

**TOWN COUNCIL**  
**First Subcommittee Meeting**  
**February 14th, 2023**

The Honorable Joshua T. "Jack" Lawson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. at 802 Main Street, West Point, Virginia 23181.

Members Present: Jack Lawson, Mayor; Deborah Ball, Vice Mayor; James Hudson, Johnny Nein, James Pruett, John Ragsdale and Chris Vincent.

Also Present: John Edwards, Town Manager; Karen Barrow, Town Clerk; Tim Sawyer, Chief of Police; Walt Feurer, Director of Public Works; Susan Lathan, Town Treasurer; Holly McGowan, Director of Community Development; Donna Pauley, Human Resource Officer; Spencer Cheatham, Fire Chief; Melissa Anderson, Communications Manager/Events Coordinator and other Interested Persons.

**I. Agenda Changes**

There were no changes made to the agenda.

**II. Adoption of Minutes**

November 17<sup>th</sup> 2022  
January 10<sup>th</sup> 2023

Mrs. Ball made a motion to adopt the minutes, seconded by Mr. Ragsdale. Upon a unanimous vote, the motion was approved.

**III. Community Development Committee**

**A. Historical Society Request**

Jim Vadas, Chairman of the Historical Society Sign project presented a map of downtown West Point showing the locations for the J. W. Marshall Oyster House, the Ship & Rail Depot, the O'Conner Hotel and the Richardson Oyster House. So far signs have been placed on private property, the next group of signs will need to be placed in the VDOT right-of-way and with the approval of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Mr. Vadas presented the Committee with a copy of the State Code for Historical Highway Marker program and advised that the Department of Historic Resources requires a local official to submit a plat showing the design of the markers along with examples of the information on the sign.

Mr. Edwards asked if the intention was to make these town signs.

Mr. Vadas stated that would be fine.

Mr. Edwards reviewed the state code and advised that to date this has been a Historical Society program, today you are asking for something different. The locations are in the right-of-way and not on private property. The location for the sign for the Richardson Oyster House is not in a good location at seconded St. and Kirby St. the right-of-way would be in the marsh grass. Mr. Edwards asked if the Historical Society has approached the Bristow's to put the sign on their property.

Mr. Vadas stated no that there is a telephone pole in the location, we are thinking of putting the sign near that pole. Mr. Vadas advised that the Historical Society is receiving a lot of positive feedback on the sign for the Beverly Allen School, it received over 4,000 hits last month on Facebook. So the signs are being used.

Mrs. Ball stated that she has looked at the area on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and that she does not think there is enough space for a sign at the pole.

Mr. Hudson asked if the sign would require the town seal and would the town be responsible to maintain the signs.

Mr. Edwards advised that the state code does refer to the town seal and the language in the code refers to “locally administered program” so the town would assume liability of the signs, which is something the town has never done before.

Mr. Lawson advised that locating signs in the VDOT right-of-way is a different program. Mr. Lawson stated that he has a concern with the location and use of the right-of-way and suggested looking at other locations that would not involve VDOT.

Mr. Vadas stated that the Historical Society would like to give the right-of-way locations a try.

Mr. Lawson suggested the town review the Virginia Historical Society requirements before going any further.

Mr. Hudson asked who the program manager would be.

Mr. Edwards stated the Town Manager or a member of staff. Mr. Edwards advised that town staff will look further into the requirements with the State and the Historical Highway Marker program.

#### B. Flood Plain Ordinance Amendment, Ordinance 02-2023

Mr. Edwards reviewed the FEMA Flood program and the changes in the new mapping area. Mr. Edwards advised that the changes affect flood insurance and the premiums that people would pay and that the ordinance needs to be adopted so the town can apply for FEMA assistance if needed.

Mr. Lawson stated that the town should do anything they can to assist people with their premium insurance.

Ms. McGowan reviewed the areas of the ordinance that has options for changes and advised that the town needs to adopt the changes by May 2023, and that the changes would bring the town up to State Code standards.

Mr. Edwards stated that the VE Zone would raise the floor elevation up by 18 inches to two feet.

Ms. McGowan stated that there are recommended changes for accessory structures in areas that we know flood and are not on the flood map. Ms. McGowan advised that the recommended area square footage for accessory structured in these areas be 600 square feet.

Mr. Lawson asked if the town should do what is required.

Mr. Edwards asked for Ms. McGowan to do addition research on the 18 inches verses the two feet on the elevation.

Ms. McGowan advised that she will prepare the changes for Town Council to review at the Town Council Work Session.

Mr. Nein asked if there is a map showing the new elevation areas.

Mr. Lawson advised that the maps are online for the public to view, you can put your address in the system and it will tell you if you need flood insurance.

Mr. Edwards advised that town staff will review the questions Council has asked with FEMA and report back at the Work Session.

### C. Library Update

Mr. Edwards advised that he has spoken with the landlord of the shopping center, and that the lots the town owns adjoining the shopping center are not part of any deal with the relocation of the library. The rent will stay as it is until the end of the current lease.

Mr. Lawson asked when the lease expires.

Mr. Edwards advised 11 years with a 9 year extension for a total of 20 years. The rent will remain the same for the 11 years, it will then go up when the extension goes into effect. Mr. Edwards also stated that he is working with the architect as they finalize the plans. Once the plans are finalized, we will be able to start contacting contractors for pricing. As we obtain the pricing, I will bring the project back to Town Council to see if you want to continue with the project.

## IV. Finance Committee

### A. Transient Occupancy Tax, Ordinance 01-2023

Mrs. Ball asked if the Town Attorney has made any changes to the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Edwards advised yes, that the Town Attorney has researched the Commissioner of the Revenues recommendations and made those changes to the ordinance. The 7% tax rate remains in same.

Mr. Nein stated that he has spoken to someone that has a similar business and he advised that the 7% is a fair percentage.

### B. BZA/Wetlands Board Appointment

Mr. Edwards advised that Stuart Daniel has resigned his position on the BZA and Wetlands Board. Teresa Glidewell has expressed an interest to fill Mr. Daniels unexpired term that expires September 30<sup>th</sup> 2026. The appointment will be on the Town Council agenda.

### C. FY2023-2024 Budget Discussion

Mr. Edwards advised that the County had a reassessment in 2014 and the Town equalized the tax rate. In 2020, the mill done some upgrades that increased their tax base and the town was able to reduce the tax rates. The Town has not had any revenue increase since 2014, the inflation rate has increased 22.5% since 2014. The County has not completed the current reassessment process, the equalization meeting at the County is not scheduled until March 9<sup>th</sup> 2023. Mr. Edwards also stated that the budget short fall is over \$700,000, to equalize the reassessment the tax rate would need to be 47 cents. The 47 cents would not cover the budget short fall and money to balance the budget would need to be transferred in from the savings account. To equalize the rate and cover the 22.5% inflation, the tax rate would need to be 55 cents per \$100 that would give West Point an increase in revenue of \$470,000..

Mr. Lawson asked if the town has an audit, so we know the balance in the savings fund.

Mr. Edwards advised that he has not received the audit, but he believes the fund balance is approximately 3.9 million dollars.

Mr. Lawson asked if we can adopt the budget without setting the rate.

Mr. Edwards stated yes you can.

Mr. Nein asked what percentage of the 2022 budget was property tax.

Mr. Edwards advised that WestRock pays approximately 55% of the total town tax base. The real estate is 23%, personal property 15%, machinery and tools 36%.

Mr. Ragsdale asked if the town did not move forward with the library project, would we be able to close the gap in the budget.

Mr. Edwards stated that the Library project is a one-time expense and it increases the real estate taxes paid to the town. King William County and the Pamunkey Regional Library will be making contributions to the relocation cost. Mr. Edwards advised that the town cannot afford to equalize the rate with inflation and a gap in the budget at 47 cents.

Mr. Ragsdale stated that there are a lot of moving parts to the library project.

Mr. Edwards advised that the cost would also include moving the police department, the cost for the town is a little over \$300,000. Mr. Edwards also stated that once the police department is relocated to a building the town owns, you will be taking a 5400 square feet building that is not paying real estate tax to paying tax.

Mr. Lawson stated that moving the police department would put it in a visible location and the Library would be in a good location at the shopping center. If the library stays where it is, the town will have to pay for repairs and renovations to the current building.

Mr. Edwards reviewed the outside agencies budget requests and recommended the agencies be level funded.

Mr. Lawson asked if the schools have made any budget requests.

Mr. Edwards stated that the schools are still working on their budget and have not made any request. The joint budget meeting with the School Board is Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at the high school cafeteria. Individual meetings with Town Council will be scheduled after the joint meeting with the School Board.

## **V. General Information**

### **A. Melissa Anderson**

Mr. Edwards introduced Melissa Anderson as the new Communications Manager/Events Coordinator.

### **B. Foodtrucks**

Mr. Edwards advised that the Foodtrucks have been scheduled to begin in May through October. There will be six events and we are currently accepting vendors and music guests.

### **C. Trash Truck**

Walt Feurer stated that the trash truck has broken down and the backup truck is also having problems. We have been running late on the pickups but now we are caught up.

### **D. 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee Meeting Cancelled**

Mr. Edwards advised that he has no items for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee and suggested Town Council cancel the meeting.

The consensus of Town Council is to cancel the meeting.

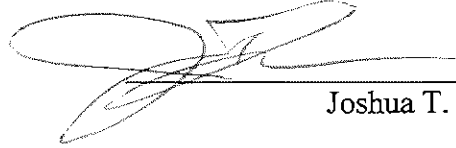
**VI. Town Council Agenda**

Mr. Edwards stated that Town Staff will verify information for the Flood Plan Ordinance for the Town Council Work Session and that the Transient Tax and BZA appointment will be on the Town Council agenda.

**VII. Next Meeting:** March 14th 2023 @ 4:00 p.m.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.



Joshua T. Lawson  
Mayor

ATTEST:



Karen M. Barrow  
Town Clerk