

VARNVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 13th, 2024

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Mayor Nathaniel “Nat” Shaffer.

Officials present ; Mayor Pro – Tem Henry A. Campbell, Councilman Ronald Williams, Councilman Faye Gooding, Councilman Joseph Williams, Councilwoman Linda Cooler. Councilman Nicholas Ginn,

Others- Police Chief Smith, Fire Chief Bryan Adams, Wade Freeman, Dorris Sheffield, Willie Micheal Williams, Stuart Thompson, Shari Nichols

1.1 Invocation – Councilman Joseph Williams

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Nathaniel Shaffer

1.3 Freedom of Information Act (**FOIA**) Compliance – Clerk Shannon Shaffer

2. Consent Agenda Items –

2.1 Approval of Agenda – Agenda amended. No objections / Approved

2.2 Approval of Minutes – 5-14-24- and 6-11-24 No Objections / Approved
Motion made by Joseph Williams and seconded by Councilmember Linda Cooler

3. Reports of Department Heads

3.1 Chief Smith reported that two officers accepted jobs at another department.

He also reported that by doing some research he was able to get 2 Dodge Chargers donated to the Town through a state surplus. Chief Smith also reported that crime rate is down in Varnville.

3.2 Fire Chief Bryan Adams reported that in the month of June the fire department responded to twenty-two in town calls and nineteen county calls and for the month of July the fire department responded to eighteen in town calls and twenty-seven county calls. He also reported the only large fire

occurred at Varnville Elementary School and that fire fighters did a wonderful job responding. Arson was ruled out as a cause of the fire.

3.3 Mayor Shaffer reported that SEID Grant awarded the Town of Varnville \$93,600 toward the Gin Building Feasibility Study. This Grant will be used to determine how this building could be used to benefit the community.

Mayor Shaffer also reported that it was approved by the South Carolina Department of Safety that Varnville has been awarded \$280,000 as requested and approved by Representative Bill Hagar, to pay for the eight-hundred-megahertz radio system and eight fire air packs.

Also reported based on data, Varnville is now considered, for the first time, 62.3 LMI (Low to Moderate Income).

CBDG Grants through LCOG will be available this Fall, and we will apply for any grants that would be beneficial for Varnville.

4. Old Business-

4.1. First reading of the town of Varnville Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Motion was made by Councilman Nick Ginn and seconded by Councilman Ronald Williams. All were in favor.

5. New Business

5.1 Discussion / Action on Sale of Surplus Equipment in G/S Department. :

Mayor Shaffer presented the council with the need of selling of one of the two garbage trucks since the town is in contract with S&S Garbage Disposal. Also, money from this truck will go back into general funds and toward updating the general services dump truck.

Mayor Shaffer motioned to sell surplus general services equipment through govdeals

seconded by Councilwoman Faye Gooding.
All were in favor.

5.2 Discussion /Action on purchase of Forklift/ Lull &Basket

Mayor Shaffer presented information for the purchase of a Skytrak forklift/lull basket. There is a general revenue bond in place to purchase this equipment. This equipment would be used for hanging festival signs, Christmas lights on light poles, and be used for trimming trees in the area. Also, suggested that we could rent the lift to the Town of Hampton.

5.3 Discussion / Action on property maintenance / code enforcement/ feral cats/ dogs

Chief Smith reported that there a stray dog issue within town limits however, the Animal Shelter is not accepting any dogs and Police Officers are not trained to catch

stray/aggressive animals. Officers are directed to contact animal control in their training . Due to the risk in catching these animals the only solution for the Police Department in handling aggressive stray dogs is by terminating them if they are not on their owner's property and are attacking other animals or people.

Shari Nichls and Partner Stuart Thompson reported that the stray dogs in question have been on there property and killed their pet cat on the porch of their home. They shared photos and other accounts that they have had with the same pack of dogs. They have had to fence in their yard to keep them from coming into there yard and killing other animals.

Chief Smith reiterated the Leash Law that Varnville has established. Those who have loose dogs or do not have dogs on leash or within voice command can be ticketed. If confronted with animals deemed vicious or deadly to others can be terminated by whatever means the officer has.

For 3 years Mrs. Nichols has caught stray cats, has them spayed/ neutered and released them after healing from surgeries. All this is done with out-of-pocket expenses. The Town allocated \$1500.00 to the Hampton Animal Hospital assist Mrs. Nichls with her efforts. Mayor Shaffer made the motion and seconded my Councilman Joseph Williams.

5.4 Discussion / Action on Budgetary matters; revenue and expenditures

Mayor Shaffer presented the council with a profit and loss sheet. Currently the Town is having an audit performed. Updates to the budget will be made once the audit is completed.

6. Executive Session

Motion was made by Henry Campbell and seconded by Faye Gooding to enter executive session.

6.1 Receipt of legal advice dealing with matters covered by attorney-client privileges, including pending or potential legal claims.

6.2 Personnel matters – Grievance

No formal action was taken after the executive session.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:47pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Shannon Shaffer
Admin. Assistant/ Clerk