

MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2023 AT 7:00 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.

Call to Order: Mayor Boies called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance: Council Member Monahan led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation: Rev. Chris Flohr, pastor of the St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, offered the invocation.

Roll Call:

ROLL Called with the following members present: Mayor Boies, Vice Mayor Reynolds, and Council Members Carter, Hooser, Kimmons, Lowder, Monahan, and Stover. Absent: Council Member Ricard.

Public Hearings: None

Introduction and Recognition of Visitors and Guests:

- **Monthly Employee Update**

New Employees	Department	Effective Date
Lifeguards		
Resignations/Terminations		
Jay McKinley	Public Works	05/03/2023

Mayor’s Comments:

Mayor Boies expressed appreciation and thanked all the school coaches, athletic leaders and student athletes. The Strasburg High School Girls Track Team won the State title which was the first time for this in over 20 years. Several teams went to the State quarterfinals, so we had a lot of great things going on with our student athletes and student leaders.

Mayor Boies thanked the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce for hosting the Teen Leadership Conference. She, Town Manager Coggsdale, and Chief Sager all spoke to the group. Mayor Boies recognized PRIDE Month and Juneteenth. She read the “Resolution of Unity” that was passed in May 2022. This was not an easy resolution to come up with and it was finally written by Council Member Ricard’s class. It encourages us to recognize our differences.

The members of Town Council have all been thinking of our town employee who was injured last week in a work accident. All have kept this employee in their thoughts and prayers.

Citizen Comments:

Wyatt Vaught, representing the Skatepark Group: Stated he has been before Council many times, telling why they feel the Town should fund a skatepark. They have done their best to answer questions and put fears to rest. They are still here after more setbacks than they care to count. He knows this is not an easy decision and he knows there are a lot of worthy causes. If Council votes no, that is their prerogative. Maybe they believe a skatepark is not a wise investment or it is too costly. All have the right to that opinion. If that is their opinion, he challenged Council to look at the crowd in the audience and think of all the letters that have filled the in-boxes in recent years. How many groups have been coming into the Town Council for this long, with this much community support, and this much of their own financial backing?

The dedication that has been shown by Trent Williams’ family over the past ten years cannot be overstated. It should be applauded and admired. But, now we must realize that only by working together we will succeed. Overall, he knows this Council supports the skatepark and that this is

listed as a high priority in the town's Master Park Plan. With this shared goal in mind, he thinks it is time to do something. ARPA funding has created a unique opportunity but the skatepark only requires a fraction of it – less than three percent of the total ARPA funds. This is a permanent installation that will serve all ages and backgrounds through a variety of activities for generations to come.

If Council is still not convinced, **Mr. Vaught** said that current donations stand to reduce the cost of the skatepark substantially and right now, it can be built for much less than half the national average.

Mr. Vaught continued by saying we can't keep kicking the project down the road. Inflation is the big enemy, and the cost will keep going up each year. He asked that after the progress they have made, not to send them back to square one because "square one for us is also square one for the people of this town. Please, vote yes tonight to fund the skatepark with an additional \$145,000. Help us memorialize Trent Williams and give closure to his family. Remember, we don't ask for this money directly; only that you work with us to spend it responsibly on the construction of the skatepark. We will continue to raise funds independently while working towards further grants and donations whenever possible."

Mr. Vaught concluded by thanking Council for their time and their services to the community.

Jack Tinsley: Mr Tinsley said he was giving his professional opinion on the skatepark. He is a 13 year paramedic who retired about five years ago. He was also an educator at the college level. He knows it is really important that kids not be on the street so to have a place like this for people to skate legally is good. When skating on the street, if someone hits a crack in the sidewalk, it is a hospital bill. This park is very important.

There are a lot of people in the crowd. When he was growing up, he was in a predominantly white area. It was much easier for him to interact with other people as a black person by skating. He also has a lot of LGBTQ friends that he has met because of skateboarding. There is nothing in Martinsburg like this. He does not have a lot of money, but it will bring money into the community.

Mayor Boies said five emails were received in support of the skatepark.

Consent Agenda:

- 1) Minutes of the May 1, 2023 Work Session and Minutes of the May 9, 2023 Regular Council meeting.
- 2) Change of date for the July 3, 2023 Work Session to July 5, 2023.

Vice Mayor Reynolds moved to approve the consent agenda; second by Council Member Kimmons. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business (Discussion and/or Action Items):

1.) Special Use Permit #SUP2023-0004, FFC Properties LLC – Short-Term Rental

Description: Special Use Permit application (SUP2023-0004) requested by FFC PROPERTIES LLC, owner, for property identified as Tax Map 025A301B087 002A located at 316 South Massanutten Street at its intersection with Brown Street and containing 0.259 acres. The request is to permit a short-term rental use within the existing building.

Mayor Boies asked if there were any questions.

Vice Mayor Reynolds moved for approval of Special Use Permit (SUP2023-004) for a Short-Term Rental at 316 South Massanutten Street; second by Council Member Carter.

Discussion:

Council Member Hooser said all know his belief. Residential zoning is for residents and housing

is already expensive enough in this area without turning more homes into hotels.

The motion passed on a roll call vote with the following results:

Vice Mayor Reynolds	Aye
Council Member Carter	Aye
Council Member Hooser	Nay
Council Member Kimmons	Aye
Council Member Lowder	Aye
Council Member Monahan	Aye
Council Member Ricard	Absent
Council Member Stover	Aye

2.) FY2024 Budget and FY2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

2a: Consideration of Real Estate Tax Rates

2b: Consideration of FY24 Budget Adoption

2c: Consideration of Appropriation Resolutions for Budget Funds

Mayor Boies thanked **Town Manager Coggsdale**, **Director of Finance Fletcher**, and **Council Member Monahan** for all their work. We had great communication during this process.

Council Member Monahan moved to set the real estate tax rate effective as of **January 1, 2024** at **\$0.155** per hundred dollars of assessed value; second by **Council Member Hooser**.

With no discussion, the motion passed on a roll call vote with the following results:

Council Member Kimmons	Aye
Council Member Ricard	Absent
Vice Mayor Reynolds	Aye
Council Member Carter	Aye
Council Member Monahan	Aye
Council Member Stover	Aye
Council Member Hooser	Aye
Council Member Lowder	Aye

Council Member Monahan moved adopt the **General Fund, Water Fund, Wastewater Fund, and Trash Fund FY2024 Budgets** as presented by the **Town Manager**, together with the proposed **FY2024 Schedule of Rates and Fees, FY2024-28 Capital Improvement Program, a 6.0% cost of living adjustment effective July 1, 2023** for the **Town of Strasburg** eligible employees; second by **Vice Mayor Reynolds**.

The motion passed with no discussion on a roll call vote with the following results:

Council Member Stover	Aye
Council Member Ricard	Absent
Vice Mayor Reynolds	Aye
Council Member Monahan	Aye
Council Member Lowder	Aye
Council Member Kimmons	Aye
Council Member Hooser	Aye
Council Member Carter	Aye

Council Member Monahan moved to approve the appropriation resolution for the general, wastewater, water, and trash funds for the fiscal year beginning **July 1, 2023**; second by **Vice Mayor Reynolds**.

With no discussion, the motion passed on a roll call vote with the following results:

Council Member Ricard	Absent
Council Member Stover	Aye
Council Member Monahan	Aye
Vice Mayor Reynolds	Aye
Council Member Hooser	Aye
Council Member Carter	Aye
Council Member Lowder	Aye
Council Member Kimmons	Aye

Council Member Stover said he was happy and surprised with the budget process.

3.) Consideration of State Park Funding Request

Description: Consideration of Skate Park Funding through ARPA funds.

Mayor Boies said at the Work Session, Council directed staff to put this on the agenda. She clarified that 1) the funding amount was to be up to \$145,000; 2) this money would not just be handed over to the skatepark group; it will be used to fund the skatepark and see the project through fully from a staff guided project and staff managed project. Also, Council just approved the FY2024 budget, and it does not start until July 1. If Council wishes, they could direct and move forward with a motion to ask staff to designate the money and then do an official budget amendment in July 2023.

Council Member Stover said he has been in charge of funds in other groups, and he wants to make sure that if the town gets behind this with \$145,000, it is understood that the excavation will still be donated. He just has a concern about that donation still happening if the town is now behind the project. He wants to vote yes to the skatepark but just wants to make sure this will not be a major problem. He doesn't want the donation to be taken away and more money be needed.

Mr. Vaught said that to his knowledge, everything is good with that. Should something happen, that would need to be addressed during the engineering phase and the park could be rearranged. But, as far as they are concerned, they can work within this budget. They have the official cost estimate that was given to them by Racey Engineering and the \$75,000 for excavation included in that is if big boulders are found that would increase the cost. As far as the \$25,000 donation for excavation, he is confident they could reduce the size of the skatepark by \$25,000 to make this up if needed.

Mayor Boies said one thing she wants all to be clear on because she feels all are on the same page. This will be for up to \$145,000. A big hole won't be dug and then we find out it is going to cost more. We have professional staff that make sure things like that won't happen. A check will not be written until we know the exact cost.

Council Member Hooser asked for clarification about putting this aside for a budget amendment. **Council Member Monahan** said we have the money set aside in a "special holding spot" until the committee settled some things, so the money would have to be moved out of there. **Council Member Hooser** said then the funding is guaranteed but **Mayor Boies** said we will have to hear the motion first.

Council Member Kimmons moved to direct staff to prepare for Council at the next Council meeting a budget amendment for the skatepark. The amount shall be to fund the project up to \$145,000 from ARPA funds to be dispersed per receipts with the understanding town staff will have oversight of the project; second by **Council Member Carter**.

Discussion:

Council Member Monahan commended **Mr. Vaught** for the work he has done on this project. She has supported the skatepark through the years with her own finances and she thanked **Mr. Vaught** for his commitment to the park. His efforts to not only revive this project but also his commitment to overcome any hurdle that has come his way shows his passion for the sport and project. She is thankful for her colleagues for agreeing that if this motion passes, it will become a town project with guidelines that will need to be followed. However, she still has reservations with spending almost \$150,000 on one project. There are many needs and wants in the park that allocating the remaining funds to one project is difficult for her to commit to. She also feels that while there is a lot of excitement there are too many unanswered questions for her to vote to allocate the total amount that is being asked for. She was willing last year to allocate up to \$50,000 to see the skatepark complete, and she still is. She will have to vote no on the motion, not because she does not support the project, but because of her many reservations of pitfalls. She has a 12-year old who is eager to see the project completed as are others in town. Her sincere hope is that her concerns are not warranted, and everything goes smoothly for this to become a safe and fun addition to the town park.

Council Member Hooser asked if this puts the funding off until the next meeting. **Council Member Kimmons** said it will put off allocating the funds until next month when the budget is in place. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said the budget doesn't start until July 1. Unless the vote is changed between now and the July meeting, this confirms the Council's support of the project and that they are willing to allocate up to \$145,000 next month. This is just the paperwork to get this done correctly; it is hard to amend a budget before it goes into effect. **Council Member Hooser** said he is weary of kicking the can down the road any further. He wants his vote to be to fund this and he doesn't want any stopgaps showing. He said it is on the agenda tonight so why can't it be voted on now. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said they could not create a motion until this conversation was had. They are really committing tonight, and it is a timing issue. It could even be voted on at the next work session but that is not the normal way.

Mayor Boies said it was in the budget and then they learned we were waiting on paperwork for the skatepark group, so it was removed until the paperwork was obtained. By the time that was taken care of, it was too late for this budget vote because of public hearings, etc. Tonight, if the motion passes, Council is taking a stand they are committing.

Council Member Kimmons called for the question. On a roll call vote, the motion passed with the following results:

Council Member Kimmons	Aye
Council Member Lowder	Aye
Council Member Carter	Aye
Council Member Hooser	Aye
Vice Mayor Reynolds	Aye
Council Member Monahan	Nay
Council Member Stover	Aye
Council Member Ricard	Absent

Mayor Boies said she has had the chance to speak to several groups and one of the things that they are fascinated with is what do you do as Mayor. All are here to work for the citizens. They hear from all and vote as they feel the citizens want. They are here to work for the citizens, and this is government at its best.

New Business:

Reports:

Departmental Reports:

Complete reports are provided in the Council packet which is available on the town's website at www.strasburgva.com. Reports are also found on the "Meetings" page of the website (<https://www.strasburgva.com/meetings>).

Mayor Boies thanked all for getting the pool up and running and for all the events. She thanked **P&Z Administrator Otis** for his work on the UDO. Council had a great meeting on Saturday with the stakeholders of the Business Park.

Council Member Monahan asked **Director of Strategic Initiatives Hilton** when the Strasburg Express Town game is, and what fun things will be done at the game. The game will be on July 12. Council will be serving the Community Dinner on June 21 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Council Member Monahan asked about the graph on his permits and if it showed all permits. **P&Z Administrator Otis** said it is only zoning permits. He changed it because the values could be erroneous information because people can put down whatever they want; he wanted to give information that was pertinent.

Special Committee Reports:

NSVRC: Council Member Kimmons said the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission met May 18th at the Winchester Regional Airport. The Commission approved two resolutions; one authorizing an application for a state grant for rural transportation planning assistance, and second, a resolution of recognition presented to **William Pifer** chairman of the airport's board. The Commission approved the FY 2024 budget and work plan. Finally, the group was given a tour of the airport grounds to highlight the future expansions happening to the airport. It was a very interesting tour. There will not be a meeting in June.

Council Members Kimmons and **Monahan** met on Sunday, June 11, with their committee about the Pifer House and Visper Hall. Committee members **Barbara Adamson, Mary Redmon, Craig Ernst, Linda Wheeler,** and **Ms. Ernst** (non-member) were at the meeting. This will be placed on the next work session agenda.

Mayor Boies said Council was asked what should be placed at this development as far as commercial development. **P&Z Administrator Otis** sent out an email regarding this late this afternoon.

Council Member Items:

Council Member Stover would like someone to prepare a document with bullet points showing why things went up. **Mayor Boies** thinks this would help educate people on why Council does what they do. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said they will provide high level budget points.

Council Member Lowder said it would be helpful to know how much raising taxes 1 cent brings in. A one cent increase in real estate taxes brings in \$84,000, but in the next fiscal year's budget, it will be \$42,000 because it is not effective until January 1, 2024.

Council Member Hooser said he would like the budget points to show the average cost to individuals based on their home values.

Council Member Carter said he saw someone get stuck in a wheelchair on the sidewalk near 7-Eleven. Have we ever done anything to make sure we are ADA compliant as far as sidewalks. **P&Z Administrator Otis** said it is always on their mind. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said we might be able to do something temporarily.

Council Member Monahan said she knows where the new sidewalk is going at the park. Are we going to put grass or something beside it. **Director of Strategic Initiatives Hilton** said it has not

been graded yet. The hope is to have this done by July 1.

Council Member Monahan asked when we would get started on the park project and **Director of Strategic Initiatives Hilton** said she is ready to go.

Council Member Carter asked that if a study has already been done, please do not recreate the wheel.

Council Member Lowder asked when the bathrooms will be installed, and **Director of Strategic Initiatives Hilton** said they are on the docket.

Council Member Kimmons said we just approved the budget, but for the next budget cycle, he would like to begin work on the budget process earlier so a full year of taxes can be realized if they need to be increased. He would also be interested in knowing the cost of sending out the two bills of real estate and personal property and just making it a property tax.

Town Manager Coggsdale encouraged all to think about this.

Mayor Boies asked if this is something Council would like to explore. **Council Member Hooser** would like to see the numbers. **Council Member Monahan** said it could hurt the elderly.

Mayor Boies said to think about it but not have staff do any additional work now.

Town Manager Coggsdale said we can explore other combinations of taxes. We could have a work session to just look at the various taxes.

Council Member Kimmons said he is just trying to streamline the bills we send to our residents.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Mayor Brandy H. Boies

Clerk of Council Amy Keller