

MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024, 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 Kimmons led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation: The invocation was given by Council Member Lowder.

Roll Call:

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

Public Hearings:

- 1) **Amendment to Town Code Chapter 86-39. Shutting off water for failure to pay the bill.**

Description: Text amendment to Town Code Chapter 86-39, pursuant to State Code 15.2-2119 & 2122, related to the cutting off of water when payment is delinquent for 60 days.

- Public Hearing

The Public Hearing opened at 7:03 p.m.

Kim Bishop, 728 Crystal Lane, Strasburg, VA: She thanked Council for addressing this issue. She thought there was going to be a presentation before the public hearing, but she believes this will allow citizens more time before water is cut-off; water will not be cut-off straight off but will allow a couple of months before it is turned off. *(This was acknowledged to be correct with a nod of a head from Town Manager Coggsdale).* **Ms. Bishop** said this is such a good thing and that even though she doesn't give Council much credit for things, she really appreciates that they took the time to come up with a really good solution to this issue. However, she would like to ask that the fees that are put on when people can't pay be looked at. If someone can't pay their water bills, they can't pay the fees and fines that come after being cut off. People who can't pay their bill don't do it to not do it; they do it because they don't have the money. When fines and penalties are added, it is very hard for people to catch up. She understands having a price to charge to turn water back on after it has been turned off but if there is a way to waive fees or make them better, it would be good because people really need that kind of help. It just snowballs it when you add the fees, and it gets stressful. She does appreciate what they are doing, and it is more than her Council did but please just think about the fees.

Mayor Boies said she did not read all of the information, but this amendment would make the Town Code consistent with the Code of Virginia §15.2-2119 and 2122 when water payment is delinquent for 60 days. She believes the current policy is to send another bill after 20 days and cut-off is 10 days later, so water is shut-off between 20 and 30 days after non-payment; this would extend it from 30 days to 60 days.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor Boies said the second public hearing listed on the agenda has been removed and rescheduled for the Council meeting on March 12.

Introduction and Recognition of Visitors and Guests:

Mayor Boies welcomed the Signal Knob Middle School FFA. February 17 – 24 is National FFA Week.

Dakota Stroud, Agriculture and Education teacher and advisor for the group: Stated this is his third year in the position. During the past year, they have had many successes. They were recently named the number one middle school chapter in Virginia. They also had several state winning teams, as well as their soil's team winning first place for the second year in a row. He then turned the floor over to his students to allow them to introduce themselves and give a little information about themselves.

Olivia Fisher, President

Mia Schneider, Secretary

Kadiatou Diallo, Treasurer

Sydney McCarter, Reporter

Meghan Ritenour, Sentinel

Piper Dellinger, Vice President – **Piper** thanked all for inviting them to the meeting.

Vice Mayor McCornyn congratulated the students for their accomplishments.

Council Member Carter said he appreciates the leadership they have. They have a lot of integrity.

Mayor Boies said she was in FFA in middle school and high school. She credits FFA for her role as mayor. Just getting in front of the dais is nerve-wracking and FFA helps with this. She remembers learning how to run a meeting during her years of FFA. She encouraged them to keep reaching out for leadership positions. Leadership is important for moving things forward. We are impressed by the students and their teacher.

Council Member Monahan said she has watched several of these girls grow up and they will be moving on to high school next year.

Mayor Boies read and signed the FFA Week Proclamation.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Boies thanked staff for all their work with a successful Cupid's Market. She has heard it was fantastic. On that same night, several staff members participated in the "Night to Shine" event. She appreciates all that everyone is doing in our community.

Citizen Comments:

Kim Bishop, 728 Crystal Lane, Strasburg, VA: Stated she wanted to give a personal update on 188 West King Street. She said she paid for a fence to be put up to block the view. The gates will be put up tomorrow and locked. The greenhouses are or will be skinned/covered.

Ms. Bishop still believes there is harassment against the people who live there. **Mr. Lassiter** could not do get a spot for Cupid's Market, so he decided to do a pop-up shop at his building. About an hour and a half after putting things up, **Mr. Otis** came down because someone reported that **Mr. Lassiter** was putting things out on the sidewalk. She doesn't know who made the complaint. For those who do not think there is harassment, there is harassment. This happened after an hour and a half. The town is being used as the tool for harassment. They agreed that the event was nice, but there was nothing on the other end of town to draw people down the street. She thinks it is a shame that the end of town is ignored. Remember the harassment and targeting and please take this seriously the next time the complaints come, we will be back to appeal.

Jody Neff, 18 Signal Knob Lane, Strasburg, VA: **Ms. Neff** thanked the mayor for extending the invitation to the meeting so she could come and thank all personally for working with them in trying to get the building they own, Signal Knob Recreation Center, under contract. They had a hiccup with getting the zoning correct, but **Mr. Otis** spent a lot of time with them and walked them through it. He was very helpful. Improvements will be made to the building that they were not able to do

with it and they are very excited for **Ms. Wu** to give the property the attention it needs.

Helen Wu, 269 Rocky Road, Linden, VA: Presented each Council Member with a packet of information (attached here-to). She thanked all for allowing her to introduce herself and her school to the entire Council. She started a school in Front Royal in 2012 called the Virginia International Academy. She is the founder of the school and the head mistress. They have between 30 and 40 students until COVID. Enrollment dropped and they sold their building to a neighboring school, Chelsea Academy. Since then, they have been looking for a new home for their future students. They are now ready to take more enrollments and reach their normal enrollment. By the time they reach this goal, they have to hire many people. Their student/teacher ratio is much lower than the public schools. They have administrative staff, teachers, tutors, and dorm parents. These students will be there 24/7 so they have to people with them all the time. They have weekend activities they are taken to so the students can experience what American education looks like. They want them to have fun like American kids. They finally have found this beautiful building that they feel will meet their needs. She is not an expert on the zoning or coding but **Mr. Otis** helped them a lot. She hopes everything can go through smoothly. They offer a lot of community service to the community. They worked in the food bank and participated in the Adopt-a-Road program. They also brought the students to Town Council meetings so they can understand how American government works. The students range in age from 13 to 18 years old. They already know Chinese culture when they come to the school, and they will learn American culture while here. **Ms. Wu** feels they will be the future of the world. She hopes Strasburg will be where their dreams start.

James Nickens, Branch Street, Strasburg, VA: Stated he currently lives in Winchester, but his home base is Strasburg. He was here last year with **Rev. Gess** about the tree situation at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. He wanted to know the status of the problem.

Town Manager Coggsdale said they had a telephone conversation about the multiple concerns that **Rev. Gess** had brought up. He will be meeting with **Town Attorney Helm** this week and will give an update at the March 4 Work Session.

Pastor Todd Gess, 391 W. Queen Street, Strasburg, VA: Stated he initially wanted to discuss the same issues **Jimmy** was discussing (**Mr. Nickens**), but today he brought some information to **Town Manager Coggsdale** about when the land was set aside for the road and the part that Mt. Zion actually owns. He continued by saying that what he is more interested in is that this is Black History Month. We isolate this to just one month. It is the same for the reparations for Native Americans; you can have the reparations as long as you get back on the reservation. As long as you stay in your place, we will give you a little recognition. He has heartburn over that as a pastor and as a citizen. Today we would have had more people here to talk about the water bill, members of his church, but they told him there was no use in coming. Council will do what they want anyway. "We fought the battle many times and nothing happens." In our society today, we lift up the leaders in Black History Month, but what about the untold story. Some people say that if you bring up the untold story of where people were persecuted, that is "wokeism". It has become a derogatory word. "To be aware of what our history is, is something bad? No. We cannot make a complete change and have full equality for every minority, for every person, and I'm not just talking about race or color or creed or whatever, I'm talking about minorities and status of what they own and who they are." He feels privileged to have grown up where and how he did and it is not wealthy. "My bank account last week had nine cents in it, so we all struggle. Some struggle with what we want to invest for the future, and then there are others that struggle with survival, such as water bills. Our history is diverse and complicated and messy; it's even complicated and messy in the Bible because if you step back and think about it, who is one voice that you don't hear in the Bible? The person who was illiterate and isn't in the upper ranks to be able to write." The prophets and kings and all those who could write are written in the Bible, but where do you look for the others? We need to celebrate Black History not for a month, but "celebrate it for the history of America because it is messy, and we need to make a change and that change can come if we own up to our history."

Consent Agenda:

- 1) Minutes of the January 2, 2024, Work Session
- 2) Minutes of the January 9, 2024, Regular Council meeting
- 3) SVEC Easement Approval
- 4) Adoption of the FY2025 Budget Calendar
- 5) Adjusting the start time of the March 12 Town Council meeting to 6:15 p.m. to allow for FOIA training for Town Council by Town Attorney Helm.

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

Old Business (Discussion and/or Action Items):

1) Water & Sewer Extension Policy

Description: Proposed policy to define how extensions of the Town of Strasburg's water and sewer system main lines will be made.

Town Manager Coggsdale said this is just for water and sewer extensions. This policy deals more with extending water inside and outside of town. There are five different objectives of the policy:

1. Define how requests for new service shall be submitted to the Town.
2. Define the facilities necessary to provide new services.
3. Define the construction responsibilities of these new facilities.
4. Define the financial responsibilities of these new facilities.
5. Establish funding mechanisms for private contributions to publicly funded utility extensions.

These objectives will guide Council as the town moves forward with developments. This will help staff when they meet with those who might want to invest in our town. It establishes a process.

Vice Mayor McCornyn shared a question she asked over email. If we approved an application outside of town and then got a similar one that we didn't want to approve, could we be accused of being arbitrary.

Director of P&PS Otis said if someone comes in and needs 100,000 gallons of water and it is approved, when the next request comes in, it would not be the same as the capacity would have been affected.

Council Member Monahan said when this was first brought up, she thought they said that Council wanted to approve any outside of town limits hook-ups. Currently, we have a business park to fill and infill lots. Town staff does a great job, but it looks like it is giving staff the authority of whether it comes to Council or not.

Director of P&PS Otis said the administrative review with only staff to approve is for those within town limits and it is established by law. If the applicant shows a need, we have to extend water to them. This is not for a new development or outside of town.

Council Member Monahan asked if we are sure that the policy is written in such a way that if a group comes from outside of town and asks for water, that it will come before Council.

Town Attorney Helm said he can check this again. **Council Member Monahan** said they have learned a lot about policies, procedures, and proffers being written correctly, so she would like this to be looked at closely.

Council Member Kimmons asked what our obligation is for outside of town once the water is provided. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said once we have reached an agreement with places outside of town, it would be no different than inside of town. There are times we might limit in-town people as well as out-of-town. They are all customers. Some of these might eventually become in-town if

we have a boundary line adjustment. Drought conditions would affect all.

Consensus was to allow for the town attorney to review the policy again and bring back to a future meeting.

2) Pool Improvements/Funding

Description: Proposed repairs for the Town of Strasburg's pool – 295 Park Road.

At the last Work Session, it was decided to place this on the agenda for more discussion. Staff was instructed to get a quote on the tile and plaster work. This is not cheap, and the cost is \$118,950 but includes the expansion joint and strip removal that was included in the original estimates. This is resurfacing of the entire pool and it is not immediately needed but it could be needed within 5 to 10 years.

Asst. Town Manager Shipe said if they did do the tile and resurfacing, it would be in the fall of 2024. **Mayor Boies** asked if the other work could be done by pool season and **Park and Pool Manager Varley** will have to clarify this with National Pools.

Council Member Stover said if we wait five to 10 years for the resurfacing, the ARPA funds have to be allocated and used before then. It might be a good time to jump on this now as the price will only go up. He asked how long a warranty would be given.

Asst. Town Manager Shipe said there is a five-year warranty on the pool floor.

Mayor Boies said the ARPA funds are a one-time use and it might be hard to find the funding later.

Council Member Lowder thinks we should deal with it now. He would like to get everything done now.

Council Member Stover said the pool is community service and it is morale to the community, and it is a loss in our budget. To budget that kind of money and use regular funds would be a harder sell. He doesn't spend money unless he must, and he feels this is a good use. We can tell people we are trying.

Mayor Boies said the \$90,000 are things we need now. If we are looking at \$200,000, should we be looking at a new pool.

Town Manager Coggsdale said it is like putting a new roof on a house. You won't buy a new house because you need a new roof. A new pool would be much more costly than the \$200,000.

Council Member Monahan said she has visited two small towns that had thriving pools and because it became too burdensome, they have been abandoned.

Council Member Lowder said with the school that is being considered at the Rec Center, there is a pool in that building. Does the importance of our pool go up because of that?

Director of P&PS Otis said **Ms. Wu's** intent is to maintain the pool with the current use, as well as the basketball court.

Council Member Carter said his concern in holding off is the future cost. Things will not get any cheaper. It will be more expensive, and we won't have ARPA funds to use.

Vice Mayor McCornyn said she remembers that National Pool said the "bones" are good and she thinks it is good to invest in this.

Council Member Woodson said the pool is in the middle of the sun. Is there some way to get more shade. **Park and Pool Manager Varley** agrees there needs to be more shade but is not sure how to do this. Woodstock has several different pavilions, and we only have one.

Town Manager Coggsdale said it appears there are two questions – the repairs to do now and then the tile and plastering. There are two different opportunities.

Mayor Boies said from the work session, she feels the \$90,000 was unanimous. Should we wait on the vote of the tile and plastering until we have more budget discussions? This isn't something we have to decide on tonight.

Council Member Monahan asked if the quotes were tied to Council agreeing to both the \$90,000 and the \$118,000 for the tile and plastering. Do we need to do both for these quotes?

Town Manager Coggsdale said some of the work could be put off until the tile and plastering work. There is some minimal tile work in the first price that wouldn't need to be done now if all the other tile work is going to be done in the fall. Council will have to decide their priorities on ARPA funds. If it is done in the fall, that would be under the FY2025 budget. We can do Phase I and then discuss the other work during the budget discussions.

Asst. Town Manager Shipe said that for every 30 days, the cost could go up one percent. **Town Manager Coggsdale** added that unless they are under State Contract, we would need to go through procurement. **Asst. Town Manager Shipe** said they are under State Contract.

Mayor Boies said if we approve both tonight, we might be able to save about \$26,000 because of the \$10,000 saved on the tile work and then the \$2,000 per month for the one percent increase to the quote.

Town Manager Coggsdale asked what they would like to have done. **Asst. Town Manager Shipe** added that part of the estimate was \$25,000 for a fence which is actually in the CIP for the next fiscal year. If you take off the tile work and plastering and the fence, the cost would be about \$55,000 for everything else. If you keep the fence in, it is up to about \$80,000.

Council Member Stover asked if we have built the fence around Public Works and we have not. He remembers that when this was first brought up, it was \$45,000; it is now \$90,000. He thinks this stuff needs to be done now. We want to save the \$10,000 on the tile work now and not let them go up on the cost. **Asst. Town Manager Shipe** said there is a chance that they will go up the one percent.

Council Member Carter moved to approve pool repairs, including tile and plaster work to be completed in fall of 2024, with an estimated cost of \$198,026. ARPA funds will be utilized for repairs; no second at this time.

Discussion:

Town Manager Coggsdale said we are basically amending the budget and when you go outside the one percent, you must have a public hearing. If you want to commit, you should commit to Phase I. We can come back on March 4 and have the discussion again.

Mayor Boies said we might want to wait on the tile and expansion and the fence because the fence is in the CIP.

Town Manager Coggsdale said we can work with National Pools and tell them we want to proceed with the six items and to include the other items if it is decided to not do the tile and plaster work. We can ask for an extension in the contract to work through the other items.

Mayor Boies asked about the fence price. **Asst. Town Manager Shipe** said this was the cost that was put in the CIP. **Mayor Boies** is worried the cost will be more.

Council Member Carter amended his motion to read: “I move approve pool repairs for Phase I up to \$55,000 including the six items with the option for later approval for tile and plaster work; second by Council Member Kimmons. With no further discussion, the motion passed on a roll call vote with the following results:

Vice Mayor McCornyn	Aye
Council Member Carter	Aye
Council Member Hooser	Absent
Council Member Kimmons	Aye
Council Member Lowder	Aye
Council Member Monahan	Aye
Council Member Woodson	Aye
Council Member Stover	Aye

3) Section 86-39. Shutting off Water for Failure to Pay Bill Text Amendment:

Council Member Monahan moved to approve the text amendment to Section 86-39 of the Strasburg Town Code as presented; second Council Member Lowder. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4) Other old business:

Council Member Monahan discussed the Dunmore property and how its use could be determined. She asked **Director of P&PS Otis** to research putting in proffers with the rezoning of the property so that if it is approved that there are proffers that go with the land if it is sold.

Town Attorney Helm said if we are rezoning to a certain type of zoning, you can’t ask them not to use it for certain things.

Director of P&PS Otis said once a proffer is approved, they go with the property. There are certain things that the Planning Commission has already asked for. Council could show a concern for certain use, and it could be brought before the owner who could then decide if they wanted to proffer the suggestion. **Director of P&PS Otis** said he had suggested having land bays.

Council Member Monahan said we can suggest proffers, but can you rezone property for only certain use? Could we create our own use district for this property? **Town Manager Coggsdale** said that would be a conditional rezoning. **Director of P&PS Otis** said the owner would have to identify what he would not put in. These are all voluntary conditions.

Town Attorney Helm asked if **Council Member Monahan** was talking an overlay district and she said that is what she is thinking of. He would need to discuss this further.

Mayor Boies asked if this is coming from concerns of smells and noise. **Council Member Monahan** said when looking at the property across from Food Lion, how many times has something been said is going in or the type of houses we are dealing with. This is to protect future people.

Council Member Carter asked if the uses for light industrial are listed on our website, and it is in the UDO that shows what can be put on that property. It will behoove people to look at this so they can see what they might be dealing with. **Director of P&PS Otis** will send this to all of Council and it will be included in the next packet.

Mayor Boies said we have been waiting to hear from Dewberry regarding 115 West King Street and they will be at the March 4 meeting.

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>).*****

Director of P&PS Otis said they have been working with the engineers for the Queen Street and the Sandy Hook water line projects. There will be an open meeting so the citizens can come and hear what is being proposed.

Mayor Boies congratulated both **Brian Otis** and **Brian McKee** on their promotions.

Mayor Boies said business licenses are due on March 1. She asked how this helps the town. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said this is how we get our BPOL taxes. The process helps us find who is in business. It helps with the budget process.

Asst. Town Manager Shipe added that it gives a contact person for businesses which can be used in emergencies.

Mayor Boies said a new bakery is coming to town. We always welcome all new businesses.

Town Attorney Helm said we have the zoning violation matter with a court date of April 2. He will provide an update following this.

Special Committee Reports:

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission: Council Member Kimmons submitted a written report which read: "The Commission met on January 18th. We received a report on a Virginia Housing PDC grant that the Commission has been overseeing. This is a grant used to help build housing for lower income families. The program was awarded with funds to build 20 homes in our region. A few houses were built in Strasburg using these funds. The commission passed a resolution to adopt the updated Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan is updated every 5 years to be eligible for pre and post disaster funding. In the near future, this council will also be voting on the plan. If anyone would like to read the plan now, it is available online from the NSVRC website or I have a pdf I can forward to you. The commission will not be meeting this month."

Town Manager Coggsdale asked if there was a date to add this to the agenda for the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and **Council Member Kimmons** said the NSVRC will be in contact on that.

Council Member Items:

Council Member Monahan asked about the volunteer site on Facebook for volunteers for Strasburg that **Business and Engagement Coordinator McKee** developed and it is "Discover Us". Council Member Monahan said for a long time the "Discover Strasburg" page promoted things from all over. And, now everything is Strasburg related. **Business and Engagement Coordinator McKee** has also started initiatives about volunteers, and he has gotten 30 volunteers.

Mayor Boies said the key is to keep volunteers engaged and put them to work.

Council Member Kimmons said next Saturday (February 24) will be the "Nanny's Quilt" event at the Visitor Center. This quilt shows the interrelationships in our community through its 225 names shown on the quilt.

Closed meeting: none

Adjournment:

Being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.