

REGULAR WORK SESSION OF THE FARMVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MARCH 6, 2024

At the regular work session of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 6:00 PM, in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia, there were present Mayor Brian Vincent, presiding, and Council members Sallie Amos, A.D. “Chuckie” Reid, Dan Dwyer, Tommy Pairet, Donald Hunter and John Hardy.

Staff present were Town Manager Scott Davis, Finance Director Julie Moore, Town Attorney Gary Elder, Chief of Police Andy Ellington, Community Development Director and IT Support Ashley Atkins-Austin, Deputy Clerk Jacqueline Vaughan, and Clerk of Council Mary McKay.

Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order and welcomed all guests present and watching online.

The Clerk called the roll, noting Council member Adam Yoelin as absent.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Hunter made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Reid, and with all in favor stating “aye”, the motion passed.

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest made.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Julie Moore provided the January 2024 Monthly Financial Report. The revenue compared to the budget should be at 58%, but the water and sewer funds are below that percentage as ARPA money is budgeted but the revenue isn’t recorded until the end of the year. Revenue compared to the prior year is up except for the airport fund. Last year there was a large ongoing project with federal funding that isn’t occurring this year. Ms. Moore reported that the expenses compared to the budget are well below 58% and considered a positive. The same departments talked about for the last few months are still over budget but should be under budget by year’s end. The expenses versus prior year are below but there are still some departments that are over as previously reported, for the OpenGov software purchase and the Splash Pad.

Town Manager Scott Davis reported on an update to the Town of Farmville financial policies. The Council already has adopted financial policies which have been amended once before. These policies are being updated once again to change the format to what is used in submission for a Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) award. Additionally, the

revenue to expenditure debt limit of 10% is being increased to 13%. Council members were provided with the proposed financial policies for review as a resolution will be brought forward at the March 13, 2024, regular meeting for the Council's consideration.

DISCUSSION: UPDATING PARKING CITATIONS

The Town Manager reported on the need to update the current parking citation as new parking meters are being installed downtown in areas with metered parking. With the new electric vehicle charging stations also being installed, a fine is being proposed for parking at an electric vehicle charging station and not charging a vehicle. However, since providing the proposed citation changes, it has been determined that for this violation, there is a state code that doesn't allow a locality to charge a fine of more than \$25. For the other violations, an increase of \$25. is being proposed, from \$25. to \$50. per fine. Additionally, state code allows localities to tow a vehicle if a driver has more than three unpaid parking citations. The driver would need to pay the unpaid parking citations before paying the fine to the tow company. Council members were asked for feedback on how to move forward with changes to the current parking citation. Also noted from the town's ordinances, a parking citation could be issued for an expired inspection and state registration for any vehicle parked upon the town's roadways. Mr. Pairt inquired about the enforcement for antique vehicle tags. Inspection or state registration is not required for antique vehicles, but those vehicles are supposed to be driven only for certain purposes.

Reported also was the need to make changes to the outdated meter ordinance which states a two-hour maximum, Monday through Saturday, 8 AM to 6 PM wording, and states fines are not assessed on specific holidays which is no longer current. The parking meters are covered from Thanksgiving to the first of the year, and fines are not assessed during that time.

A brief discussion was held about a problem with merchants parking on the street all day and how to enforce parking limits.

It was asked if there would be signage placed on the meters for assessing the parking fines. The Town Manager advised if the changes are approved, some type of information would be issued concerning the fines, but notices would not be mailed out to residents.

For future discussion, it was reported that a local company had reached out for assistance in getting their tenants to park in a designated parking area instead of in the Train Station lot closest to the Lofts Apartments on East Third Street. A suggestion was made to change that lot to metered

parking for anyone to use. If the train station is rented for an event, the parking meter fines would be waived.

The proposed changes will be brought forward again once ordinances are drafted and will require public hearings. There was a consensus to move forward with the changes to the parking citation.

DISCUSSION: LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY FACILITY GOLF CARTS

Town Manager Davis reported that Longwood University's new facilities building on Fourth Street is nearing completion. Longwood's campus has become more enclosed for safer and easier pedestrian traffic and as some of the roads on campus are closed to vehicle traffic, golf carts are utilized. With the new facilities building now being located off-campus, the Town has been asked to develop an ordinance to allow the university's employees to cross the roadway with golf carts to campus. Council members were provided with Code of Virginia, 46.2-916.2 Designation of public highways for golf cart and utility vehicle operations, and 46.2-916.3 Limitations on golf cart and utility vehicle operations on designated public highways, with several sections being referenced. Longwood University needs access from their facilities building to Redford Street on the other side of Main Street. The following route is being recommended: from where the parking lot is located at the facilities building in which Longwood owns, crossing the creek then turning left into the Midtown Square parcel, go onto what used to be part of South Street on the roadway through Midtown Square which Longwood Foundation owns, make a right turn onto Putney and go up a short distance, and cross Main Street at a controlled signal onto Redford Street. Council members were also provided for reference the City of Radford, Virginia's Code of Ordinances Article VI.-OPERATION OF GOLF CARTS AND UTILITY VEHICLES, Sec. 55-247.-Authorized Users, as this locality has prepared an ordinance solely for Radford University. It was noted that the area to be traversed from the new facilities building to campus would be defined by access points in writing instead of having a map attached. Longwood University would be required to provide a crossing for the golf carts to make the other vehicle traffic aware, decal all of their golf carts, and be required to have a slow-moving sign on the rear of the golf carts by code.

Discussions were held with several questions and concerns noted:

- Mr. Hunter asked if the ordinance would specify a time of day or at any time.
- Mr. Pairet mentioned if crossing streets in town, there should be lights and brake lights.

- Mr. Hardy asked if there would be a penalty for crossing where not supposed to.
- Mr. Reid asked who would be driving the golf carts on the route. Also brought up were the crosswalks and brick walkways downtown that are not lighted and blinking with the students walking out causing safety concerns.
- Mr. Hardy asked if the only crossing being proposed would be Putney Street crossing Main Street.
- Mr. Dwyer mentioned previously being asked why golf carts aren't allowed in certain areas in town and being referred to a locality such as Clarksville that has an ordinance for a certain neighborhood, but lights and some other safety features are required. Agreeing with Mr. Pairet, Mr. Dwyer stated it feels unsafe to go up Putney Street heading toward Main Street with a vehicle that does not have lights.

Town Manager Davis provided information as the questions were asked. The timeframe that the golf carts would travel the proposed route is sunrise to sunset. If the area designated is not used for crossing, a ticket could be received for a traffic infraction. Campus employees for the facilities maintenance building would be driving the golf carts. He also mentioned the only other alternative if golf carts aren't allowed, is that slow moving vehicles be used which doesn't require an ordinance be adopted as they're licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles to operate on the roadway. He noted also that the golf carts are at a very different price. Discussion continued about the slow-moving vehicle sign being used on the back end of the golf cart and a blinking light being used. It was not suggested as Mr. Dwyer brought up about using golf carts in general because the Town of Farmville does not have the same level of traffic as some localities. The amount of distance to travel is not safe with the amount of traffic the town has.

- Mr. Dwyer remarked that he doesn't disagree but thinks it could be a concern when Longwood University is allowed to do something that perhaps the public is denied, even with better safety features.

The Town Manager noted this being one of the reasons for sharing what another college town/city has done in allowing only university use and not for the city as a whole.

- Mr. Hunter asked if Longwood University could be responsible for lighting up the crossing area to make sure people are aware.

The Town Manager reiterated that Longwood is willing to mark the golf carts as Longwood University golf carts, provide the slow-moving signage on the golf carts, and the requirement is that there are signs at that intersection letting drivers know of the golf cart crossing, and the University will be responsible for paying for the signs and installation.

- Mr. Hardy mentioned that he liked Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Pairet's comments that a light be used.
- Mr. Pairet remarked that a yellow strobe light should be required on top of the golf cart in order to cross the street if the Council decides to follow through.
- Mr. Dwyer followed up noting as a minimum, something is needed to indicate that there's a moving object going up Putney Street because it's going to be in the same lane as the cars.

A brief discussion was held for the location of the light on the golf cart, the top or the back.

- Mr. Hunter advised he had no problem with a light being added as a requirement.

Mayor Vincent advised of a consensus that Council members want some form of a safety light on the back of the golf cart.

HEALTH CARE YEARLY RENEWAL

The Town Manager reported that for the second year in a row, there is no increase in the health benefits renewal rates for fiscal year 2025. The rates will be kept the same for those insured and for what portion the town pays. As there is a short turnaround time and an April 1st due date, a resolution will be brought forward at the March 13, 2024 meeting to move forward with signing an agreement continuing with the health insurance rates.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager reported on another topic for discussion that there was no time to include in the packet before distribution. Council members were provided with a paper copy of the information for review. Not being here in 2014, and able to receive only little information found by Ms. Vaughan and some others and very little from the minutes from back then, Town Manager Davis continued by describing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) whereas Longwood University pays the Town \$35,000/year to lease the following streets: Redford, Madison, Spruce, Race, the driveway around the President's house, Franklin, and a portion of Pine

Street. He reported there were some open and closed meetings with very little information as to the purpose of the MOU. The town still owns the streets and receives state funding to maintain.

Discussion was held with input provided by several Council members. It was mentioned that it was thought at the time, Longwood University was charging for parking permits to park on the referenced streets, and the town was trying to get a portion of the money back from where students were being charged to park on the town's streets. It was thought Longwood University was generating money from issuing parking permits that they were able to turn around and give that money to the town to pay for the use of the Farmville Area Bus to transport students around. It was on the town's streets that Longwood was charging for parking to generate money to help offset the cost of using the Farmville Area Bus.

The Town Manager reported Longwood University wants to dissolve the MOU and no longer pay the \$35,000/year. The Council was asked what if Longwood University wants to take over those streets that are on their campus. Would the town be willing to turn those streets over with them being fully maintained by the University? The Town would no longer have any responsibility for the paving, or the maintenance and those streets would belong to them.

Additional information was requested by Council:

- What does Longwood University charge, if anything, for the parking spots on those public streets?
- What does the town save by giving up those streets and not maintaining them?
- A map of the referenced area was requested.
- Are all the houses on Pine Street owned by Longwood University?

There is a Planning Commission vacancy with the resignation of Ward A Planning Commissioner Jayne Johnson. A position advertisement for Ward A was placed in *The Farmville Herald* to receive applications for those interested, however no applications were received. Since that time, the Ward B representative Rhett Weiss has offered, as he lives in Ward A and it's on the same term date, to be reappointed for the Ward A seat, and then a Ward B vacancy could be advertised. It was noted that Mr. Weiss lives in Ward A but at the time there was an opening in Ward B. If no one applies from the ward with the vacancy, someone from outside the ward is

allowed to fill the seat. Discussion was held by the Council with the topic to be brought forward to move Rhett Weiss to Ward A and then open for Ward B applications to be received.

COMMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Council member Reid brought up for discussion again the topic of the unmarked walkways and crosswalks downtown. Referenced was the Madison Street crosswalk with the blinking lights, and the two brick walkways with no signs or lights. It was asked if some sort of sign or notice be placed there for the safety of the students who walk out on the unmarked and not-blinking walkways, or either ask Longwood for stronger enforcement of the crosswalks.

The Town Manager advised the areas are marked with crosswalk paint and the University has asked the students to use the crosswalk with the blinking light.

A request was made for a letter to be sent to Longwood University notifying them again about the concerns and ask for enforcement.

After discussion concerning whether there needs to be the additional crosswalks in the area, the Town Manager advised the crosswalks will be looked at to determine which ones are needed.

There being no other business and on a motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Pairt, with all in favor stating “aye”, the meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

Mary H. McKay, Clerk of Council