

**Narrows Town Council Meeting
June 9, 2025**

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

Staff members present were John Davis, 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.

Public Hearings

Mayor Spangler opened the public hearing concerning the FY26 budget and asked if there were any comments. Hearing no comments, he declared the public hearing closed.

Mayor Spangler opened the public hearing concerning the water and sewer rate increases and asked if there were any comments. Hearing no comments, he declared the public hearing closed.

Appointments/Reappointments

Councilman Mills made a motion to reappoint Terry Nicholson as Town Manager.

Councilman Hale seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Hale made a motion to reappoint Benji Ratcliffe as Chief of Police.

Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Mills made a motion to reappoint Debbie Thomas as Treasurer/Clerk.

Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Mills said the town had an exemplary group of employees that were just rehired, and they were a lot of the reason that things were going so well in town. He was glad to be able to have each of them for another year.

Approval of May 12th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the May 12th meeting minutes.

Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Consent Agenda

Library Report

Councilman Mills said Cindy Laws did a great job for the town.

Parks & Recreation Report

Councilman Hale asked Terry Nicholson if he was at liberty to say who the people were that were hired as park attendants.

Terry Nicholson said Patrick Bailey and Brian Long.

Farmers Market Report

Terry Nicholson said there will be vendors at the Farmers Market this Saturday.

Police Report

Mayor Spangler said he had some people commend the police department on some work they were involved in about a week ago.

Councilman Mills asked if council was going to discuss dilapidated properties at tonight's council meeting.

Councilman Hale asked Mike Bedsaul if there was an update on the Wolf Street property.

Mike Bedsaul said not at this time, but he would follow up on that.

Councilman Hale said he had been asking about this property for quite some time and wondered how long it would take until that would be concluded.

Mike Bedsaul said he believed they initially started this a couple of months ago.

Terry Nicholson said that was for Mike Bedsaul's part of it, but the town had been dealing with it for a while.

Mike Bedsaul said their firm had a plan of action they were in the process of doing to address that.

Terry Nicholson said that process was under way, and it was a court proceeding. They had to try to notify the owner, but the owner had not responded for a couple of years by the town's attempts to contact them. The court would then be petitioned for what the town wanted to happen so it could be several months before this was resolved.

Councilman Hale asked Mike Bedsaul if insurance policies usually covered demolition for properties that had burned up.

Mike Bedsaul said they could, but it would depend on the terms of the policy that the individual had but they usually did not cover this. The homeowner usually ran into the problem of not having the funds to be able to clean it up.

Councilman Hale asked Terry Nicholson if he needed anything else from council to help with this process.

Terry Nicholson said he had not had a lot of time to work on that because of dealing with FEMA and he apologized for that.

Councilman Hale said he was concerned about that property because it was unsightly and it was a safety issue.

Financial Report/Treasurer's Report

Terry Nicholson said he wanted to point out one thing that had been added to the treasurer's report. There was now a line titled 'Automatic Payments' and that was a culmination of transactions that were being paid automatically through the Funds Management checking account. That was always a significant amount of money they needed to keep track of.

Town Manager's Report

Mayor Spangler said the water loss being at 16% was very impressive.

Councilman Mills said all the town workers did an excellent job.

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson if he was aware of any other grant funds that may be in jeopardy like the \$350,000 the town lost.

Terry Nicholson said he did not know of any right now, but things were changing daily on that front. One good thing was that there was quite a bit of money coming to this area because of the flooding from Hurricane Helene. Christy Straight, who will be speaking to council tonight, informed him of another EDA (Economic Development Authority) grant that fit perfectly for the waste water treatment plant and the hazard mitigation the town wanted to do. There was a significant amount of money, possibly up to \$20 million, and the town will look at that.

Councilman Hale thanked Terry Nicholson for his leadership on this and said the town was very fortunate to possibly be able to receive this funding.

Councilman Mills told Terry Nicholson that he had done well on these projects.

Public Works Director's Report

Councilmember Bowles thanked John Davis and the town crew for getting the flowers out.

Terry Nicholson thanked Council members Sara Bowles and John Hale for getting them planted.

