

**Town of Louisa
Monthly Meeting
July 16, 2024**

Present: R. Garland Nuckols, Mayor; Jessi Lassiter, Vice-Mayor; Danny Carter, John J. Purcell IV, Vicky Harte, Council members; Jeff Gore, Legal Counsel; Elizabeth T. Nelson, Town Manager; Jessica M. Ellis, Clerk/Treasurer; Craig Buckley, Chief of Police

Absent: Sylvia Rigsby, Council member

Also in Attendance: Daniel Crawford and Deborah Crawford, 107 Patrick Henry Drive; Roger Henry, 303 Cutler Avenue; Tracy Clark, Executive Director for the Louisa County Chamber of Commerce

All copies, including: reports, handouts, and documents can be found following the minutes.

Mayor Nuckols called the Louisa Town Council meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Daniel Crawford, town resident at 107 Patrick Henry Drive, stood and addressed Council with the following comments/questions: in regard to the water authority's water restrictions due to the drought, does the town currently have any restrictions; does the town have a policy for such an event, and what does the town have in place when Amazon connects to the reservoir; will the town be lowering water bills as a result of water restrictions; can the spring water flowing through the creek in his neighborhood or the water from town wells be pumped into the reservoir, and is the property where the spring is located on Cutler Avenue available for purchase?

Roger Henry, town resident at 303 Cutler Avenue, then stood and addressed Council with the following comments: he was ashamed

1 that the Town of Louisa did nothing to celebrate the 4th of July, and
2 would like to know why the town has not taken on the celebration in
3 the wake of the volunteer fire department's efforts; the town passed a
4 water and sewer budget without knowing the facts and they need to
5 take a closer look at the water and sewer problems as he feels the
6 Water Authority is going down the wrong path and does not want the
7 town to follow; and would like to know what town residents get for the
8 taxes they pay.

9
10 **CONSENT AGENDA**

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12 Mayor Nuckols questioned if there were any changes or additions to
13 the agenda. Council member Harte requested a discussion on water
14 usage to be added to the agenda (item no. 3 under New Business).
15 Mrs. Nelson stated that a discussion on the structure of the Public
16 Works Department be added to the agenda as item no. 4 under New
17 Business.

18
19 Council member Lassiter made the motion to approve the amended
20 consent agenda. Council member Purcell seconded the motion. The
21 vote went as follows: 4-0 in favor.

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23 **PRESENTATION AND UPDATE**

24
25 **1) Louisa County Chamber of Commerce – Tracy Clark,**
26 **Executive Director**

27
28 Ms. Clark updated Council on the Louisa Forward Foundation's
29 Explore Main Street Initiative reporting that they continue to move
30 forward with their strategic plan and are continually looking for new
31 opportunities while giving thanks to those that have helped along the
32 way, such as Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, the Town of
33 Louisa, and the Town of Louisa's EDA. Ms. Clark also reported that
34 they have received some grant funds for the way finding project for
35 signage and hope to receive additional funds in the near future to
36 continue with the project as well as to help build out their strategic
37 plan.
38

1 Ms. Clark then fielded comments and questions from Council
2 member Harte regarding parking complaints that she reported
3 receiving from patrons of the town. Ms. Clark responded to Council
4 member Harte referencing the strategic marketing analysis that was
5 conducted in 2023. Ms. Clark reported that the findings were very
6 informative and indicated that people were indeed concerned about
7 parking, however, it also showed that there is plenty of parking in
8 town and the reality of the situation is that it's a matter of people not
9 knowing where to park due to unfamiliarity or an aversion to parking
10 where they cannot see their destination. Ms. Clark stated that
11 situations such as this take time and everyone's cooperation to
12 resolve. As for parking complaints involving the new EV charging
13 stations, Ms. Clark responded that she has not personally heard of
14 any issues.

15
16 Council member Harte also reported that she was told by at least
17 three town businesses that they are not members of the Chamber
18 because the dues are too expensive and because they do not feel
19 that they are adequately being represented – they felt the focus was
20 more on businesses surrounding Lake Anna and other areas. Council
21 member Harte asked about the cost of dues and the Chamber's
22 focus. Ms. Clark responded stating that the Chamber and the
23 Forward Foundation are two separate entities and that the Chamber
24 is a membership-based organization, and the dues are their number
25 one source of revenue. She went on to further explain that the base
26 membership is \$180, which broken out over 12 months is about \$15
27 per month and stated that she felt the benefits outweigh the costs due
28 to the services that the Chamber provides in addition to it being the
29 number one directory source for local businesses. Ms. Clark stated
30 that the Forward Foundation is all-inclusive and does not exclude
31 those who are not Chamber members and has conducted multiple
32 outreach invitations to include all businesses at every stage of the
33 Foundation's project as an opportunity to play a role in what is going
34 on locally at no cost. Ms. Clark stated that she can understand that it
35 can get a little blurry at times as the Foundation was created to
36 support what the Chamber is doing, and she is happy to attend Mrs.
37 Harte's meetings with patrons and businesses to explain further.
38

Ms. Clark then presented the town with the Partner of the Year award recognizing the Town of Louisa for being a strategic partner of the Chamber of Commerce.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Action/Discussion: Virginia Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Award Acceptance

Mrs. Nelson reported that at the last meeting she and Mr. Snyder informed Council that the town had received 100% principal forgiveness funding in the amount of \$250,000 for our lead service inventory. Mrs. Nelson noted that attached to the award letter in the packet is a work order issued by CHA to begin the work, and that Council needs to acknowledge their acceptance of the VDH funding package to continue moving forward.

Council member Harte questioned if we would be subject to additional fees associated with the project or if the cost of the project is capped at \$250,000. Mrs. Nelson responded stating that the project is an inventory project and should not have any cost overruns and stated that the engineers have outlined the scope of the work in the service contract. Should additional mapping be needed, it will cross over to another task that is outlined on their service contract which has already been approved by the Office of Drinking Water. Mr. Gore then added that the project has a not to exceed cost contract and any changes would have to come to Council for approval.

Council member Purcell made the motion to acknowledge and accept the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Award package. Council member Carter seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 4-0 in favor.

2) Action/Discussion: Virginia Commission for the Arts – Creative Communities Partnership Grant Award

Mrs. Nelson reported that the town had received an award letter from the Virginia Commission for the Arts for the 2024-2025 for the Creative Communities Partnership Grant. She explained that it is a

1 matching grant that is approved annually in the budget and passed
2 on to the Louisa Arts Center as a sub-grantee of the application. Mrs.
3 Nelson stated that Council will need to acknowledge and accept the
4 award and approve payment to the Louisa Arts Center.

5
6 Council member Carter made the motion to acknowledge and accept
7 the award and approve payment to the Louisa Arts Center. Council
8 member Purcell seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 4-0
9 in favor.

10 11 **3) Action/Discussion: Water Usage**

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13 Council member Harte lead a discussion wherein she expressed
14 concerns regarding the current water restrictions, billing reductions,
15 and Amazon's future water usage. Council member Purcell informed
16 everyone that he had questions about the Amazon facility as well and
17 had reached out to the county for information but had not heard back
18 as of yet. At the conclusion of the conversation, it was suggested and
19 agreed upon to reach out to the county for information.

20 21 **4) Action/Discussion: Public Works Department Structure**

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23 Mrs. Nelson began the conversation by reporting that interviews for
24 the Superintendent's position and the Assistant Superintendent's
25 position had been recently conducted. She informed Council that
26 Council member Lassiter sat in on the interviews as a member of the
27 Personnel Committee, and following the interviews, they held a
28 conversation wherein they discussed the needs of the Public Works
29 Department – specifically questioning if it was necessary to have two
30 supervisory positions in a small five-person department. Mrs. Nelson
31 explained that the reason the Assistant Superintendent's position was
32 suggested was because it was assumed that Mr. Jones would be with
33 the town for several more months before his impending retirement
34 which would allow the town to hire an assistant to work and train with
35 Mr. Jones for a longer period of time before his departure. However,
36 Mr. Jones submitted his retirement paperwork with a date of August
37 30th which alters the department's needs. Mrs. Nelson then explained
38 that they would like to recommend the following: have only one
39 supervisory position - a Superintendent; make the Superintendent's

1 position a true supervisory position on the salary chart by moving it
2 accordingly; use the budgeted assistant's salary to hire another
3 maintenance worker; and use salary savings to boost the
4 Supervisor's and existing employees' salaries.

5
6 Mayor Nuckols responded stating that he realizes that we have to pay
7 more for personnel, and is not against hiring, but would have
8 preferred to look out for those that are already working for the town,
9 and would have preferred to have done it while working on the
10 budget.

11
12 Council and staff then discussed the matter further before suggesting
13 and approving a revisit of salaries by the Personnel Committee to be
14 brought back for discussion and approval by Council in 90 days.

15
16 Council member Harte then made the motion to: eliminate the
17 Assistant Supervisor's position; have the Personnel Committee take
18 the salary savings from that position and appropriately designate the
19 funds to the other Public Works employees that are underpaid; and
20 have the Supervisor/Superintendent's position moved on the salary
21 scale to reflect a true Supervisor's position. Council member Lassiter
22 seconded the motion.

23
24 Council member Purcell then asked, for clarification purposes, if it
25 was Council's intent to use some of the Assistant's salary to bump up
26 the Superintendent's salary and to use some to distribute to existing
27 employees. Council member Harte confirmed that was the intent of
28 her motion.

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30 The vote then went as follows: 4-0 in favor.

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32 Mayor Nuckols stated that he would like to see the Personnel
33 Committee revisit all salaries during the 90-day review and not just
34 Public Works as stated in the motion. Council member Lassiter and
35 Mrs. Nelson replied that it was resolved earlier in the discussion that
36 it was the committee's objective to look at all salaries and would
37 report back.

38
39 **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Water and Sewer Committee & Streets and Sidewalks Committee:

Council member Purcell and Mrs. Nelson reported: we received an update from Thrasher providing a timeline on the water project and hope to start construction in the next 90 days; and they also brainstormed on the sidewalk project during the combined committee meeting.

Mayor Nuckols reported that he spoke with the Lieutenant Governor recently to discuss the sidewalk project funding we lost in hopes that her office could be of help to us.

STAFF REPORTS

Police:

Chief Buckley updated Council on the upcoming National Night Out event, and informed them that the security improvements to their building is scheduled to begin in September/October which is being paid for by grant funding we received in July.

Council member Harte questioned if we are officially on the national list for National Night Out and Chief Buckley responded that we are, and we are being considered for an award.

Project Manager:

Mr. Synder reported that we have three projects that will be coming before the Planning Commission this month: a PUD along Pine Ridge properties that takes in roughly 19+ acres and 159 townhomes; a SUP for an additional 42 townhomes behind the assisted living facility; and a revision/amendment to a previously approved PUD on Route 33. Mr. Snyder stated that he would provide more details once the Planning Commission has had a chance to see the presentations and go through the hearings. Mr. Snyder also made mention of: the bids that are under review with Thrasher; receiving an information request on property next to the Waverly apartments; and True Value Hardware was recently sold and is now operating as Ace Hardware.

1 Council member Harte posed a question to Mr. Snyder about Timber
2 Oaks' DEQ permits in regard to land disturbance and expiration
3 dates. Mr. Snyder responded that before any land clearing can take
4 place, all plans and permits will have to be in place – whether they
5 are new or renewed – and will have to be reviewed by the County of
6 Louisa and DEQ. Mrs. Nelson added that the plans would also have
7 to come back to the town for a final site plan review.

8
9 Mayor Nuckols questioned the status of the car dealership property
10 on Route 33 to which Mr. Snyder responded that there has been no
11 progress other than moving some of the cars around and the addition
12 of a new mechanic and questioned how Council would like to
13 proceed. Mr. Snyder stated that he would discuss the matter with Mr.
14 Gore.

15
16 Mayor Nuckols mentioned complaints about tall, unsightly grass, etc.
17 on properties in town. Mrs. Nelson responded that a list of such
18 properties has been started and that we will first try to reach property
19 owners via phone before taking action, then a letter will be sent if the
20 property has to be cut by staff or a contractor explaining that the
21 cutting charges have been added to their taxes.

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23 **Legal Counsel:**

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25 No report.

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27 **Clerk/Treasurer:**

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29 No report.

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31 **Manager:**

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33 Mrs. Nelson reported:

- 34
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 - There is an invitation to Abbi Powell's Eagle Scout presentation for
 - 36 each Council member.
 - 37 • There is a signup sheet for the Hometown Heroes new banner
 - 38 project if anyone is interested.

- A formal invitation is at each Council member's seat for the Silver Tie Gala.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Council member Lassiter made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Council member Purcell seconded the motion.

Mayor

Clerk