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**Town of Louisa  
Monthly Meeting  
March 21, 2023**

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**Present:** R. Garland Nuckols, Mayor; Jessi Lassiter, Vice-Mayor; Danny Carter, John J. Purcell IV, Sylvia Rigsby, Vicky Harte, Council members; Council member; Jeff Gore, Legal Counsel, Elizabeth T. Nelson, Town Manager; Craig Buckley, Chief of Police; John Robins, Project Manager; Kellye Throckmorton, Administrative Assistant

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**Absent:** Jessica M. Ellis, Clerk/Treasurer

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**Also in Attendance:** Travis Daniel, Manning Woodward, Tommy Nelson, Becky Guinn, Kendall Drumheller, and Kelly Steer, members of the Hometown Heroes Project

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

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Mayor Nuckols called the Louisa Town Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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**BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

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None.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mrs. Nelson stated that Council will consider two items for the police department under New Business, no. 3: a budget appropriation; and a grant application.

Council member Lassiter made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Council member Rigsby seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

1           **NEW BUSINESS**

2

3           **1) Discussion/Action: Hometown Hero’s Project**

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5           Mrs. Nelson reported to Council that Mr. Travis Daniel, Mr. Manning  
6           Woodward, Mr. Tommy Nelson, and Ms. Becky Guinn, in cooperation  
7           with the Mineral Chapter of the VFW, have created the Hometown  
8           Heroes project to honor Louisa residents who lost their lives while  
9           serving our country (from WWII – to present). In total, there are 41  
10          residents that they are seeking to honor, and they would like to  
11          feature those individuals on banners hung on light poles in the  
12          downtown area. Those initiating the project will raise funds to cover  
13          the banners, hardware, and ongoing maintenance; they are seeking  
14          the town’s assistance with hanging the banners, taking them down,  
15          and storing them. The group would like to fly the banners twice a  
16          year – Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The VFW will prepare and  
17          submit the project’s accounting to the town for us to review  
18          annually. A banner sample was included in the packet.

19

20          Mr. Daniel then took a moment to speak to Council explaining how  
21          he came up with the idea - highlighting his time served in the military  
22          and the loss of friends he experienced through the years. Mr. Daniel  
23          made mention of the project members who were in attendance:  
24          Manning Woodward; Tommy Nelson; Becky Guinn; Kendall  
25          Drumheller; and Kelly Steer.

26

27          Council member Harte responded stating that she is an auxiliary  
28          VFW member and has many relatives serve in the military. Mrs.  
29          Harte expressed that she is very supportive of the project.

30

31          Council member Rigsby questioned how many light poles we have in  
32          the downtown area. Mrs. Nelson replied that there are currently 42  
33          poles of which 41 would feature a banner.

34

35          Council member Purcell questioned if the town is in a position to  
36          oversee an account as mentioned above, and Mrs. Nelson replied  
37          that after speaking to our auditors, the town would simply review the  
38          VFW’s accounting annually to be sure the necessary funds are there  
39          to continue with the project.

1 Council member Rigsby questioned if there was a plan in place for  
2 the project to continue if the VFW were no longer involved in the  
3 project financially. Mrs. Nelson responded that they do not have a  
4 long term maintenance agreement in place, but is certainly something  
5 that can be added. Mr. Daniel then spoke stating that their goal is to  
6 raise \$10,000. The banners and hardware will total \$7,000 leaving  
7 \$3,000 for future maintenance – meaning they are covered for the  
8 short term, but not long term.

9  
10 Council member Carter stated that he felt the project was a great idea  
11 and made a motion to approve the project. Council member Harte  
12 seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

## 13 14 **2) Discussion/Action: Police Chief Council Appointment**

15  
16 Mrs. Nelson requested the reappointment of Craig Buckley as the  
17 part-time Chief of Police. Craig retired at the end of January and has  
18 agreed to come back and serve part-time as we search for a full-time  
19 Chief for the department. Mrs. Nelson reported that a contract has  
20 been drawn, similar to that of our previous part-time Chief, Tom  
21 Leary. Mrs. Nelson stated that, as he did before, the Chief will have  
22 authorization to drive a town vehicle home if needed.

23  
24 Council member Lassiter made the motion to reappoint Craig Buckley  
25 as part-time Chief of Police. Council member Harte seconded the  
26 motion. During the call for discussion, Council member Purcell  
27 questioned if he would receive benefits. Mrs. Nelson responded that  
28 there would be no benefits as Craig will be under 30 hours weekly.  
29 Mayor Nuckols then called for the vote, which went as follows: 5-0 in  
30 favor.

31  
32 Mayor Nuckols then swore in Craig Buckley as the part-time Chief  
33 of the Louisa Police Department.

## 34 35 **3) Discussion/Action: Police Department Budget Appropriations/ 36 ARPA Grant Application Approval**

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1           Budget Appropriation Discussion:

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3           A lengthy presentation was given by Chief Buckley wherein Council  
4           and staff discussed the budget appropriation in detail. Mrs. Nelson's  
5           and Chief Buckley's memos, which were included in the packet,  
6           summarized what Chief Buckley and the police department are  
7           seeking.

8  
9           In short, Mrs. Nelson reported that the police department needs to  
10          make two purchases this fiscal year that can be appropriated via  
11          the Town Manager's approval authority, however, because of the  
12          contract agreement and the impact on future budgets, Council will  
13          need to approve the expenses.

14  
15          Chief Buckley's presentation and memo went further and explained  
16          the expenses as follows:

17  
18          "Our police department has two significantly expensive, but  
19          operationally necessary purchases that need to occur.

20  
21          The first necessary purchase is to equip our officers with Electronic  
22          Control Devices (Tasers). Previously, our officers were issued Tasers  
23          but those devices had not been purchased through Taser and  
24          therefore lacked any warranty, service support, nor the required  
25          software and hardware to maintain them. The original Tasers have  
26          reached the end of their operational use and we must replace them.  
27          Axon Enterprises, the parent company of Taser, has provided a quote  
28          of \$24,080.40 to supply us with six Tasers and all associate hardware  
29          and software to maintain them for a period of five years. This breaks  
30          down the annual five-year recurring cost to \$4,816.08. I am aware of  
31          an available law enforcement equipment grant through the  
32          Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and I will be  
33          including the cost of our Taser replacement in the grant application,  
34          but if our grant application is denied or the funds covering our Taser  
35          replacement, we will need to cover the expense.

36  
37          The second necessary purchase is the upgrading of our Body Worn  
38          Cameras which are a product from WatchGuard. Our cameras have  
39          been slowly failing over the past year which is affecting their reliability

1 and use for evidentiary and administrative purposes. I have had  
2 multiple conversations with WatchGuard and the product we have is  
3 the most basic camera that they used to provide. However,  
4 WatchGuard stopped supporting and updating our current camera  
5 package over two years ago. Our software for the cameras no longer  
6 receives security updates or tech support. Therefore, we must take  
7 steps to either upgrade to WatchGuard's newest products or switch to  
8 another camera provider.

9  
10 WatchGuard, recently purchased by Motorola, provided me with  
11 quote to upgrade to the newest Motorola Solutions video package  
12 which totals \$73,800.00. I believe this quote to be excessive for a  
13 police department our size, so I requested a quote from Axon  
14 Enterprises. The Axon Enterprises quote is \$31,386.60 with a  
15 \$6,277.33 recurring annual cost and will provide us a total of 18  
16 cameras over a five-year period. Axon would provide us with six  
17 cameras, at 30 months into the contract we would be sent six new  
18 cameras, and then at 60 months Axon would provide us another set  
19 of six new cameras. This ensures that we will always have the latest  
20 technology throughout the five-year contract at no additional cost.  
21 The DCJS equipment grant will not cover Body Worn Camera  
22 purchases, so we must cover all of the cost.”

23  
24 Council member Lassiter questioned the life of the cameras to which  
25 Chief Buckley responded that they are very durable and are covered  
26 by warranty.

27  
28 Chief Buckley noted that the ARPA grant does not cover body worn  
29 cameras.

30  
31 Council member Harte questioned how we got out of sync with the  
32 County. Chief Buckley responded that he doesn't know as it  
33 happened well before he came on with the town. Mrs. Harte then  
34 asked why we are not moving forward with changing vehicle cams.  
35 Chief Buckley responded that we really don't have the funds to do  
36 that at this time - that there may be some assistance via the ARPA  
37 grant, but it would be by expense, and he would rather focus on what  
38 is a necessity at this time, and the body worn cameras are a  
39 necessity.

1 Council member Rigsby questioned if the Axon gear will require any  
2 additional upgrades/expenses. Craig responded that it will not - we  
3 are already upgraded across the board.  
4

5 ARPA Grant Application Discussion:  
6

7 *The ARPA Law Enforcement Equipment Grant Program guidelines*  
8 *and application procedures was included in the supplemental packet.*  
9

10 Chief Buckley reported that it appears that we are eligible for  
11 \$112,000. The following would be items purchased with the  
12 funds: a new vehicle; 2 in-car cameras; IT for mobile routers; ballistic  
13 vests; rifle grade ballistic shields; and tasers. He also noted that  
14 there is no matching funds associated with this program.  
15

16 Action Taken by Council:  
17

18 Chief Buckley recommended paying for the cameras up front versus  
19 paying monthly for five years, if possible.  
20

21 Prior to Council taking action on the two items presented by Chief  
22 Buckley, Mrs. Nelson noted that the finance Committee met on the  
23 20<sup>th</sup> and discussed paying for the cameras up front, if we have the  
24 funds, versus paying monthly as well. Mrs. Nelson stated that we will  
25 have to include the monthly costs future budgets if we cannot pay  
26 them off early.  
27

28 Council member Rigsby made the motion to enter into the two  
29 contracts for the electric control devices and the body worn cameras.  
30 Council member Carter seconded the motion. The vote went as  
31 follows: 5-0 in favor.  
32

33 Council member Lassiter made the motion to authorizing the Chief of  
34 Police to pursue the ARPA grant funding. Council member Purcell  
35 seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.  
36

37 **4) Discussion/Action: 2023-2024 Cutting Contract**  
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1 Mrs. Nelson reported that bid submission closed on March 17<sup>th</sup>, and  
2 that we only received two bids. The Finance Committee reviewed the  
3 two contracts at their meeting last night and are recommending that  
4 we go with Kickin Grass. Mrs. Nelson stated that Kickin Grass came  
5 in with the lowest bid, and happens to be who were are currently in  
6 contract with to cut Hillcrest Cemetery. The contract for the next FY  
7 will incorporate Hillcrest Cemetery, Oakland Cemetery, and the Town  
8 Hall campus. Mrs. Nelson stated that she has eliminated a public  
9 works position for the coming FY because the additional cutting by  
10 the contractor will help to lighten the load on the public works  
11 department. Mrs. Nelson also noted that the Finance Committee is  
12 also interested in contracting out the work for longer terms, and she  
13 will get with Mr. Gore to discuss that further.

14  
15 Council member Carter made the motion to contract the grassing  
16 cutting out to Kickin Grass for the upcoming FY. Council member  
17 Purcell seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

18  
19 **5) Discussion/Action: Louisa County Historical Society Special**  
20 **Event Application Request – Heritage Day Festival**

21  
22 Mrs. Nelson reported that the Historical Society has applied for a  
23 Special Event Permit for their annual Heritage Day Festival on April  
24 29, 2023.

25  
26 Council member Lassiter made the motion to approve the Special  
27 Event Permit. Council member Rigsby seconded the motion. The  
28 vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

29  
30 **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

31  
32 **Finance Committee:**

33  
34 Council member Rigsby reported that the committee met yesterday  
35 and discussed several things such as final insurance quotes. Ms.  
36 Rigsby stated that they would like to hold one more committee  
37 meeting at the beginning of April to do a final review before bringing  
38 the budget to Council as a whole.

1 Mrs. Nelson stated that the committee would like to hold a full Council  
2 budget meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> before the start of the Council meeting.

3 Mrs. Nelson proposed a 4:30/5:00 start time. She added that having  
4 a meeting the same day as Council meeting allows for additional time  
5 for a second whole Council meeting – if needed, later in the month –  
6 and still be able to meet the advertising requirements for a public  
7 hearing in May.

8  
9 **STAFF REPORTS**

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11 **Police:**

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13 Chief Buckley reported that in two years, the department has  
14 received \$162,000 in grant funds. Chief Buckley stated he will  
15 continue to look for funds in order to help keep us from having to  
16 spend tax dollars whenever possible. He also thanked Council for  
17 having him back to serve as Chief.

18  
19 **Project Manager:**

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21 Mr. Robins stated that he had nothing to add to his report.

22  
23 **Legal Counsel:**

24  
25 No report.

26  
27 **Clerk/Treasurer:**

28  
29 No report.

30  
31 **Manager:**

32  
33 Mrs. Nelson reported:

- 34  
35 • The town's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee has now met twice and  
36 getting better organized.  
37 • The Louisa County Water Authority is advertising a bulk water  
38 sales increase of 15%. This will impact our budget, therefore we



1           are looking at possibly raising our water and sewer rates in the  
2           upcoming FY.

3  
4           **CLOSED SESSION**

5  
6           Council Member Purcell made the following motion: “I move that  
7           Council convene in closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section  
8           § 2.2-3711(A)(3) for discussion of the acquisition of real property for a  
9           public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely  
10          affect the town’s bargaining position or negotiation strategy”. Council  
11          member Lassiter seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0  
12          in favor.

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14          Council went into closed session at 6:58 p.m.

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16          **OPEN SESSION**

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18          Council returned to regular session at 7:09 p.m.

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20          **CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION**

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22          Council member Lassiter made the following motion: “I move that  
23          Council members certify that to the best of each member's  
24          knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from  
25          open meeting requirements under this chapter and (ii) only such  
26          public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the  
27          closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered  
28          in the meeting by Council. Any member of Council who believes that  
29          there was a departure from the requirements of clauses (i) and (ii),  
30          shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the  
31          departure that, in his judgment, has taken place.” Council member  
32          Purcell seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

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34          **ACTION**

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36          Council did not take any action following closed session.

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38          **COMMUNICATIONS**

39

1 Council member Harte questioned if a change in code had been  
2 submitted in regards to taxation on games of skill. Council member  
3 Purcell responded that the code as a whole needs further  
4 review/updating and that Council would look at making changes to  
5 address the grey area, as well as others, at one time. Mr. Gore  
6 stated that under current law, localities don't have authorization to tax  
7 - they have no statutory authority. Council member Harte stated that  
8 she would like to initiate a code change in order to get the grey area  
9 cleared up. Mrs. Nelson stated that what we were discussing is  
10 abolishing games of skill versus zoning and that we took the matter  
11 through the steps as directed in the code and Council voted to deny  
12 the SUP based on it not conforming to the proper land use per  
13 Zoning. Council member Harte stated that the gentleman from the  
14 BP says he is waiting to hear from the town about town code  
15 changes. Mrs. Nelson reported that the only thing that town staff has  
16 told him is that if he wishes to appeal, he needs to do so with the  
17 Circuit Court. Council member Purcell stated that he would like to get  
18 through the comprehensive plan review first then focus our attention  
19 on revising all the necessary areas of the code. Council member  
20 Rigsby stated that the process to make the necessary updates is a  
21 lengthy process and needs to be done correctly.

22  
23 Council member Harte then questioned why Council does not stream  
24 meetings. Mrs. Nelson responded that the acoustics of the room  
25 make the audio difficult to decipher due to the age of the building.  
26 We have audio recordings of every meeting that the Clerk uses to  
27 type minutes that can be made available for anyone who would like a  
28 copy.

29  
30 Council member Harte questioned who takes care of the roads in  
31 town as there is a culvert pipe giving away and needs reporting. Mrs.  
32 Nelson informed her that would be VDOT.

33  
34 **ADJOURNMENT**

35  
36 Council member Lassiter made the motion to adjourn the meeting at  
37 7:28 p.m. Council member Purcell seconded the motion.

38  
39 \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk