

**Narrows Town Council Meeting  
February 10, 2025**

Mayor Tom Spangler called the meeting to order. Council Members present were John Hale, Jonathan Creger, John Mills, and Joe Goorskey. Councilmember Sara Bowles was absent.

Staff members present were Cindy Laws, Terry Nicholson, Benji Ratcliffe, and Debbie Thomas.

Attorney Mike Bedsaul was present.

Mayor Tom Spangler gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of January 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

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

**Councilman Hale seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Hale, Creger, Mills, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

**Consent Agenda**

*Library Report*

Councilman Hale asked Cindy Laws where the library association meeting would be held that she will be attending.

Cindy Laws said it will be held in Waynesboro, Virginia.

*Parks & Recreation Report*

Councilman Hale said there was reference to the upcoming softball/baseball season in the parks and recreation report. Will that season be at risk because of the damage at Lurich?

Terry Nicholson said he asked Mike Bedsaul to review the RFP for the fencing and infield mix. The fields could be used without fencing but they have to have the infield mix to use them. They are working to get those done in time.

Councilman Hale said he observed a young man and his mother at the town park cleaning up leaves along the fencing and he stopped to thank them for that. The gentleman was Levi Frazier and his mother was with him. He was doing this work as part of his obligation to the National Honor Society. He likes to see that because it is rare that anyone volunteers to do anything anymore. Councilman Hale asked Terry Nicholson if he was aware this was going on.

Terry Nicholson said yes and Levi Frazier also helped in taking down Christmas lights at the Farmers Market. He has been a great help. The town receives help from several high school students throughout the year.

Councilman Hale asked if a note of thanks had been sent or could he help with that.

Terry Nicholson said that had not been done in the past simply because most of this is done unbeknownst to the town.

Councilman Hale said he would contact Terry Nicholson to discuss this.

*Farmers Market Report*

A report will not be available until April 2025.

*Police Report*

Councilman Mills said John Riley came by his house and praised Office Melissa Cohen in her work as a police officer for the town. He also talked to him about the lights to be installed at the school and told John Riley it is not the school board that is holding this project up.

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

No comments.

#### *Town Manager's Report*

Councilman Hale thanked Terry Nicholson and the Planning Commission on updating the zoning ordinance.

Councilman Creger said he saw the town crew out working on a Sunday morning a week or so ago. He appreciates their hard work.

Terry Nicholson thanked him for his comment. Also, with the bad weather being forecasted for tomorrow there is a crew scheduled to work from 4am-4pm and another crew from 4pm to 4am on February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be a judgment call made in the morning on office hours.

#### *Public Works Director's Report*

No comments.

**Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.**

**Ayes: Hale, Creger, Mills, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

#### **Presentation**

Mayor Spangler said there would now be a presentation concerning the Gallimore and surrounding properties.

Terry Nicholson said Kaitlyn Woolard with Stantec was online to present the highest and best-use study of the Gallimore and surrounding properties. On the Zoom meeting as well were Joe Morici and Kate Poehlein.

Kaitlyn Woolard (landscape architect and planner with Stantec) thanked council for the opportunity to present an overview of the Narrows Brownfields Redevelopment Planning Project. This Brownfields planning project kicked off in the spring of 2024 and at that point the town had obtained funding through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Brownfields program for the purposes of conducting redevelopment planning on a high-priority site right in the heart of Narrows. They scoped this planning project to help the town understand the market demand for development on the site, understand the highest and best use, explore a couple of concept-design options, and then laid out a path to advance it towards development. Through the planning process they conducted a market study tailored to the site-specific needs of this site, analyzed the existing conditions, explored some alternatives, engaged the community, conducted a series of stakeholder interviews, and provided a draft report to staff in December. They were wrapping the project up tonight with their final presentation. She was going to just do an overview of the final report and they will send a final PDF after tonight of the final deliverable that outlines most of what she was going to cover a little more detail. She started with a quick overview of the site and what the project was. She knew a lot of council were very familiar with the work they had been doing but if anyone was not she would outline it here. This site was identified as a high-priority Brownfields site for a variety of reasons, first of which being it is industrial, light-industrial, and blighted. It is a site that is perceived by the public that it might be contaminated, so that makes it a Brownfield. The second reason it was a high-priority site was that it had already leveraged some Brownfields funding for assessment work that had been completed previously on the project site. And the biggest reason this is a high-priority redevelopment site is because it is a wonderful location and a nicely situated piece of property

