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**Town of Louisa
Monthly Meeting
April 19, 2022**

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

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Absent: John Robins, Project Manager

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Also in Attendance: Patricia Vaughan, 962 Walnut Shade Road, Louisa

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

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

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Ms. Vaughan stood before Council to express her frustrations and disappointment in the town for removing items from gravesites in Hillcrest Cemetery. Ms. Vaughan stated that the sentimental items on her family member's graves, specifically on the head stones, had been there for years. She went on to say that they and were not in the way of grass cutting and they should not have been removed without notification.

CONSENT AGENDA

Council member Dulaney stated that he would like to hold a discussion on the matter brought forth by Ms. Vaughan. Mayor

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Nuckols added the item to the agenda as no. 5 under New Business. Council member Dulaney also requested a report and discussion from the Finance Committee on the proposed budget this evening following staff reports – if time allowed – because it looked as though the agenda would be light. Mr. Dulaney stated that he and a few others would like to discuss the matter this evening rather than hold another meeting given that there were only a few items that needed to be reviewed/discussed. Each member consented.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Discussion/Action: Hillcrest Certificate of Deposit Renewal

Mrs. Nelson spoke briefly, referencing the rates she disclosed in her memo to Council that was included in the packet for discussion this evening. Mrs. Nelson stated she felt it was in the town’s best interest to move the funds to LGIP.

Council member Carter made the motion to approve the Town Manager’s recommendation to transfer funds from United Bank to LGIP due to the current market rate and the availability of funds, if needed, without penalties for withdrawal. Council member Dulaney seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

2) Discussion/Action: Budget Appropriations

Mrs. Nelson requested two budget appropriations: 1) to pay off debt service; and 2) the need for contracted services.

Per the memo Mrs. Nelson drafted to Council, the town budgeted

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2 debt service for the Community Facility loans with USDA-RD in fiscal
3 year 2021-2022. The loans were differed for a 24-month period due
4 to the pandemic. After a review of current debt obligations during
5 budget work sessions, the Finance Committee and staff
6 recommended that budgeted funds be appropriated to pay off existing
7 vehicle debt as the town currently has 5 vehicle loans with 5 police
8 and 2 public works vehicles held for collateral. As of May 1, 2022 the
9 payoff for all the vehicles is \$94,267.83. Mrs. Nelson stated that the
10 budgeted debt service for the deferred Community Facility loans can
11 be appropriated to cover the total payoff amounts and eliminate these
12 obligations.

13
14 The memo also detailed the need for contractual services to make a
15 connection to the town sewer system for a residential dwelling
16 currently under construction. Due to our lack of staff and the
17 machinery needed to make the connection, assistance from an
18 outside source is needed. Central Virginia Contractors, Inc. is
19 charging \$14,000 for their services. In addition to connecting to the
20 subject property, the contractor will also connect the adjacent
21 property while on site which will be of assistance in the future. The
22 funding for this job can be appropriated from salary savings as well
23 as budgeted RSTP Plant Improvements that are available in the
24 current fiscal year.

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26 Council member Rigsby made the motion to approve the two budget
27 appropriations as requested by the Town Manager. Council member
28 Purcell seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0 in favor.

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30 **3) Discussion/Action: Ordinance to Change the Committee**
31 **Appointments to Coincide with General Elections**

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33 Council member Dulaney made the motion to adopt the ordinance.
34 Council member Lassiter seconded the motion. The vote went as
35 follows: 5-0 in favor.

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37 **4) Discussion/Action: Musical or Entertainment Festival Permit**
38 **Application Approval – Louisa Arts Center**
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2 Mrs. Nelson reported the Louisa Arts Center submitted Musical or
3 Entertainment Festival Permit Applications to hold an event on June
4 18th and August 20th at the Louisa Fireman’s Fairgrounds. She stated
5 that they will be using existing permitted spaces on the fairgrounds.
6 They plan to have food trucks at the events and each truck will be
7 responsible for obtaining their own Health Department permits. Beer
8 and wine will be sold at the event and an application has been filed
9 with the VA Dept. of ABC to obtain a special event permit – Virginia
10 Eagle & Premium Distributors will distribute the alcohol. There is
11 adequate space for parking, and attendants will be on staff to assist
12 with traffic and crowd control. The Arts Center is not requesting any
13 assistance from the Louisa Police Department, however, Chief
14 Buckley will coordinate a review with the Arts Center staff prior to the
15 event, and approval will be contingent upon the Chief’s review.
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17 Chief Buckley added that the department will provide assistance if
18 needed, and moving forward, event holders will be charged a fee if
19 officers are needed for events that are considered non-town related
20 or private.
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22 Council member Dulaney made the motion to approve the permits
23 contingent upon Chief Buckley’s review and approval. Council
24 member Purcell seconded the motion. The vote went as follows: 5-0
25 in favor.
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27 **5) Discussion/Action: Hillcrest Cemetery Discussion**

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29 Council and staff held a lengthy discussion on the removal of items
30 from Hillcrest Cemetery. Mrs. Nelson reported that the Public Works
31 Department had recently cleaned the cemetery in preparation for the
32 current cutting season – which is standard protocol - and is
33 conducted each year and is advertised in the newspaper and posted
34 on our website. Mrs. Nelson stated that items were removed from the
35 head/foot stones in addition to the gravesites - as directed in the town
36 code. Mrs. Nelson noted that, in years past, staff has not always
37 stayed on top of removing the items, and would instead move things
38 in order to cut - which delays cutting and makes weed eating and
39 cleaning grass from stones more difficult. Mrs. Nelson went further,

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2 and explained the necessity to remove the items as the amount of
3 unauthorized items had grown exponentially and become unsightly,
4 and because the town has entered into a contract with outside lawn
5 care providers (for a second season) to help maintain the cemetery
6 due to low staffing. Mrs. Nelson also reported that the cemetery
7 rules have been in place for many years and that the Cemetery
8 Committee met in November to review the standing ordinance and
9 add information/rules for the columbarium section of the cemetery.
10 Mrs. Nelson stated that the rules and procedures are handed out
11 with each sale in the cemetery. She stated that staff was aware that
12 the removal of items may cause upset, and have tried to handle each
13 situation as delicately as possible by working with them to retrieve
14 items and provide them with the information needed to avoid this in
15 the future.

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17 Council member Dulaney suggested Mrs. Nelson reach out to Ms.
18 Vaughan on the matter, and suggested a cemetery committee
19 meeting - if needed – to discuss the matter and provide assistance
20 with helping to prevent future incidents.

21 **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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24 None.

25 **STAFF REPORTS**

26 **Police:**

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30 Chief Buckley reported that he needs to make corrections to the
31 crime report – there are a couple of number errors that need
32 adjusting. He also reported: the department has completed the
33 domestic violence training program and the MOU has been signed;
34 they have now completed 157 policies out of the required 191 for
35 accreditation; the department's Facebook numbers have increased
36 and Officer Fallon has been managing the site well; Officer Fallon will
37 be coordinating an Anti-Defamation Training at the Arts Center on
38 May 24th and plans to work with the Chamber of Commerce to
39 potentially get the attendees out in the area to visit shops, etc. and

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2 possibly have a food truck at the event; the department now has two
3 openings and they have been advertised.

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5 **Project Manager:**

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7 Mrs. Nelson spoke for Mr. Robins stating that he had intended to
8 be at the meeting, however, a sewer emergency had occurred in
9 town and he was called to assist Public Works. She stated that his
10 report was included in the packet and if they had any questions to
11 please reach out to him.

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13 **Legal Counsel:**

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15 No report.

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17 **Clerk/Treasurer:**

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19 No report.

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21 **Manager:**

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23 Mrs. Nelson reported that Mr. and Mrs. Kersey had reached out to
24 her recently to notify Council that the National Day of Prayer is
25 scheduled for Thursday, May 5th at courthouse square.

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27 **Finance Committee Report / Budget Discussion:**

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29 *A lengthy discussion was held between Council and staff.*
30 *Notable comments and points of the discussion follow:*

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32 Council member Rigsby reported on the following from the last
33 budget meeting: 1) the committee/council members would like to see
34 changes in how raises are given – more of a performance based
35 structure in the coming year; 2) exclude the proposed purchase of a
36 new police vehicle this year; 3) exclude the purchase of new lawn
37 mowers this year, and instead, re-appropriate the mowers used for
38 cutting Hillcrest back to the town shop for general use; 4) the
39 increase in construction costs of the sidewalk project.

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Council member Dulaney made clarified that there were no tax or fee increases for the upcoming fiscal year, and then thanked staff and the finance committee for their work/review of the budget. He questioned if staff has everything in place to conduct performance based raises this coming year, and also questioned what the cost of living is at this time.

Council member Carter replied that the cost of living is currently at 8.5%.

Council member Lassiter reported that what the personnel committee had hoped for was to move to performance based raises, but that at this time, we are not ready to implement that in July; so what staff was asked to prepare is an across the board raise of 2-3% in July and a performance based raise at the end of the calendar year of 2-3%, then moving forward there would only be a performance based raise conducted annually - in December.

Council member Carter stated that he would like to see an across the board raise of 5% given in July. Mr. Carter asked what other localities are doing. Mrs. Nelson deferred to Mr. Gore wherein he reported that he is seeing most municipalities giving cost of living across the board raises or a combination of both – as proposed in our budget.

Council member Dulaney stated that he is in agreement with Council member Carter in giving a cost of living raise in July and then proceed with performance based raises once staff has everything in place - in terms of proper evaluations and employees being informed of the process.

Council member Dulaney asked Council member Purcell what his thoughts were on the matter to which he responded that he was okay with an across the board raise of 2-3% in July and a performance based raise at the end of the calendar year of 2-3%, then move forward with a performance based annually.

Council member Dulaney then questioned what the Chief's thoughts

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2 were on performance based raises in regards to the police
3 department. Chief Buckley responded stating that they are not
4 looked at as the best practice for police due to quotas, etc. He stated
5 that he would do whatever Council desired, but it would require a
6 more detailed review and process.

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8 Council member Dulaney asked Mrs. Nelson to weigh in on the
9 conversation. Mrs. Nelson stated that she stood by her initial
10 recommendation of 5% across the board and approximately 2% in a
11 merit based raise at the end of the year. Mrs. Nelson went on to say
12 that she feels merit based raises are doable by the end of the year,
13 as job descriptions have been completed, but had not thought about
14 how merit based raises may affect police departments and stated she
15 felt that may require a closer look.

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17 Mayor Nuckols stated that he had reviewed all salaries, and
18 expressed that he felt we may need to look at the salaries of positions
19 that we have been unable to fill. He used the police department as
20 an example and also mentioned the public works department as they
21 have had to call in contractors for assistance a number of times. Mr.
22 Nuckols added that he was also concerned that there was not
23 enough funds budgeted for contractual services.

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25 Council member Dulaney stated he was comfortable with a 5% pay
26 increase across the board and a performance based raise in
27 December – if prepared. Mr. Dulaney went further to state that, while
28 he understands the importance of recruitment, it is also equally as
29 important to be able to retain employees.

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31 Council members Lassiter and Rigsby stated that they preferred a
32 performance based raise vs. a combination of both, however, if we
33 weren't ready to conduct the performance based raises, then they
34 would rather put the process on hold and do only an across the board
35 raise at 4%.

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37 Mrs. Nelson stated that Mr. Gore's raise for services were also in
38 need for approval this evening as it was not included in the budget.
39 Council concluded their discussion with the general consensus of a

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4% across the board raise for staff and legal counsel to be included in the budget.

Council member Dulaney made note that parts of the code remain antiquated and needs revising and encouraged Council and staff continue with that review process.

Mayor Nuckols and Council member Dulaney suggested a review of the town's fleet of equipment and determine what can be repaired, declared obsolete, and sold.

COMMUNICATIONS

Council member Dulaney requested updates on the Exploring Main Street project as information becomes available.

ADJOURNMENT

Council member Dulaney made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk