

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE STEPHENS CITY TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023
6:00 PM**

Mayor Diaz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Diaz asked that we observe a moment of silence.

Roll was called with the following members present:

Mayor Diaz, Vice-Mayor Fravel, Councilman Fravel, Councilwoman Smith, Councilwoman Stevens, Councilwoman Swygert-Smith

Staff present:

Mike Majher, Town Manager; Kelly Thatcher, Town Clerk; Steve Rickards, Town Treasurer; Dave Griffin, Town Attorney; Bill Copp, Police Chief; Timothy Vaught, Fire Chief; Chris James, Police Sergeant

Guests:

Marshall Werner, Newtown Landing; Cormac Dodd, Winchester Star

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Diaz asked if anyone from the public had comments. There were none.

MINUTES – Regular Meeting of August 8, 2023

Vice-Mayor Fravel moved for approval of the minutes of the Regular Town Council Meeting of August 8, 2023. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

TREASURER'S REPORT – Report attached

Town Treasurer Steve Rickards stated that the Month of August had been a resoundingly healthy month. He informed council that the reserve fund accounts had been moved from Truist to FirstBank. He said in March they will revisit BB&T CD. Water bills will be going out tomorrow.

POLICE REPORT – Report attached

Chief Copp asked if there were any questions about the report. He stated that there were lots of things coming up in the next few months: September 27th will be the Sherando Homecoming Parade, October 7th, Capon Valley Bank will be hosting a Community Veteran Celebration and November 10th will be the Veteran's Day Ceremony. Councilwoman Swygert-Smith wanted to compliment the department on doing such a good job and how nice it was to see the police presence in the evenings.

SCVFD REPORT- Report attached

Chief Vaught read his report. He stated that Fire Prevention Week will be the second week in October and this year's theme is 'Cooking Safety Starts with You! Pay Attention to Fire Prevention!'

Chief Copp wanted to give a shout out to Fire Marshall Steven Ritter. In the past few weeks, he has been called to assist with some violations at local businesses and he is always there when needed. Chief Vaught wanted Council and town residents to be aware that Frederick County had issued a Burn Ban effective September 5th until further notice.

ACTION AGENDA

Approval of DEQ Drought Warning

Mayor Diaz explained that the DEQ had issued a drought warning. After consulting with Frederick County administration, the warning became effective August 30, 2023. Councilwoman Swygert-Smith made the Motion to approve the drought warning. Town Clerk Thatcher stated that this warning was probably going to change into an emergency at the end of the week. Councilwoman Swygert-Smith amended the Motion to say that if it was changed to an emergency that this approval would include any changes brought forth by the DEQ. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

Approval of Sherando Homecoming Proclamation

Mayor Diaz stated that Mike Majher, Town Manager, Councilwoman Smith and himself had met with the Sherando Principal and the band director. The meeting went well, and all agreed on a solution to the problem. Going forward there will be a rotating schedule for participation in the Heritage Festival. Next year the full band will participate, followed in 2025 by the drumline and then the Jazz Band in 2026. With this issue being resolved Mayor Diaz felt it would be appropriate to adopt the Sherando Homecoming Proclamation. Councilwoman Stevens made the motion to approve the Proclamation. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

Adoption of updates to Personnel Handbook

Mayor Diaz asked Councilman Fravel to explain. Councilman Fravel explained that the Handbook has needed to be updated for a long time. The Personnel Committee had looked at Winchester's and Front Royal's handbooks and, with help from staff, had come up with the presented handbook. He explained that this is a living document and still needed some work however the town needed to have rules and policy in place. There will be changes and updates as needed. Councilman Fravel then made the Motion to approve the handbook as presented. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee - Linden A. Fravel, Chair

No Meeting: No Comments

B. Personnel Committee - Pete Fravel, Chair

Meeting: No Comments

C. Public Safety Committee - Ron Bowers, Chair

No Meeting: No Comments

D. Public Works Committee - Mariah Smith, Chair

No Meeting: No Comments

E. Ordinance and Governments Committee - Regina Swygert-Smith, Chair

No Meeting: No Comments

F. Parks and Recreation Commission - Tina Stevens, Chair

No Meeting: No Comments

G. Planning Commission - Linden A. Fravel Jr. Chair

No Meeting: No Comments

H. Newtown Heritage Festival Committee

Meeting: Marshall Werner, speaking as a member of the committee, stated that there was discussion on what the committee can and cannot do. There was discussion on becoming a 501c nonprofit organization and the consensus was they were not interested. They are hoping to introduce more kid-friendly activities.

Councilwoman Smith made the Motion to approve Committee Minutes and Reports. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

Town Manager Mike Majher reported:

1. Dave has been busy with over 200 permits issued.
2. Once again, the A/C unit is out in council chambers.
3. The Homecoming Parade will be held on Wednesday September 27th.
4. A conference call including the police and fire departments will be held to discuss the 307 project.
5. The engineers should be getting the completed plumbing, electrical and structural plans for the Old School Project sometime in October.
6. Met with the Capon Valley Bank Board, they appreciate the town and want to continue to be involved in town events. They are trying to decide what to do with their vacant lot. They are not sure if they want to expand or if they want to sell it.

7. We would like to request that VDOT do a speed study on the North and South ends of Main Street. Councilwoman Stevens made the Motion to have the Town Manager request a traffic study. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

8. Vice-Mayor Fravel asked where things stood with the Mulberry project. Mike Majher stated that we are still waiting for quotes. Companies in the area are so busy that it is difficult to get anyone to send in a quote.
9. October 7th there will be an event at the Capon Valley Bank celebrating Veterans from noon to 5.
10. Hydrant testing will be postponed until the Drought emergency has been called off.
11. A request was made to council to be able to purchase radio read meters to replace those that are being read manually. The cost to replace them will be around \$64,000. New meters will save on manhours and the cost will be covered by just 3 new houses being built. Councilwoman Smith made the Motion to approve the request to replace all manual read meters to radio read meters by appropriating the funds from the CIP. The Motion carried with the following VOTE:

Bowers- Absent	L. Fravel-Aye
P. Fravel-Aye	Smith-Aye
Stevens- Aye	Swygert-Smith-Aye

CLERK'S REPORT

Town Clerk Thatcher wanted to thank Cormac Dodd and let him know it was appreciated that he was in attendance. Names of residents that are struggling are still being forwarded to the Promise program. If anyone has items that they would like to submit for the Newsletter, please do so. The water bills will be reflecting the new rates.

COUNCIL COMMENTS/CALENDAR

Mayor Diaz asked if there were any council comments or changes to the calendar, there were none.

Motion for Closed Meeting

Councilman Fravel made the Motion to enter into a closed Meeting of Stephens City Town Council at 6:55 pm pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia. All members present voted aye to enter into a closed meeting.

Exit and Certification of Closed Meeting

Councilman Fravel made the Motion to exit and certify the Closed Meeting of the Stephens City Council at 7:18 pursuant to Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code of Virginia. All members present of Town Council voted aye to exit and certify the Closed Meeting.

There being no further business, Vice-Mayor Fravel made a motion to adjourn at 7:19 pm and the motion was carried unanimously.

Michael A. Diaz, Mayor

Kelly Thatcher, Town Clerk