

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

July 25, 2023

The regular meeting of the Montross Town Council was held July 25, 2023, and was called to order at 7:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 15869 Kings Highway, Montross, VA.

Council Members Present: Terry Cosgrove, Bobby D. Greene, Aaron Hooks, Joseph P. King, Kathryn S. Wittman

Council Members Absent: Carolyn Carlson, Clinton A. Watson, Jr.

Town Manager: Francine G. Taylor

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Cosgrove called the Council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was observed.

APPROVAL PRIOR MINUTES

Mayor Cosgrove asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the June 27, 2023 meeting. Mr. King, seconded by Mrs. Wittman, made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting. The motion unanimously carried.

APPROVAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mayor Cosgrove asked if there were any additions or corrections to the financial reports for June 27, 2023. Mr. Greene, seconded by, Mr. Hooks made a motion to approve the June 27, 2023 financial reports as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER

Mrs. Taylor reported that, per Council's approval at the June meeting, a new office copier from Cobb Technologies has been leased in amount of \$119.92 monthly, below the Council approved threshold of \$123 a month. Taylor also negotiated for one year of technology care coverage at no cost to the Town. The new copier has fax and scanning capabilities and has proven to be a welcome addition to the equipment inventory.

Mrs. Taylor provided the approved contract for trash services from American Hauling Services as confirmation of what was approved at the June meeting. The revised contract indicates that the service will be offered for a one-year period, with new bids to be requested in 2024.

Water breaks continue to haunt Montross with another break occurring recently near Yesterday's Restaurant. Repairs were able to be made in a short amount of time, allowing the restaurant and area residents to experience minimal disruption. Previous breaks on Kings Highway, Carver Street and Wakefield Street have also been repaired and resurfaced.

The Town Manager and Mayor attended an event at Stratford Hall to launch the Northern Neck Heritage Area. The Town Manager also attended a day long stakeholders' summit to plan the upcoming NNK250 celebration of the Nation's 250th anniversary commemoration. Extensive planning is underway. A theme has been selected for each of the four years the event will be celebrated:

- 2024 – The Power of Place
- 2025 – We The People
- 2026 – American Experiment
- 2027 – Preservation and Commemoration

Communities are encouraged to plan events around the July 4th weekends of each of those years.

In an effort to improve and expand our telephone capabilities, we received a bid from Matthew Tanner of Timely Tech (TT) for both telephone service, as well as data back up options for the Town. Currently, Montross rents our phones from Breezeline with a monthly cost of \$174. Timely Tech recommends purchasing our phones and connectivity equipment, which after purchase price, would drop our monthly phone expense to \$74.28. To purchase phones, ethernet switch, rackmount, system network rack as well as installation, configuration and labor, the cost would be \$1707.94. To back up data on both computers, we currently pay CodeBlue Technologies \$107 monthly. TT recommends eliminating the monthly fee by installing a local network storage solution as a more secure option and would provide better service to the Town than an external offsite hard drive. Our 3 year contract with Breezeline will expire at the end of August, and Council needs to decide whether to continue with a contract renewal, change to month-to-month at an increased cost, or purchase our own phones with a change in providers. Mr. King asked for more information regarding Timely Tech, as well as references. The topic will be tabled to the next Council meeting pending additional company information.

Mrs. Taylor expressed that residents continue to express concern about the roaming goats. The Sheriff's Office has asked to be notified when there is a complaint so that Animal Control can address the issue.

OLD BUSINESS

WATERLINE:

- Mrs. Taylor shared that the project is at 60% completion. The well house is being prepared for painting, and the meter segment of the project is underway. It was determined that our current utility software is not compatible with the anticipated meters, so a program will need to be written to integrate the programs. Any costs for this effort will be absorbed by the meter company.
- Extension: We continue to await a decision by VDH regarding the letter asking for consideration of \$1.7 million to complete the extension areas.

Fall Festival:

The co-chairs for the event are leading the efforts for this year’s event, and applications continue to come in. The committee was in hopes that VDOT would agree to block off Route 3 to thru traffic, but they declined that notion. Without that option, the thought was to route traffic through the neighborhoods for a longer period of time than is normally done, but the Sheriff’s Office is unsure they would have the manpower to support that effort for a long period of time. The committee is contemplating the use of volunteers, but there is concern of finding the right persons directing traffic and crowd control. The main concern of the committee is public safety. Per the meeting he previously attended, Mayor Cosgrove shared he thought contributions had been received in the amount of about \$30k in donations.

First Friday: The July event was rained out, and the August event is anticipated to still be at the green space location to allow more time for the park grass to become established.

Park: The mayor shared that work continues to be done with the utility infrastructure, and we have contemplated an opening ceremony at the September 1 First Friday event. A motion was made by Mrs. Wittman, seconded by Mr. King to make the official name of the space the Montross Community Park. The motion unanimously carried. Signage is yet to be addressed. Park funds still remain for additional needs.

Codification: Mayor Cosgrove again asked for any input on codes that need to be updated or considered. Topics that the mayor has suggested are food carts, noise levels for live music, Air BNBs, zoning, blighted properties, food and lodging taxes. The mayor indicated that we should look into what State standards are for noise ordinances. Also centralizing the food cart vendors in one location might be more desirable than spread out throughout town.

NEW BUSINESS

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Hooks asked if there is an Oktoberfest planned for the Town, and the mayor shared that yes, it is being discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Resident Bobby Reamy read a letter of his involvement history in Montross, as well as his opinion of areas for improvement. Town Manager Taylor replied that she would review the items of concern prior to the next Council meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Francine Taylor
Town Manager

Terry A. Cosgrove
Mayor