that has continuous parcels out of the floodplain, overlooking the New River. It looks over the Narrows name sake and is walking distance to downtown, so it definitely has high potential to be a great community asset for development. They have an aerial map of the project site they worked on as well as a couple of existing conditions images they took while out on site. The project site contains eleven parcels, which is approximately 10 acres or a little bit over. The site includes the former Gallimore property, which the town has acquired for the purposes of relocating the fire station. The rest of the site is made up of a collection of properties that were privately owned currently, but with land owners that have expressed interest in redevelopment and the right opportunity had presented itself. The biggest physical challenges of the site are limited frontage to Main Street, the narrow and fairly poor road conditions of the internal road network, the limited and unsafe access to Main Street from Gross Street, not really being a great connection point for a fire station or fire trucks. Another challenge is just being mindful of the fact that there were a lot of single-family residential houses adjacent to this property. They wanted to make sure they were looking at compatible uses. The biggest opportunities they saw with this site were clearly the views, the topography, proximity to downtown, continuous acreage, no floodplain, no streams, and no wetlands on site. The biggest hurdle was just that contamination from the Brownfields perspective, which is something that we can continue to leverage funding to remediate and advance. On that note, just a quick overview of the environmental assessment work that had been done on the site to date. In 2022 and 2023, the site went through a Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessment that was funded under a VBAF grant, and then in 2024 Stantec completed an asbestos and lead-based paint survey for all the properties included in the project site. That survey found asbestos in three of the properties, as well as some very minor lead-based paint in two of the properties. There were some needs for additional funding to be leveraged for some of that abatement and the remediation of the site which she would explain a little later. Concurrent to the existing conditions assessment they also had their market economics team at Stantec do a market study for this site to understand the highest and best use for redevelopment. That was a really big part of this project: understanding what is viable. The process included general employment, demographics overview, housing, economic research, as well as several one-on-one stakeholder interviews with local real estate professionals, local development professionals, people who really understand market context in this area of Virginia. That was really the most important thing they did, in that they got out and talked to people about what type of investments people might make in a site like this. In September 2024, their market study team presented those findings to a group of staff and stakeholders and presented the following key takeaways and recommendations for redevelopment. The study found that the highest and best use of the site, in addition to the fire station, would be locating parcels on the property for redevelopment. The highest and best use was residential. This was due to the proximity of Main Street, the aesthetics they talked about, and the ability of the sites actually supporting a mix of uses and some higher density residential products. Reasons for this were that new housing, more up to date in current housing, and diverse housing types were very scarce and limited in this area and there were very little rental units, if any, on the market. Really strong indicators pointing towards the most viable use of the mix of rental and ownership were multi-family housing units in midrange sizes and price points. The secondary use that was identified in the market study was for retail commercial. There was very small frontage, unfortunately, so that will limit how much retail commercial they would want to do as most retail commercial wants to be among the most traveled thoroughfare. This will be looking for some non-competing usage with Main Street businesses that were there today and that were successful, so looking for some complimentary uses such as a destination restaurant, potentially a brew pub, any type of commercial or retail business that wanted some outdoor amenity space which might want to capitalize on some use of public space as well. There was also opportunity for some professional office such as law office, dentist office, that type of thing on some of the interior sides of any retail they would want to show on the site. Market indicators did not show a strong need for industrial on the site and she knew that was something people want. A lot of times when they are looking at the best use of a site they want employers and want people to create new jobs, she completely understood that need. Their market study team identified the biggest need in such a close proximity to downtown was housing. This would amplify and assist with getting stronger businesses downtown and supporting the ones that are currently there. More roof tops and some higher density roof tops were the best opportunity to give people more variety in housing and bring more people downtown. A hotel was also explored, but it was determined that with their experience with hotel

chains, they were not going to want anything that is not on a larger highway, so other sites along Route 460 would be more viable for a hotel. A boutique hotel would certainly be supported in downtown Narrows but they would not want to compete with the existing MacArthur Inn, which might have the most potential to serve that boutique need some time in the future. So, with those factors in mind, they jumped into conceptualizing a mix of uses on the site, not just focusing on one but focusing on several uses and how they can be arranged, including housing, the fire station, retail commercial, and public open space on the site. They began by showing a quick slide on how they organized those uses and began with a couple of concepts just understanding organization of space, compatibility of land uses internally, as well as externally, and making sure they had a sensitivity to the adjacent property owners and adjacent single family residential homes. They jumped into a couple different, more refined concepts so the two that are showing have a total of three formalized design options that could be built on the property, two of which are shown. She would go into greater detail on the third, which is the one they chose. These were just understanding different organizations of space, different areas where they could have a viable location for the fire station, different ways they could engage public space, and then arranging some development on the property. All the concepts had similar goals, and that was to locate the fire station on site to make sure they provided more than one access point, which was something they talked a lot about at the community engagement meeting. They all had the goal of developing some sort of public space to capitalize on the views of the New River and the views of the Narrows namesake and just not privatize such a nice bluff that that overlooks the river. They all offered residential components that were complimentary to the surrounding uses, and then they all modified the internal street network just slightly to accommodate new development. This past November they took these concepts to the community, and they received some good engagement and feedback on what they were proposing. They presented the concepts and some precedent imagery to help people understand and envision what those uses could be, and explained a little bit about the project. Following that process they went straight into their final master plan development. They refined the concepts and did a nice rendering to help visioning, and then put it all together in a final report for the town's use. The final concept is shown here, and this was the preferred master plan lay-out for the project site, as indicated by the community, as well as staff and stakeholders of the project. This includes all the components that she already discussed, including the fire station. In this concept, the fire station was located in the center of the site, on the Gallimore property the town has acquired. What was beneficial to this was that the town can easily phase the decision, which means they can work on the fire station portion of it now, since the property was owned and then the other components can come with time and development agreements with some partners they work on development relationships with. This concept had the fire station located in the center. The building portion of the fire station would be about 6,500 square feet. This is a scaled-back version of the original design that had been previously completed for the town so this was pared down a little bit, but they can still establish that footprint as they move the project forward. This also had a space for six pull-through fire station bays as desired by the community. The concept had a community lawn and event area and a public overlook for the river. It had a little pavilion, a dog park, and a small park that was worked in and that was something that was expressed by the public that they would like to see on the site. What she liked about the position of the open space was that right as you looked down Hare Street you could see straight into a public space, a nice green park area, that really pulled people in. If they were going to have a public space on that site that is not right up against Main Street, she thought it was really important to draw people to that space, so she liked that this was the anchor of the view of Hare Street. This concept has 78 town homes, 18 of which would benefit from the overlook of the river, and approximately 60,000 square feet of multifamily apartment units. She believed right now they were just showing those as two-story units. That was plus or minus 60 to 80 units depending on the size and the distribution of unit types. They were showing about 20,000 square feet of single story retail commercial, and she knew some people expressed an interest in some mixed-use, with residential above and commercial below, but their Market team advised against that. This tends to be the type that struggles in smaller communities, so it was better to have some single-story retail that fronts the Main Street corridor. All the uses included adequate buffers from adjacent residential land uses, as the stormwater management that supports the development. Again, she just wanted to stress this was a long-term vision, something that could really help initiate conversations with people who might be looking to identify opportunity sites for development, something that can really help get that conversation going and set a vision forward for future development. They finalized

