

**Narrows Town Council Meeting
June 8, 2020**

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

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

The following members of the Narrows Planning and Zoning Commission were present: Terry Nicholson, Jerry Rhodes, and Sarah Thwaites.

Councilman Jonathan Creger gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joint Public Hearing

Mayor Davis said there will now be a joint public hearing to consider allowing an electronic sign at Reece's Building Supply. He opened the town's portion of the public hearing to order. He would now like to turn the meeting over to the planning commission.

Terry Nicholson said he is the chairman of the planning commission. The joint public hearing is to consider allowing an electronic sign at Reece's Building Supply. He would like to open the planning commission's portion of the public hearing to order. Is there anyone from the public that would like to make a comment? (There was no public comment) There is a quorum present for the planning and zoning commission. They did discuss this at their March meeting and had no problem with the sign being installed. He would like to entertain a motion to approve the special exception for the electronic sign at Reece's Building Supply.

Sarah Thwaites made a motion to approve the special exception for the electronic sign at Reece's Building Supply. Jerry Rhodes seconded the motion.

Ayes: Thwaites, Rhodes, and Nicholson

Nays: None

Motion Carried 3-0

Mayor Davis asked if there were any public comments for the town concerning the special exception for the electronic sign at Reece's Building Supply? Hearing no comments, he closed the public hearing.

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the recommendation from the Planning Commission and approve the electronic sign for Reece's Building Supply. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Mayor Davis said he would like to open the public hearing for the FY21 budget, tax rates, and water fees.

Susan Kidd said the budget advertised was \$4,101,839. The real estate tax rate did decrease to .47¢/\$100 because of the reassessment. Other taxes remained the same and the PPTRA rate is .47%. The proposed changes to the water policy would be:

- 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. **(Giles County currently has a this in place).**
- 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. **(Giles county currently has a \$500 fee in place for this).**

Councilman Garrett asked if there was a time limit on the water service fee for the second disconnect?

Susan Kidd said there is no time limit.

Councilman Garrett said they should add a time limit to that.

Susan Kidd said changes can be made because this cannot be approved until next week.

Councilman Creger asked about the oversight on the town's portion of VRS retirement?

Susan Kidd said that has to be done as a budget amendment.

Mike Bedsaul said this was found after the budget was prepared. Council can approve this at the next meeting since the total difference is less than 1% and an amendment to the budget can be done.

Councilman Creger said he saw where the 3% salary increase for employees was removed. Is there a time later in the year that raises could be given?

Susan Kidd said yes.

Councilman Garrett asked if the employees were aware of this?

Susan Kidd said yes.

Mayor Davis closed the public hearing for the FY21 budget, tax rates, and water fees.

Appointments/Reappointments

Councilman Creger made a motion to reappoint Debbie Thomas as Clerk/Treasurer. Councilmember Thwaites seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Turner made a motion to reappoint Benji Ratcliffe as Chief of Police. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Approval of May 11th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Garrett made a motion to approve the May 11th meeting minutes. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Consent Agenda

Cindy Laws said the library has begun to provide curbside service for patrons and hopes to open the library to the public on July 1st. She has logged over 3,000 books into the Evergreen Cataloging System. The library has been approved as a SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employee Program) training site. She is in the process of training someone and can work up to 20 hours/week at the library with no cost to the town. She has completed and submitted the necessary paperwork to apply for our State Aid Grant. Due to the decrease in local expenditures over the past several years, she had to request a technical waiver. The requirement for State Aid is that our Library expenditures must remain the same or preferably increase each year. The decrease this year has been due to salaries. The upcoming 2020/21 year will also show a decrease in local expenditures.

This is a result of her opting out of insurance, therefore, costing the Town less to operate the library.

Councilmember Thwaites asked Cindy Laws when she would hear back from the state?

Cindy Laws said in about 2 weeks. She was unaware that they have to keep a minimum of 5,000 books in the library and they also have to purchase 200 new volumes each year. These things have to be done to be able to continue receiving money from the state.

Lindsey Caudill said she did a guesstimate on expenses for the splash pad but the water and electricity is a little tricky to figure because the recirculation pump is going to use several gallons per day. That can vary depending on how many children are using it that day, the weather, and the humidity. The valves are on an automatic shutoff so they can control that since there are sensors for that. As far as electricity, it will not be that bad because the pumps will be the only thing running a lot of electricity. She figured the entrance fee as \$2.50/person, which is less than the original plan. They do not feel they can charge more than the pool in Pearisburg. They are going to try to offset some of the expenses with private-party rentals. She included a quote for chemicals from National Pools of Roanoke but Buddy Kast said he could get them cheaper. They will also offer season passes for families. She spoke to Splash Pads USA and they have no issue with the contract. There would be 3 employees at the park when the splash pad is open.

Lindsey Caudill said Mac Gallimore has approved to let fireworks be set off on his property.

Mike Bedsaul said they can send Splash Pads USA the contract to sign. Council needs to reject any and all bids received prior to the bid from Splash Pads USA.

Dakota Shrader said he would like to thank the Narrows Police Department, especially Jimmy Joe McCroskey, for helping with the graffiti that was sprayed on the Narrows Community Center. He would also like to thank Robbie Rucker with Green Clean for cleaning the graffiti off of the building.

Mike Bedsaul asked Susan Kidd if the town has contacted VRSA insurance to see if there are any requirements for the splash pad?

Susan Kidd said it will be added as a separate structure and there will be no additional expense.

Mayor Davis told Police Chief Ratcliffe there have been reports of reckless driving on side streets and there have been reports of not seeing town officers patrolling enough on side streets.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he will inform his officers of this.

Councilmember Thwaites said she is thankful for the Narrows Police Department.

Councilman Creger asked about the crosswalks at the town park?

Buddy Kast said they are working on them and they will be completed when paving is done this summer.

Buddy Kast said at an earlier council meeting an elderly couple from Poplar Street came and complained about the water coming down the road and running into their yard. He has looked into this and the water is coming from Minton Lane. There is a branch in that area and the ditch line is stopped up. He contacted VDOT and Jessie Williams to see if the ditch line can be cleaned out.

Mayor Davis said he may want to talk to Chris McKlarney and have him call David Clarke with VDOT.

Mayor Davis said he knows Camp Success is a mess right now. Have we contacted DGIF about abandoning the lower road?

Buddy Kast said he did and they will come and look at it when they get time.

Councilmember Thwaites said she is concerned about employees not receiving a raise. Is there anywhere in the budget they could cut so they could provide raises?

Susan Kidd said no. They did give merit raises to employees that were eligible for them.

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

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public

Karen Harris said her ex-husband has a DMV stop on his account and because she was on the vehicle with him it also placed a stop on her. Her ex-husband lives in Bristol, Tennessee now so the stop does not affect him. She cannot get tags on her vehicle because there is over \$500 owed for taxes.

Debbie Thomas said if Karen Harris can bring her divorce decree that shows he had sole ownership of the vehicle.

Councilman Garrett asked if she has ever lived in town?

Debbie Thomas said she can look in utility billing to see if she has.

Communication from Mayor and Council

Councilman Garrett said there has been one remote in-person/combination meeting since the Covid-19 pandemic. The next PSA meeting is to be held on June 11. There will be no water-rate increases.

Council Turner told Buddy Kast there are a couple of houses that need to be cleaned up. One on Poff Street and one on Northview Street.

Buddy Kast said he has been working on the one on Northview Street and he will check on the one on Poff Street.

Councilman Turner said he would like to commend Buddy Kast and his workers on the way the town looks. It looks better than it has in years.

Mayor Davis asked about the two houses that are on Flesham Street.

Buddy Kast said those have been condemned. The owner needs to be given a year to decide whether he wants to board them up or tear them down.

Councilman Garrett said he would like for the town workers to be told they have done a great job working through the pandemic.

New Business

Susan Kidd said they have been talking about considering a new police/fire department at the old BB&T bank building and to apply for grant funds they need an architectural plan. The fire department said they want to go ahead with this and it will cost \$38,490. She has the agreement from T&L to go ahead and start on that but before they do that the town probably needs an agreement with the fire department. If that is all right she will get with Mike Bedsaul and have that ready for the next council meeting.

Unfinished Business

Dakoda Shrader said the company that quoted the fencing for the Lurich ballfield quoted it wrong but Reece's has the fencing. There may be \$2,000 extra needed for fencing in addition to what was in the original quote.

Mayor Davis asked Dakoda Shrader if he had plans for holding softball tournaments once the fields are upgraded?

Dakoda Shrader said yes. They will also make money at the concession stand if tournaments are held there.

Susan Kidd said a public hearing will be held at the council meeting in July to approve the money for this.

Mike Bedsaul said the advertisement will have to run in the newspaper once a week for two successive weeks with six days between.

Councilmember Thwaites asked how long it would take to complete the project once the money is received?

Buddy Kast said about 30 days.

Matters for Consideration by Council

None.

Councilman Garrett made a motion to schedule a public hearing at the July 2020 council meeting to discuss the funding of the Lurich Ballfield. Councilmember Thwaites seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Creger, Garrett, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Garrett made a motion to recess this meeting until June 15 at 7:00 p.m. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorksey, Thwaites, Garrett, Creger, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, John G. Davis