

VARNVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday January 23, 2024

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Mayor Nathaniel “Nat” A. Shaffer. Officials present ; Mayor Pro - Tem Henry A. Campbell, Councilman Ronald Williams, Councilman Nick Ginn, Councilwoman Faye Gooding, Councilwoman Linda Cooler, and Councilman Joseph Williams.

Others – Fire Department – Wade Hadwin, Bryan Adams, Police Department – Chief Smith. Joshua Thomas – Code Enforcer Officer, Dorris Sheffield, George Crosson Jr., Edna McQuire, Johnnie Green, Chris A. Crosby

1.1 Invocation – Mayor Nathaniel A. Shaffer

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance - Mayor Nathaniel A. Shaffer

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

2. Consent Agenda Items -

2.1 Approval of Agenda - Mayor Shaffer revised the agenda by addition of 6.2 - No objections.

2.2 Approval of Minutes – 11/27/23 – No Objections / Approved

3. Reports of Department Heads

3.1 Fire Department, Bryan Adams reported that they have responded to 29 Town Calls and 29 County calls for the month of December.

3.2 Police Department, Chief Tyrone Smith reported information about the current police department employee work schedule and included an example of a potential schedule if VPD was fully staffed. Chief Smith gave a copy of the

officer's schedule to the Councilmembers and Mayor. – information only. There have been no recent applicants for positions at the Police Department. Chief Smith also recommended installing a special permit process for anyone planning events such as community dances and private birthday parties in Varnville town limits. This process will require the event planners to pay a permit fee where proceeds can be applied to benefit public functions planned by the town such as the Annual Christmas Celebration. This will require an ordinance to be implemented.

3.3 Mayor Shaffer reported the Lowcountry Regional Water System (LRWS) has several employment positions open including a water treatment plant operator and three utility technicians.

With regards to the CDBG demolition grant, the town of Varnville was not awarded funding due to the mass number of applications. We may reapply in Fall 2024.

Also, Mayor Shaffer provided the council with a profit and loss statement showing each department's income and expenditures for the period of July 2023 – December 2023. He reiterated most expenses are within budget. However, cash flow is down and the cost of goods and services continues to increase.

4. **Public Hearing**

4.1 Pro- Tem Alexander Campbell made the motion to enter Public Hearing, seconded by Councilman Nick Ginn. All in favor.

Joshua Thomas from Safebuilt, town code enforcer officer, presented the council, mayor and attendees with his professional evaluation and opinion of dilapidated buildings existing at 964 Carolina Ave. and 42 Bennet Street. Mr. Thomas explained the risk and requirements that led him to make the decision to condemn the forementioned buildings. The owners of these properties, the family of George Crosson of 42 Bennet Street and Jonnie Green, owner of 964 Carolina Ave, were present at the hearing. Mr. Thomas reiterated the risk and requirements that were met on their property, as well as explaining what steps the owners would need to take, and the time the demolition should take place. Mr. Crosson stated that they would be demolishing the building themselves. Mr. Amos Crosby, the property owner adjacent to Mr. Green's, 964 Carolina Ave, complained about the condition and activities occurring there. He has witnessed vagrants occupying the structure, as well as commercial building supplies and construction debris being stored on this property. Mr. Green stated that he and Mr. Crosby do not associate. Mr. Green stated he agreed to adhere to the conditions of the condemnation and will renovate the property to bring it back up

to code. Mayor Shaffer explained to all parties involved that the town wishes to work with each property owner and to understand their situations. Property owners will have due process. However, if the town absorbs the cost of demolition a lien would be placed on the property to cover the cost, and that the town would rather give the owners every opportunity to take care of the problem on their own.

With no objections Mayor Shaffer closed the public hearing.

5. Old Business - No old business to be discussed at this meeting.

6. Executive Session – The motion was made by Councilman Alexander Campbell and seconded by Councilmen Nick Ginn to enter executive session at 7:59 pm. All were in favor.

7. New Business -

7.1. First reading; Ordinance #2024- 01; AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUSINESS LICENSES ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF VARNVILLE TO UPDATE TO THE LATEST STANDARDIZED CLASS SCHEDULE AS REQUIRED. Motion was made by Nick Ginn and seconded by Councilwoman Faye Gooding. All were in favor.

7.2. Election of Mayor Pro-Tem; Councilman Ronald Williams nominated Henry A. Campbell for Mayor Pro Temp and Councilwoman Faye Gooding seconded. No other nominations were made. All were in favor.

7.3. Mayor Shaffer made a motion to postpone the appointment of the Fire Chief to the next meeting on the 13th of February. Seconded by Councilman Alexander Campbell. All were in favor.

7.4 The council was presented with a report of all dilapidated buildings and abatement thereof. This report is for the review of the actions taken place by our code enforcing officer at various addresses within the town limits.

7.5. First reading; Ordinance #2024 – 02; AN ORDINANCE FOR COMMERCIAL TRASH COLLECTION DUMPSTERS, BINS, AND SIMILAR FACILITY'S BUFFER AND SITE STANDARDS. Motion to adopt by Councilman Nick Ginn and Seconded by Councilman Alexander. All were in favor. A public hearing will be scheduled for this ordinance.

7.6. ARP Funding report presented. Councilman Ronald Williams made the motion to allocate the amount of \$25,000 of ARP funding to the refurbishment or improvement of Ginn Street Park area. Seconded by Councilman Joseph Williams. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shannon E. Shaffer
Admin. Assistant / Clerk