

REGULAR MEETING OF THE FARMVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON APRIL 10, 2024

At the regular meeting of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, April 10, 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, Daniel Dwyer, Tommy Pairt, Adam Yoelin, Donald Hunter, and John Hardy.

Staff present were Town Manager Scott Davis, Town Attorney Gary Elder, Finance Director Julie Moore, Chief of Police Andy Ellington, Captain William Hogan, Public Works Director Robin Atkins, Fire Chief Daniel Clark, 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 in attendance, those tuned-in online and students from Professor Eric Hodges’ class from Longwood University.

The Clerk called the roll, noting all Council members were present.

The Lord’s Prayer was recited for anyone wishing to join in prayer. Vice-Mayor Reid led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest made.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL AS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

After reading the proclamation, Mayor Vincent then made a presentation to Rick Ewing who accepted on behalf of the Friends of the Barbara Rose Johns Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library.

**PROCLAMATION
IN RECOGNITION OF APRIL AS
NATIONAL POETRY MONTH**

WHEREAS, the Academy of American Poets established the month of April as National Poetry Month in 1996; and

WHEREAS, National Poetry Month seeks to highlight the ongoing achievement of American poets by introducing Americans to the pleasures and benefits of reading poetry; by bringing poets and poetry to the public in immediate and innovative ways and by making poetry an important part of our children's education; and

WHEREAS, as National Poetry Month, under the leadership and direction of the Academy of American Poets, is now the largest literary celebration in the world; and

WHEREAS, poetry enriches the lives of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, poetry, as an essential part of the arts and humanities, affects every aspect of life in America today, including education, the economy, and community pride and development; and

WHEREAS, poetry has produced some of the nation's leading creative artists and has inspired other artists in fields such as music, theatre, film, dance, and the visual arts; and

WHEREAS, National Poem in Your Pocket Day will be celebrated on April 18th. Poems will be available at Farmville Downtown Businesses, Longwood University's Greenwood Library, Hampden-Sydney College's Bortz Library, and at Centra Southside Community Hospital.

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS PROCLAIMED, by the Mayor and Town Council that the month of April be recognized as National Poetry Month in the Town of Farmville, Virginia, in honor of poets across America that share their talent with the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Seal of the Town of Farmville, Virginia to be affixed on this 10th day of April, in the year 2024.

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

Mayor Vincent announced the public hearing period.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Farmville Town Council will hold a public hearing at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, VA. The purpose of the public hearing is to hear citizen comments on the following matters:

- **Adoption of Resolution No. 2024-04-01, FY 2024-2025 Town Budget**

**TOWN OF FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA
BUDGET SUMMARY
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025**

Fund	Revenue	Expenditures
10 General Fund	15,485,558.17	15,485,558.17
15 Street Maintenance Fund	2,352,512.54	2,352,512.54
40 Water Fund	3,043,556.35	3,043,556.35
42 Sewer Fund	2,551,130.60	2,551,130.60
44 Transportation Fund	925,870.12	925,870.12
45 Airport Fund	1,114,227.49	1,114,227.49
Total	25,472,855.27	25,472,855.27

The above budget includes a real estate tax rate of \$0.13 cents per \$100.00 of assessed value, a personal property tax rate (business only) of \$1.50 per \$100.00 of assessed value, a \$0.27 cent per pack cigarette tax rate, and a 7 percent tax rate on amount paid for meals and lodging within the Town of Farmville limits.

- **Adoption of Resolution No. 2024-04-02, Capital Improvement Plan**

Citizens are encouraged to participate in this public hearing. Any person(s) wishing to comment on the above matters should plan to attend this meeting or submit written comments. Please email Mary McKay at mmckay@farmvilleva.com or mail written comments to PO Drawer 368, Farmville, VA 23901, to arrive by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, April 10, 2024.

Questions and comments regarding the proposed budget may be directed to the Town Manager's Office, 116 North Main Street, PO Drawer 368, Farmville, Virginia, 23901 or by calling (434) 392-5686, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. It is the intent of the Town to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need special accommodation, please contact C. Scott Davis, LP.D., Town Manager, at (434) 392-5686, prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING – ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2024-04-01, FY 2024-2025

TOWN BUDGET

With no one signed up or wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

**PUBLIC HEARING – ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2024-04-02, CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

With no one signed up or wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Mayor Vincent advised that a copy of the budget report may be requested from the Clerk.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The following Longwood University students currently taking Dr. Eric Hodges' Political Science class were present and spoke on several topics:

Reaya Bajor addressed the Council to speak on the many barriers of accessing rural healthcare including transportation, distance, and lack of health insurance coverage. A suggestion was made to partner with Longwood University to help fund a mobile clinic to serve individuals in Farmville and surrounding towns. The mobile clinic could be set up in areas accessible through the Farmville Area Bus and would also help the nursing program students gain more experience before graduating.

Mayor Vincent provided the general guidelines used during the public comment period.

Aislinn Craig spoke on special education in the Prince Edward County school system and in rural areas such as Farmville and reported on the recent statistics showing Prince Edward County High Schools having significantly lower test scores for the state of Virginia at large, especially for students with disabilities. Ms. Craig reported on her group's discussion of potentially having an after-school support program for students.

Sarah Mitchell spoke on the issue of domestic violence to bring awareness of the issue and reported on her unexpected inability to find resources in Prince Edward County. Ms. Mitchell also reported on the 2022 closing of a local women's shelter, Madeline's House, due to a lack of funding and her attempts to contact STEPS, a local non-profit organization and new owner of the facility. To provide better access to resources, Ms. Mitchell mentioned the creation of a website which would list every available resource in Prince Edward County.

Manuel Rodriguez addressed the Council to spread awareness of the growing mental health problem among high school students and mentioned from a survey, that anxiety and depression are some of the largest issues faced, and the need to provide resources. Mr. Rodriguez shared this information with Council members as he feels they are in positions to speak to a larger audience. Also shared were ideas such as mandatory mental health classes for students or teachers to provide

awareness of what to look for when problems occur and schools distributing information to inform students and parents about how to address problems.

Evelyn Henard spoke on the topic of literacy and Covid-19 within Prince Edward County noting literacy plays an essential role in ensuring everyone has a fair chance to receive a proper education but also allows individuals the chance to prepare for their future. Ms. Henard reported on the impact on literacy from covid-19 mentioning the placement test scoring in Virginia before and after Covid, and approximately 34.9% of students are at high risk for reading difficulties. She further asked each Council member to remember literacy as an important tool and investing in it means investing in a brighter future for the community.

Marla Lopez spoke on the topic of substance abuse in the Prince Edward County area. Statistics were provided on the percentage of deaths linked to substance abuse. Ms. Lopez reported that currently those who suffer from substance abuse in the area get arrested and go to jail rather than receiving help and that drug courts could be an alternative. She reported this type of rehabilitation program located in the town of Farmville would be an immense help not only for Farmville residents but those in the surrounding communities who don't have accessible resources. She further asked Council members to consider and support more rehabilitative services or the establishment of drug courts in the area.

Rhett Weiss, resident from 809 Fourth Avenue, Farmville, VA, was present to address the Council and report on the opportunity he had to take the Citizens Police Academy Advanced Course. A thank you was offered to the Town Council and to the Police Department for making the program available. Mr. Weiss presented a monetary donation to Captain Bill Hogan to help offset the costs for his attendance.

Imari Patterson addressed the Council to speak on the topic of substance abuse and provided two talking points, policies and options. Ms. Patterson reported that millions of people are suffering silently from substance abuse and stated the issue doesn't just relate to the colleges but concerns the entire town of Farmville. She asked Council members what options are available so that all are aware and concluded by stating that school is hard enough but having a substance abuse issue makes school even harder.

Mayor Vincent thanked Mr. Weiss for the acknowledgement of the Citizens Police Academy.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Hunter made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Hardy, with all in favor stating “aye”, the motion passed. The Consent Agenda includes the draft minutes of the March 6, 2024 Work Session and the March 13, 2024 Regular Council Meeting.

FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Dwyer made a motion to accept the Finance Report as submitted, seconded by Mr. Reid, and with all in favor stating “aye”, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND:

Finance Director Julie Moore provided the March 2024 report. There was \$17,133.52 earned for the ABM project and this income will go towards future payments on the project. A total of \$16,432.48 was earned at the Virginia Investment Pool (VIP), making a total earned of \$146,707.23 with VIP for fiscal year 2024. There was a total earned of \$20,651.85 in March in the sweep accounts with Benchmark Community Bank, for a total so far of \$187,259.41. There is an earned income of \$34,926.01 in March from investing at the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP), with a total earned at LGIP of \$324,691.47 in fiscal year 2024. The total earned income for March 2024 was \$72,010.34, excluding income received for the ABM project.

OLD BUSINESS – NONE

NEW BUSINESS – NONE

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Davis provided an update:

- Spring Clean-Up is scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2024.
- There will be an update from VDOT on the Green T Intersection and on the Roundabout project at the May 1, 2024, Work Session. Bids for construction will be requested in fall 2026 with construction to begin spring 2027.
- Hurt & Proffitt was hired to obtain information on the Town's water and sewer infrastructure. As previously mentioned, an amendment to the contract to list additional infrastructure will be brought forward, hopefully at the May 8, 2024 meeting. A survey of every manhole will be completed to have an approximate age and location as well as the make, model, and year of the fire hydrants. Once completed the information can be

accessed from the Town's GIS and can be updated as changes are made. The information on the water meters will be available as new equipment is going to be installed.

- Some improvements have been made with getting the disabled cars cleaned up at the automobile repair shops. There is still more work to be done to meet FEMA requirements, especially on West Third Street which is in the flood plain.
- The issue on Longwood Avenue is being taken to the next step, which is to seek the Court's assistance to remediate. There is a public safety issue with a lack of visibility from a fence being installed on a property and the other with disabled vehicles and clutter in the yard.
- The conditional use permit for the solar project will be coming up next week [April 17, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting] and then will be brought forward at the next Regular Council Meeting with other ordinances that were discussed at the April 3, 2024 Work Session.
- From the discussion last week on conditional use permits and how certain zoning districts could be amended and adding conditional use permits, it may be helpful to review at the next Work Session, the details of conditional use permits and some of the ramifications to help in making an informed decision in the next steps.
- Chief Andy Ellington was asked to come forward to provide information on a challenge being requested.

Chief Ellington provided the details of the difficult news recently affecting the department and the diagnosis faced by Communications Operator Helen "Winky" Blanton. To show encouragement and financial support, a challenge was requested of the Council, Town of Farmville employees, and anyone they wish to reach out to. If \$5,000 is successfully raised by May 23, 2024, at 12:00 noon, Chief Ellington reported that he has arranged for his head to be completely shaven. Donations to the cause will be maintained by Finance Director Julie Moore until turned over to Ms. Blanton.

- Town Manager Scott Davis then reported if \$10,000 is raised, he will also shave his head.
- A reminder was made to show appreciation during Emergency Communication Operator's Week, April 14-20, 2024.

COMMENTS BY MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mr. Yoelin commended all for their participation and remarked on the difficulty to speak publicly. He thanked all for coming out and he thought all did very well.

Mr. Dwyer expressed his appreciation to all and to the seniors who will be missed, and wished them the best of luck.

Mrs. Amos reported receiving three text messages concerning \$1,000 donations towards the challenge.

Seeing Prince Edward County Administrator in the audience, Mayor Vincent asked Doug Stanley if there were any items to report.

Mr. Stanley addressed the Mayor and Council members and provided handouts to the Clerk. An apology was mentioned for his late arrival due to his attendance at the Prince Edward-Randolph Henry soccer game being played in overtime.

- The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on April 16, 2024, at 7:00 PM, on the FY 2024-2025 budget and tax rates. There are no proposed tax rate increases. The budget includes a 3% increase for County staff and an increase in the minimum salary from \$12 to \$13.50 per hour.
- Prince Edward County has applied for a \$16.97 million grant from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to construct a 12-inch waterline from the town system to the new 1-million-gallon water tank on Persimmon Tree Fork Road. The project will also provide funding for a waterline from the proposed Sandy River Reservoir to the water tank and hopefully provide funding for an optional adjacent property to allow for the ability to market a larger data center site.
- DEQ held a public hearing on March 5, 2024, at Prince Edward County High School on the draft permit application for the Sandy River project. Appreciation was expressed to the Town Manager for a letter of support.
- 2025 Reassessment is approximately 50% complete with a project completion date of fall 2024, which will then go to the Board of Equalization. An update will be provided as both Town and County tax rates for next year will be impacted.
- Prince Edward County has applied for a \$1.7 million Assistance to Firefighter's grant to purchase radios for the new proposed radio system.
- As of March 1, 2024, the Kinex Broadband project has installed 261 miles of fiber. Mr. Stanley reported a total of 495 customers have been connected to the system.

- The Board of Supervisors approved at their April 9, 2024 meeting, the lease purchase agreement for the radio system.
- Brightspeed has been in contact with Prince Edward County and is looking to submit a Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program grant application to upgrade from copper wire to fiber for residents and businesses in the Farmville area.

No questions were received from Council members.

Mayor Vincent reported his attendance at a Strategic Alliance meeting with a good update received on the Prince Edward County School system.

A reference was made during the Public Comment period concerning Madeline's House. Mayor Vincent reported that STEPS has taken over the facility and may be waiting for some federal funding. Additional information may be available should anyone want to reach out to them.

CLOSED SESSION

On motion by Mr. Hardy, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with Council members Reid, Dwyer, Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, and Amos voting "yes", Council went into closed session under the provisions of Paragraph A.1 of Section 2.2-3711, for the discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for appointments to the Farmville Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Farmville Town Council has convened a closed session meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Farmville Town Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Farmville Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed session meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Farmville Town Council.

VOTE: Seven ayes, No noes

MOTION: Dwyer

SECOND: Hunter

AYES: Dwyer, Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, Amos and Reid

NOES: None

ABSENT DURING VOTE: None

ABSENT DURING MEETING: None

Clerk of Council

**APPOINTMENT TO THE FARMVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION - APPLICATION
ACCEPTED**

Mr. Pairet made a motion to accept the application from Ms. Jen Fraley for Ward A for the Planning Commission, seconded by Mr. Reid, and with a recorded vote of Council members Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, Amos, Reid, and Dwyer voting “yes”, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND: The topic was discussed previously at the March 6, 2024 Work Session. Ward A Planning Commissioner Jayne Johnson recently resigned from the Farmville Planning Commission. A position advertisement for Ward A was placed in *The Farmville Herald* to receive applications from those interested. An application was received from Jennifer Fraley. Ward B representative Rhett Weiss also offered to be reappointed to the Ward A seat. Mr. Weiss lives in Ward A but at the time of his appointment to the Farmville Planning Commission, 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.

This appointment will fill the unexpired term of Jayne Johnson of June 30, 2026.

**FARMVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE ON THE BOARD OF
ZONING APPEALS**

Mr. Dwyer made an amended motion to recommend to the Circuit Court that John Miller be the Planning Commission’s representative on the Farmville Board of Zoning Appeals, with an amended second by Mr. Hunter, and Council members Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, Amos, Reid, Dwyer and Pairet voting “yes”, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND: Cam Patterson previously was serving as the Planning Commission's representative on the Board of Zoning Appeals with an end term date of February 28, 2026. Dr. John Miller now wishes to serve as the representative.

There being no other business and on a motion by Mr. Reid, seconded by Mr. Pairt, with all in favor stating "aye", the meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

Mary H. McKay, Clerk of Council