

**Narrows Town Council Meeting  
February 14, 2022**

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 Spangler gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Hearing**

Mayor Spangler opened the public hearing for the business license rate update. There will be no rate increases.

Susan Kidd said this is more to bring the town in line with the state code.

Mike Bedsaul said the other change is that 1992 was the last time the ordinance was updated and there had been a change in the state code relating to the appeals process for challenges to a business-license tax determination. Those needed to be updated.

Mayor Spangler asked if there were any comments concerning the public hearing? Hearing none he closed the public hearing.

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

**Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.**

**Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

**Consent Agenda**

*Library Report*

**Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the library report. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

*Parks & Recreation Report*

Councilman Goorskey said he appreciated Landon Patteson's work on the most recent basketball season. He knows this was a headache at times but he commended him for his work.

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

**Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

*Police Report*

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

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

**Nays: None**  
**Motion Carried 5-0**

*Financial Report/Treasurer's Report*

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

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

*Director of Strategic Development's Report*

Councilman Goorskey asked Susan Kidd if there was any word on when they would begin on the façade projects?

Susan Kidd said the architect has been out of town but should be getting with the contractor sometime this week.

Councilman Mills said their team had a meeting concerning obtaining a building permit for the outfitter building and were given direction staff is going to pursue. He would really like to see it not limited to that one building. There are several properties that have the potential to have some good stuff to happen to and he wants to know what our responsibilities to these properties are and what they are going to be able to do within the confines of the law. He would like council's support in charging staff to find out this information. He would like to see very comprehensive guidelines they can understand going forward.

Councilman Goorskey said there are properties the town owns and whether they want to do something with it or sell it to someone they need to know what they are getting. Something as simple as an asbestos test would be helpful for a prospective buyer. They need to be able to show people a path to better develop their town.

Councilman Mills said their team has been dealing with floodplain issues on the outfitter building and they have attempted time and again to find a resolution. Susan Kidd did the right thing and formed a meeting with all the players a couple weeks ago. Out of that meeting they finally understood what they had to do. One of the requirements was getting DCR involved in this. If they are going to talk to these folks they need to talk to them about all of the buildings in town because it will be the same issue if a building is in the floodplain.

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

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

*Public Works Director's Report*

Councilman Goorskey asked John Davis how big the leaks were they fixed in December and January?

John Davis said they were decent-sized leaks. They fixed another one the other day.

Mayor Spangler asked John Davis if he had found out anything about having the sign for the American Legion moved?

John Davis said that is on VDOT. They may move it back toward the building, but VDOT has to check on that.

John Davis said he has spoken with AEP about fixing the streetlights that are not working. Police Chief Ratcliffe turns them in, but they are not being fixed. He will stay on top of it.

**Councilman Turner made a motion to approve the public works director's report.**  
**Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.**  
**Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey**  
**Nays: None**  
**Motion Carried 5-0**

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

None.

#### **Communications from Mayor and Council**

Councilman Mills said the PSA had their meeting and it was very disturbing to him. Because of things that happened in Flint, Michigan, there have been serious changes in the Department of Health and waterworks. The bottom line is it can be brutal for water providers and the town is one. As an example, in the county there was one home in twenty that was surveyed that had a higher lead content in their water. Instead of adding more chemicals to the drinking water he asked why they could not replumb the whole house. That was not an option. The county now must treat all the water for one house in a particular service area. The state said there were grants available for these chemicals and he said that was for this year but what about the next fifty years? There is going to be a meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Red Sulphur Public Service District in Peterstown, and they are supposed to be really in-depth as to what has to be done and the timeline. He has been told they have two years to get going on this stuff but will know for sure after this meeting. He is going to the meeting, and he would like for John Davis, Jeff Perdue, Susan Kidd (if she wants to), and one more council member to be in attendance. The town will potentially have to survey every customer and may have to take corrective action. The town is backed up against the wall every day as it is, how will they pull this off? When the federal government gets involved, they really don't worry about things like that.

Tom Garrett said he saw the memorandum and one thing they talk about are lead service lines and he was wondering how they define that. He thinks lead service lines would be lead pipe, but would they be talking about pipes that have lead fittings or things of that nature?

Councilman Mills said he would interpret it like Tom Garrett does but that is not the way it is. He was told years ago they had a lead arm that came off of a service line and would attach the service line to that arm. They said that was a frequent occurrence in this area.

Tom Garrett said this has been a long time coming because they were talking about this before he came off the PSA board. His perspective was a lot of times the problem is in the private homeowners piping but they are not asking the homeowner to do anything they are asking the water provider to modify the water source to help an individual whose plumbing has an issue.

Councilman Turner said he and his wife recently went to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and notice banners hanging there recognizing veterans. They call it the "Road to Glory". He called the gentleman that is over this, and they have 256 of them. He would like to see this done in Narrows. He believes they need to honor their veterans more than they do. He would like to have council approve this.

Councilman Spangler asked how much each banner would cost?

Councilman Turner said one banner and bracket would be around \$150. There are probably different companies you could order them from.

Councilman Spangler asked if the brackets that were already on the poles could be used?

Councilman Turner said he believed they could but he would check.

Councilman Mills said this is a great concept and he does not believe he will receive any opposition on the timeframe proposed. Who is going to pay for this?

Councilman Turner said a GoFundMe page could be created to raise funds to purchase the banners and brackets. They could also talk to the American Legion and the VFW about raising the money. There could be a committee formed to take care of this.

Councilman Conley said the VFW Auxiliary would have information also.

Councilman Mills said the town could donate funds toward this but could not fund the entire expense. He would like to see the numbers on how much this will cost.

John Davis asked how many veterans are on each banner?

Councilman Turner said one but they could look at putting one veteran on each side of the banner.

Mayor Spangler told Councilman Turner to check into this some more and check on prices for the banners and brackets.

Councilman Goorskey said they may speak with the families of the veterans to see if they may want to sponsor a banner.

Councilman Conley said Suddenlink just received a fine of \$2.2 million in the State of West Virginia. They were cited by the SCC for having poor service, no call center, and various other items. That money will be going back to customers in West Virginia. As he understands it, Giles County is the only county that is serviced in Virginia by Suddenlink. Would it be proper for the town to write Suddenlink a letter to establish a call center to service this county? The town would like to receive some of the benefits they have to do anyway.

Councilman Mills said if they do not ask for it, they will not get it.

Mike Bedsaul asked Susan Kidd if they could contact Giles County to do a joint request to Suddenlink?

Susan Kidd said they could.

**Councilman Conley made a motion for the town to develop a letter to Suddenlink (this could also be a joint letter with Giles County) to establish a call center to service Giles County. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

### **New Business**

Susan Kidd said the town has several real estate parcels that have been delinquent on their taxes for ten years or more and are in the hands of Sands Anderson. They want to know if council wants to go ahead with a tax sale.

Mike Bedsaul said if you have parcels that are worth less than \$10,000, you have the option to do a non-judicial sale and there are a few town parcels that fit this scenario. The downside of a non-judicial sale is that there may be liens against the property so no one will bid on them. If you do a judicial sale, the property can be sold free and clear because you are giving the lienholders notice. The downside would be if you have a property that is not valued at very much, they may not sale or bring a lot of money. Susan Kidd wants some guidance on the five properties as to whether they have a judicial or non-judicial sale.

Susan Kidd said these five properties are the ones the town is always receiving calls about because the house is falling in or the yard needs to be mowed.

Mike Bedsaul said if the town does their sale the same time the county does you get more people at the auction.

Mayor Spangler said they will leave it up to Mike Bedsaul and Susan Kidd to do what is in the best interest of the town.

Mike Bedsaul said he would have Reid Broughton get in touch with Susan Kidd concerning the tax sale.

Susan Kidd said the Narrows Volunteer Fire Department wants to get EMS and an ambulance at the local fire department, which is a very involved process. They are asking permission to have Mike Bedsaul look at it. There must be an ordinance to operate the facility.

Councilman Conley asked if they have enough people now to man the unit?

Fire Chief Elwood Lambert said right now they have 7 or 8 people to man the unit. If this passes, there will be more.

Mayor Spangler asked if this would be an ALS ambulance and if there are people qualified to run it?

Fire Chief Elwood Lambert said yes to both questions.

Mayor Spangler said it is a great idea.

Council agreed to let Mike Bedsaul look at the paperwork.

### **Unfinished Business**

**Councilman Conley made a motion to amend the agenda to adopt the Business License Tax Rate Ordinance. Councilmember Bowles seconded the ordinance.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to adopt the Business License Tax Rate Ordinance. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

Susan Kidd said she and John Davis spoke with both engineering firms concerning the ARPA projects and staff would like to recommend the town go with Peed & Bortz. Both firms are excellent and Peed & Bortz helped design our system. If they feel they cannot handle a project they will let the town know. One of the first projects the town wants to do is the sewer project and Peed & Bortz designed that project and are intimately familiar with it. They would like for council to accept Peed & Bortz first and Thompson & Litton second for the town's ARPA projects. Both firms are very capable.

**Councilman Conley made a motion to accept Peed & Bortz as the engineering firm for the Town of Narrows ARPA projects. Thompson & Litton will be second if Peed & Bortz cannot be used. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

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

Susan Kidd said council is being asked to donate to the Giles County Dance Team.

Mayor Spangler said he is not against this organization but if you give to one you have to give to all.

Susan Kidd said they could offer them a spot at a future event free of charge.

Mayor Spangler said this sounds like a great idea.

Susan Kidd said the council retreat has been scheduled for March 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the office of Sands Anderson at 150 Peppers Ferry Road in Christiansburg, Virginia. The items on the agenda so far are business and economic development, broadband infrastructure, and if there is time left wages and benefits and minimum wage issues.

Susan Kidd said Edmunds GovTech was sent a letter concerning issues the town had with 2021 taxes being imported to the software. They sent an updated invoice and applied a credit of \$1,535.73. She spoke with Mayor Spangler concerning this and she feels they should have written the entire amount off for real estate taxes. They told Debbie Thomas they had never given a credit before but the town told them they needed something because that was a debacle.

Mayor Spangler said a 10% credit was far less than it should have been.

Debbie Thomas said it did not just include real estate but personal property as well.

Susan Kidd asked council if they wanted them to pursue this further.

Council agreed for Susan Kidd and Debbie Thomas to pursue this further.

Susan Kidd said they received notice last week that health insurance rates are going up 11.1% for FY23. That is the biggest increase they have had in several years. They could go out and look for other insurance sources but it is too late in the year to do it and she would suggest looking for alternatives in the fall.

**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the FY23 health insurance rates. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

Mayor Spangler said they appointed Bobby Lucas as the representative from the town to the New River Valley Regional Commission. Bobby Lucas cannot serve on the commission because he is not a council member.

**Councilman Mills made a motion to appoint Tom Spangler as the representative from the town to the New River Valley Regional Commission. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

Mayor Spangler said they need to look at securing someone to replace Susan Kidd at the end of August. The sooner they can get the process started it will be to their benefit.

Councilman Conley said he would like to be involved in setting the criteria for the individual to replace her.

Mayor Spangler said there may be some individuals that are interested in the position.

Mike Bedsaul asked Susan Kidd if she had a current job description for her position?

Susan Kidd said probably not but she can develop one.

Mike Bedsaul said she can develop a job description and work from there.

**Councilman Mills made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.**

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

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 5-0**

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler