

The regular meeting of the Amherst Town Council was held on March 12, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 186 S. Main Street with Mayor Jacob P. Bailey presiding. Council members present were: Bobby J. Bondurant; Haney Mottley; Harold Swisher; and C. Manly Rucker, III. Town Manager Jack Hobbs, Police Chief Kenneth Watts, Director of Public Utilities Tom Fore and Office Manager Colan Davis were also present. Councilor Jason Campbell was not present for the call to order but arrived later as noted below.

The Rev. Barbara Rodgers gave an invocation.

Mr. Rucker made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Bondurant to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 4-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye". Mr. Campbell was absent.

Mr. Campbell joined the meeting.

Blake Robertson, Tom Shrader and Tim Pigg from the Amherst Volunteer Fire Department gave a presentation on that group's plans to purchase a new fire truck and requested that the Council commit to funding a total of \$50,000 over the next three years for the unit.

The Town Manager gave a report on the Town Square project. Mr. Rucker made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Swisher to:

- Support the project.
- Authorize the Mayor to represent the Town Council before the Amherst County Board of Supervisors to:
 - a. Secure the county's general acceptance of the project.
 - b. Request the vacation of the upper end of E. Court Street with the understanding that the Town would own that real estate.
 - c. Negotiate access to the county parking lot to effect the improvements there, including requesting financial support from the county for the improvements that would not be on property owned by the Town of Amherst.
 - d. Negotiate an agreement for the use of the county parking lot for events for final approval by the Town Council.
- Authorize the Town Manager to obtain cost estimates for the relocation of the overhead wiring on E. Court Street and Goodwin Street.
- Authorize the Town Manager to request formal feedback on the project concept from VDOT, including that agency's policy regarding angled parking on lower E. Court Street, and
- Authorize the Town Manager to continue working to refine the project insofar as is practical and funds are not required in an effort to avoid delays to the design and construction effort.

The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye".

Mr. Barry Thompson spoke in favor of a donation to the Amherst Volunteer Fire Department for a new fire truck.

Mr. Rucker made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mottley to approve the February 13, 2008 minutes as distributed earlier. The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye".

Mr. Campbell made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Rucker to authorize the Town Manager to purchase new chairs for the Council Chamber. The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye".

Mr. Rucker made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Bondurant to authorize an additional \$500 for a new bookcase, cabinet and clock for the council chambers.

The Town Manager presented a preliminary report from the Town Engineer on the capital needs associated with the sewer system. It was noted that this information would be useful as the Council makes decisions on the sewer budget this spring.

Mr. Campbell made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Swisher to authorize the Town Manager to purchase a replacement truck for the utilities department. The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye".

The Councilors discussed the recent reassessment which has increased the Town's real estate tax base by 51% and asked the Town Manager to develop the FY09 budget with an "equalized" tax rate.

The Police Chief led a discussion on work needed to complete the Town Hall renovation project.

By consensus, Council decided to declare a list of items as surplus and to authorize their sale via putting everything out for sealed bid on an in-house basis. The list includes: a 1993 Chevrolet S-10 pickup, a Case 580 Super K Backhoe, a 3-point hitch type tiller, a 1996 Chevrolet Caprice police car, and a 2000 Ford Crown Victoria police car.

The Town Manager reported that the Gannaway Subdivision sewer replacement project has resulted in the redirection of sewer away from the "Glenway pump station" and into the new gravity-only piping, so the Town will stop billing the four Town customers that used this town-operated machine the \$6.20/month per a 1974-era arrangement.

The Council discussed the test of removing the internal mechanisms of the downtown parking meters and asked the Police Chief to continue with the test.

Mr. Campbell made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Mottley to authorize the purchase of a plaque at a cost not to exceed \$1,200 that would recognize the Village Garden Club's donation of the fountain at the traffic circle to the Town. The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye".

Mr. Mottley made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Bondurant that the Town Council reconvene in a closed session for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. pursuant to section 2.2-3711 A.3 of the Code of Virginia, (1950), as amended. The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye".

After reconvening in open session, each member of the Town Council was given the opportunity to declare whether there was a departure from the subject matter and purpose during the closed session. Mr. Mottley made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Rucker that the Town Council certify that to the best of each councilors' knowledge that (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Title 2.2, Chapter 37 and 15.2-2907 of the Code of Virginia and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the session. The motion passed 5-0. Messrs. Bondurant, Campbell, Mottley, Swisher and Rucker voted "Aye" via the roll call method.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 P.M.

Jacob P. Bailey
Mayor

Attest:

Clerk of Council