

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

Mayor Tom Spangler called the meeting to order. Council Members present were Clyde Turner, Sara Bowles, George Conley, John Mills, and Joe Goorskey

Staff members present were Lindsey Caudill, John Davis, Susan Kidd, Cindy Laws, Landon Patteson, Benji Ratcliffe, and Debbie Thomas.

Attorney Mike Bedsaul was present.

Mayor Tom Spangler gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Oath of Office

Sherry Gautier from the Giles County Circuit Court was present to give the oath of office to newly elected Mayor Tom Spangler and Councilman John Mills.

Approval of October 11th and October 25th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the October 11th meeting minutes.

Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Turner made a motion to approve the October 25th meeting minutes.

Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Consent Agenda

Library Report

Councilman Conley made a motion to approve the library report. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Parks & Recreation Report

Councilman Goorskey asked if they could open the concession stand since basketball season will soon be starting?

Lindsey Caudill said they can, but they will have to pay more out of their part-time employee line item. That is what is hurting their budget.

Councilmember Mills asked what were the odds of them breaking even?

Landon Patteson said slim to none.

Lindsey Caudill said if they have concessions open, they will have to have 2 people to work it so they will have to pay 2 people \$9.50/hour. They can open it this season and see where they stand.

Councilman Turner asked about the progress on the Lurich ballfield?

Landon Patteson said he is going to meet with Dakota Shrader this afternoon because there are some things that were ordered when he was working that have not arrived. Dakota is going to tell him who to contact concerning this.

Councilman Goorskey said during volleyball season Landon Patteson gave them an excellent response concerning the reason they kept things in-house and that was communicated to parents. He has received a number of questions he does not know how to answer. At the end of volleyball season he understands that a game was cancelled.

Landon Patteson said the tournament was cancelled due to girls that were supposed to play volleyball were cheerleading and could not be at the games so there were not enough kids to play. They rearranged the schedule and played 3 days in a row and gave them the same number of games.

Councilman Goorskey said one of the parents told him they had asked the rec department several times why the games were played the way they were and did not receive a response. Maybe they can let parents know and post something to Facebook to let parents know. He does not think the rec department is doing anything incorrectly and he appreciates everything they do.

Landon Patteson said he is going to have a meeting with the rec directors from Pearisburg and Pembroke to discuss how to have games with the Covid restrictions that are in place.

Councilman Goorskey said there are a lot of events going on in town and the Christmas lights are being put up and that is awesome. Do they have any fundraisers planned?

Landon Patteson said they do, and one will be trying to start a cornhole league.

Lindsey Caudill said they are also working on building up their parks and rec committee and they will be talking about fundraising as well.

Councilmember Bowles said the trunk or treat was very well organized and very well attended.

Lindsey Caudill said they had around 650 children attending.

Landon Patteson said Lindsey Caudill is a great event coordinator and she does a great job.

Lindsey Caudill said Connexion did a great job with the games and the fire department did the hayrides. They need to be thanked also.

Councilman Mills said our problems never go away and always get worse. The worst thing we can do is not communicate with the people we serve.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the parks and rec report.

Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Police Report

Councilman Conley said he would like to thank Police Chief Ratcliffe for his work in arresting people for drugs. We need to get that under control.

Councilman Mills said our entire police department is doing a great job, but it looks like Police Chief Ratcliffe is working more than any of them and that is very impressive. He would like to thank him for his work.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he is covering Chad Stilley's shift and once he returns to work he will be able to do more of his administrative duties.

Councilman Conley made a motion to approve the police report. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Financial Report/Treasurer's Report

Debbie Thomas told council the tax due date has been extended to December 15th because of issues with Edmunds GovTech, our software company.

Susan Kidd said letters will be written to the software company to ask for a reduction in our software fees.

Councilman Turner made a motion to approve the financial report/treasurer's report. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Director of Strategic Development's Report

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the director of strategic development's report. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Public Works Director's Report

Mayor Spangler asked John Davis if there was anything he or council could do as citizens to help with the water-loss situation, other than reporting any leaks they might notice?

John Davis said three water mains have been fixed and it is hard to tell how long they have been leaking.

Councilman Goorskey asked if they were having trouble taking time to look for leaks?

John Davis said they are looking but there are so many leaks and when a leak is in a yard the leak-detection does not work well. They have spent a considerable amount of time doing leak detection, but they are short-handed and have other jobs they must do.

John Mills said the system is antiquated and they need to find leaks, but they need to find some money to replace the lines. It is very frustrating.

John Davis said there is a two-inch main on Warner Street they have worked on three times this year. They are going to try at some point to replace a larger portion of the line. The PER they are hoping to do on the water project should show where they stand and what they need to do.

Councilman Goorskey said he knows the town employees are doing all they can to find and repair leaks, but he does not remember the leak loss being this high for an extended period of time. They need to contact the PSA and see if they can send someone to help.

John Davis said they have to do leak detection at night and there are only three employees in the water department. He has been helping them as much as he can.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the public works director's report. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public

Seth Palmer with Boy Scout Troop 68 told council he would like to build a kiosk at Mill Creek for his Eagle Service Project. He will be responsible for obtaining all of the supplies and tools necessary to construct the kiosk. He is asking permission from council to build the kiosk.

John Mills said this is a great idea and it will be great to have on his resume saying he is an Eagle Scout.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the construction of a kiosk at Mill Creek. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications from Mayor and Council

Councilman Goorskey said he was not able to attend the last PSA meeting but spoke with Kevin Belcher and there was a well they drilled at Cascade Springs and they are trying to get that to work because it is not pumping much water. They are getting better trash rates from Lusk than they have in the past.

Councilman Goorskey said he would like to see if council would like to appoint an alternate to the PSA board.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to appoint John Mills as an alternate to the PSA board. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey

Abstain: Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Turner said he would like to congratulate Mayor Tom Spangler and Councilman John Mills on winning the election. He would also like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers and his sight is improving a little bit. He will go back to the doctor to have another evaluation. His brother, Jeff Turner, contacted his family and asked everyone to remember his wife Amy in their thoughts and prayers.

New Business

Susan Kidd said they wanted to appoint someone to the New River Valley Regional Commission board to replace Sarah Thwaites. Council can think about that and get back to her at the next council meeting.

Councilman Mills said he knows Bobby Lucas is an exemplary citizen and believes he would be a good representative to appoint to the New River Valley Regional Commission.

Councilmember Bowles said she was also hoping Bobby Lucas would be on the Parks & Recreation Committee.

Bobby Lucas said he will think about it.

Councilman Goorskey said they will bring this back up under “unfinished business” at the December council meeting.

Unfinished Business

Susan Kidd said they had an offer and a counteroffer on selling the property at 126 Monroe Street and received a “no” from DHCD and CDBG. They want an offer closer to what the property is appraised for, and that amount is \$39,000. She does not see this happening.

Councilman Goorskey asked Susan Kidd what the town paid for all of the properties?

Susan Kidd said \$99,000.

Councilman Mills said whoever buys it is going to have to spend money to renovate it.

Mike Bedsaul said it was listed for sale for 90 days. Could it be listed for another 90 days?

Susan Kidd said she thought they could send a letter to CDBG and DHCD stating they listed the property for sale for 90 days and received an offer and a counteroffer and let them know that is all they received.

Mayor Spangler said they may as well go ahead and list it for another 60 or 90 days.

Councilman Goorskey said he would like for a letter to be sent from the mayor saying what has been going on and how the town feels about it. There are enough empty buildings in town and they now have an opportunity to put someone in one of them.

Susan Kidd said the whole purpose of the downtown revitalization is to take blighted buildings and put businesses in them.

Councilman Goorskey said he would also like to find out if there is an incoming delegate that would like to sign that letter.

Mayor Spangler said they will have to list the property for \$39,000.

Susan Kidd said they did last time.

Matters for Consideration by Council

Susan Kidd said she is asking council to approve awarding an administrative contract with the New River Valley Regional Commission to oversee the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. They are asking \$8,500/year to oversee the funding. Joy Rumley with the NRVRC looked at the purchases the town is contemplating, and she believes everything would be covered.

Councilman Mills made a motion to accept the proposal for the New River Valley Regional Commission to oversee the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Susan Kidd said they received a call concerning utility relief funds available to the town in the amount of \$11,787.58. Most of the amounts owed on utility bills are for people that have left town, some of those amounts being thousands of dollars. Some people are on payment plans and those could be paid off.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the utility relief funds award in the amount of \$11,787.58. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Susan Kidd handed council a list of projects for the ARPA funds to be spent on. There will be around \$183,000 transferred to the General Fund for general revenue replacement. Council had also talked about a stipend for employees. They spoke with Montgomery County, Pulaski County, and the Town of Pulaski. It is called "premium pay for essential workers" and it has to be outside of the regular salary and not an hourly rate for the weeks they worked during the state of emergency. They figured there were 61 weeks during that timeframe and most employees worked the entire time. There were 4 employees that worked a portion of that time. If they were given \$50/week that would be \$79,750. She has the amounts worked down if council is interested.

Councilman Goorskey asked if they had employees that worked during that time that were no longer employees would it cover them?

Susan Kidd said not unless council approved that.

Mike Bedsaul said it would only be for current employees.

Councilman Mills said he appreciates the town employees more than they will ever know. He knows this is a pretty big chunk of change, but it is a one-time opportunity to give to the employees.

Councilman Conley asked what the amount would be if it was \$25/week?

Susan Kidd said it would be \$39,875, \$40/week would be \$63,800, and \$30/week would be \$47,850. The state of emergency was March 13, 2020, to May 14, 2021.

Councilman Mills said money never falls out of the sky for municipalities and it is a great big “thank you” to employees. The Town of Narrows is the people.

Councilman Goorskey said the amounts listed for HVAC seem very low to them.

Susan Kidd said those were the numbers given to him. They probably need to go out to bid for that.

Councilman Conley said he would rather see it be \$40/week and that would leave leeway for other projects.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve premium pay for full-time employees that worked during March 13, 2020, to May 14, 2021, in the amount of \$40/week.

Councilman Conley seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Mayor Spangler said there has been some discussion on having a Christmas dinner for current town employees, including council and the police department. He received feedback that a luncheon would be better attended than a dinner. He spoke with Linda Hollie at Anna’s Restaurant and the price would be around \$13.99/person. He also suggested contacting some local businesses to help sponsor the luncheon and he would also like to contact some local businesses to donate door prizes. He understands it has been about 10 years since the town had a Christmas dinner and in light of COVID he believes it is worth doing. They would like to have a luncheon and then let the employees go home for the rest of the day.

Susan Kidd said she believes if a date is set most employees will show up.

Mayor Spangler said they could do it Monday, December 13th. He will contact businesses about sponsorship and door prizes.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve a Christmas luncheon in an amount not to exceed \$504. Employees will also be allowed to leave after the luncheon.

Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Turner made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler