

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

June 27, 2023

The regular meeting of the Montross Town Council was held June 27, 2023, and was called to order at 7:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 15869 Kings Highway, Montross, VA.

Council Members Present: Terry Cosgrove, Carolyn Carlson, Aaron Hooks, Joseph P. King, Clinton A. Watson, Jr., Kathryn S. Wittman

Council Members Absent: Bobby D. Greene

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 May 23, 2023 meeting. Mr. King, seconded by Mrs. Wittman, made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2023 meeting. The motion unanimously carried.

APPROVAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mayor Cosgrove asked if there were any additions or corrections to the financial reports for May 2023. Mrs. Carlson, seconded by, Mr. Hooks made a motion to approve the May 31, 2023 financial reports as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

REPORTS

FALL FESTIVAL

Festival co-chair Barbara Jean Jones updated Council members on the work in progress. She reported that several new volunteers have stepped forward and donations have started coming in. The opening ceremony has changed to 9AM to allow for additional entertainment, including the high school and middle school choirs, dance studio troop and Josh Grigsby as the featured entertainment. The parade will celebrate the Westmoreland Volunteer Fire Department's 75th anniversary and they will serve as Grand Marshall. Many items are well underway and in place. Appreciation was expressed for the Town's support. Mayor Cosgrove thank Mrs. Jones, as well as Jen Dixon and Allen Hickman for stepping forward to co-chair this important event. Council member Hooks asked about the feasibility of a 5K race on that day, and Mayor Cosgrove shared that the Sheriff's Office had

expressed hesitation of holding it the same day as the festival for safety reasons. A suggestion was made to hold it at the trails at the high school. If held, funding could run through the festival account. The mayor stated that a clean up effort prior to the event is typical and we will ensure that gets scheduled.

TOWN MANAGER

Mrs. Taylor reported that there have been two recent accidents within Town. The first occurred on May 10 when a commercial produce box truck jumped the curb in front of the Coke plant and sheared off a utility pole, guide wire and road sign. The second accident was on June 3 when a driver approaching Montross from the west exited the road and destroyed the Welcome to Montross sign near Dollar General. Both accidents were reported to the Virginia State Police and to the Town's insurance carrier. The Town Manager continues to gather information related to these incidents.

Taylor mentioned having difficulty finding additional vendors to provide a quote for the needed ethernet cabling required for adding phone service to the front office. She continues to seek suppliers.

Taylor shared that she was contacted by an area physician looking to possibly expand into the Montross area. She provided available properties for a potential practice, and explained the available financial incentives should there be interest.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Cosgrove shared that on Tuesday, June 20th Town Council met in Executive Session following the Budget Public Hearing to discuss ending the current trash vendor contract and entering into a new one-year contract with another vendor to fulfill the 2nd of the two-year contract with the previous service provider. Bidding will be open after this contract for potential vendors. He suggests after all contract details are finalized that we perhaps have the schedule and rates published in the newspaper. Vice-Mayor King said that in light of the quick turn-around for this change, the Town has done a good job of handling the situation in trying to make this a smooth transition.

WATERLINE:

- Mrs. Taylor reported that the well project is underway and that one of ours had been shut down to allow for the conversion to the new one. The County's system will serve as our backup in case of an emergency. Mr. King shared a bit of history regarding the alliance between the County and the Town to partner on our respective wells, which allowed for a savings of \$1 million by agreeing to share a well rather than upgrade each of our two wells. Both parties met with DEQ, who were impressed with the cooperation with our respective agencies and approved the proposal. Such partnerships need to be pursued whenever possible.

- Extension: Cosgrove shared that the Town Manager had reached out the Virginia Dept. of Health/Office of Drinking Water regarding possible additional funding to extend to the areas not included in the original approved areas – Rt. 3 to the Town limits including Forest Drive and Carver Street. We sent a formal letter expressing that the Town of Montross is committing \$426K in funds to complete the items encumbered in the original grant, and asking for consideration of \$1.7 million to complete the extension areas.
- Mayor Cosgrove shared that the waterline project progress has been completed to the point of directional drilling.
- Meters: Fran Taylor shared that those vendors involved in the meter project will meet remotely with herself, the Mayor and our Water Operator, Brian Saunders on June 28th to explain the process going forward and who will be doing what and in what order.

First Friday: Mr. Cosgrove shared that though his hope had been to hold the upcoming First Friday events at the Community Park, it has been recommended that the grass needs to become more established before the park is used for events. Power has yet to be completed, so keeping the event at its current location will be necessary. Mr. Hooks said that he has heard from some that wish the event could remain at the location adjacent to the new brewery, but the mayor shared that while he can appreciate this desire, this location is now private property, so another location will be necessary at some point.

Codification: Mayor Cosgrove has asked for any input on codes that need to be updated or considered. We had been informed that the company who published our Town Code previously had gone out of business, but TM Taylor researched and found that they had been acquired by a new company and we are working with them to update our current code. Topics that the mayor has suggested are food carts, noise levels for live music, Air BNBs, zoning.

Budget Approval: After a budget work session, and a Public Budget Hearing on June 20th, with no comments or changes recommended, a motion was made by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Hooks to approve the FY2023-2024 budget. Roll call vote: Mr. King – aye; Mrs. Carlson – aye; Mr. Hooks – aye; Mrs. Wittman – aye; Mr. Watson – aye; Mr. Cosgrove – aye. Motion unanimously carried.

Mrs. Carlson shared that the topic of a meals tax for Montross has been discussed, and needs to be seriously considered soon as an additional revenue stream. The mayor stated that Montross is one of the last municipalities to enact the food tax, and with all of the new amenities that have been added locally, new dollars would be a welcome funding opportunity.

NEW BUSINESS

Copier: The 18-year-old office copier has stopped working and parts/supplies are no longer available for purchase. One bid for a new unit was received of a purchase price of \$5280, with \$31.20 monthly maintenance; or lease option of \$120 monthly. This price includes parts, labor and toner. A motion was made by Mr. King to allow Mrs. Taylor to enter into a lease agreement for \$123 a month; seconded by Mrs. Carlson. Roll call vote: Mr. King – aye; Mrs. Carlson – aye; Mrs. Wittman – aye; Mr. Watson – aye; Mr. Hooks – aye; Mr. Cosgrove – aye. Motion unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Supervisor Dorothy Tate was in attendance and thanked Town Council on all that they do and complemented Council on the meeting professionalism. She thanked Montross for attending the Supervisor meetings when possible. The mayor asked to plant one seed regarding the new designation of the historic district for Montross. The County owns a very historic structure which was the old jail near the park, and the desire would be to preserve this building if feasibly possible. Mrs. Tate said she would bring this to the attention of the County Administrator and Board of Supervisors.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hooks was contacted by a citizen about the possibility of a crosswalk being painted on the street in front of the library to the child care facility across the street. Mrs. Wittman also mentioned how unsafe it can be pulling out of the library. The situation will be looked at.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Francine Taylor
Town Manager

Terry A. Cosgrove
Mayor