger made a motion to reappoint Terry Nicholson and Jerry Rhodes to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Councilman Garrett seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Susan Kidd said the Planning and Zoning Commission met last Tuesday and reviewed the special exception for Reece's and voted to have it move forward. There needs to be a joint public hearing at the April council meeting. Reece's wants a reader-board sign and it will be on the front of the building.

Buddy Kast said it will be the same size as the sign that is on the building now.

Councilman Garrett made a motion to schedule a joint public hearing with the Narrows Planning and Zoning Commission for their regularly scheduled April meeting to discuss a special exemption permit for Reece's Building Supply. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Susan Kidd said Jumpstart Giles is kind of like a shark tank business competition and has been going on for the last 6 weeks. April 17th is when they do their pitch night and there are at least 2 people from Narrows that would like to locate businesses here and are in the competition. The prize money will be in excess of \$30,000 that will be split between four or more people. Council is invited to attend the pitch night at Mountain Lake on March 17th at 6:30 p.m.

Councilman Garrett made a motion to go into executive session to discuss real property (Sec. 2.2-3711.A.3). Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Garrett made a motion to return to open session. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Certification

WHEREAS, the Town of Narrows, has convened an executive meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative-recorded vote and in accordance with the provision of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act: and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification of the Town Council that such executive meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Town of Narrows hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the executive meeting to which this certification resolution applies: and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Town Council.

ATTEST: _____

Councilman Garrett made a motion to accept the certification. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Mayor Davis said he knows everyone has heard the talk about consolidation of the schools and he would like to know how the town feels about giving their viewpoint on it. If they would close one of the schools in town there would be a huge economic impact on the town, including the rec dept. He is totally against it.

Councilman Garrett said he has not followed the proposal very closely this time but he was involved with the discussion last time. They had discussed it without any facts so it was hard to be for it or against it because they did not have a plan.

Mayor Davis said the meeting they are having tonight is just the contractor telling what they are going to do with the \$55,000 the school board has given for this project; it has nothing to do with the school system or a question/answer period.

Councilman Garrett said if someone can show him a plan that will dramatically improve our children's education he would decide on being for it or against it. But until someone can show him a plan he sees no reason to discuss it now.

Councilman Goorskey said it is his understanding there will be information on several different ways to consolidate or partially consolidate. There will be no discussion on the educational benefits of it or the bussing issues.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he has talked to people about it and they are afraid it will lower the assessment of their real estate.

Mayor Davis said what he understands about the situation right now he is not really concerned about consolidation per se. The school board could probably get the votes to consolidate but it has to be approved by the county. His concern is that, through this study, this study may show that Narrows Elementary School (which is the best elementary school in the county) is not sufficient and they can save money if they close it down. This concerns him. He believes the town needs to take a stance on this.

Councilman Garrett said it may be beneficial to have the school board at our next meeting to explain what is going on.

Councilman Goorskey said they may not want to speak very much on the record.

Mayor Davis said we would like to know.

Councilman Garrett said if they come to a council meeting and do not answer questions that tells him they are trying to hide something or they are not ready and that tells him his answer for going forward is not now.

Councilman Goorskey said there has already been a statement that a FOIA request for emails pertaining to this has not been completely filled because of one member using a private email in communications and believing those possibly do not have to be turned over.

Councilman Garrett said he believes they could request the school superintendent and the western-district representative be at the council meeting. Anyone who can answer questions.

Mayor Davis asked Susan Kidd if she could do that?

Susan Kidd said she would.

Councilman Creger said we should not hurt our town economically.

Mayor Davis said Councilman Turner told him there was a school board meeting today and they were supposed to get both football fields fixed. Giles was left on the table and Narrows was taken off the table. He does not know the reason this was done. They are also going to invest \$150,000 in the track at Giles High School.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he knows nothing has been proposed for the football field at Giles High School but they are going to resurface the track.

Councilman Garrett made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorksey, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, John G. Davis