

Narrows Town Council Meeting August 11, 2025

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

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

Attorney Reid Broughton was present.

Mayor Tom Spangler gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of July 14th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the July 14th meeting minutes. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Consent Agenda

Library Report

Councilman Creger told Cindy Laws she did a good job by securing the Virginia State Aid Grant in the amount of \$18,338.

Cindy Laws thanked the town for the beautiful flower she received when her sister passed away.

Parks & Recreation Report

Councilman Hale said he was heartened to read in Roger Shepherd's report about potentially opening the concession stand at the park in the future. He remembered when Lillian Smith ruled the town park with an iron fist, but in a good way, and the concession stand was a part of that. He appreciated his forward thinking.

Councilmember Lane said there was a grant in the amount of \$50,000 for small towns that she had spoken to Terry Nicholson and Sara Bowles about. They would like to pursue this grant for renovations to the middle shelter at the park. She told Roger Shepherd that it may help with the grant application to include some park-usage data if they decided to go that route. It did not have to be super-intense data and could simply be shelter rentals for the summer or a visitor count for two or three days.

Terry Nicholson said there was something called Placer AI, which was a program the county had and Cora Gnegy used it for tourism. A box could be drawn around an area on GIS and the

program would show the number of cell phones that entered and exited the property at any given time. Historical data could be done as well.

Roger Shepherd said the town had files on One Drive that showed shelter rentals for several years so he could derive data from that.

Councilmember Bowles thanked Roger Shepherd for being so accommodating to local schools by opening up the annex and other facilities for practice.

Councilman Mills asked if it cost \$50 for kids to play football.

Roger Shepherd said he thought it was higher than that but he would have to check.

Councilman Mills said that brought him angst. He thought this priced people out of participation.

Terry Nicholson said that was not the town's program.

Councilman Mills said he knew that and was glad it was not. He wanted to let anyone that was listening know they should not be charging the kids to play football.

Councilman Hale said he read some very nice remarks on a local user's group about the July 4th events and park facilities. This brought him great pride.

Roger Shepherd said the park attendants kept the park looking good and Verna Combs did a great job keeping the bathrooms clean.

Farmers Market Report

Councilman Creger said the town was getting a lot of use out of their farmers market and thanked Lindsey Thompson for coordinating that.

Mayor Spangler said the benefit Saturday was well received and a lot of people participated.

Councilmember Bowles said they were hoping to sponsor another benefit around the same time before the fall festival.

Police Report

Councilman Hale asked Benji Ratcliffe and John Davis if there had been any word from AEP on the installation of the LED lights.

John Davis said he spoke to them last week. They were working on that and had to get pole numbers throughout town. They have to order the lights as well.

Financial Report/Treasurer's Report

Councilman Hale asked why cigarette tax receipts were high for this month.

Terry Nicholson said because when they were purchased, a whole roll had to be bought. The tax stamps are sold as businesses need them, so sales are sporadic.

Town Manager's Report

Mayor Spangler said Christy Lawson wanted him to thank John Davis and Jeff Perdue for taking the town's backhoe and tearing down what was left of the ticket booth.

Councilman Hale asked Terry Nicholson if there was anything council could do to help with overseeing the administration related to blighted properties.

Terry Nicholson said he had the BAD buildings survey the group did, and that group needed to get back together. He had gone through the list and around 40% had something happening with them and were making progress. Reid Broughton will update council tonight on one of those properties.

Councilman Hale thanked Terry Nicholson for his response along with his other priorities.

Councilman Creger said it was great to see the completion of the electrical improvements at the waste water treatment plant.

Mayor Spangler said he was a little disappointed with the feedback from Asterra. It was not as effective as what he would have liked to have seen.

Terry Nicholson said they were a little disappointed themselves. In three of the twelve places Asterra identified, we did find leaks, but they were all outside of the 300' radius where they told them they would be. They were "close, but not quite". The other nine of those they did not find a leak yet, but that was not to say there was not a leak there, it is just not detectable at this point.

Councilman Mills asked what if any investment did the town have in that outfit.

Terry Nicholson said it was somewhere between \$7,000 and \$9,000.

Councilman Mills said they would be better off paying J.J. Perdue some overtime to look for leaks.

Terry Nicholson said in the future we would tend to say unless they received grant money to do it, the town would probably not want to participate because for that amount of money the results they received were really not that great. The town has hovered around that 20% mark for water loss anyway so their losses were relatively small compared to other municipalities.

Mayor Spangler told Terry Nicholson he saw there was a meeting scheduled regarding the new generator at the waste water treatment plant. The town did receive the grant so this meeting was just to move it forward.

Terry Nicholson said that was correct. This meeting was the contract negotiation for the town to begin the process. He suspected at the next council meeting he would have that contract for council to review. This one was a “no-brainer” because there was no match required for this.

Councilmember Bowles said she would like to extend thanks to Terry Nicholson for helping with Green Wave Recognition Night and getting all the certificates printed and helping her set up and clean up.

Terry Nicholson said she was quite welcome. It was a great event and the community really enjoyed that. It was good for the students to know their community recognizes their accomplishments.

Public Works Director’s Report

Councilman Hale told John Davis he hoped it was part of John Davis’s near-term plan to paint the handicapped parking spaces adjacent to the activity center.

John Davis said it was in his plan.

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

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications, Concerns, and Requests from the Public

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson if he had an update concerning mowing as a noise nuisance.

Terry Nicholson said that since the complainant could not attend, he would tell council what the complaint was. Two neighbors are fighting with each other, and this was a complaint in response to the neighbor that initiated this. This neighbor was mowing his grass at 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. five and six days a week, and the town received a complaint about that. He and Police Chief Ratcliffe had talked about it and found that there was nothing in the town’s ordinances that said mowing was a noise nuisance, or any kind of nuisance. Terry Nicholson has also mentioned it to Mike Bedsaul for him to see if there was any recourse. There was likely nothing the town could do about that, because it was not a violation of any of the town’s ordinances. The complainant had said she might come tonight, but since she did not he wanted to make council aware of what the problem was.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he spoke with the neighbor and asked him why and he said he mowed it early like that because it was cool and that was the best time to mow.

Councilmember Lane asked if there were other neighbors around them.

Terry Nicholson said yes. This resident also FOIA requested to receive a copy of all of the town's ordinances. It was sent to him by email.

Communications from Mayor, Council, and Staff

Mayor Spangler said he would like to thank Councilmember Alicia Lane for the work that she and Nathan Cooke did for the NRV Magazine. She wrote the article and Nathan took the pictures. It was an awesome article and she did a great job, and the town wanted to thank her for it.

Councilman Mills agreed, saying they had 60 runners signed up for the Wolf Creek Runs Wild race in October.

Councilmember Lane said they now had 84 runners signed up: 39 from Giles County and 45 from outside of Giles County. This was shaping up to be an event which was doing what they were hoping to do, and that was to showcase Narrows to people from outside of Giles. This was the second time within 6 months or so that the cover story in the New River Valley Magazine had been about a Narrows related event. They loved to pick up stories about Narrows and she really appreciated that. There was actually a second story in this issue about a Narrows High School graduate, Raigen Clark.

Councilman Mills said we learned at the last PSA meeting that although the PSA was supposed to receive 0% loan funding for the lead and copper rule revision (LCRR) work done by Thompson and Litton, that somebody did not get the PSA's audit report in time, and therefore the PSA was not getting that loan now. The town would have to come up with \$30,000 for a lump sum payment instead, and there was no way he was raising his hand for that without talking to Council. Personally, he was not done with it. It happened quickly and there were all of these excuses, and he kept trying to ask, and they kept dodging the questions. He said he would talk to council, and he was here talking to council. He was sure this council's position was going to be that they did not have \$30,000 to spend, and somebody was going to have to come up with something else. That would be the message he was going to deliver. Eventually, the town was probably going to have to pay it but he was not going to vote to spend that kind of money that the town did not have without somebody toeing the line and answering for this mess. He asked Terry Nicholson if he was saying that correctly.

Terry Nicholson said he was. Just to clarify for council, the town budgeted to pay that amount over time. There is debt service in place to pay that over the number of years that we had been told.

Councilman Mills said something that bothered him about this situation was that the representatives from Narrows were the only ones that seemed to be concerned about it. Either everybody else had a bucket full of money or they just did not give a damn. He would like to retract that statement. Pearisburg had some anxiety with it and they were standing with Narrows wanting an explanation and to see if there was some way that the PSA, Giles County, or somebody could intervene on their behalf. That was where they were with that. They would have a meeting Thursday and he and Terry Nicholson will do their best.

Mayor Spangler said that was pretty poor.

Councilman Creger said he agreed with that approach. Someone needed to stand up and figure this out. Where was the money supposed to come from and who forgot to sign up?

Councilman Mills said it was the failure to get the audit done on time, and the PSA acted like it was no big deal because they had been late before, but it did not cost Narrows \$30,000 before. He was disappointed with the lackadaisical attitude.

Terry Nicholson said it was a grant that was a no-interest loan over that 10 years, and that was what got pulled. Basically, it was allowing all of the towns to pay that over time.

Mayor Spangler said there was no interest but now there was interest involved.

Councilman Mills said there would have to be interest involved because the town did not have the money. They were not done either.

Councilman Creger asked who had the authority to change it; the grantor, or PSA?

Terry Nicholson said it was between the PSA and the grantor to figure out.

Councilman Creger said they needed to tell the PSA they could pay it.

Terry Nicholson said the town committed to doing it over time and that was what council voted to do.

Councilman Mills said that was what they were going to stand on.

Terry Nicholson said he wanted to hit some highlights on the Recreational Trails Program Grant because he did have a meeting with Kellie Seaton from DCR, and John Hale, Chris McKlarney and Eli Sharp from the regional commission. This was the grant that John Hale had initiated two years ago. The town did not receive it the first year but reapplied and did receive it this year. It was a \$120,000 total project; \$24,000 of that was match that the town would be providing and \$96,000 will come as grant money. The \$24,000 was shared between the town, the county, and the regional commission. That broke down where the regional commission was bearing much of that match, because they were going to do the environmental studies that were needed to be done, and they were doing that for the town at no cost because of other projects the town had done with them in the past. That was a very generous offer on their part for the town. The rest of the match will be the town and county's force labor, so the town did not have any cash going into this. The town will be doing some grading work to regrade some of the parking lot and then would bring a contractor in to do the trail work.. Based on VT Community Design Assistance Center's design, there will be a wood archway over the entrance to the trails to identify where to get onto the trail. Again, the town's commitment was really manpower, the county's commitment was manpower, and the regional commission was doing environmental work for the project. That environmental work will be first, and it was going to take probably about six months to do. After that, the town would be able to issue a contract for the trail work. It would be a little while before they saw work going on up there. This was an exciting project and he wanted to thank John Hale for spearheading that initial effort. They just tweaked it a little bit this year to get the improvements done to the application so that they were successful. The next step

was that the town manager would need to sign an agreement that the town would do that match, and that acceptance will come sometime in the next couple of weeks. To avoid delaying it until after the next meeting, he needed council to approve him signing the grant.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve Terry Nicholson to sign the Recreational Trails Program Grant. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

New Business

None.

Unfinished Business

Reid Broughton said there was a piece of blighted property that Sands Anderson was asked to file suit on to convey to the town. The court entered an order on Friday saying they could do that. He had a signed deed with him this evening. As soon as he received the order from the court, he will record it and it will belong to the town.

Terry Nicholson said that property will go to Habitat for Humanity.

Matters for Consideration by Council

Mayor Spangler said he had a request from The Hope House for a donation.

Councilman Creger said he believed The Hope House provided good services.

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve a donation of \$200 to The Hope House.

Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Executive Session

Councilman Mills made a motion to amend the executive session to add Real Estate (Discussion of Gallimore Property, Surrounding Property, and the Bank Building), Sec. 2.2.3711.A.3 of the Code of Virginia. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Mills made a motion to enter executive session to discuss Employee Compensation (Discussion of Police Department Compensation Package), Sec. 2.2.3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia and to discuss Real Estate (Discussion of Gallimore Property,

Surrounding Property, and the Bank Building), Sec. 2.2.3711.A.3 of the Code of Virginia. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Mills made a motion to return to open session. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Certification

WHEREAS, the Town of Narrows, has convened an executive meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative-recorded vote and in accordance with the provision of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act: and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification of the Town Council that such executive meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Town of Narrows hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the executive meeting to which this certification resolution applies: and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Town Council.

ATTEST: _____

Councilman Mills made a motion to accept the certification. Councilman Creger seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Mills made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, Mills, and Lane

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler