

**Narrows Town Council Meeting  
June 12, 2023**

Mayor Tom Spangler called the meeting to order. Council Members present were Bobby Lucas, Sara Bowles, George Conley, and Joe Goorskey. John Mills was absent.

Staff members present were Lindsey Caudill, Cindy Laws, Terry Nicholson, Benji Ratcliffe, Roger Shepherd, and Debbie Thomas.

Attorney present was Mike Bedsaul.

Mayor Tom Spangler gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Hearing**

Mayor Spangler opened the public hearing concerning the FY24 budget.

Terry Nicholson said council's packets contained the summary information for the FY24 budget and they have been given a worksheet showing the budget in detail. There have been some adjustments due to the VRSA insurance and a miscalculation in personal property taxes that has been corrected. It is now ready for council's approval.

Councilman Conley stated that although there is a .02¢ increase on real estate taxes, personal property taxes will remain at 85% of the assessed value.

Terry Nicholson said that is correct.

Mayor Spangler asked if there were any comments concerning the FY24 budget or the tax-rate increase. Hearing no comments, he declared the public hearing closed.

**Appointments/Reappointments**

Councilman Conley said he would like to delay the appointments/reappointments until next month in lieu of Councilman Mills not being present at tonight's meeting. He would like to discuss this with the entire council before the appointments/reappointments take place.

Councilman Goorskey said that's fine as long as no one's appointment runs out before then.

Debbie Thomas said the appointments run out the last day of this month.

Councilman Goorskey said he would like to go ahead and consider the appointments.

Terry Nicholson said they could be done at the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mike Bedsaul said they could do the appointments at the special called meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup> as long as everyone agrees to amend the agenda to add that item.

Mayor Spangler said they would still need to make the appointments at the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting even if all council members were not present.

**Councilman Conley made a motion to table 'Appointments/Reappointments' tonight and amend the agenda for June 20<sup>th</sup> to add 'Appointments/Reappointments'. This is so a council member that is absent tonight can be present for the appointments/reappointments. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

**Approval of May 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

Terry Nicholson said Stephanie Buchanan's name was wrong in the minutes several times and has since been corrected.

**Councilman Lucas made a motion to approve the May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.**

**Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

### **Consent Agenda**

#### *Library Report*

Councilman Goorskey said everyone needs to go see the Iris Brammer Public Library and Librarian Cindy Laws. It's a wonderful setting and environment. He thanked Cindy Laws for doing a great job.

#### *Parks & Recreation Report*

Councilman Goorskey said there is a lot of information in the parks and recreation report and he really appreciates that. He had a question about the Cabo Fish Taco truck set up at the farmer's market and the conflict with another local restaurant that also serves fish tacos. Has this been brought up and addressed?

Lindsey Caudill said she discussed it with the owner of Tidal Wave Seafood and made her aware that Cabo Fish Taco has been coming to the farmer's market since the inception of Covid and this has been an ongoing relationship. She can ask them not to come if that's what council wants but they need to remember Cabo does pay meals tax.

Mayor Spangler asked if the owner of Tidal Wave Seafood had a problem with Cabo coming to the farmer's market.

Councilman Goorskey said yes.

Lindsey Caudill said she reached out to the owner of Tidal Wave Seafood and told her it was not her intention to take away business from a local restaurant.

Councilman Goorskey said he doesn't want to sound like he's for or against this he simply wants to talk about it. He does know the Cabo Fish Taco truck has been coming to the farmer's market longer than Tidal Wave Seafood has been in town.

Lindsey Caudill said Simple Fixin's food truck will be coming once a month to the farmer's market.

Councilman Goorskey said Lindsey Caudill is doing a great job at the farmer's market.

Councilmember Bowles said what she purchases at Cabo Fish Taco would not be the same item she would purchase at Tidal Wave Seafood and she believes it's good to have choices.

Councilman Goorskey said he wanted the owner of Tidal Wave Seafood to know they care about them and try to find a remedy.

Mayor Spangler said they are only talking about one evening a month.

#### *Police Report*

Councilman Conley thanked Police Chief Ratcliffe and Office McCroskey for the drug arrests.

#### *Financial Report/Treasurer's Report*

No comments.

### *Town Manager's Report*

Terry Nicholson said the date is wrong in his report for the Planning Commission public meeting. It should be June 26<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 pm at the farmer's market. Samantha Dougherty has completed the mural at the town park and will begin working on the white wall behind the farmer's market. She is making great progress and does beautiful work.

Councilman Goorskey said Samantha Dougherty is an amazing young lady and very talented.

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson if there was any information he wanted to share concerning banners in town.

Terry Nicholson said he has been working with Bobby Lucas and John Davis toward being able to put up banners for the local businesses in the downtown area as well as on US 460. They have received permission from AEP to put banners on the town's light poles on 460. There are 13 poles, which could hold up to 26 banners. They will need to purchase some hardware and are working on that now. They'll also consider adding banner hardware to several poles in the downtown area that currently do not have brackets, so they can put more banners in the downtown area. As they are getting the hardware set up, they are also working with Cora Gnegy to coordinate the branding that will go on the banners. Once they have the design set, they will contact local businesses to give them the opportunity to purchase one or two banners for their business. They will give preference to the downtown businesses for placement on US 460 in order to attract visitors off the highway and into downtown. They will work with a local company to design the banners. The town will purchase the hardware and the business will purchase their own banner. Businesses in the downtown area will be given priority to purchase and place the banners. Businesses could also purchase a banner to place on a light pole outside of their business. He has also asked Thompson & Litton for doing a wayfinding signage project. This would be two large VDOT compliant signs on Route 460 and one at the top of the hill approaching the bridge to direct downtown traffic.

Mayor Spangler said there is a structure that's going to be given to Habitat for Humanity. He asked Terry Nicholson if he thought there were other structures that would fall under that same possibility.

Terry Nicholson said that was very likely. Habitat for Humanity has been working quite a while on some projects in Giles County. The structure Mayor Spangler is speaking of will be demolished and a house will be built at the high school to take its place.

Councilman Lucas said a few weeks ago he sent a picture to Terry Nicholson of the small parking lot near Jason Tickle's business. It was brought to his attention that this area was going to be turned into charging stations for electric vehicles. Is that something the town has been working on?

Terry Nicholson said the town owns that parking lot and there are 6-8 parking spots there. Jason Tickle is going to place a meter base for his façade renovation in that area and will put several meter spots in that area so the town could place a charging station there for electric vehicles. Pulaski, Roanoke, and Blacksburg have all done this but there are not many areas around Narrows that are putting charging stations in. People that have electric cars can download an app that will lead them to the nearest charging station. While their vehicle is charging they have to be doing something so placing one in our downtown area would be an attractive thing. He has looked at them a little bit and there are options to either purchase or lease them. Jason Tickle is interested in helping with that.

Councilman Goorskey said this will be a great thing for the town. He asked if there had been any interest in the outfitter building.

Terry Nicholson said yes.

### *Public Works Director's Report*

Councilman Goorskey said the 31% water loss is great. He thanked John Davis for his work in achieving this.

**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

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

Mayor Spangler said Jenny Martin would like to speak concerning promoting a food drive with Giles County Towns.

Jenny Martin introduced herself and addressed council about specific food items that the Narrows Junior Woman's Club is collecting as part of the National Day of Service which will be celebrated on September 30, 2023. She said that cuts to the SNAP benefit program and rising food costs have led many to choose between purchasing food and paying bills. Christiansburg came up with 'sign wars' and she would like to create 'food wars'. The Virginian Leader said they would be glad to do an article on this and WDBJ 7 said they would do their best to air a segment about this on 'Good News Today'. She challenged each member of council to participate. She also challenged Mayor Spangler to challenge other mayors in the county to a contest to see who could donate the most. The food items will go to the Giles County Christian Mission.

Councilmember Bowles thanked Jenny Martin for taking this on.

Terry Nicholson said the town will promote this on their Facebook page.

Mayor Spangler said next on the agenda is Franceina Turner to discuss a utility disconnect refund. He spoke with Terry Nicholson and believed it had already been taken care of.

Terry Nicholson said Franceina Turner was a customer that has always been on time paying her bills. She was in the hospital and her water was disconnected for nonpayment. She was charged the \$75 reconnect fee and Tasha Riddle asked if it could be waived since she was a good customer so the \$75 was refunded to her account.

Mayor Spangler said next on the agenda is Pam Dunn concerning the utility disconnect policy.

Councilman Conley said Pam contacted him this evening and wanted to ask the town manager to review the policy and make sure it was comparable with other municipalities.

Terry Nicholson said he spoke with Pam on the phone concerning the utility disconnect policy. He placed a copy of the policy in council's packets. The town has always had the \$75 reconnect fee but June 15, 2020, they added a reconnect fee of \$150 for customers that are disconnected for a second or subsequent time within a period of 12 months. He will compare the policy to other localities.

Mike Bedsaul said he recalled the \$150 fee being added because of certain instances that were happening in town.

Terry Nicholson said it's also important to remember that the town incurs costs when an employee has to turn a water meter off and then back on.

Emily Clem said she would like to discuss the rock wall on College Street because she owns a house there. The wall is between Morris Street and Northview Street. The wall is falling and it's the town's responsibility to fix the wall. They have gone through this many times but when the street was created it was agreed that the town would maintain the wall. There were 2 town employees that went to the courthouse and found records that show it's the town's responsibility and that was Tony Denson, who has since passed away, and Buddy Kast. If she correctly recalls John Davis was either mayor or a council member at that meeting.

Debbie Thomas said she lives beside the house Emily is speaking of and the wall is in bad shape.

Mayor Spangler said if, in the past, the town has committed to and taken care of it then it's the town's responsibility.

Emily Clem said Buddy Kast did find the documents at the courthouse and that it was the town's responsibility to maintain the wall.

Mayor Spangler said he's sure it will need to be researched again.

Emily Clem said there should be town council minutes that pertain to this but she's not sure of the date.

Mayor Spangler asked John Davis to meet with Emily Clem and take a look at the wall.

John Davis said he is familiar with this and has done some research on it.

Angie Barrett said she's Emily Clem's niece and lives in the house where the rock wall is deteriorating. She has pictures of the wall and there are a few rocks that are barely hanging on. When she mows the yard she has to go to the edge of the yard to mow and is scared to mow there because of a hole that's forming where the wall is deteriorating. There is also a wall across the street that needs to be repaired.

Councilman Goorskey asked if the walls need to be replaced/repared or the roadway maintained safely.

Angie Barrett said they need to maintain the wall.

Debbie Thomas said if nothing is done to the walls and they fall, a part of their yards will fall out in the road. The work doesn't have to be pretty but they don't want their yards falling out in the road.

Councilman Goorskey said he knows the wall they're speaking of but council needs to know their liability concerning the wall.

Mayor Spangler said they will look into this.

### **Communications from Mayor, Council, and Staff**

Mayor Spangler said first is the PSA report but since Councilman Mills is absent there is none. The second item is the change order for electrical upgrades at the sewer plant.

Terry Nicholson said he had council approve a line item for all of the electrical upgrades at the sewer plant which included some transfer switches at some of the pump stations and some other major work. In the process of the contractor implementing that, they realized there was a surge-protection switch that was missing from one of the pieces of equipment in the description and a change order was made in the amount of \$1,500. Since council approved an individual line item for that contract for the sewer, he wanted council to be aware that he will approve the \$1,500 change order, but they are still within the amount that was approved for the sewer project overall.

**Councilman Conley made a motion to approve \$1,500 for the surge-protection switch for the electrical upgrades at the sewer plant. Bobby Lucas seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Mayor Spangler said the next item on the agenda is the Virginia Investment Pool.

Terry Nicholson said he and Debbie Thomas met with a representative from the Virginia Municipal League/Virginia Association of Counties (VML/VACo) concerning the potential for the town to participate in something called the Virginia Investment Pool.

This is made up of a collection of statewide municipalities who have pooled their money to invest so they've created an investment opportunity that municipalities can buy into. A portion of the unassigned fund balance can be placed in an investment account and keep it liquid. They call it the 'Stable Net Asset Value Pool'. A portion of the unassigned fund balance can be placed in the investment pool and gain interest. The liquidity part of it is if the town would ever need to pull that money back, the town could receive it in a day. It's at no cost or risk to the town. The only risk there would be if at the end of a year, the money you invested was less than what was originally invested, the unassigned fund balance would decrease. He spoke to the treasurer at Christiansburg and they have invested funds with them since the inception of the investment pool in 2013. They went through a period where interest rates were very low, which made the return pretty low. As of now, the interest rates are 5% so the town could be earning 5% on whatever amount they decided to invest. He is asking council to give himself and Debbie Thomas the capability to pursue this and look at placing a portion of the unassigned fund balance in this investment pool. He would recommend doing no more than half of the unassigned fund balance.

Councilman Conley asked Terry Nicholson what dollar amount he was talking about.

Terry Nicholson said \$150,000 or so.

Mayor Spangler asked if the Virginia Investment Pool had administrators or do they farm that out.

Terry Nicholson said they have their own administrators. He can present the information the town was given at a future meeting but the following was in the presentation:

*Funds managed by Public Trust Advisors (PTA), an SEC-registered investment advisor:*

- ✓ *Top rated fund manager with \$75+ billion in assets under management*
- ✓ *Solely focused on managing short-term, fixed income investments for state and local governments*
- ✓ *Selected through nationwide search of best-in-class fund managers*

Councilman Conley asked how that would affect the town's loan status as far as receiving loans.

Terry Nicholson said it would help because they would be earning interest.

Councilmember Bowles asked if there were penalties for withdrawing money from the investment.

Terry Nicholson said no.

Mayor Spangler asked what they invest in.

Terry Nicholson said they have a traditional money-market fund and Standard & Poor's highest rating of AAA.

Mayor Spangler said they have different tiers of investment as far as risks or they do whatever they want to do with the funds.

Terry Nicholson said yes. The town would be buying into the bigger pool that they manage.

Councilman Conley asked if they had an underwriter.

Terry Nicholson said he doesn't know the answer to that but will ask.

Mayor Spangler asked what their rating was.

Terry Nicholson said their rating was AAA which is S&P's highest rating.

Councilman Conley said he doesn't have a problem with it if there's an underwriter.

Mayor Spangler said he's all for making money but his concern is the risk they may be putting the town in.

Councilman Lucas asked Terry Nicholson if he was asking for council's permission to look into this.

Terry Nicholson said yes. He will ask about the underwriting.

Councilman Conley said they should definitely look into it.

Mayor Spangler said there are a couple of items they need to discuss that aren't on the agenda. The first one is the basketball court renovations.

Terry Nicholson said he and John Davis were able to meet with 2 representatives from the Mary Northern Moody Foundation. They are the funders for the grant Pearisburg received for their basketball court. They walked around the town park property and the existing basketball court and looked at some other possibilities there. They took some measurements so they could give Terry some rough estimates of what they were looking at cost wise so he could present it to council to get approval for them to proceed. The basketball court at the park isn't in terrible shape but is undersized. The tennis court area beside of the splash pad has basketball goals at either end as well but the tennis court surface is in bad shape, and would be more valuable to renovate. The town could put in 2 pickleball courts in the area where the tennis courts are now and would require an area of about 60'x60'. That would leave another 45' where they could install a ½ basketball court with an adjustable rim and little kids could use that area for practice and things like that because the goal could be lowered. They could also resurface the existing basketball court and may be able to expand it a little bit. They can resurface the existing basketball court, replace the goals, and get to choose the colors which can be green and gold. All of that can be done for the amount of money they are looking at. They are really excited about this project.

**Councilman Conley made a motion to approve the project at the town park with the Mary Northern Moody Foundation. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Mayor Spangler said the parks and rec committee has asked for bushhogging to be done on the Day property where the fireworks will take place.

Terry Nicholson said Narrows Fireworks is asking the town to bushhog the area where the fireworks will take place. It will require at least half a day for the town employees to clean up this area. The parks and rec committee asked that a tree be cut down in this area and some further brush removal on the banks of the creek but the town is not able to do that because of the equipment and time that would be needed. They feel like it will not interfere with the sightline from the park for the fireworks.

**Councilman Lucas made a motion for town employees to bushhog the area on the Day property where the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks will take place. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

### **New Business**

None.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

06/12/2023

## **Matters for Consideration by Council**

Mayor Spangler said the only item is to consider the creation of a committee to oversee the Gallimore Project to be made up of members of town council, fire department, police department, and town staff.

Terry Nicholson said he is requesting this because they are getting closer to where they will be making decisions about proceeding with the project on the Gallimore property. He wanted to have a project-management team that would be made up of members of town council, fire department, police department, and town staff to be the driving force behind this and someone to keep things moving faster than if they wait each month to come back to council with questions. This team could keep council updated at council meetings as well.

Mayor Spangler said they couldn't have more than 2 council members to serve on the committee.

Mike Bedsaul said once this team is appointed, there would have to be public notice of their meetings just like any public body.

Councilman Goorskey asked Terry Nicholson what authority he was thinking of giving this committee. If they would be making design decisions, that may be something the entire council would need to discuss.

Terry Nicholson said that could be part of it and also costs and those types of things. The quote they received for the entire project was a large estimate and they will need to do value engineering and figure out how they want to proceed.

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson how many people he was thinking about to be on this team.

Terry Nicholson said 2 from council, 2 from the fire department, 2 from the police department, and 2 from town staff. That would be a total of 8.

Mike Bedsaul asked Terry Nicholson if this team would be advisory in nature.

Terry Nicholson said yes. This team could give council monthly updates on how they wanted to proceed.

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson how often the team would need to meet.

Terry Nicholson said they would meet less often right now but will reach a point where they will need to meet every couple of weeks.

Mayor Spangler asked Fire Chief Elwood Lambert if that was something they could do.

Fire Chief Elwood Lambert said yes.

Mayor Spangler asked John Davis if town staff could meet that often as well.

John Davis said yes.

Mayor Spangler said he thinks it's a good idea.

Terry Nicholson said they will proceed with that.

**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to amend the agenda to add personnel matters (Sec. 2.2.3711.A.1) for the discussion of job performance. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**



**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to go into executive session to discuss the Gallimore project (Sec. 2.2.3711.A.3), to discuss a job description (Sec. 2.2.3711.A.1), and to discuss job performance (Sec. 2.2.3711.A.1). Councilman Conley seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

**Councilman Conley made a motion to return to open session. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

### **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:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Councilman Goorskey made a motion to accept the certification. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Mayor Spangler said there will be a special meeting held June 20, 2023, at 6:00 pm in council chambers to approve the FY24 budget and for appointments and reappointments.

**Councilman Conley made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Lucas, Bowles, Conley, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

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Clerk, Debbie Thomas

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Mayor, Tom Spangler