

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

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

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

Attorney Reid Broughton was present.

Councilman Jonathan Creger gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of October 13th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the October 13th meeting minutes.

Councilman Hale seconded the motion.

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, and Mills

Abstain: Creger

Nays: None

Motion Carried 3-0

Consent Agenda

Library Report

Councilman Creger said he visited the library recently and it looked nice. He thanked Cindy Laws for the work she had done.

Councilman Hale said he was pleased to see the increase in state aid money and was sure Cindy Laws was too.

Cindy Laws said when she started working at the library the state aid money was around \$13,000 and now it was \$21,754.

Parks & Recreation Report

Councilmember Bowles said the new scoreboard was exciting.

Councilman Mills said it looked like they had some volleyball champions.

Roger Shepherd said the 4th and 5th grade girls won the league championship. The team consisted of six 4th graders and three 5th graders. The team was coached by Tiffany Helton.

Farmers Market Report

A report will not be available until April 2026.

Police Report

Councilman Creger said he believed the town had a new police officer.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said that was correct and her name was Megan Whited. He was going to introduce her to council tonight but she had tickets for a concert so he hoped to introduce her at the next council meeting. Noah Ramsey finished the police academy so hopefully next month he would be working on his own.

Councilman Mills asked Police Chief Ratcliffe how the street light replacements were going.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he had spoken with AEP and John Davis had as well.

John Davis said he had placed a copy of the email he received from Kristopher Howell with AEP concerning the replacement of current street light bulbs with LED bulbs. Kristopher Howell stated that AEP would no longer be able to conduct complete streetlight conversions but would still replace individual lights that were reported as out with LED options.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said when he emails AEP with streetlights that were out they created a work order that was sent to him. They will give it another week and if AEP had not replaced the streetlights he had received work orders for they will contact them and let them know this had been going on for way too long. Some of the streetlights were reported to AEP four to five months ago.

Councilman Hale said that was great but if that did not work he had another idea. He understood that things changed but he hoped that Kristopher Howell had a sense of obligation to try to help.

John Davis said Kristopher Howell was a good contact to have and he will definitely reach back out to him. Kristopher Howell went to his supervisor concerning this because he had been told that all of the streetlights would be replaced with LED bulbs.

Councilman Mills said they did not want to pick a fight with AEP but they did not want to be ignored either.

Financial Report/Treasurer's Report

No comments.

Town Manager's Report

Councilman Hale thanked Terry Nicholson again for the action that was taken on the blighted property. Blighted properties in town were certainly something that was very important to him. He thanked Terry Nicholson for the action that was taken to create a better result which was an aesthetic improvement and was a public safety improvement. He asked Terry Nicholson, relative

to the rest of the town, if they were current in terms of those kinds of actions. And if not, was there help council could give him.

Terry Nicholson said they were not current and were still continuing to work on several other properties to have similar actions. They were working on several they knew needed to come down.

Councilman Hale asked Terry Nicholson to explain to him about the possible decision about self-insurance relative to flood insurance on the building and contents at the Lurich Ballfields.

Terry Nicholson said they were going to talk about that as one of the agenda items tonight. They will talk about FEMA reimbursements and what they were asking the town to do.

Public Works Director's Report

Councilman Mills said he promised a dear friend of his that in a public meeting he would praise John Davis and his crew. This person called and had the town crew to clean up some brush and they wanted the town to know they did it in a very professional manner.

Terry Nicholson said the town received an email about that as well and shared it with staff.

Mayor Spangler asked John Davis how the mini excavator was doing.

John Davis said great and it was getting the work out.

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

Ayes: Hale, Bowles, Creger, and Mills

Nays: None

Motion Carried 4-0

New Business

Austin Sacks introduced himself and said he worked for Davenport & Company, which was the town's financial advisor. He was attending the meeting by Zoom to discuss what was called a revenue anticipation note. This was short-term borrowing for operating cash flow purposes. It was really to keep bills paid, ensure payrolls were paid, and giving the town that contingency and cash flow to make it through the fiscal year or at least until a majority of their revenues came in via real estate taxes. In talking with the town manager, cash flows were getting to a low point where a need for this revenue anticipation note was necessary, so Terry Nicholson reached out to Davenport & Company. They surveyed revenue anticipation notes on the marketplace, talked to several banks, and appealed for their interest in the anticipation note. What they had for council today was a proposal from First Bank and Trust. They gave a proposal for a fixed rate anticipation note. It was a general obligation of the town and given the type of financing it would mature no later than June 30th, 2026. This was really the only term. It was a fixed rate note with the interest rate at 5.29%. Documentation had been prepared by bond counsel and that would

provide authorization. He invited council to move forward with this financing and those dollars could be reinvested. Typically, they saw those dollars invested in local government investment pools that were earning a little over 4% and that would offset some of the borrowing costs. They were just making sure the town had the proper contingencies in terms of cash on hand to make sure all bills were paid as the town waited for some revenues to come in. This would be the only act required by town council and following approval by this body they would be able to move toward closing which would come at the end of this week. He would be happy to answer any questions related to the financing.

Terry Nicholson said council did have the memo in front of them that Sands Anderson prepared for the town. They were asking council to approve a resolution tonight for the town to pursue borrowing this money. The town anticipated receiving around \$750,000 in personal property and real estate taxes this year. This revenue anticipation would be \$500,000. It was basically moving that money to be accessible to the town now so they could use it, then pay it back when taxes were paid and that would address the cash flow problem they were having right now.

Mayor Spangler said the intention would be to use it as needed.

Terry Nicholson said that was correct. The town would use what they needed to this month and put the rest of it in LGIP and pull it out of LGIP when needed, which they could do in a day's time for the rest of the months until March.

Councilman Mills said this seemed like a reasonable approach. He had been talking to Terry Nicholson for months about a rainy-day fund or something similar. It needed to be clearly understood by their constituents that the town got in a situation that was beyond their control and had to spend the money when they spent it.

Terry Nicholson said he wanted to add that at last month's meeting, council had approved for him to potentially borrow another \$100,000 on the line of credit that was prepared, which was also with First Bank and Trust. They did not need to do that this month because they kept their expenses down and got their revenues up to where they needed, to be able to get through this past month. They were at a point now where they really needed to do something, but they had not borrowed any more other than that initial \$200,000 that they did for the FEMA damages and would talk about that more tonight as well. In talking with Davenport, they did consider using just that line of credit. The reason they recommended the town not do that was because those funds need to be tied to the damages that the town suffered because of the flood. Davenport would rather they did this as a revenue anticipation note because it was an easier note to get, and they felt like this was the better solution for what they were trying to do.

Councilman Creger asked if the \$500,000 would basically just be sitting there when they needed it and could borrow it. The town would not be on the hook immediately for \$500,000.

Terry Nicholson said the town would be borrowing it all initially and then put some of it into LGIP funds to earn interest until they needed it. The town would be on the hook for that \$500,000 as revenue anticipation for when they received it as tax revenue in March.

Councilman Creger said the town was expecting \$750,000 in real estate and personal property tax revenue. Was it correct that the town was a little bit behind collecting funds because they shifted dates or something?

Terry Nicholson said they were, because they moved the tax-due date to March, and that was part of the problem. They typically had tax revenue coming in this month and they were sending bills out now. The bills were being prepared this week, but that was not going to be enough to get them through the cash flow issue they were having.

Mayor Spangler said the lack of funds was anticipated when they approved moving everything to March.

Councilman Mills said it did not matter which way they went. Through no fault of their own, they were in a bind and had to come up with some money. Their charge was to get the best deal they could on borrowing money and he would stand up to anybody that thought they mismanaged because they had not. No one could predict a 100 year flood and that was what put them in a bind.

Terry Nicholson said another thing to point out in speaking about the revenue and when taxes were due: one of the things that Davenport & Company had talked to him about, and they may ultimately continue to pursue this in the future, was to possibly either move that date again, or make it so the town billed twice a year like the county did for real estate taxes. This was the immediate solution.

Reid Broughton said council needed make a motion to approve the resolution that was in front of them that was prepared by Sans Anderson. It stated: *a resolution authorizing the issuance of up to \$500,000 principal amount of a revenue of anticipation note of the Town of Narrows, Virginia, and providing for the form, details and payment thereof.*

Councilman Creger made a motion to approve the resolution for the revenue anticipation note. Councilman Mills 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

Terry Nicholson said he would like to bring council up to date on project statuses with FEMA. The town was over a year beyond the actual flood event and, to date, had received only one of the six reimbursements they anticipated getting for the flooding from Helene. The project that was approved first was the Lurich Road ballfields where they lost the fencing and the infield mix. The total damages there were \$44,740. That project had been closed out, and on that project the town received from FEMA 75% of the money, which was \$33,555, from the state they

received \$8,500 and the town then was responsible for \$2,684 of that. It broke down to 75% from FEMA, 19% from the state, and 6% the town was ultimately responsible for. He told council that percentage breakdown was going to be important to one of the things they would be facing here in the future. That project itself had already been closed out and had gone all the way through the system, and the town received the money back. Four more of their six projects with FEMA were obligated, which meant they were approved for reimbursement with one of those being obligated today. In his report it said three of them were obligated but they were up to four now. Those four projects were reimbursement of the loan and line of credit so they were reimbursing the town for the expense for Davenport & Company issuing the loan and the interest for the first year on the loan itself. That totaled \$32,420 and had been obligated. It would go through the 75%, 19%, and 6% repayment to the town. He expected that one to go pretty smoothly. The third one was the reimbursement of management time and that was for his and Debbie Thomas' time in meetings they sat in with FEMA. They were eligible for \$5,015 for that and that was a 100% reimbursement from FEMA so they would get that total amount paid back. The next one was the concession stand and sports equipment. This was the building that sat between the two ballfields on Lurich Road. That building was built to withstand a 100 year flood, and it did, except for the windows. The windows were double-pane windows and they got water between the panes. They had to replace the windows in that building. Everything else they lost in that building was basically contents. The cabinetry in the kitchen area where they served concessions and then the storage area in the back where they had all the sports equipment stored came to a total of over \$30,000, but the town was notified when they obligated the money that FEMA was going to reduce that amount by half because the town did not carry flood insurance on that building. This was all new to him, and he just learned this last week. Because the town did not have flood insurance on that building, they were going to take a 50% reduction in their loss in that building and would have to have to eat about \$15,000. FEMA was also going to require the town to obtain and maintain flood insurance on that building in the future, and they gave the town an insurance amount for the building itself and the contents of the building. Fortunately for the town, the amount was only about \$7,800 for the building and about \$20,000 for the contents and that was based on the claim the town made this time.

Councilman Mills asked what the yearly outlay was going to be for that.

Terry Nicholson said they did not know that yet. He had not yet been able to get a quote from NFIP, the National Flood Insurance Program, for that building. He would have to get that and council would obviously have to approve that expense and they would build that into next year's budget. It would be an added expense for the town.

Councilman Mills said he would say this before he saw anything. If they put something on the table that he thought was an exorbitant amount, he would roll the dice.

Councilman Hale said if all the town was going to get back was \$15,000, they needed to talk about that.

Terry Nicholson said the flood insurance would be reimbursed for whatever amount they insured the building for. They could insure it for higher amounts but that was going to be costly per year to do.

Councilman Mills said it had been proven that the building design worked so they were not going to lose the building.

Terry Nicholson said the town staff had learned that in the future, if the forecast was to flood at this level, they were going to add four feet to it and were going to move stuff out of that building. They did not move stuff out of that building because they did not anticipate the water was going to be that high.

Mayor Spangler asked if the town could self-insure that.

Councilman Hale said that is what they would be doing.

Terry Nicholson said if the town did not get national flood insurance on it or some kind of private insurance on it, then FEMA would no longer cover that site for them in the future.

Councilman Mills said it was rotten to take half the town's money and they were just now aware of it. He was not a big fan of FEMA and never had been. He worked with them for 40 years. Council would diligently listen to what Terry Nicholson brought to them, but if it was like most of their flood insurance he would say forget it.

Terry Nicholson said the next outstanding project which had been obligated was the repairs and stabilization of the road in Camp Success that went from the entryway down to the boat ramp. The town had received quotes for doing that work themselves with force labor, and buying materials, and FEMA had obligated money for that. There were no buildings involved there so there would not be a reduction on this one. FEMA had actually obligated funds more than the amount the town anticipated the costs were going to be. He anticipated that one would be like the reimbursement for the Lurich Ballfields was and should go pretty smoothly once they did the work. They held off on doing it because they did not want to do it during the open season. They will take care of that now and get that completed and then be able to be reimbursed for that one. The only other project that was remaining was the wastewater treatment plant. Based on what he learned from the concession stand at Lurich Road, they had buildings at the wastewater treatment plant that were not insured. His concern was they were anticipating another \$300,000 worth of costs for that building for the repairs that Thompson and Litton had been saying they needed to do. This was the electrical repairs for all the conduit and everything that was under water during the flood event. His concern was if the town spent that \$300,000 and put it through the system and FEMA came back and said they would approve \$150,000 of that then the town was on the hook for \$150,000 of repairs that they would have already committed to pay for. That worried him that they would put themselves in a position that suddenly they were needing to pay for something out of pocket they had not anticipated doing, and \$150,000 was lot of money. Even if that whole \$300,000 was to be reimbursed by FEMA, the town would still be responsible for 6% of that. That was close to \$20,000 that the town would have of their own they would need to pay. He had arranged a meeting this week with Thompson and Litton, the Mayor, John Mills, Cody Kast from the wastewater plant, John Davis, and himself. They will sit down and talk through what their risk would be if they were to say they were not going to fix the electrical stuff that was underground. If something broke, they would self-insure, fix it themselves, because \$20,000 could go a long way for the town fixing things that cropped up. Especially if they were looking at ultimately doing away with the wastewater treatment plant.

Councilman Mills said they would be sending good money after bad money and unless Thompson and Litton presented them with something that was just wild scope, they were not going to spend that money on his vote. He thought Terry Nicholson's logic was solid and he was tired of this stuff.

Terry Nicholson said he wanted council to understand that Thompson and Litton was not going to come back and say, "Oh, you don't need to do that." Period. They had to protect themselves as well. They had been very honest and frank with him that that was a lot of money to spend on stuff that they really just did not know about until they got into it. The other concern on the other side that Thompson and Litton expressed to him was what if they got into this and started realizing not only was the wiring bad but the conduit was bad. They would then need to tear the conduit out and have to replace that. Then they got into digging and that would be way more money than \$300,000. There were some cons on the other side as well that they needed to be thinking about. He just wanted to tell council that this meeting was happening and that they would come back to council with their recommendation about what they thought they ought to do.

Councilman Mills said that was a prudent thing to do. He could tell him that nothing was going to change from that meeting but it was imperative they have that meeting in order to have acted appropriately.

Terry Nicholson said he just wanted council to be fully aware of the dilemma they were facing in trying to decide how to move forward with this.

Mayor Spangler asked if the town was given the \$300,000 that had been presented to FEMA was the town obligated to spend it on what it was reimbursed for. Other than maybe the wastewater treatment plant, not the upgrades, but the electrical they were talking about.

Terry Nicholson said FEMA would only reimburse after the funds had been spent. FEMA's estimate of the damages to the building were higher than the town's, and they were also higher than Thompson and Litton's were. They had looked at the potential for there being more damage there and now a year after this, Cody Kast was telling him they were not having any electrical problems. Their indications were that everything was fine the way it was right now.

Councilman Mills told Terry Nicholson that was a good move but God forbid that anybody used common sense and applied all this money to fixing the problem over there, the real problem.

Terry Nicholson said he did not need any action from council tonight. He also wanted to let council know the town had continued to have meetings with FEMA about the hazard mitigation grant and they were still working very actively on that with the town, and VDEM (Virginia Department of Emergency Management), the Virginia version of FEMA, was really being proactive in helping the town towards that, and were being very encouraging to the town that they were optimistic that the town could get some pretty significant funding for the combined wastewater treatment plant.

Councilman Mills said he promised that as soon as he saw the cash hit the bank he would eat a plate of crow right in front of everyone. Until then, his statements stood.

Mayor Spangler asked Terry Nicholson if there was anything in the wastewater treatment plant that would be to their advantage to replace and get reimbursement for that they could use going forward equipment-wise.

Terry Nicholson said no, not really. The generator, which was a different grant through DHCD, was going to be used whether there was a pumping station or whether it stayed as a wastewater plant. FEMA would not let you upgrade your plant using money because of flood damages; it literally had to be replacing like for like. You had to be repairing something and putting it back like it was pre-flood in order for them to reimburse under the public assistance side.

Councilman Creger asked what the status was on the combined wastewater treatment plant.

Terry Nicholson said that was what he was just saying. The town continued to work with VDEM and FEMA on the hazard mitigation grant. They had a core group of people from Narrows, people from the county, people from Pearisburg, and the New River Valley Regional Commission was helping them with the funding package. They continued to work on that and VDEM and FEMA were both involved in those group meetings as well. It was proceeding and they were still encouraging with the application that they were eligible for money. There was a large chunk of money that was based on the amount of money that came to this area and came to Virginia in general for flood damages from Helene that had to be spent on hazard mitigation. The town WWTP was a prime example of what that money was supposed to be used for.

Mayor Spangler said they needed to tell FEMA if the town elected not to spend \$300,000 and saved them \$300,000, they needed to give the town \$15,000 back on the ballfield.

Councilman Hale said good luck with that.

Terry Nicholson said that was all he had on the FEMA reimbursements unless anyone had any other questions.

Councilman Mills said the next PSA meeting would be November 13th.

Councilman Hale said there would be some additional information forthcoming from Alicia Lane that would be subsequent to his remarks tonight but he was very pleased to be in attendance tonight. He thanked Sarah Bowles, Jonathan Creger, Tom Spanger, and John Mills for their support of the Wolf Creek Runs Wild event which occurred in October. He wanted to thank his team members Alicia Lane, Terry Nicholson, and Cora Gnegy for their support of this event. It was something he thought they could and should be very proud of. He anticipated they would have some very favorable news to report in terms of contribution to Mill Creek and that information would be forthcoming. He thanked Benji Ratcliffe, John Davis, and other members of the town staff for their contributions to this event, which was certainly invaluable. They certainly thanked their sponsors, large and small, for helping support this event. He thought this was something they all could and should be very proud about. This event showcased their community in a nice way and effectively fulfilled their mission of encouraging healthy living,

healthy lifestyles, and showcasing the County of Giles as Virginia's Mountain Playground. He thanked the ones coming on board initially to help get this thing launched. It had certainly made his job easier in terms of raising funds for this event with other supporting members in the community. He thanked Benji Ratcliffe, John Davis, the rest of the town staff, Terry Nicholson, Debbie Thomas, and Roger Shepherd for their help. He thanked council for having confidence in them. He was very proud of the results of their efforts and hoped they were too.

Councilman Mills said when you had 266 people pay money to run in the race, that was phenomenal to him. He was sure they were preparing for round two next year.

Councilman Hale said he believed they were.

Councilman Hale asked Police Chief Ratcliffe and John Davis if they had copies of or documentation of their correspondence or communication with AEP to try to resolve the streetlight issue.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he did. He had emails because every time they sent a report in AEP would send a work order back so he had all those emails.

Councilman Hale said they might need that.

John Davis said he did not have anything but just the email he sent. Most of his had been done by phone with Kristopher Howell.

Mayor Spangler asked when they received a work order back how long did it take AEP to meet that obligation.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said it had always been slow but it had never been like it was now. There were some lights he had turned in five months in a row that were still not fixed

Mayor Spangler asked Police Chief Ratcliffe if AEP had given him any reason for that.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said no. Even after sending the work orders back saying they would repair the lights they were still not being fixed.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he thought a lot of it was due to the fact they thought they were going to replace all the lights with the LEDs.

John Davis said he would make a phone call for sure and talk again with Police Chief Ratcliffe.

Councilman Hale said council would like to be updated on this.

Terry Nicholson said, for reference, Police Chief Ratcliffe was really the official channel for how things were sent to AEP to report.

Councilman Hale said he had a sense that John Davis was involved as well and thought having as much information as they could have would help.

Councilman Hale asked Terry Nicholson if the town would be in a position to have paid off the line of credit by March 2026.

Terry Nicholson said yes. They had to pay off the revenue anticipation note before the end of this fiscal year. They could keep the line of credit longer if they needed it, but their anticipation was that once they received all the FEMA reimbursement they were going to get they would use that to pay the line of credit back.

Councilmember Bowles said she had spoken to Terry Nicholson a little bit about this. There was an art student at Narrows High School who was extremely talented, her name was Hannah Farmer, and her mother was a teacher at the elementary school. She asked the student a few weeks ago if she had ever painted on some of the windows in town or on any windows and she had not but that would be second nature to her. She talked to her about giving the town a price on painting the bank windows and storefront windows and she sent her some inspiration pictures which were amazing. The student also gave a price of around \$20 to \$30 per window. The town could buy the paint and she would have her own paint brushes. There was money in the beautification line item that could pay her for this. She thought it would be really nice to showcase one of their local art students.

Mayor Spangler asked if this would be on the outside of the window.

Councilmember Bowles said yes.

Mayor Spangler said the Wheeler building, which looked so bad from looking in, would she black out the window and then paint?

Councilmember Bowles said she would prime the whole window first and then paint over it. She would do a winter scene, not something that was so much Christmas, and that would age well through January. She told Hannah Farmer council would like it to start by the beginning of December so that with all the other activities the town had going on in December that could be showcased.

Police Chief Ratcliffe asked if Hannah Farmer could possibly do something for the police department window, like their police patch.

Councilmember Bowles said she was sure she could.

Mayor Spangler said he would love to see her black out the window on the Wheeler building and then paint her scene. She could even black it out from the inside or maybe the town could do that.

Councilman Mills said he was all for this. The only thing he had a problem with is paying some hardworking kid \$20.

Councilmember Bowles said it needed to be much more than that. She just wanted her to look at the job and see if it was going to be too much. Luckily for her she had two sisters and a mom that were equally as talented as she was so they would probably help her as well.

Councilman Mills said he trusted their team to be fair with people like that and give them a hand up. Anybody that was willing to work he would rather go on the high side than the low side when dealing with people like that.

Terry Nicholson said they could do this as a budgeted line item under the beautification line item.

Terry Nicholson said since there was a budgeted line item council did not need to vote on this.

Councilmember Bowles said she had spoken with John Davis about maybe doing lights out back on the alleyway. Was there a light pole that could come off of?

Terry Nicholson said there was not a pole there. There was a pole which was near the dumpster but it was too far away from the alley.

John Davis said there was power to the light poles to put those light poles on out in the parking lot out back they could possibly use to put a couple on.

Unfinished Business

None.

Matters for Consideration by Council

None.

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