the site after they did the final layout, and jumped into an illustrative vision to help sell the idea to the community, sell the ideas to some development partners, and energize people around the opportunity to redevelop this site; how it might complement the community and seamlessly transition from what was there today into new development. The next slide had that same concept, but they isolated the property itself so it showed the addition of the ten-acre site nestled right there in the mountains, in close proximity to downtown. The last slide shows the ‘how’ as being one part of the equation and the ‘what’ as the other. They ended their final report for this redevelopment planning study with a funding strategy, or outline of possible funding sources and avenues that the town could work towards for implementation of not just the whole site but breaking it out into tangible pieces. They would not find a funding source that was going to fund the whole vision, but they will find different pieces that they can find funding for and start to piece it together to accomplish that vision. Further environmental work on the site could be addressed through remediation needs that could be addressed by pursuing additional VBAF grants that will assist with the abatement and disposal of any excess material. Other funding research they did outlines twenty other possible funding sources that were broken up in pieces, and then putting them in categories of the different pieces of the projects that they will address. All those funding sources were outlined in their final report. They pulled out a couple of them that they thought were really high priority next steps, and those are outlined on this page, and include the EPA Thriving Communities Grant, the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant, the Norfolk Southern Thriving Communities Program, the Virginia Tech School of Medicine Community Health Assessment Grant program, the T-Mobile Foundation’s Hometown Grants Program, and the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants Program. Again, those will address different components but those were resources that could be explored to advance pieces of this project. The EPA Thriving Communities Grant is something they have been working with Terry Nicholson on to get this project into an application for that one and that was recently submitted, so if awarded that can advance some additional property acquisition and can also advance some of the design and engineering of the site for the fire station portion and public space portion. The final report breaks this down in a lot more detail, and there was an entire appendix of all those funding sources, and also an entire appendix of the full market study report for anyone who really wants to dive into that and explore the findings of both of those. That concludes the project overview, and she was more than happy to answer any questions council had. She thanked council for the opportunity to give this presentation.

Terry Nicholson said he noticed while Kaitlyn Woolard was presenting that Karen Weber joined the call as well.

Councilman Mills said he appreciated all the effort that had been put into this study but he was disappointed to see that the properties may not be able to be used for an industry that produced jobs and some payback to the town. He knows they will get taxes from the citizens that live there.

Councilman Goorskey said he appreciated what Mr. Mills said. He definitely would love to have an apartment there overlooking the river and liked the idea of retail. Is there a different study that shows if they put 60 or 80 units there the population would increase so they have also increased the traffic through town and increased the visibility of business locations along Main Street? Would that increase the chance of having new businesses along that corridor?

Councilman Mills said that was a true statement. He would like to see something there that would get 20 to 30 people working making a pretty decent salary.

Councilman John Hale said his desire on behalf of the town would be to encourage business here in the community. He wondered whether there would be a way to proceed that would set this up, or a portion of it, to accommodate business or industry. Was there a way to build flexibility into this plan to initially target business and industry such that they could pivot if they needed to so they could accommodate residential construction. He would ask that question and then he would comment that he continues to have concerns about the proposed location of fire company and the concern is based on response time and safety. He was talking about response time meaning the need to navigate around wherever they were located in the heart of that area and get out to Main Street to go do what they need to do. That takes time and there were people and vehicles that

could potentially be in the way in addition to people out in that public space. He continues to advocate for locating the fire company somewhere out on the Main Street and without having to navigate around other development in the area.

Councilman Mills said he liked the idea of having the development more as a Plan B than a plan A and if Plan A does not materialize then drop back to this plan they presented.

Terry Nicholson said to Councilman Hale's point about the fire station location, they put the fire station in several different positions in considering this whole thing and putting it on Main Street was one of the options. The fire department liked that option the best. The problem was the town did not own that so they put the fire department as far forward as they possibly could on what they own to get them straight out Hare Street.

Kaitlyn Woolard said she would like to add that the final report had three concepts they proposed and presented at the community engagement meeting, and they were all in the report. The idea was while this one was identified as the preferred concept purely on the basis of ownership, if down the road they were not able to get those other properties, the location was based on what the town owns. The other concepts were still in there and they can certainly be used to work with developers in working on the acquisition of additional property and entertain other locations. There was one concept where the building was where the retail was shown currently and was right on Main Street. There was another concept where the fire station moved over to where the apartments were and they had that concept out at the engagement meeting and met with a couple of property owners along that frontage of Main Street that said they would be interested in selling some of their properties for additional access points for the fire station. She would definitely think about this as just a tool to use to get conversations going to work on whatever was needed to be worked on, whether it was additional property acquisition or development relationships. As to Mr. Mills' point about flexibility, she thought there was certainly flexibility, especially in the concept that was presented as the preferred concept. The residential components were broken up into two isolated pockets, so if they had a light industrial use come in there was no reason that they could not take one of those pieces and change that to light industrial use. It carves out different uses for different spots, and she believed this could be accomplished.

Councilman Mills said he appreciated that comment. It was not a new concept and there were other areas where businesses, the proper industry, and people could work and live in the apartments.

Terry Nicholson said he believed Kaitlyn Woolard said this as well but he will reemphasize to council that they were not asking them to make a decision tonight. This is just a presentation of the tool for looking at possibilities for development.

Councilman Mills said they were putting money out but none was coming in. It was critical for this town and was the most important decision they were going to have to make.

Mayor Spangler said his initial concept was bringing some industry that would create jobs and income for the town. That may be a possibility on a smaller scale but the downside of that is if they were able to cover the whole territory with an industrial site, what happened 10 years down the road when they go out of business. There is a lot to think about. His other concern was with the fire department located in amongst the housing. He was not as concerned with the fire truck exiting the area as he would be with the responding firefighters coming to the firehouse because he was a part of that one time and everybody runs wide open, and when they were going through an area that had animals and children it could get to be big concern. Will the town have the authority to remove the railroad track?

Terry Nicholson said once the town owns the parcels they would.

Mike Bedsaul asked what portions of the tracks he was talking about. For example, was he talking about these little remnant of tracks.

Mayor Spangler said when you entered Hare Street or when you crossed toward the VFW you crossed a set of tracks. He did not know who owned that property.

Mike Bedsaul said when they looked at the title for the property the town does own, there were all of these little remnants of tracks that may have been privately owned that were connected to sort of the main railroad line, and they would use those to back up a cart onto the property so

they could load it and then hook it up to a train that was on the main line and pull it out back at the time the town had a tannery there. He believed the tracks Mayor Spangler is talking about had been abandoned.

Councilman Hale said so there would be no right of way there.

Mike Bedsaul said he did not believe so but they would have to look at that. He believed there was an easement in that area.

Terry Nicholson thanked everyone from Stantec for their help with this.

Cindy Laws said the library conference was being held in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Councilman Hale thanked Cindy Laws for that clarification.

Terry Nicholson said the town submitted an application to EPA for a \$350,000 grant to help move this forward. He does not know what was going to happen with that grant now with the stuff that is going on with the EPA.

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

Mayor Spangler said next on the agenda was a request from Karen Turner. He had a letter addressed to council in reference to renaming and dedication of the Centennial Park on behalf of Cindy Light's friends and classmates. It was a request that the Centennial Park be renamed and dedicated to Cindy and the suggested name is Cindy Light Memorial Park. Cindy was an active member of several organizations and a devout Green Wave. She contributed to the community and schools in numerous ways by providing ribbons, flowers, and decorations many of which she donated along with her time. They requested to not only rename the park but to have a dedication ceremony and a plaque to commemorate her memory. They asked for council to please consider this request because they felt Cindy was deserving of this honor.

Councilman Hale said he had given this a lot of thought and wanted to be clear about the fact that he very much appreciated and was grateful for the life and contributions of Cindy Light, but as he thought about this he wondered where they draw the line in terms of these sorts of decisions. He thought about people like Don Brookman, George Thwaites, Jim Tabor, Richard Fleeman, Patricia Dennis, Nancy Morgan, and others who all probably considered themselves big fans of the Narrows Green Wave and certainly were very valuable members of the community. Centennial Park was named in honor of the town's centennial celebration in 2004 with the time capsule to be opened in 2054. There was currently an additional plaque in the vicinity there perhaps in honor of the mural that was on the wall commemorating the contribution of Brick Marunich. There was a lot of naming going on in the area so he came back to the question about where do they draw the line. He was not sure whether a renaming was appropriate, however he felt like some sort of recognition was appropriate and suggested in lieu of a renaming, perhaps it would be appropriate to honor the life of Cindy Light with a bench. There were a couple of benches there and neither had any designation to them. Those were his thoughts. He wanted to be clear about the fact that he very much appreciated and was grateful for the life and contributions of Cindy Light as he was for all of the town's local heroes.

Councilman Mills said he knew Cindy, loved her, and respected her. He paid her the highest compliment he knew how by purchasing every flower he ever bought for 30 years from Cindy Light. He thought council as a body needed to be extremely mindful when they started naming whole bodies of land for anybody. He strongly believed they should put something recognizing her life and contributions to this town.

Mayor Spangler said John Hale mentioned a bench but Karen Turner and the friends that were involved may have something else in mind they would like to put there. Council would be open to whatever they might suggest.

Councilman Goorskey said this town, historically, was full of very upstanding, community conscious people that have done so much for their community so how could you just pick one. Recognizing these types of people in their Centennial Park, which was named and brought about as a recognition of the town itself being here for this period of time. The town would not be here without people like this and so it was a very fitting place to place a memorial to those types of



individuals. He would be very willing to run it back to the people closest to Cindy and see what they would be amendable to as far as what type of a recognition.

Councilman Mills said they could keep the name Centennial Park and house outstanding citizens there in some form or fashion. Anything that would denote their respect, love, and appreciation for them.

Councilman Creger said he agrees with all that has been said as far as the park has a name and they have to be careful what they name something. In the case of Cindy Light, he believed a good idea would be a small area of a flower garden and something in the ground with Cindy's name. That would be pretty simple and would really relate to her and flowers.

Terry Nicholson said there are raised flower beds in the park already.

Councilman Mills said someone needed to talk to Jonathan Light and Karen Turner and let them know their thoughts.

Terry Nicholson said he would speak with Karen Turner since she submitted the original proposal.

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

Mayor Spangler said next was communications from mayor, council, and staff. First was the PSA report.

Councilman Mills said the next meeting will be Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Terry Nicholson said he wanted to let council know the outfitters that were in the building have left the area. They decided they were not going to continue here, so the building is vacant again and the town has possession of it again. They will put out another RFP and he will work with DHCD to see if the town might be able to broaden the scope a little bit in opening this up to more. He believed it would still need to be something that was outdoor recreation focused but the way they had been doing this in the past was trying to get basically a concessionaire to come in and use the building for the services they were trying to get in town. They may open it up a little bit more to where basically the building was available for someone to operate a business that fits within this category and then have people submit proposals for that. He wanted to let council know what was happening.

Terry Nicholson said he sent council an email concerning the BAD building report. The West Virginia University team would be in Narrows on Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 4 p.m. to do a presentation of their final report. Their report for this stage would help the town with what their next steps would be moving forward so he invited mayor and council to participate.

Mayor Spangler said next is an update on automatic transfer switch.

Terry Nicholson said Scott Bortz was present tonight so he asked him to present to council where the town stands right now with the variable frequency drives. They had one that Peed & Bortz arranged for the town to bring in and test. They did that test last week and the test was successful so it looked like the VFD's would actually solve problem.

Scott Bortz said the problem was they could not get enough basic charge to run the plant with those two blowers running so the VFD's would allow this to happen. This will allow the generator to work as it is supposed to with the ATS. Russ Jackson came to Narrows and actually ran the test. He did have one blower on the VFD that was directly wired in and they got everything in the plant running except for one motor because the belt had broken. The plan was to basically purchase another VFD, including a warranty for the two VFD's which would be around \$12,000.

Terry Nicholson said they had the warranties in their change order and two motors. The town would purchase the two variable frequency drives. The electrician was marking them up when he purchased them, so the town would be buying them at cost through the town and would just be paying for the installation. The total there will be \$31,822.34.



Councilman Goorskey asked where that was in the change order.

Terry Nicholson said that number would not be on the change order. The contract change order had the amount at \$19,662.34 and that was the labor to do the installations. There were two other pages: one was from Sydnor Hydro, Inc. and that was an invoice in the amount of \$5,090.00 for the price of one VFD. There was a second page from Sydnor Hydro, Inc. that said 'Danfoss FC-202 VLT Aqua Drive'. The price for the above was for the second VFD and a six-year warranty on both of the VFD's. Adding \$7,070.00, \$5,090, and \$19,662.34 came to a total of \$31,822.34.

Councilman Mills said he appreciated Scott Bortz being present tonight. He appreciated his presence and fortitude but has been displeased with their performance on this project.

Scott Bortz said he asked some of the same questions as well. This was a lot of money to spend on getting something up so he said they could talk about a generator cost initially, the generator is not really properly sized for what the town had at the sewer plant. He spoke with Russell Jackson and he said to get a new generator for what the town needs would probably cost \$50,000 to \$60,000 and then a trailer would have to be purchased as well. The prices on everything were sky high since Covid. He said if they do not run it on a generator that would probably cost another \$30,000 or \$40,000 as well so instead of a change order for \$30,000 to get an operable system they were looking at a change order that would be in the \$70,000 to \$100,000 range. They were making something work with what the town has. He would have hoped by reading back on some reports that there would have been a bigger red flag raised earlier on that said this generator was going to really struggle with what they have, if it worked, and then when they got out there they saw it does not have any problems.

Councilman Mills said that was where his heartburn comes in. Why were they just now getting into this? He accepted his explanation and he had one vote to move forward on this.

Mayor Spangler asked if the \$19,000 figure was labor only.

Terry Nicholson said that was right.

Mayor Spangler asked if the wire and the generator plugs that needed to be replaced was in that amount.

Scott Bortz said there is a little bit of material there but it was basically what will be paid to the contractor.

Terry Nicholson said the engineers realized the generator was going to be running basically at its capacity in order to support the whole plant. What they identified was that the quick connect cord they were using from the generator to the outside of the building was rated at 100 amps, and they were going to be running the generator right at or just under 150 amps. They were going to exceed the amperage for that wire and the connector as well, so they were going to upgrade that so it would meet the standards that were required for that line to not overheat if they were to run the building on the generator for an extended period of time.

Mayor Spangler said he also read the town had recently upgraded those plugs but now since they are doing this it will not work.

Terry Nicholson said that was something they worked with Scott Bortz on. This was going to be a \$50,000 change order because in order to change that one plug for the plant they were going to have to go back and replace or upgrade the quick connects at each of the pump stations because conceivably they would move the portable generator to a pump station if it were down. They would need to make that connection, and the heads were not interchangeable. His solution was to pull all that back out, and if we need to move the generator to a pump station, we would swap the cords back out, because the pump station would never run at 100 amps or even close to that. They would just switch the cords on the generator to run a pump station, but if we are running the plant, we would need that larger upgrade. We are only paying for one new head and one cord to run the plant. It was a matter of taking four bolts off and putting four bolts back on.

Mike Bedsaul asked if the six-year warranty on the VFD's was from Sydnor Hydro Inc. or was that the manufacturer's warranty?

Scott Bortz said he believed that was the manufacturer's warranty.

Mike Bedsaul said the only reason he asked that was when he looked at the additional conditions of sale which were connected to the purchase order it basically said, if he was reading it correctly, that Sydnor Hydro Inc. was stating they were not providing any warranties. The only warranty that would apply would be a manufacturer's warranty, if any. He was just trying to get some clarity on what that was and what the terms of the warranty would be. Does it provide for replacement or just repair.

Scott Bortz said he did not know but his speculation would be it was a replacement. He would suspect if it had been a couple of years, they might send somebody out to try and repair it. He was not certain but can look into it.

Mike Bedsaul said he saw a letter from Benjamin Mullins talking about the salt house and it says to remove the previously installed generator and install a generator plug receptacle that was rated 275 amps and that price was around \$4,543. Was this something that the town had already purchased and now they were not able to use.

Terry Nicholson said that was what he pulled out of the change order.

Scott Bortz said in the overall base contract there was an installation of these quick connect plugs at all five of those locations which included four pump stations and the salt house. The one at the salt house had actually been installed.

Terry Nicholson said looking at the letter from Benjamin Mullins, the only things the town would be doing were the main plant wire, the generator plug upgrade, and the VFD's for the blower motors.

Councilman Mills said 25' of cable at that number is \$560/foot.

Terry Nicholson said that price included installation as well.

Councilman Goorskey asked if it included installation of an extension cord at \$560/foot.

Scott Bortz said it was his understanding, and Terry knew more on these, because he asked these questions on the other ones as well. There was a pump station cost at almost \$3,700 each. He asked how a receptacle cost that much and they said they were literally costing a couple thousand dollars for these plugs. Apparently these larger items were really that much more expensive now and in a post-Covid world it was a material issue as well.

Councilman Mills said it was hard wired on one end and there was a plug on the other so you have one plug at \$2,000.

Terry Nicholson said he would have to go back and check on this as well. The main plant wire and generator plug upgrade may also include wire from the plug on the outside of the building up to the second floor where all the control panels are.

Councilman Mills asked Terry Nicholson if he agreed with this change order.

Terry Nicholson said he and Mike Bedsaul talked about this and they were going to ask council to defer making a decision on this tonight until the next meeting or until they can do a little bit more digging into this.

Councilman Mills said that sounds reasonable to him because questions had arisen that seem like no one has an answer to.

Councilman Creger said he does not have the full background but for one, the two ought copper, they do 200 amp service changes with that and he was definitely not paying \$500/foot for it. It seems from his understanding that the planning of this was not right and it was not on the town it was on Peed & Bortz, but the town is bearing the financial burden of this and that was what was rubbing him wrong. This was a mistake that really was made at the beginning and the planning stages on their end and the town is bearing a significant burden for that. The town had to get this done and are over a barrel. Where was their assurance that this was not going to continue and

that Peed & Bortz will get it right and will say if it does end up costing another \$25,000 they will foot the bill. Where does it stop?

Scott Bortz apologized because he did not have that much of a background on this issue. He received a little bit of information from his guys. Peed & Bortz had agreed to front the money to get the VFD to the town. They sent their guy to work on it twice and did not charge for that. He came out one time but everything was not ready and he came out last week when they actually got it running, ran through everything to make sure it would run, and that is the best he could tell. He was not an electrical engineer, that was a sub to their job, but again Russell Jackson in their office did come out and check on the work. That was the best assurance he could give council. He could not say there will be no changes. He told council that his understanding was staff initially told them that they were able to run both blowers on that generator currently as was set up, therefore, they would expect a little bit of resistance in that new ATS, but to see it drop down where nothing was wrong once those two blowers were going was a big surprise to them.

Councilman Mills said there were a couple of ways to look at this. It should have been caught in the beginning and that was a problem. His only defense for this gentleman was if it was caught in the beginning, which it should have been, the town would have had to pay for it. He was at the point to get Mike Bedsaul involved but when he had time to cool down and think about the ramifications - Peed & Bortz loses, the town loses, but more importantly the citizens lose if the town was paying Mike Bedsaul to go after Peed & Bortz for \$30,000.

Councilman Goorskey asked if the money to cover this expenditure, in the beginning, came from ARPA funds.

Terry Nicholson said yes. The town had sewer improvement funds.

Councilman Goorskey said that was prior to encumbering the rest of the ARPA funds. This was the first one of the beginning amounts they took out of that and since then they fully encumbered the rest of the money. They had the opportunity at the beginning to pay for this had they known about it and now they no longer have that pot of money to pull from to pay for this. There is a damage to the town due to poor planning and now they do not have the opportunity to pay for it the way they would have that would not have cost their citizens. He needs to know the answers to these questions before he is ready to move forward with anything. Was the generator that was used the town's original generator.

Scott Bortz said that was correct.

Councilman Goorskey asked what size it was.

Scott Bortz said he believed he was told 48 kw.

Councilman Goorskey said he could put a 48 kw on the pad for him and run it to an automatic transfer switch for \$50,000 all day long. He was doing it right now at a commercial location with 100' on that wire. He was just saying he could get there cheaper than what he was seeing. Are the blower motors new or old.

Terry Nicholson said the blower motors are new now because they were damaged by the flood.

Councilman Goorskey said if you put a VFD on an older motor you have potential of overheating that motor especially during soft starts when it was at lower RPMs. The newer motors would be fine with putting a VFD on them. They were looking at a fix that will cost them later. There had been some oversimplification on the town's end. The information he had been getting is they have just been talking about VFD's over and over or just talking about soft starts over and over. There were quite a bit of things they did not know about and it was not just the VFD and not just a soft start. They were talking about the plugs, wires, and a lot of other items. They have already had other change orders that, in his opinion, should have been caught on the design phase including the grounding issues they had. The ground wires were what they were, they were there and could be seen. Did they not have a site survey when they first did this. They were not able to pull that out of the original pot of money. This was not sitting well with council at all because the town paid for the design as well, but the design did not encompass everything they needed. Where do they get some help for that. At what point does Peed & Bortz feel like saying they know they missed this design. This was not new information and should have been

known. Did they study the peaks and lows on the kilowatt hours on the poles. Do they have that study to say that yes they definitely know. Some of that information could have been known.

Scott Bortz said he was surprised no one ran that generator to make sure the blowers could run. He came out to the site after the flood, about month ago, and looked at the generator. He also wondered why no one tested it. It was old and did not look like it could run a whole plant. They do not usually put it in their scope to test everything on a job like this. He was certainly learning lessons and from now on they were going to test everything.

Councilman Goorskey said he was also in the construction industry and they will be doing a job somewhere between 300 kw and 500 kw on a factory in Bluefield. He was going to have every test run and be able to guarantee that what he puts there was going to run everything in the plant the way they expected it to be run. He would not only look at the loads that were there but also the wire sizes, the peaks and valleys, and the age of the equipment. Was the VFD being used to change the frequency of the generator to match the blower motors now because that would be another mis-designed function.

Scott Bortz said he was not the expert on this, but his understanding was that the motors were variable speed. He knew that setting was set on the VFD, and that was an issue when it was sent to them, with a constant setting, which was the wrong setting, so they did have to adjust that. He does not recall exactly how that was but believed they could try.

Councilman Goorskey said if the motors they had were not compatible with the frequency that was being sent to them, it seemed they were just now catching it, so they throw in VFD's now to cover that without really saying they missed that.

Scott Bortz said he will certainly ask on that again but he was far from the expert.

Mayor Spangler said he read somewhere that one of the switches was purchased and was installed and was run to make sure it would do what it needed to do but there were a total of two switches.

Terry Nicholson said yes.

Mayor Spangler asked if there was any chance that when that second switch was installed there would be additional problems so that it would not run both of them.

Terry Nicholson said they ran the first motor with everything else in the plant running and ran it so that that first motor then kicked on with the automatic transfer switch kicking it on and a variable frequency drive bringing it up to speed. That worked fine so then what they did to test whether two of them would be a problem was they moved the variable frequency drive to the second motor and ran the first motor at full speed along with everything else on the plant so that was the constant load. Then the second VFD kicked in and brought up the second motor and that worked as well. That was where they got to that total where the whole plant would be running. The idea of the automatic transfer switch was that it could bring things online at specific times so you can set it to say if power goes out, it kicks over to generator power and then it starts things in the order that you have pre-programmed into it. What they would do was these would be the last things that would come up and they would be able to be run. They tested that with everything running and had the last one brought up with a variable frequency drive.

Councilman Mills said for \$20,000 more they could get a new setup. Is that true.

Councilman Goorskey said yes.

Scott Bortz said going back to what he had been told that was marginal at best. Realistically, they need something larger. He said they were getting them off eVA state procurement.

Terry Nicholson said he wanted to remind council that at the beginning of all this they did test the town's generator to make sure it would run and it ran at its rating. It was performing as it should as if it was brand new. They did have to replace the fuel lines on it to make sure that was not a variable in this question mark.

Mayor Spangler said he believed he read somewhere that this was the fourth change order so it was getting old. They just need some guarantees that they are not looking at a fifth change order.

Mike Bedsaul asked Scott Bortz why the VFD's were not included in the original engineering design.

Scott Bortz said he believed they were told that in the previous setup they were not all VFD's but were just straight across the line starters, and that worked on a generator. There was no reason for their engineers to say they definitely needed to put on VFD's if everything was working as it was. Their project was just installing the automatic transfer switch and everything else was remaining the same outside of the automatic kick over. He guessed that was why it was not investigated or proposed.

Councilman Mills said he really thought this would be settled tonight but it will obviously not be. At what point does Peed & Bortz consider giving the town a break.

Terry Nicholson asked council if it was all right to defer this until the next council meeting.

Councilman Creger said they could defer it but what would happen between now and next month. Are they just going to talk about some more and get some more information.

Mike Bedsaul said he would review the contract documents between the town and the work done. He would like to find out about at least what the warranty information contains. The town has purchased warranties before and the warranty just was not that great and became a problem later. If one the VFD's fail they will be right back where they are now.

Mayor Spangler asked if the first motor was running at a normal pace and it worked why was it necessary. Why did they not just start the second motor and run it wide open and then see if a transfer switch worked on the first one.

Terry Nicholson said because the problem was when the motors kick on the amperage spikes to around three times what it runs at initially and then ramps back down once the motor gets to spinning at the correct speed. They are trying to overcome that spike, and that was what these variable frequency drives are for. They ramp the motor up to a certain speed instead of kicking it on full speed and causing that spike in electrical current as it comes on. If they had just started the second motor with the variable frequency drive still hooked to the first one it would have caused it to kick off. They knew it would have because no matter what was running, if one of those kicked on without a variable frequency drive on it, this would trip the automatic transfer switch and the generator.

Mayor Spangler said Councilman John Hale had some information for council on the 5K/10K race.

Councilman Hale said he was pleased to let council know that several months ago several people conceived the idea of a potential 5K/10K fun run/walk here in the community with the idea being to simply showcase the community. They believed that we lived in a beautiful place and this would be a nice opportunity to encourage people to come to our town. He was pleased to report that he had received very positive responses from members representing the county and representing VDOT, who they will rely upon to assist with road closures and that sort of thing. Alicia Lane who is a resident of the town and a member of the planning and zoning committee is providing a great deal of support as is Terry Nicholson and Cora Gnegy from the county. The likely route, assuming they move forward, will traverse Old Wolf Creek Road and perhaps Highway 61, depending on the distance. There was a lot of additional planning that was going to be required. The timeframe will be sometime later this summer or early in the fall. They still need to work out a number of details as he had indicated quite a lot of planning including who they may choose to benefit from this but hopefully council understands the spirit and the intention behind this. This was not intended to be a fundraising event but an event that showcases the town and encourages people to come here, visit here, and spend some time here that would not normally do so.

Councilman Mills asked Councilman Hale what he needed from council.

Councilman Hale said nothing except their support.

Councilman Hale said about a month ago he was approached by a constituent about a concern related to handicapped parking availability and accessibility particularly as it relates to the Narrows Elementary Middle School. He believed council was aware of the sensitivity they had to the issue concerning speed limits and safety. He thought this too was certainly something very important from an inclusion standpoint and from a safety standpoint. He had done a fair amount of research, visited the site several times, and submitted a report as recently as yesterday. He was working with Terry Nicholson on this and also a representative of the school board in an effort to try to figure out what they can do to improve handicap parking and accessibility at Narrows Elementary Middle School for purposes of school access, access to the athletic field, access to the community center, and perhaps access to the library as well. In terms of support, Terry Nicholson had indicated that the town may be required to provide some level of financial support. He was not sure where the town's responsibility began and ended and the school board's responsibility began and ended but it appeared like they would all need to work together. He hoped he could count on council's support as necessary in order to try to move this across the finish line.

Councilman Creger said he knew they needed to have the handicap requirements but did Narrows Elementary Middle School not meet those requirements now.

Councilman Hale said he was not in a position to respond to that because did not know the answer. They may meet the requirements to the location of the number of spaces related to accessing the athletic field. Access to the community center did seem to be reasonably convenient and reasonably safe.

Councilman Goorskey said access to the community center was right outside the door.

Councilman Hale said that was marked with signage but not well marked with paint in order to clearly designate the spaces. There was paint there at one time but it was not very visible today. He thought ADA requirements consisted of both a space and an access aisle to accommodate ramps and to load and unload wheelchairs but he did not believe they had that capability at that location.

Councilman Goorskey said he did not think that could happen in that particular direction of parking because the sidewalk became the access because the vehicle could not park on the sidewalk to take that up. In parallel parking, there was nowhere he was aware of in any city that he had been in where there was an additional space cut into the sidewalk.

Councilman Hale said that was true, however, when those spaces were occupied and there was heavy attendance at a football game there was not anything in reasonable proximity to those spaces.

Mayor Spangler said when there was heavy attendance at a ball game access to the sidewalk for a wheelchair was limited at best.

Councilman Mills said they could very well meet the intent of the code but in this situation it was not adequate to serve the people. He knows they have support from the school board and that John Mills will do whatever is reasonable to help this problem.

Councilman Goorskey said he was all for going above and beyond what they legally had to do. The parking spot at the annex cannot be counted as an accessible parking spot for a football game. There was way more than a 2% grade from that spot to the entrance of the field. It fits for the intent, so the route was from the parking spot to the intended use, where the main function of the facility was. Parking for the football field home side stands had to be up in a location where they could also maintain a 2% grade from that spot. They may be more than willing to open up the whole street to it but he did not know if it would count to the aggregate total that would help in that situation. The very simple way he looked at all accessibility was that any person should be able to gain access to whatever function they were having without saying "please come help me". The fundamental basis for all ADA was to provide independence without the need to ask for help. They have braille menus available so they do not have to ask for those types of things. When it came to parking, certain things needed to be considered - what the parking was for. It could be multiple areas because there are multiple different functions they would like to broaden access to.



Mayor Spangler said he looked at the handicap parking at the elementary school and believed there were about six spaces there. If you put three cars in there you could not get any more because it would be crowded.

Councilman Hale thanked council for their support of what they were trying to get done.

Councilman Hale said Havens Hill Florist was a new business in town. He was big on business in the Town of Narrows. He encouraged council to show their love and appreciation and to patronize the new business.

Councilman Mills said Councilman Hale helped this new business get started and he was appreciative of his efforts.

Councilman Goorskey said he heard great compliments of the new florist this past weekend.

Councilman Mills said when he told Terry Nicholson about the new florist, he went there the next day and explained about business licenses at their request, because they wanted to do things correctly.

### **New Business**

Mayor Spangler said next was scheduling work sessions for strategic planning with the New River Valley Regional Commission.

Terry Nicholson said he had been talking with Kevin Byrd about having council meet with him to plan their priorities for the coming year. He would like for council to meet with Kevin Byrd first and go through those priorities, the projects they have pending, and how those are going to be playing out over the next several years. At the second session he would like to have Davenport Financial come and speak with council about their view on how the town might finance all the projects. They are anticipating probably two –two-hour sessions. He spoke with Kevin Byrd today, and he suggested March 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, which would be Monday nights and would be at 6:00pm, the same time council normally meets.

Councilman Hale said the 31<sup>st</sup> works for him but the 17<sup>th</sup> is questionable. Can they attend by phone?

Terry Nicholson said yes.

Mike Bedsaul said council can attend by phone. Council adopted a policy where individual council members can attend by electronic communication depending on why they could not attend the meeting in person. There was a limit on the number of times this could be done per year and he believed it was 25% of the total number of meetings that were held per year.

Councilman Goorskey asked if Peed & Bortz could itemize their paperwork a little bit better. He believed it was fair to ask them to put down a little bit more information such as how many feet of wire they were talking about.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

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

Mayor Spangler said consideration in approving the change order for the ATS switch at the WWTP will be discussed at the council meeting in March.

Councilman Mills made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

**Ayes: Hale, Creger, Mills, and Goorskey**

**Nays: None**

**Motion Carried 4-0**

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler