

New Market Town Council Minutes
Monday, November 17, 2008
7:30 pm

The New Market Town Council met in the Council Chambers of the Arthur L. Hildreth, Jr. Municipal Building with the following members present: Larry Smith, Mayor, John Blosser, Vice Mayor, Ripley Click, Harry Durrett, Eddie Litten, Gary Comer, and Troy Fadeley.

Town Attorney – Jason Ham
Town Manager – Chris Boies
Town Clerk – Jeanne Rinker
Visitors and Press – See attached Sheet

Mayor Smith opened the meeting and declared that a quorum was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Smith presented the Consent Agenda which included the minutes for the Council meeting held on October 27, 2008 and the Financial Statements for October 2008. Mr. Fadeley moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Comer seconded the motion which passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearings.

Mayor Smith announced at this time that before the Citizen Comments and Petitions, he had a statement he would like to read into the minutes. The statement follows:

“I have heard some concerns from the public over the resolution adopted by the Council last Wednesday and its impact on the ability of the Fire Department to operate on a day-to-day basis. That resolution stated that the Company’s annual donation will be held until the Company takes action based on the Barrett Report. The Council budgeted \$20,000 for the Fire Department in the current fiscal year (The fiscal year runs July 1 – June 30). The Town and Fire Company have an arrangement where the Town pays for the electricity and dumpster services at the Fire Hall throughout the year. Those payments are made directly to the vendors (Dominion Power and Green Earth). The resolution adopted on Wednesday does not stop these payments because they are made

directly to the vendor. The Town also provides sewer and water free of charge and this will continue.

The Total payments made for the electricity and dumpster services throughout the year are then subtracted at the end of the fiscal year from the \$20,000 budgeted and a check is written to the Fire Company for the remaining balance. During the last budget year, that check was made for \$4,107.21 and disbursed on June 25th, 2008. The next payment from the Town to the Fire Company is not due again until June of 2009. My point is that the resolution adopted last week should not inhibit the ability of the Fire Company to operate on a day-to-day basis because a payment is not expected from the Town until June of '09. We are continuing to pay for the electricity and dumpster services, and look forward to working with the Fire Company so that the annual donation that is due in June can be paid to the Fire Company.”

Citizens Comments and Petitions

Mr. John Chroniger of Greenview Lane came to the podium and commended Mr. Click for bringing to the Council’s attention the cash on hand and the possibility of using some of that for the regional Sewer Agreement with Broadway.

Secondly, Mr. Chroniger made the following comments regarding the Streetscape Project: “When the Town finishes this project, and we have new sidewalks, I question whether or not these improvements will bring in tourists. What I wish to know is ‘Will my tax dollars, (and when I say ‘my’ I mean all of the citizens) our 20 % of the cost, be refunded to us by the taxes of those tourists that the new streetscape should be bringing in?’ I worry that we do not have enough downtown businesses to have these tourists spend enough money to give me back my 20%. What are we going to do to (1) fill the empty retail spaces and (2) have the current property owners make their retail spaces more attractive to cause businesses to relocate here? Do we have any plans? Are we offering any incentives? Shouldn’t we be working on these issues simultaneously with the planning of the streetscape project? As my point of view, I think we should be working on both aspects, not doing one and then waiting to fill the vacant spaces. I’d like you all to think about that.”

Mayor Smith responded, “At the conference that Mr. Durrett and I attended this summer for newly elected officials, one of the concerns was economic development. We both attended that session and agreed that we need to get some plans working in that regard. The two do go hand in glove; I couldn’t agree with you more, and we are addressing that.”

Committee Reports

Finance & Personnel:

Mr. Fadeley reported that the Finance and Personnel Committee met on November 3, 2008 with all members present. The Committee heard a presentation from

Mr. John Crim, President of the Chamber of Commerce concerning some goals and activities of the Chamber for this year. After some discussion the Committee voted to recommend to full Council the approval of the following items:

- Allow the Town to treat health insurance premiums that are deducted from employees on a pre-tax basis;
- Provide a \$100 holiday bonus in December for Town employees;

A closed session was held to discuss appointments of citizens to Town Committees after which the meeting was adjourned.

Public Works

Mr. Blosser reported that the Public Works Committee met on November 3, 2008. All members were present. They discussed having a special work session and set Thursday, November 13th at 2:00 pm as the meeting date. The Committee also discussed funding for the \$2.25 million payment to Broadway and decided to discuss it further at the work session.

The Committee met again on Thursday, November 13th, 2008 with all members present. The purpose of the meeting was discussion and consideration of increasing water/sewer rates and connection fees. Staff gave a report on various increases. After a very lengthy discussion, the Committee proposed water/sewer rate increases, an increase in connection fees, and agreed to hold a public hearing on the issue at the December 2008 Council Meeting.

Public Safety

Mr. Comer reported that the Public Safety Committee met on Monday, November 3, 2008 with all members present. It was announced that Police Officer Chris Rinker was promoted to Sergeant.

Mr. Comer then gave a summary and an update on recent happenings within the New Market Volunteer Fire Department. He stated that the Committee had a very productive meeting with acting Fire Chief, Matt Hughes following a newsbreak the previous Wednesday of serious allegations occurring within the Fire Department. Mr. Hughes and his Board of Directors, within a span of two days, terminated two families from the Fire Department. They also had implemented procedures recommended by the auditors, one of which was the decision to hire a Certified Public Accountant to handle their finances and bookkeeping. Mr. Comer highly commended Mr. Hughes, his Board of Directors, and other members of the Fire Department for a very quick, clean, and efficient operation. He then introduced Mr. Hughes and the acting President of the Fire Department, Stan Pawloski. He invited Mr. Hughes to offer any comments he had regarding the events of the past week.

Mr. Hughes assured everyone that what happened within the Fire Department was strictly administrative, and did not affect anything operational. Although funding from the County and Town are currently on hold, it will hopefully be restored in the near future. Mr. Hughes stated that he is scheduled to meet with County officials within the next few days.

Tourism, Economic Development and Historic Preservation

Chairman Harry Durrett reported that the Committee had no business on the agenda and did not meet in November.

Action Items

The first item eligible for Council action was discussion and consideration of documentation authorizing the Town to treat employee health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis. **Mr. Litten made a motion to approve this documentation. It was seconded by Mr. Comer and passed on a unanimous roll call vote.**

The second agenda item was consideration of employee holiday bonuses. **Mr. Fadeley moved to give each full time employee a \$100 bonus in December. It was seconded by Mr. Litten and passed on a unanimous roll call vote.**

Next on the Action Items list was discussion and consideration of Resolution #190 showing the Council's appreciation to every one who helped with the new library and its opening. Mr. Boies read the Resolution. **Mr. Litten made a motion to adopt Resolution #190. It was seconded by Mr. Comer and passed on a unanimous roll call vote.**

The final agenda item was discussion and consideration of a slogan/motto contest for the Town. Mayor Smith commented that with the upcoming Streetscape Project, he would like to implement a contest to get ideas and to adopt a Town slogan/motto. He added that the plan would be to solicit ideas in December and January, send them out in February to be voted upon, and announce the winner in March. The winner would receive one month's free water bill up to \$75.00. **Mr. Click made a motion to approve the holding of a contest to adopt a Town slogan. Mr. Blosser seconded. The motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote.**

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Smith announced that the 2nd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting will take place here at the Town Hall on December 6, 2008 at 6:00 pm. A choral group from Stonewall Jackson High School will be here for the caroling. Refreshments of coffee, hot chocolate and cookies will be served in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Smith informed everyone that water/sewer rate increases will be discussed at the December Mayor's Forum. The exact date has not yet been set. The public will

have an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments in a less formal setting before the Public Hearing.

On a final note, Mayor Smith thanked the members of the Fire Company and of the Public Safety Committee for the work that has been done so far. He stated, "It speaks well for the Town and the concern for the citizens of the Town. Fire protection for the citizens has always been high quality and we're sure it will remain high quality."

Council Comments

Mr. Litten stated that he wanted to express a personal comment. He expressed his support for Mr. Fadeley whose name appeared in the newspaper articles regarding the Fire Company.

Staff Comments

Mr. Boies stated that a date needed to be set for the next Streetscape Committee meeting. He proposed Monday, December 8th, 2008, and it was agreed to have the meeting on that date.

Mr. Boies announced that the audit report for the last fiscal year has been received. He asked Council if they would like for the auditing company to come and speak to the Council or to the Finance Committee regarding the report. Mr. Fadeley responded that he thought it would be best if Council members were given a copy of the report to read and then they would decide. Mr. Boies said as soon as he received the copies he would distribute them to the Council.

Closed Session

There were no closed sessions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Larry Smith, Mayor

Jeaane K. Rinker, Town Clerk

