

**Narrows Town Council Meeting
March 8, 2021**

Mayor John Davis called the meeting to order. Council Members present were Clyde Turner, Sara Bowles, George Conley, Sarah Thwaites, and Joe Goorskey.

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

Attorney Mike Bedsaul was present.

Mayor Davis gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Davis said they are going to hold the drawing for #shopped24124.

Lindsey Caudill said the winners are Lee and Tina Blaker.

Approval of February 8th Meeting Minutes

**Councilman Turner made a motion to approve the February 8th meeting minutes.
Councilmember Thwaites seconded the motion.**

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Conley, Bowles and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Consent Agenda

Councilman Conley said he would like to thank Debbie Thomas and Susan Kidd for meeting with him and helping him understand the budget.

Councilman Goorskey asked if he saw a post on Facebook requesting more donations for the Splash Pad?

Lindsey Caudill said they are a little short on funds for the Splash Pad and will be using some money from the Park Commission, so they are trying to hold a fundraiser to make up for what they are short. They are short about \$6,000.

Councilman Goorskey asked if they knew they were short when the contract was signed?

Lindsey Caudill said yes.

Councilman Goorskey asked where they were with the ballfields and could they let Dakota Shrader know to keep council updated in his report?

Lindsey Caudill said there are some issues with the backstops and pipe they received. They are trying to see if Reece's can take back what they have and, if not, try to use it somewhere else.

Councilman Goorskey said he is being asked about flag-football tournaments. This question was being asked last year also. He knows COVID had put a damper on things, but they need to start on these.

Lindsey Caudill said they are trying to finish the Splash Pad and then work on the ballfields.

Councilman Goorskey said the rec dept is a valuable asset, and they are doing a great job, but council receives a lot of questions about what is going on.

Councilmember Bowles asked Lindsey Caudill if they had discussed supervision at the park this summer?

Lindsey Caudill said yes and they have some people in mind to have there.

Councilman Goorskey said the people supervising at the park should be older than the ones working in the concession stand.

Councilman Goorskey said he knows Buddy Kast is not present, but he worries about the water loss because it continues to rise.

Susan Kidd said there was a big loss at the campground, but a compound meter has been ordered that should fix the issue.

Councilman Goorskey said the PSA will help with finding water leaks. This could relieve some of the workload from Buddy Kast and Jeff Perdue.

Councilmember Thwaites said in looking at Buddy Kast's report the town has a lot of projects going on. She appreciates his report being so thorough.

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

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public

None.

Communication from Mayor and Council

Councilman Goorskey said river withdrawal has never been done, except when applying for the permit. The permit is hard to get back again if you do not renew it. If there is a catastrophic failure, then river withdrawal can be done until a viable source of water can be found. There are a lot of places that do river withdrawal. They sold the store at the Hoge's store site. They received money from the pipeline to purchase new portable water plants. This was at no cost to the PSA.

Mayor Davis said letters were sent to our state representatives with our concern over the raise in minimum wage.

New Business

Councilman Conley said last month he asked about credit card fees. He asked Debbie Thomas to elaborate on what she found.

Debbie Thomas said the county does not charge credit card fees because they have over \$4 million in the bank at NBB so they are not charged these fees. The Town of Narrows has nowhere near \$4 million.

Councilman Conley said he went ahead a little farther. We can charge a fee. He contacted other towns and this is what they charge: Pembroke – 3%; Radford – 2.5%; Dublin – 1.75% and .75¢ for an e-check: Montgomery County has not been charging fees since COVID; Blacksburg – no fees; Rich Creek – no fees; Christiansburg – no fees. The common denominator is the National Bank of Blacksburg. He believes it would behoove us to investigate this further and cut our costs to the citizens.

Councilmember Thwaites asked Councilman Conley if, in investigating on fees, was he just checking on merchant services fees?

Councilman Conley said he was checking on convenience fees.

Councilmember Thwaites said those are merchant services fees. There are other fees that banks can charge. For instance: stop-payment fees, monthly maintenance fees, transfer fees, fees to cash checks that are drawn on them because the person cashing the check does not have an account there. If you are looking at banking fees you need to look at all the fees and do a comparison that way.

Councilman Conley said he believes it needs to be looked at.

Mayor Davis asked Councilman Conley if he wanted to look at changing banks?

Councilman Conley said he wants to investigate lower fees and if that means changing banks they need to do that.

Councilmember Thwaites said what she is trying to say is that the town may not come out ahead because they may incur a lot of other fees.

Debbie Thomas said she contacted Edmunds GovTech about the fees and the town can elect to pay them. The town would receive an invoice from Edmunds GovTech every month for the fees from the previous month.

Councilman Conley asked if NBB could be contacted to see about the fees?

Debbie Thomas said the town has contacted NBB and they said they need a statement from the town before they would go any further.

Mayor Davis said he believes it would be a sad day for the town to push promoting businesses in the Town of Narrows and then talk about leaving the only bank they have in the Town of Narrows. They worked very hard to get FNBP to come to town.

Debbie Thomas said she believes one of the reasons FNBP came to town is because the town said they would place their money there.

Councilmember Bowles said by being on the parks and rec committee she has found that FNBP is a large supporter of Kid's Fishing Day, the Fall Festival, and several other events held in town.

Councilman Conley said he is looking out for the citizens of Narrows.

Mayor Davis said he is too, every time he sits in his seat.

Debbie Thomas said if council will take a vote and direct her to do this she will.

Councilman Goorskey said he will be surprised if they would come out ahead and it would be very tedious to go through bank statements to see what they are charged.

Debbie Thomas said she contacted the Treasurer at the Town of Pearisburg. They use Paymentus now for online payments and the only bill a citizen can pay is a utility bill. When their contract is up with Paymentus they will be going with Edmunds GovTech for online payments so they will have the same fees the town does.

Councilman Conley made a motion to investigate other opportunities for credit card fees.

(Motion died for lack of a second)

Councilman Conley said he receives a lot of phone calls about Suddenlink concerning their rates, availability, and services. What kind of arrangement does the town have with Suddenlink? Are they the only provider in town?

Susan Kidd said the town has an agreement with them but it is not exclusive. Other providers are able to come to town. They just grant them the right to operate here.

Mayor Davis said before they signed the agreement they had several meetings with Altice and presented complaints citizens had. The town cannot negotiate what Suddenlink charges. They have helped with the Narrows Junior Women's Club Auction and still provide some equipment for that.

Councilman Conley said what a lot of people are upset about is the closing of the Princeton office so if you need a remote control you must drive to Beckley.

Mike Bedsaul said Altice wanted a ten-year agreement but the town only agreed to a five-year agreement.

Councilman Conley asked if they could contact other providers to see if they could offer services to the town?

Mike Bedsaul said they could. The town could advertise a request for proposal for service providers. The only issue is would there be enough customers to entice another provider to come. They could simply contact other providers to see if they would be interested. The only restriction is that they could not offer a better deal than Altice gives the town now.

Mayor Davis said they could send letters to cable/internet providers.

Councilman Conley made a motion to issue a request for proposal for other cable/internet service providers. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Conley asked if he could get a copy of the PSA contracts and agreements?

Debbie Thomas said she will email the document(s).

Unfinished Business

Mike Bedsaul said at the last council meeting Buddy Kast brought council a copy of an agreement for general engineering services between the Town of Narrows and Peed & Bortz. This agreement also provides for a non-exclusive relationship between the town and Peed & Bortz. The town can use them or does not have to. The copy given to council has provisions in red that would be added to the agreement. He spoke with Scott Bortz today and he did not have any problems with the changes that were made. It would be effective as of today.

Councilman Goorskey asked if there is a line item in the budget for this?

Susan Kidd said they have general maintenance line items that could be used for this.

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to approve the agreement for engineering services with Peed & Bortz subject to the modifications noted and also authorize Susan Kidd or Mayor Davis to execute it on behalf of the town. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Conley, Bowles, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Matters for Consideration by Council

Susan Kidd said council is being asked to approve the FY22 health insurance rates. Anthem is our insurance carrier. There was an increase of 3% but because of COVID we received a 4% discount.

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to approve the FY22 health insurance rates. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to amend the agenda to add the item "Real Property" under "Executive Session". Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to go into executive session. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Conley, Bowles, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Turner made a motion to return to open session. Councilmember Thwaites seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

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: _____

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to certify the meeting. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Thwaites, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to hold a public hearing at the April 12th council meeting to consider disposing of property that was purchased with ARC grant funds, specifically the apartment associated with the Shuff building. Any proceeds from the sale of that property will go back into the grant project. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Conley, and Turner

Abstain: Bowles

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilmember Thwaites made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Goorskey, Thwaites, Conley, Bowles, and Turner

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, John G. Davis