

**Narrows Town Council Meeting  
September 14, 2020**

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

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

Mayor Davis gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of August 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

**Councilman Garrett made a motion to approve the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.**

**Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

**Consent Agenda**

Councilman Garrett said water loss is back to the point where it is concerning him. He asked Buddy Kast what they could do to get the loss to around 25% instead of 50%?

Buddy Kast said the weather has a lot to do with the loss because of meters bursting. They are not finding a whole lot of issues when checking for leaks. He believes there are some leaks they have not found.

Mike Bedsaul said he is going to contact Mueller's attorney directly. Buddy Kast has spoken to at least 3 administrative personnel at Mueller since Mike Kimmelman, the initial contact, left Mueller. They did now know he had left. They initially sent 141 of the bronze-bodied meters to replace the plastic ones and the town still has about 90 of those. When there is a new rupture they are counting the meters they are replacing against the original 141 that were sent.

Councilman Garrett asked Buddy Kast how many meters he believed they had replaced with bronze meters?

Buddy Kast said about half.

Councilman Garrett said his concern is that in the last month they lost around 3 million gallons of water. That is a million and a half more than he would expect them to lose which comes to around \$4,500/month. That is substantial over a year when budgets are tight.

Buddy Kast said hopefully it will slow down. They have not been as diligent in looking for leaks because of all the other projects they have going on.

Councilman Garrett said he understands that. The town cannot get any further behind on the sewer PER project because that needs to be done. Would it be worth it to call Kevin Belcher to see if he has someone that could help with a leak survey?

Buddy Kast said he could contact Virginia Rural Water and see if they have someone and that would be free of charge. He does believe a large part of the leak loss is due to ruptured meters.

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

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

## **Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public**

Tasha Riddle said she has a customer that has now had three leaks because of the house being older and the pipes are bursting. She has done two leak adjustments: one was on 26,000 gallons of water and the other was on 27,000 gallons of water. The customers are working on getting the leak fixed but have requested another adjustment if/when they get the repairs done.

Councilman Garrett asked if this was inside the house or outside?

Tasha Riddle said she believed some of it was in their yard.

Councilman Garrett said if he remembers correctly they changed the policy to where they are at least paying the cost of what we are buying the water for. He believes the policy should be changed so that the customer would pay the minimum bill plus the cost of what we pay the PSA for the excess usage. Could they talk to these customers about doing a complete line replacement?

Buddy Kast said he believes this needs to be done.

Mayor Davis asked if the town could go to the PSA and ask for an adjustment?

Councilman Garrett said he cannot remember anyone asking the PSA for an adjustment.

Councilmember Thwaites said she would like to know what the residents are doing to keep this from happening in the future.

Councilman Garrett asked what their normal water usage was before the leaks?

Tasha Riddle said around 3,000 – 4,000 gallons/month.

**Councilman Garrett made a motion that this utility bill be adjusted to a 4,000 gallon bill for water and sewer and that the additional 23,620 gallons be billed at the PSA rate charged to Narrows and that the customer be notified that this is the last adjustment that will be given until they have made substantial repairs to the outside water lines. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Tasha Riddle said in June Robert Frazier had contractors working at his house and they left the outside water spigot on but he did not realize it until a couple of days later. A total of 6,040 gallons was used and his usual usage is 2,000-4,000 gallons. He asked for a leak adjustment but was told there was no leak therefore a leak adjustment could not be given. He is asking council to approve an adjustment to his bill.

**Councilman Garrett made a motion to approve a leak adjustment for Robert Frazier. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Mayor Davis said the customer at 701 Memorial Boulevard is asking for a refund of the \$75 reconnect fee for late payment of their water bill. The resident was gone all day on September 9<sup>th</sup> and his wife had cancer treatments. They did not get home until after the office was closed. They were up all that night and did not get up early enough the next morning to get to the office to pay the water bill.

**Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to credit back the \$75 reconnect fee to the customer at 701 Memorial Boulevard. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

## **Communication from Mayor and Council**

Councilman Garrett said the PSA met Tuesday of last week. The finances are in pretty good shape and things are going fairly well. The master meters were tested and he did ask for results to be sent to Buddy Kast. All meters were within the 5% allowance. They discussed having something for trick-or-treat on a county-wide basis. It needs to be consistent and staff can discuss that later. Pace Analytical can now test for COVID-19 in wastewater. He does not know if they have a practical need for it but they would be able to detect where in the sewer system it could be coming from. At the next meeting he wants to discuss the relative cash-on-hand the PSA has versus the actual budget. Their cash position is in good shape right now. They have roughly a 4-million-dollar budget with roughly 2 million dollars in cash so they may be able to pay for some things with cash this year and minimize the increases next year.

Mayor Davis said the county is considering the provision of water to the Clendennin area. They have three options they are considering and one of them is the Narrows North Well, which in the past has been no good according to the PSA.

Councilman Garrett said he believes they only want the north tank, not the well.

Mayor Davis said he believes it could be a bargaining tool with the PSA. He is going to turn this over to Buddy Kast.

Councilman Garrett said the only thing is that this is not a PSA project but a county project.

Mayor Davis said at the last meeting he was asked to send a letter to the governor and legislators and thanks to Councilmember Sarah Thwaites they sent those out. He was also asked to send a letter to Giles County Public Schools concerning students attending school full time instead of virtual learning. He has the letter but has not sent it, and he will not be sending it, until the town opens up their businesses. Two days after the last council meeting the town announced they were not having their fall festival and were not opening the recreation department. How can he ask the schools to open up when the town is not open?

Councilmember Thwaites said she expressed some concerns about this to Mayor Davis. She does feel like the children should be back in school five days a week but they cannot ask someone to do something the town is not willing to do themselves.

Mayor Davis said children need their education and physically need to be in school. He thought they were going to have the festival and two days after the last council meeting it was cancelled.

Councilman Goorskey said there are a few streetlights out near the park.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said those have been turned in to AEP.

Councilman Goorskey asked if anyone had checked out what was going on in the bamboo stand near the park. He understands there is a lot of foot traffic in and out of there by adults and children alike.

Buddy Kast said that property belongs to Burl Compton.

Councilmember Thwaites said she shared the Trunk-or-Treat that the recreation department is holding. Are they going to prevent residents in town from trick-or-treating?

Mayor Davis said he did not believe they would because it is outside.

## **New Business**

None.

## **Unfinished Business**

**Councilman Garrett made a motion to modify the agenda and add “Splash Pad” under Unfinished Business and “Children at Play signs” under Matters for Consideration by Council. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Lindsey Caudill said the splash pad contract has been revised and it now specifies that the town is going to waive the building permit fee. They will take it out in their name.

Mike Bedsaul said this was sent to Splash Pads USA today and they were agreeable on this.

Lindsey Caudill said Splash Pads USA hopes to start the project the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>. The toddler playground will have to be closed but the other playground will probably not have to be.

Councilman Goorskey said this answers all of the questions they have had and since Buddy Kast is ok with it they should move forward.

Mike Bedsaul said since Susan Kidd is out of the office he would like to ask council to authorize the mayor to sign the contract on the town’s behalf.

**Councilman Garrett made a motion to authorize the mayor to sign the agreement between the Town of Narrows and Splash Pads USA presented this evening.**

**Councilmember Thwaites seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

#### **Matters for Consideration by Council**

Buddy Kast said council is being asked to donate to the Giles County Homeless Shelter. In the past the town has donated \$200.

**Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to donate \$200 to the Giles County Homeless Shelter. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Buddy Kast said Jeff Spicer that operates Wolf Creek Sweet Deals would like to rent the old art gallery/gift shop at 302 Main Street for the next year. The building they are in now is going to be renovated. The rent would be \$200/month.

**Councilman Garrett made a motion to approve the lease of 302 Main Street to Jeff Spicer in the amount of \$200 per month, either on a month-to-month lease or a yearly lease. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Buddy Kast said council is being asked to approve a purchase agreement with Allen Neely. This is for the small grassy area from the bridge at Princeton Lane to behind Grants Supermarket. This will be part of the downtown revitalization area.

Mike Bedsaul said the seller has asked for one change to the agreement. On page one under “Purchase Price; Payment” it states “the property shall be credited by Buyer against real estate taxes owed” and the seller would like that changed to “the property shall be credited by Buyer against any taxes owed”.

**Councilman Garrett made a motion to execute the purchase agreement between the Town of Narrows and Allen Ray Neely for the property at Lot No. 5, in Block B, Section W, Old Part of the Town of Narrows as presented to council with one**

**exception that under Section 1 the “real estate taxes” be modified to say “any taxes”. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Debbie Thomas said council has been given a listing of delinquent taxes that needs to be ran in the Virginian Leader. She gave them 2 listings, one in alphabetical order and one in order of amount owed. She remembered Councilman Garrett asking about advertising the listing only with amounts owed of \$75 or more.

Councilmember Thwaites there would be around 40 listings that could be removed if the amount advertised is only \$75 or more.

Debbie Thomas said she could put in the advertisement that the amounts listed are only those over \$75.

Councilman Garrett said he would advertise it as “the following is a partial list of all delinquent levies”.

**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to advertise the 2019 delinquent tax list and only listing amounts owed over \$75 and changing the wording from “all” to “partial”. Councilman Garrett seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Mayor Davis said council is being asked to consider placing “Children at Play” signs in the area on and around Fairview Street. Buddy Kast has looked at it and they will need around 10 signs at a cost of \$60/sign.

Buddy Kast said they have a few in stock they can use now but they will need to keep some in stock.

Councilman Garrett said he believes there are a lot of streets in Narrows these signs could be placed on. If you start where do you stop?

Buddy Kast said almost every subdivision has some of these. He agrees with Councilman Garrett. This will be a maintenance cost from now on.

**Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to install at least 10 “Children at Play” signs near and around Fairview Street. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Garrett, Thwaites, and Goorskey**

**Nays: Turner**

**Motion Carried 3-1**

**Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Garrett seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

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Clerk, Debbie Thomas

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Mayor, John G. Davis