Councilman Hale thanked John Davis and the town crew for placing the flags throughout town.

Councilman Creger asked Terry Nicholson if he had time to check to see if the dog trainer would be able to use the outfitter building.

Terry Nicholson said the RFP was out, and he had spoken with Jacob Taylor, and he had prepared a proposal. DHCD said that his business would be a fit. Proposals would be due June 16th at 3:00pm so he will have them in hand at the next council meeting.

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Communications, Concerns, and Requests from the Public

None.

Communications from Mayor, Council, and Staff

Councilman Mills said Todd Meredith was leaving employment at the Town of Pearisburg so the Giles County PSA would be losing a chairperson. The Town of Narrows would not only be losing a partner with the Town of Pearisburg but would also be losing a partner with the Giles County PSA. Anytime there was a change in personnel, a lot of things could happen.

Councilman Creger asked what the process was for choosing a new chairperson for the PSA.

Councilman Mills said the Town of Pearisburg would have to choose someone and nominate them. They had the method to replace the chairman but not to replace the vice-chairman. They will work it out.

Rhett Gum from Optimum introduced himself. He had worked with Mike Bedsaul, Terry Nicholson, and Debbie Thomas for several months and it had been great. He worked with a lot of local governments and it was great to work with a team as capable as the team at Narrows. The last time he was at a council meeting there were some ongoing issues with the service from Optimum so he just wanted council to know he was still available to help with any issues that might arise.

Councilman Mills said council appreciated Rhett Gum attending their council meeting. Service with Optimum had gotten better since Rhett Gum had been involved.

Councilman Hale said he had some personal experience with Rhett Gum since he attended the last council meeting. One of the statements Rhett Gum made at the last council meeting was ‘I will help you if you need help, just give me a call’ and he found that to be the case. Rhett Gum helped a new business in town get established that was having difficulty navigating the Optimum system and he also helped Councilman Hale with Optimum service at his home.

Rhett Gum said it was his pleasure to help so if he was ever needed someone could reach out to him for help.

Terry Nicholson said the town had also contacted Rhett Gum to help with town services or help for a resident.

Rhett Gum said Optimum strived to be the provider of choice in all the communities they worked in.

Councilman Hale asked Mike Bedsaul if the agreement between Optimum and the town had been finalized.

Mike Bedsaul said Terry Nicholson mailed two signed copies of the agreement to Optimum.

Rhett Gum said once those were received one would be signed and sent back to Narrows.

Councilman Creger said he did get the sense that service from Optimum had gotten better because he did not see as many negative posts on social media.

Rhett Gum said they were doing their best but sometimes it was hard to provide the services they provided.

Council discussed some high-speed internet projects at the county level.

Rhett Gum told council that as Optimum continued to invest in their network he would be happy to give council updates. Since Optimum had taken over Suddenlink, Optimum had been trying to upgrade their equipment and services.

Elwood Lambert said he presented a letter to Terry Nicholson for a request to increase the monthly funding from \$1,193.83 to \$1,552.00 from the Town of Narrows to the Narrows Fire Department.

Councilman Mills said if his math is right that would be an increase of \$358.17/month.

Councilman Creger said he read the letter and believed the fire department did a lot with a little and were more than deserving of an increase in this funding. He asked Terry Nicholson if there would be a problem with the budget if the funding was increased.

Terry Nicholson said it would be an annual increase of \$4,300 so there would not be a problem.

Councilman Mills asked Elwood Lambert if that was enough.

Councilman Mills said they could at least give \$2,000/month.

Terry Nicholson said the town could give the \$1,552/month the fire department was requesting and then look at possibly giving more in FY27.

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the request from Narrows Fire Department to increase the monthly allotment from the town from \$1,193.83 to \$1,552.00. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Christy Straight said she worked with the New River Valley Planning District Commission. She thanked council for making time on their agenda to hear some things about the hazard mitigation plan that council was being asked to adopt this evening. They updated the annual plan every five years. When FEMA made funding available, the NRVPC applied for the grant and formed the steering committee. They had all the localities participate including regional, state, and federal agencies who helped support them in pulling together the information they needed and analyzed it and made sense of it. The goal of what they did was mitigation, and she felt like they were all familiar with what that was after Hurricane Helene. It was not the response and the recovery it was the 'we got past recovery and how could they make it so the next time around it did not hurt as much' so that was what this plan was investigating. They pulled all that data, their steering committee met, and they pulled experts together into working groups to look at these different natural hazards and talk about what they were finding and what they could do to make their communities more resilient and stronger through these mitigation actions. They had five working groups and a lot of meetings to look at this. They had a great team at the commission working on the materials. She really appreciated Terry Nicholson and everybody in the town who helped contribute to pulling this together because it was not just commission staff, it really was every local citizen just coming together. In the end, they figured out what their worst hazards were, what they were most at risk for, and dug deep into those and came up with those mitigation actions. They then had an action plan, and once the plan was adopted, every locality that adopted the plan was eligible to apply for mitigation funding from FEMA. It did not affect things like the public assistance, and those emergency and response recovery pieces, it was just mitigation. Otherwise, it would be harder to do because they were not in the middle of an emergency, and it really started to come out of things like capital improvement plans, so these mitigations funds came in and helped close the gap on the ability to make their community more resilient. She wanted to point out that when they got done with this, what they found out was not shocking. Severe winter weather, flooding, and high winds were the region's biggest hazards. Wildfire and drought were also concerns, more so in some areas than others. Wildfires could be a challenging job in droughts, particularly for farmers, but they had a system that kind of helped mitigate what they might see in drought seasons. Those were the biggest hazards they faced. Public involvement could always be a challenge, especially in these regional plans, but she thought it had been on everyone's radar enough that they had a really good response. Over 90 people came

and visited their project website, which in these kinds of plans was quite a good level of interest. They asked them to engage with the information and tell them about their base hazards such as what were things they were seeing in the plan that resonated with them, what they were missing, and what they should be talking about. They received great feedback from this. When they looked at the hazards folks said ‘this was what affected them and their property the most, and it lined right up with what the steering committee group and all those experts said. She said she believed they had a good focus for prioritizing projects. Every locality was responsible for developing a project list, a mitigation action plan if you will. The town also had some priority option actions right now to get funding for the wastewater system but there were eleven projects on that list and over the next five years they could look at funding that would come available and take advantage of the opportunities that came open to make some progress on things that the town had identified as important to act on. FEMA was very interested in certain topics each time they went around, and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was a big deal for them, so they always asked them to identify their repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss properties. These were the ones that were probably always the first ones most damaged in a flooding event and there were only two in the town, so there was funding out there like a flood mitigation program to do things like flood proofing, or if it was severe enough to consider acquisition or elevation. Those were big-ticket high-action projects. There were other things they could do like flood proofing or elevating the utilities to the house to help mitigate those kinds of losses. She had gone over the highlights and wanted to make sure council knew about that and then also take any questions they might have. Adopting the plan gave council a five-year window to access that FEMA money. This time around they already had a couple localities adopt their hazard mitigation plan, so the clock was running and they were going to be back to adopt the action by 2030.

Councilman Mills made a motion to adopt the New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Terry Nicholson said he was approached a couple of months ago about the retaining wall that was on the parking lot on the opposite side of Mary Street from Narrows Elementary/Middle School. The school board was getting ready to repave that parking lot and they asked the town to look at the retaining wall that held the sidewalk up on Wolf Street. He and John Davis went out and looked at it. They were thinking about repaving the lot, so they wondered if there was anything they needed to do to that wall before they repaved it, so they did not mess up the pavement. They looked at it and thought structurally it was fine and sound but there were a couple of places that had some cracked blocks, and they thought they could pull those blocks out and replace them, and that was their plan. They were then asked to look at it a second time and so they did. The wall does lean some, but it was not structurally compromised in any way. Terry Nicholson thought they should get the cost of replacing the wall, so they would have that for reference. That came in anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for the materials to replace that wall. At \$10,000 or \$20,000 they did not feel like it was a high enough risk for the town to go in and start messing with that wall. They do plan to repair the places that they originally identified that had some cracked blocks, and then they would continue to monitor that wall. It was in no danger

of collapse at all, it was just something that the school board was asking, and they asked the town to consider whether they wanted to repair the wall.

Mayor Spangler said just so he was clear Terry Nicholson was talking about the wall where they back the buses up to and then the shorter wall on Mary Street.

Terry Nicholson said yes. The school board really just wanted to know what the town was going to do prior to them going in and paving, which he anticipated they would do this summer.

Councilman Hale said he had been involved in this and thought that one of the concerns for sure was the fact that they did not lay down new pavement and then have a wall collapse and then there was damage to the pavement.

Councilman Mills said he did not believe the wall was in imminent danger of collapse at all. The wall was unsightly in a couple of places but they had indicated that was going to be fixed. If he had to give a definitive answer he would say leave it alone.

Terry Nicholson said that was where they were right now and just wanted council to be aware of that.

Terry Nicholson said council had talked in the past about the fact that the town's capacity to handle larger unbudgeted expenses was very limited. That was especially true now with expenses the town had incurred due to the flooding from Hurricane Helene, and he would go over those in just a minute. In the last year, they had some large unbudgeted repairs that had hurt the town's fund balance, such as the change orders for the ATS switch at the wastewater treatment plant which was \$45,000, repairs for the pump rail system at the Virginia Avenue pump station which was about \$31,000, and the large galvanized line replacement project that was underway over in the Orchard that was about \$38,000 above what they had budgeted for, and that was just for materials for that job. That brought the total to \$114,000 above what they had budgeted for last year. If it had been only that, the town would have been able to weather those expenses, but they had also had some higher public works costs from overtime due to Hurricane Helene and snowstorms this winter where they had to push snow several times. There had been some higher police costs where they replaced the part-time officer with a full-time officer, so the funds there had gone up a little bit. Again, those costs by themselves would have been manageable, but then Helene rolled through and for flooding repairs to date the town had paid out \$112,842 for repairs to Camp Success, the Lurich Road ball fields, the concession stand at the ball fields, and the wastewater treatment plant. They were looking at the wastewater treatment plant being probably another million and a half dollars of repairs to the electrical system. The town's annual budget was \$4 million, so they certainly could not handle a million and a half dollars. But even then, the combination of those \$114,000 of unbudgeted things that happened last year and then on top of that another \$113,000 and they knew that in the next couple of months they would have another \$69,000 that the town would owe to Thompson and Litton and to repair the road at Camp Success, depending on how FEMA told them they could handle that road. The town had a cash-flow problem at this point, and they had talked all along about creating some kind of line of credit that the town could use in examples like this, and they were going to need to do that right away. He had been working with Davenport & Company and had talked with them about the situation that the town was in and explained to them where the town was. Davenport & Company

provided council with a proposal for no monetary amounts yet but what Terry Nicholson was asking council tonight was approving him to work with Davenport & Company over the next month where they would start talking to potential lenders. They would do this in two stages and start with the smaller line of credit, this would be several hundred thousand dollars to maybe half a million, and that would be the town's cushion. The town would not need to draw all of that but just enough to handle the cash flow to get through to the times of the year where their income came in. He would like to have the town only borrow what they knew they were going to get back from FEMA and that way it was just a matter of borrowing it and when FEMA paid the town it just went directly back to the bank they borrowed from. FEMA had said they would cover the interest costs for the loan as well, and that was something that was reimbursable under their administrative expenses. Terry Nicholson's time would also be reimbursable under administrative expenses, so he had been keeping track of all the time that he had spent working on this, so they could request reimbursement for that. The first part would be that shorter term and a more immediate line of credit, and they would shop that to all the banks in Giles County. Davenport & Company had some other connections that they might look at as well. The second portion of that would be to deal with the wastewater treatment plant. They knew that million and a half dollars was estimated for repair, but they would not know an actual figure until Thompson and Litton had gone through scoping that project and then putting it out for bid. Then the town would know what the actual cost was, and that was when Davenport would put the second stage of financing into place for the town to actually cover the cost of repairing the wastewater treatment plant. What he presented to council tonight was Davenport & Company's proposal. They would charge the town \$15,000 to do all the shopping of the individual lenders, put together the proposals, and work with Mike Bedsaul and bond council in order for this to go out and be closed upon once the town was ready to do this. Davenport & Company will come back to council at the next meeting in July and would have numbers then for what the actual amount to borrow would be, and would get council to approve that separately from what he was asking them to approve today, which was for them to proceed with that proposal. Basically, council would be agreeing to pay that \$15,000 to get the town through handling this shortfall.

Councilman Mills said he had talked to Terry Nicholson for months about needing some sort of bridge financing and that was just a part of doing business. He trusted the town staff and definitely trusted his teammates not to go crazy because they had access to some money. He really wanted something to happen on these dilapidated structures.

Terry Nicholson said one of the things that DHCD was putting out that was related to Helene funding was a housing component and there was a big chunk of money there the town could tap into for those kinds of things.

Councilman Mills said the town did need to have some funds available for these dilapidated structures.

Mike Bedsaul said that under the terms of the FEMA grant money, Terry said they would pay the interest on this line of credit. What about the other costs associated with the loan such as the \$15,000 to Davenport & Company and the bond counsel fees. Would it cover those costs.

Terry Nicholson said he would ask, but he doubted they would cover Davenport & Company's fee, but they probably would cover the bond counsel.

Councilman Creger said the town needed to have some gap money to get these projects done and it was going to take money to really build the strong foundation the town was looking to build so that the town would not need so much money at some point. This fee of \$15,000 was a good bit of money but if Davenport & Company did not do that footwork then somebody else would have to do it.

Councilman Mills made a motion to allow Terry Nicholson to sign paperwork and move forward with the line of credit financing. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Hale thanked Mike Bedsaul for his help in preparing the resolution and he was asking Councilman Mills, Councilman Creger, and Councilmember Bowles for their support of this resolution which was intended to help address the handicap parking issue that had been brought to light in and around the Ragsdale Field area. This resolution authorized the school board and the school board on behalf of organizations they endorsed to request from Narrows' town manager dates during which they would agree to close one block of Holston Street directly behind Ragsdale Field for the purpose of establishing temporary handicap parking spaces as well as providing opportunity for pickups and drop offs of people that may be handicapped as well as establishing a necessary fire lane. He thanked Elwood Lambert and others from the fire department for helping support this. He asked Mike Bedsaul if there was anything he would add in terms of what they were attempting to do here.

Mike Bedsaul said no.

Councilman Hale said this resolution requested a minimum of 10 days advanced notice to the town manager by the school board but also provided an opportunity for some flexibility in case there were unexpected circumstances that developed related to public safety. He respectfully asked each council member for their agreement to this resolution.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the resolution for the temporary closures of Holston Street. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Mayor Spangler said he had a thank-you note he wanted to read: *we just want to let all that was involved in getting our sewer backflow preventer approved and installed know we appreciate your concern and attentiveness to this situation. Every time we call someone always responds in a timely manner. Thank you so much. I know it was aggravating for us to have to clean our basement every time we had a rain, but I can be thankful that we have people in the town council and utilities that do care. We appreciate everything. Chris, Reba, Kaden, and Landon Bennington. They live at 402 Elsworth Street.*

Councilman Hale said he wanted to update council on Wolf Creek Runs Wild which they supported extraordinarily at the last council meeting. Since that time, they also received some additional sizable donations from both the county and from Carilion but they had not yet met their fundraising goal, but had a lot of success at this point. The event will be held on the 18th of October and registration will be opening soon. Terry Nicholson, Police Chief Ratcliffe, and others were working with VDOT for purposes of the road closures that will be required and securing signage and traffic cones and those sorts of things. They will also be using the county Code Red Notification System to notify people in the immediate vicinity of the race course to try to eliminate the likelihood that people did not get the message about what the traffic flow was supposed to be like and to be on guard and aware, especially during that two-hour time period. He just wanted to update council on that and to thank them again very much for their support. They will continue to keep them posted on what was happening.

Terry Nicholson and John Davis knew his concern about the swimming platform at the park, and he knew that the town did not have extra money to work on that. Did the town have anything in their retainer with Thompson and Litton that would provide the town with the benefit of having them evaluate that situation without incurring an expense.

Terry Nicholson said town employees had evaluated that and had come up with a plan for how they thought they could repair it. They could basically pour concrete in place of the rock that had rolled out of that wall into the creek. They were not concerned structurally about it, but did feel like it would be good to put concrete back in that opening. When the water was low enough, they would build a form that would be up against that wall and then they could pour concrete in to pack that.

Councilman Hale said that was great.

John Davis said they had been keeping an eye on it for a year or two and it had not gotten any worse with the last flood and nothing had really changed on the wall. If they were going to keep the platform, it did need to have something done. The trouble was there is no access to it, so they will need a pump truck to pump the concrete down, because you could not get any equipment down there. It will be a pretty sizeable job.

Councilman Mills asked John Davis to get council a cost and then they could make an educated decision at the next meeting.

Mayor Spangler said he had been approached by several people that would like to see additional lighting at the park and ride. There was one streetlight that was really not on the park and ride property it was adjacent to it but if they could do something with it like a directional light or something that would light the parking lot that would be great.

Councilmember Bowles said last year council supported a celebration for the students and athletes down at the park and they had that in July, and she would like to do that again. Last year they made hot dogs and cupcakes but this year she thought it might be easier to do cupcakes and then offer some door prizes. She knew that the Narrows Elementary/Middle School TSA team will still be going to nationals at the end of this month so they would need to wait for that to conclude. There were quite a few celebrations that the students needed to be recognized for.

Councilman Mills asked how much money they would need for this.

Mayor Spangler asked what did they do last year.

Councilmember Bowles said she was going to try to get some sponsorships for some gift cards and door prizes. Students' families would be invited and each student would get a certificate. Terry Nicholson printed those last year. Coaches and sponsors were able to get her names and they will recognize students that placed district or higher and then the TSA students would also be recognized.

Councilman Mills said council just needed to know how much she would need.

Councilmember Bowles said she will try to figure that out by figuring out how many students there were.

Councilman Mills asked Councilmember Bowles if she had a not-to-exceed number in mind that she could tell council now.

Councilmember Bowles said she would like to wait and see if she could get some sponsorships.

Mayor Spangler said next month's meeting was July the 14th so that would be cutting it pretty close.

Councilman Mills said that was why he was asking now.

Mayor Spangler said council had a special meeting on June 16th and asked Councilmember Bowles if she could get council a figure by then.

Councilmember Bowles said she would be attending the council meeting next week remotely because she will be at the beach.

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson if he knew what council contributed last year.

Terry Nicholson said the town did not contribute anything last year other than their time to do the printing and other things so there would not be a huge cost for what Councilmember Bowles was proposing. She was actually asking for gift cards for door prizes, not to give every child a gift card.

Councilmember Bowles said the money would just be for door prizes so they were not looking at a lot of money.

Councilman Mills made a motion to donate an amount not to exceed \$1,000 for the recognition of student athletes that will be held at the town park in July. Councilman Hale seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Mills said he made Elwood Lambert a promise that the town would take care of the siding at the fire hall.

Terry Nicholson said he and John Davis had talked about repairing the siding on the tower but they would have to use a bucket truck to be able to do that so John Davis had that on his to-do list and will get to that as soon as they can. There was a trip hazard at the walkway bridge and some mowing the town will take care of.

New Business

Terry Nicholson said he spoke with Mike Bedsaul the last council meeting when Joe Goorskey announced his resignation and since they appointed John Hale for his role on council, the rules had changed on how to handle appointments. Mike Bedsaul confirmed that at tonight's meeting, they would announce the three candidates that council members had proposed, and then they had to wait a week before they could make a decision. Because they had the budget approval scheduled for next week he would like to do that appointment at the same time. The three names were Alicia Lane, Greg Lee, and Casey Clark, and they will be considered next week to replace Joe Goorskey. When council holds their budget approval meeting, they will go into closed session and council will be able to discuss those three candidates. This would give council an opportunity to hear from the public as well about the candidates that were proposed.

Councilman Mills said they were blessed to have three very qualified applicants.

Mike Bedsaul said they had already obtained the writ of special election back from the Giles County Circuit Court and that was set for November 4th, 2025. The interim appointee will serve from the point of their qualification until that time.

Councilman Creger said he thought they had three good candidates and would certainly get one from these three. He just wanted to be clear but was under the impression that this was open should someone from the Town of Narrows simply walk in and say they were interested in that position then council would vote on it. He did not think they had to be proposed by council or anybody else. People just needed to know that so they did not close anybody out.

Mike Bedsaul said he did not think the statute would prevent council from considering other names that might come up between now and their next council meeting. He said it was his understanding from reading the statute that some people might come forward on their own and some people may be proposed by council and you talk to them and they were interested in serving. Whether the people came forward on their own or whether it was people that council proposed all the names were announced and council had that week waiting period before the actual appointments were made.

Councilman Creger said he just wanted to be clear that they were not limited to the three and not keeping anybody out.

Terry Nicholson said whoever council appoints was only going to serve until December 31st and they would have to run for Joe Goorskey's open seat, which would be running for a one-year term because his term ends in 2026.

Unfinished Business

None.

Matters for Consideration by Council

Mayor Spangler said council is being asked to approve the engagement letter for Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates that will perform the town's audit.

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the engagement letter from Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, PLLC. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Mayor Spangler said council needed to consider approving the increase for the water and sewer rates.

Councilman Hale said in looking at the schedule Terry Nicholson provided there was a difference in the in-town versus out-of-town commercial water rates but there was no difference in the in-town versus out-of-town commercial sewer rates. He asked Terry Nicholson if he knew why that would be.

Terry Nicholson said it was because the water the town was buying from the PSA and the sewer was handled internally so they did not make a distinction between in town and out of town.

Councilman Hale said he guessed they had not determined that there was a significant difference in processing costs or whatever the term was when it was coming from out of town.

Councilman Mills said the water increase was justified because the town was trying to repair an antiquated system.

Councilman Hale said he agreed with that and wanted to be clear with the other council members about the reason for his question. He told Terry Nicholson that he trusted his judgment on this that the town was capturing their costs reasonably and at the same time they continued to provide an advantage for residents of their town that might be paying a higher tax rate than if they were to be living out of town. For the higher tax rate, they needed to continue to think about delivering value.

Mayor Spangler said the town had already proven with J.J. Perdue's involvement and the involvement of others that by being proactive to find these leaks it was saving the town a considerable amount of money. If they were not doing that the 10% increase might be 30% just to pay for the water.

Councilman Hale said what Mayor Spangler stated was true, but he did not think there should be a free ride. He did not think out of town should be riding on expenses that were being borne by in town.

Mayor said that was why the cost was different.

Councilman Hale said it was for the water.

Councilman Mills said he agreed that out-of-town customers should pay more.

Councilman Creger asked Councilman Hale if he was looking to raise the out-of-town sewer rate.

Councilman Hale said he wanted to be careful about suggesting any kind of increase at any time but wanted to make sure that the town was being consistent in terms of the way they looked at this and the way they administered their taxation policies.

Councilman Creger said it seemed to him that the water was the material and the material was the labor and then sewer was all labor and no material and that was why the rates were the same. He agreed with what Councilman Hale said in that the town's residents should not have to bear the burden if it was not fair but thought it was a little late in the game right now.

Mayor Spangler said if council wanted to raise the out-of-town sewer rates it would require another public meeting and would delay the approval of what they were voting on this evening.

Councilman Creger said this may be something to consider next year.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the water and sewer rate increases.

Councilman Hale seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Councilman Creger said he may have to attend remotely.

Councilmember Bowles said she would have to attend remotely.

Mike Bedsaul said there was a limit to the times council members could participate remotely. For medical matters they could have an unlimited amount of remote participations but if it was for a personal matter, like say a vacation or something like that, they could do it 25% of the total meetings for the year.

Councilman Mills made a motion to set June 16th at 6:00pm as the date to approve the FY26 budget and to consider their appointment for the council vacancy. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

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

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler