

October 12, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Scott Martin called the regular meeting of the Lawrenceville Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. on October 12, 2021.

ROLL CALL

Roll was called. Present: Mayor Scott Martin; Council Members Joyce Bland, H. B. Brockwell, Jr., Robert F. Pecht, III, Alice Talbert, Teya Whitehead and Anne Williams.

Absent: Council Member Dora Hardy and Town Attorney W. C. Outten, Jr.

Also present: Town Manager, Everette Gibson, Town Clerk, Wanda Johnson, Police Chief, John Stith, Kimberly Martin, Scott Brandt, Leonard Rose, Alfreda J. Reynolds, Mike Dotti, James Wesson, Justin Thomas, citizens and the press.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Fire Chief Justin Thomas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion by Mrs. Talbert, seconded by Mrs. Bland and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on September 14, 2021, as received, suspend the reading and file.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to approve the agenda as presented.

RECOGNITION OF CITIZENS

ANNE WILLIAMS

Ms. Williams addressed council to make a citizen comment. She stated she has requested several times for information on the \$417,000 DHCD Turntable project. She thinks there should be a discussion on the project. Does the Tobacco Heritage Trail own the property? If so, why does the Town pay insurance on the caboose on the property? Ms. Williams wants everybody to know publicly why she resigned from the EDA. She said there are people in this town being paid to think through the problems and issues for economic development. She said she was a volunteer on the EDA board. She said if you send her an email and she has to address the issues that you should have thought of in advance, then that made her liable, as a board member, for lawsuits. Therefore, she resigned. Mr. Martin thanked her for her comments.

SCOTT BRANDT – KNOB HILL TRAILER PARK

Mr. Brandt addressed Council as a follow-up to his previous visit to council regarding his ongoing water problem. He said he received a letter from an attorney, but not from the town. He said he responded to that letter, with no response. He said when he called the town, he was told to write another letter. He said he needs a faster response. He said there are toilet flapper valve problems and \$1700 water bills. He said people, his tenants, can't afford to pay 3-4 times of

water bills. He wants to talk to someone with knowledge of sub-metered water. He said he spent many meetings talking to Mr. Dean about this and it seems to have been lost. He said he has been carrying \$7,000 - \$9,000 in water bills over the last six months and he really needs help from the town. He said he has been threatened that the water would be turned off if he did not pay the bill. He said the town has charged and collected late fees during COVID and he said he paid them and they have not been reimbursed. Mr. Martin asked if the meters have been repaired. Mr. Brandt said the water meters are fine and are accurate and there are no water leaks in the system. He said all the issues are coming from leaking toilets. Mr. Martin said he would follow-up with Mr. Gibson, Mr. Lynch and the water/sewer committee.

JUSTIN WILLIAMS

Mr. Williams said he stays in one of the trailers and his water bill was \$1600. He said he can't afford to pay that. He said he needs assistance. He got his water bill from Mr. Brandt. Mr. Williams said there are two toilets in his trailer. Mr. Brandt said one flapper was stuck open. Mr. Martin thanked him for his comments.

RICHARD BLANKENSHIP, DIRECTOR OF BRUNSWICK COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES
Mr. Blankenship introduced himself as the new director of Social Services. He said if the town needs anything, please contact the office. Mr. Martin welcomed Mr. Blankenship to Brunswick County and the Town of Lawrenceville.

LEONARD ROSE

Leonard Rose spoke about human sex trafficking and crime on social media. He spoke about Delegate Roslyn Tyler. He said Dr. Bruno Caporriomo will get the documents fixed for St. Paul's and then repair the roof. He talked about the chapters in the Bible.

MIKE DOTTI, DIRECTOR OF THE IDA

Mr. Dotti thanked Scott, Everette, Randy and Marc for the street light repairs. After waiting for parts and other repair efforts, it was a team effort to get the repairs done.

LAWRENCEVILLE EDA

The October 5, 2021, EDA meeting minutes are in the packet. There is a vacant seat on the EDA. The building adjoining the Bloom building has not been repaired. The adjoining building needs a roof and the common wall has a hole in it. The adjoining building has not gone to tax auction yet. Ms. Williams asked could the town pursue this issue in court for punitive damages? Mr. Gibson will consult with Mr. Outten.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Martin thanked Mr. Pecht for filling in at the council meeting last month. Mayor Martin attended the fire department business meeting last night. The department needs new members and discussed junior membership. Updates will be provided on the new trucks. More participation is needed in membership and fundraising. The Spooktacular event, parade and trunk or treat will be held on October 29, 2021. He attended the Discovery Session on September 21, 2021. It was well attended and the facilitators did an excellent job. The new parking lot is complete. The IDA lights have been repaired. Mayor Martin thanked the guys in public works for their hard work on the water line breaks. Chief Stith reported Officer Capps is

still in training. There is one opening in the police department. Mayor Martin and Mr. Gibson have looked at the committee assignments. Some committee member assignments might be rotated. Suggestions will be emailed to council members.

REPORT OF TOWN ATTORNEY

There was no report.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

CONSIDERATION OF ACCOUNTS

Mrs. Johnson reported the bills total \$102,614.83. On a motion by Mr. Pecht, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to pay the bills in the amount of \$102,614.83 and post to the proper accounts.

REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT UPDATE

Mr. Gibson reported the final inspection by B & B is complete. We expect to receive a final inspection report soon.

UPDATE ON SIDEWALK PROJECT

The brick for the sidewalk project is four to six weeks out from being made. The plan is to push the project start to the spring. The project has 120 days from start to completion. The next two projects will go out for bids in the next couple of weeks from SPDC.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCOVERY SESSION

The Economic Development Discovery Session was held at the Southern States building on September 21, 2021. The meeting space was beautifully decorated with fall décor by Mrs. Martin. There were thirteen participants. The four facilitators were Liz Povar-RiverLink, Bryan David-GO VA Region 3, Deborah Gosney-SPDC and David Denny- VA Growth Alliance. Representatives from the Town, LEDA, County and IDA were present. Mrs. Martin and Ms. Povar developed a post survey which was completed by eleven participants. The feedback report and an informal PowerPoint presentation were sent to council members. There will be a meeting regarding the next steps in the planning phase.

TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL PLANNING SESSION

Mr. Gibson and Mrs. Martin met with representatives from the Department of Forestry, the Town of Brodnax, Tobacco Heritage Trail Chair, Tourism Director, and SPDC to strategize ideas to market the trail and make long term improvements. This will connect to the Turntable Park and caboose. The parks service is looking into making that into a park area. Ms. Williams asked why we can't get a park when Alberta was able to get one. She said there is a sign that has been up for years for a turntable park and no park. The DHCD Turntable Park \$417,000 was used to make the initial improvements to the Southern States building. Mr. Gibson said the first phase was completed, but the second phase did not happen because the requirement to create jobs was not met. The parks service will talk to the railroad and the THT. Mr. Gibson and Mr. Dotti have discussed these projects.

GREENSVILLE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

The LVFD submitted the Greensville Memorial Foundation Formal Proposal. Mrs. Martin and James Wesson completed the grant application to fund extrication equipment for the rescue fire truck. We should know if the grant funds will be awarded by December 31, 2021.

HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PRESENTATION

Mr. Gibson reported he participated in a ZOOM meeting with a progress report by Paige Pollard on various projects. On August 5, 2021, 431 resources were approved to be included in the Lawrenceville Historic District Update that are potentially eligible for historic tax credits. She shared information on the Virginia Main Street Program and shared examples of how localities have successfully rehabilitated historic schools. Mr. Dotti said the IDA is working on the album. Mr. Pecht asked about the planned closing of the James Solomon Russell Middle School. Ms. Reynolds shared that a repurpose committee has been formed by the county and it has already contacted several developers.

ATTENDED PRODUCE PACKING FACILITY ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Martin, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Brockwell and several others from town attended the New Produce Packing Facility Announcement in Alberta. This will be great for agribusiness throughout the county.

HOLIDAY EVENTS DECORATIONS

Mrs. Martin will work on various activities to enhance community and business participation in holiday events.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Pecht stated the financial report is in the packet and we are moving pretty well on pace with the budget thus far. The audit is underway. Town tax bills will go out in November.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The fire department responded to 17 calls in September. Of the 17, 3 were in the town limits and 14 were outside the town limits. Also, 10 were in the LVFD First Due area, with 7 being mutual aid to other agencies. Approximately 129.5 man hours were expended. Chief Justin Thomas thanked council for everything they do and the support they provide to the LVFD. Creedle, Jones and Associates have completed the 501c3 application and we are waiting on the process. Chief Thomas thanked James Wesson and Kimberly Martin for their work on the ISO, and the Greensville Memorial Foundation application. Fund drive letters were sent out to everyone in the town and first due response areas. He provided copies of quotes for air packs and is requesting that COVID CARES ACT funds be used for air packs, spare bottles and turnout gear. He reported on the two fire trucks that are on order. Mr. Brockwell commented he witnessed a house fire on his street where four people were rescued. He also shared that there was a fire at his home place last Saturday. He said these are volunteers that worked together in a professional manner. He thanked the fire departments and emergency services people in the entire county. Mayor Martin asked if money needed to be discussed for the eleven sets of gear or if it was CARES Act money. Mr. Thomas said it was CARES Act. Mr. Pecht asked about the CARES Act big picture and Mr. Gibson said there have been roundtable discussions with SPDC about the CARES funds.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Brockwell advised that personnel vacancies still appear on our website. There have been a few more applications submitted and possibly part time positions. Most job openings are open until filled. An applicant picks up an application and returns the completed application. The committee is not brought in on every hire and every position. It is brought in if needed. There are still openings in the street, water and wastewater departments.

POLICE

The report is in the packet. There was no additional report.

PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT

Mr. Brockwell reported that the Brick & Tile and Butler Lumber properties, which the town owns, were discussed in the Discovery Session. Sales prices need to be established and type of market approach. Comments came back that we have everything in place to make our system work well. There are some things that need to be tweaked. SPDC participated and they handle most of our grants. GO Virginia was represented by a former county administrator. The meeting was held in a vacant industrial building instead of a meeting room. We met a new person, David Dennings, who has only been on the job for two weeks.

BUCKET TRUCK

It was decided to put the old bucket truck back on the surplus list and purchase a used 2001 bucket truck in its place. On a motion by Mr. Brockwell, seconded by Mrs. Talbert and carried by all ayes, Town Council voted to purchase a 2001 Freightliner FL70 Bucket Truck from Lake Gaston Tree Service LLC at a cost of \$9,999.

STREETS, LIGHTS & CEMETERY

The street lights at the IDA have been repaired. Officer Glover has been taping street lights that are malfunctioning. Dominion VA Power is trying to get two repaired each day.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Brockwell asked Ms. Reynolds for a report. Ms. Reynolds said the County has submitted a rezoning application to the town for the Brunswick County Conference Center to a general business use. The Town Manager, Police Chief and Ms. Reynolds met with David Lu regarding the St. Paul's College property. They were able to clear the air regarding property ownership and get direction with some of their plans. It was a great opportunity for us to partner together. Mr. Brockwell and Mr. Gibson met today to set up a small group meeting. A mock industry prospect was discussed. An advisory committee to consist of large water users was discussed.

WATER/WASTEWATER

Mr. Brockwell reported a committee meeting will be held after the meeting. Mr. Brockwell said we go to the town water meter. Some of the figures that have been reported are different from the figures the town is dealing with. We don't go on a business property and try to run their business. The business is referring to meters that the business installed. It is not related to the town meters. It is up to the people using those facilities to repair the toilets. It is not the town's responsibility. It was also stated that Mr. Outten does respond on behalf of the Town. It does

not mean it is going to court. When he requests information, we expect to get information back. Ms. Williams said she wants to go on record that we need a plan to raise our water rates at a steady increase in order to fund infrastructure repairs. Mr. Brockwell said we have plans to address a particular situation and a meeting is planned to discuss this with Alberta officials. Alberta had a break in an 8 inch line that took out service to the whole town. The line did not show up on any maps we have. The system is old and needs to be addressed.

HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

There was no report.

PARKS/RECREATION

There was no report.

WELLNESS

Ms. Whitehead reported October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and provided an information packet. A group picture will be taken after the meeting.

FARMER'S MARKET

The message board helped, but vendors are still needed. Vendors went to other areas because traffic at our farmer's market was so low initially. We need to insure we have traffic ahead of time so that people are not going to other areas.

LAWRENCEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

There was no report.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oak Grove School Marker Dedication – October 16, 2021

Drug Take Back – October 23, 2021

Halloween Parade & Trunk or Treat – October 29, 2021

Christmas Parade – December 3, 2021

Santa Breakfast – December 4, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, a motion was made by Mrs. Talbert, seconded by Ms. Williams and carried by all ayes to adjourn the meeting.

Scott E. Martin, Mayor

Wanda Johnson, Clerk