

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

November 23, 2021

The regular meeting of the Montross Town Council was held on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 15869 Kings Highway, Montross, VA.

Council Members Present: Terry A. Cosgrove, Joseph P. King, Clinton A. Watson, Jr.,
Carolyn K. Carlson, Bobby D. Greene, Robert L. Barker,
Kathryn S. Wittman (electronic participation)

Council Members Absent:

Town Manager: Patricia K. Lewis

Water Works Operator:

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Cosgrove called the Council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Mayor Cosgrove stated that a motion was needed to allow Mrs. Wittman to join the meeting through electronic communication because she was out of town for Thanksgiving. Mr. King, seconded by Mrs. Carlson, made a motion to allow Mrs. Wittman to join the meeting through electronic communication. The motion was unanimously approved.

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 October 26, 2021, regular meeting. Mrs. Carlson, seconded by Mr. Watson, made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 26, 2021, meeting. The motion unanimously carried.

APPROVAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mayor Cosgrove asked if there were any additions or corrections to the financial reports for October 31, 2021. Mrs. Carlson, seconded by Mr. Greene, made a motion to approve the October 31, 2021, financial reports. The motion unanimously carried.

REPORTS

TOWN MANAGER

On Thursday, November 11, Veteran's Day, there was a hit and run incident of our fire hydrant down at the Food Mart near the stop light. We think it happened in the early morning. I have reported it to the sheriff's office. She asked that if anyone has any information as to who hit the hydrant, please contact Deputy Shackelford at the Sheriff's Office at 493-8066.

Mrs. Lewis reported that Anne Wilson, Director of Marketing and Communications for Stratford Hall, asked her to announce that Stratford Hall was offering free admission days to the local community. Free admission for residents of Westmoreland County is December 8, 2021.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Lewis stated that the lighting of the spirit tree will be on Friday December 3rd at 6:00 p.m. on the courthouse lawn. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be at the courthouse on Saturday, December 4th from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. A list of events can be found on the townofmontross.org website as well as the Visit Montross and Town of Montross Facebook pages.

Mrs. Lewis reported that she received notice from Emily White, Conservation Grant Program Manager, on November 8th that we have been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation through the Get Outdoors (GO) Fund for the park project. A grant agreement and additional details will be provided to us in the next few weeks. Mrs. Lewis presented Council with a Resolution to accept the grant. Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Watson, made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. Mayor Cosgrove asked for a roll call vote: Mr. Greene, aye; Mr. Barker, aye; Mrs. Wittman, aye; Mr. King, aye; Mr. Watson, aye; Mrs. Carlson, aye. The motion unanimously carried. A copy of the Resolution is attached to these minutes.

Mrs. Lewis presented Council with a Resolution designating her to serve as the Town's representative to serve on the Chesapeake Bay Region Cigarette Tax Board. Mayor Cosgrove will serve as the alternative. Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Barker, made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. Mayor Cosgrove asked for a roll call vote: Mrs. Carlson, aye; Mr. Watson, aye; Mr. King, aye; Mrs. Wittman, aye; Mr. Barker, aye; Mr. Greene, aye. The motion unanimously carried. A copy of the Resolution is attached to these minutes.

Mrs. Lewis reported that she is still waiting to hear from Scott McNally with Virginia Rural Water regarding the condition of the water tower's exterior.

Mrs. Lewis reported that we are moving forward with getting the remaining easements. Mr. Riedlinger with Resource International has submitted plans and specifications to the Virginia Department of Health and is expecting approval soon. She stated she is still waiting for guidance on the \$4,000,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Health.

Mrs. Lewis stated that she sent an email to David Beale, Resident Engineer for VDOT, asking how much speed signs like the ones in the Town of Bowling Green cost - thinking they might slow down traffic and help with the crosswalk complaints. He replied that the pole mounted display signs are considered part of their traffic calming program. They have to be warranted based on the 85th percentile speed in order to be permitted for installation. He said he didn't think they were warranted based on speed because the curve slows people down. He said he thought the signs installed in the Town of Bowling Green cost about \$10,000 each (free standing signs with solar panels).

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Lewis reported that the Christmas lights would be going up on Sunday, November 28th.

Mr. Watson volunteered to gather judges for this year's Christmas decorations contest. He will let Mrs. Lewis know what day judging will take place.

It was decided that Council would have a Christmas party immediately after the December Town Council meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Larry Hinson stated that he has dealt with VDOT for years and it's either their way or the highway. He stated that he'll go to Richmond and bypass Fredericksburg because there is a new Governor coming in. He stated that safety is the most important thing. He stated that the new highway from Flat Iron to Potomac Mills is a rough new highway.

Ms. Tawan Johnson was in attendance. She stated that the bells in our Christmas lights are old and wanted to know if we could get new Christmas lights. Mrs. Lewis stated that the town purchased new Christmas lights last year through sponsorship. She wanted to know if we could replace the bells. Mrs. Lewis stated that the decorations are very expensive. Mrs. Johnson asked how expensive. Mrs. Lewis stated that the new Christmas lights were over \$12,000. Mayor Cosgrove told Ms. Johnson that he appreciated her feedback. Ms. Johnson stated that a lot of traffic comes through town. She stated that some people may want to stop to go to the bathroom and eateries in the town, but there was nothing here like a Sheetz. Mayor Cosgrove stated that there are public restrooms in town that is open 24/7 where the old sheriff's office used to be. Mayor Cosgrove also stated that the other issue we have been trying to resolve for years is a public issue of people in terms of people willing to invest in a building or space. He stated that we went through a revitalization phase where we tried to help with the vacancies. He stated that in the past three or four months a lot of the vacant buildings have been purchased and businesses are moving into town. He stated that council is all ears if someone wants to start a business in Montross. Ms. Johnson stated that apartments would be nice, along with a YMCA and a gym. Mrs. Lewis stated that she hoped the new park would help get new businesses to town. Larry Hinson stated that the old high school would be a great spot for the YMCA. Mr. King stated that we are required to have a comprehensive plan. When we develop that plan, we get input from the public. He stated that we want to see new things come to Montross. He stated that for years he heard that Montross didn't want anything. He stated that is so far from the truth. Mr. Watson said there were two housing ideas that didn't pan out. Mr. King said the new water system should help. Mrs. Lewis stated that she thought that when the new school and ball fields are open it will be a development booster for us. Ms. Johnson asked about a Walmart. Mayor Cosgrove stated that, if there was enough money to be made here, Walmart would be here. Mr. Watson told Ms. Johnson that her comments were welcomed.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Mayor Cosgrove stated that he and Mrs. Lewis were at a meeting the other day and it was brought up that Westmoreland State Park pool will not reopen. He stated that he spoke to the Assistant Park Director about the pool not reopening. Mayor Cosgrove was told that inspections were done, and it will cost about 1.7 million dollars to refurbish the pool. Mayor Cosgrove stated that he expressed his concerns as a local that we are a low-income area and that is the only public pool in the area. Mayor Cosgrove stated he will be writing letters to our local officials and the head of the park system on behalf of the town. He stated that the Park is a huge part of our economy.

CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Watson, seconded by Mr. King, made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) for discussion or consideration of the acquisition or lease of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. The motion unanimously carried.

RECONVENE REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Watson, seconded by Mr. King, made a motion certifying that only discussion or consideration of the acquisition or lease of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) took place. Mayor Cosgrove asked for a roll call vote: Mrs. Wittman, aye; Mr. Barker, aye; Mr. Greene, aye; Mrs. Carlson, aye; Mr. Watson, aye; Mr. King, aye. The motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Watson, seconded by Mr. King, made a motion that the town consider purchasing approximately .52 acres located in the Town of Montross in the amount of \$33,000. The proposed use of the property is for public parking in support of economic development and the Town's comprehensive plan. Mayor Cosgrove asked for a roll call vote: Mr. King, aye; Mr. Watson, aye; Mrs. Carlson, aye; Mr. Barker, aye; Mr. Greene, aye; Mrs. Wittman, aye. The motion unanimously carried. Mr. Cosgrove stated that the public hearing will be held at the January 25, 2022 council meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Patricia K. Lewis
Town Manager

Terry A. Cosgrove
Mayor