

TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 12, 2023

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Charles Elliott, Mayor
Sandie Puchalski, Vice Mayor
Robert Williams,
Robert Bilicki,
Stephen Joseph
Aileen Joeckel

Swearing in of the Mayor and Town Council took place at 7:15 pm.

Town Clerk Charlie Gobble introduced Samuel Cooper, Clerk of Circuit Court.

Samuel Cooper administered the Oath of Office to the newly elected Mayor of Wachapreague, Charles Elliott.

Mayor Charles Elliott term is to run from January 1st, 2023 to December 31st of 2024.

Clerk of the Circuit Court Samuel Cooper administered the Oath of Office to the elected Town Council Members, Sandie Puchalski, Stephen Joseph, Aileen Joeckel, Robert Williams, and Robert Bilicki.

The councils new term runs from January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2024.

Clerk of the Circuit Court Samuel Cooper handed out the Oaths to be signed.

He then read the Certificate of Elections

TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Charles Elliott called the meeting to order.

I. Town Council Meeting

Mayor Charles Elliott led the prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance followed by the council and the public present.

II. Mayor Charles Elliott stated that according to Chapter 2, general provision 6 of the Town Charter it says the Mayor has the power to make investigation into town affairs, check the records and books. He stated that he plans on looking into the towns records make sure there were no conflict of interest.

Mayor Charles Elliott spoke about the vacancy on council. He said he checked with a local and a federal attorney regarding this issue. He read an article in the General Provision section 6. The article stated that council had the right to pick a councilman if there was a vacancy. He said it also states that they have that right if there is no one else

available to fill the position in the municipal elections. Mayor Elliott said it was suggested to him by the attorneys, that since there was someone else in the municipal election they should be appointed to council. Mayor Elliott stated therefore he believes that John Joeckel should fill the empty seat since he had the highest amount of votes.

Mayor Elliott said an illegal committee was formed the last meeting. He stated it was not formed using the proper course of actions. He stated the proper actions are is to establish a name for the group, name the head of the group, members of the group, statement of purpose, where the meetings will be held, agree on whether the committee has the authority to make decisions, and what the scope of those meetings will be. He said the meetings will have to be public.

He said therefore he dissolves the HRSD committee that was formed and appoints Bob Bilicki head of HRSD and reporting only to the town council. He asked if there was any objections.

All the councilman objected.

Mayor Charles Elliott said this is what VA law says.

Councilman Bob Williams stated that council acted correctly, check the charter, that's how it is done. He said he totally disagreed with Mayor Elliott. He said show me the law.

Councilman Bob Bilicki said it was a petition from the floor and it was 2nd and passed by council.

Councilman Bob Williams stated the Charter is what matters, He said show me where in the charter does it state this is wrong.

Councilman Stephen Joseph also said he didn't believe council was wrong. He stated he wanted to see it in writing where it states that it was not right.

Mayor Charles Elliott said it was wrong the way it was done. He said we will discuss this further at our next meeting. He asked for a motion.

Councilman Stephen Joseph asked, a motion for what?

III. Public comments

Mayor Charles Elliott asked for public comments. There were none.

IV. Town Council Meeting

December 8th 2022, minutes were reviewed. Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski motioned to accept the minutes.

Councilman Bob Williams 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

V. Review of Financial Report

Mayor Charles Elliott asked council to review the town budget.

Councilman Bob Williams motioned to accept the financials for December 2022.

Councilman Bob Bilicki 2nd the motion.

All Agreed.

Mayor Charles Elliott asked council to review the Marina budget for December 2022.

Councilman Stephan Joseph motioned to accept the financials profit vs actual for the port of Wachapreague.

Councilman Bob Bilicki 2nd.

All agreed.

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Mayor Charles Elliott called to discuss the job assignments of council.

Councilman Bob Williams said this needs to be discussed in an executive session.

Mayor Charles Elliott read from pages 44 and 45. He read that the only time something can go to closed session is when discussion of legal issue, employee pay, personal formation or discipline takes place.

Councilman Sandie Puchalski and Council Bob Williams stated this is how we have always done this.

Mayor Charles Elliott asked why does this fall under, legal issue, employee pay, personal formation or discipline

Councilman Bob Williams said you want to assign jobs to us. It's like your king. Councilman Bob Williams stated we volunteer. We don't get paid. This is our personal information. The public will be notified after the decision is made.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel stated when she was on council the mayor assigned her what her job would be.

It was done in a public forum. She stated that the jobs assigned by the mayor did end up shifting around.

Councilman Sandie Puchalski stated we have always assigned the jobs in closed session.

Councilman Bob Williams stated that I am not trying to hide anything from the public. I just don't want to waste their time while we discuss this. It could take hours. The public will be notify what our jobs are.

Mayor Charles Elliott asked the council "are we going to go into closed session afterward?"

Councilman Bob Williams said yes, I thought you were aware of that.

Councilman Steve Joseph motioned to move on from council assignments.

Councilman Bob Williams 2nd the motion.

Councilman Bob Williams, Councilman Bob Bilicki, Councilman Stephan Joseph, Councilman Sandy Puchalski Agreed.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel did not agree.

B. Powell Park

Councilman Sandy Puchalski said she is trying to get a work session together with the coastguard to clean up the park. They do this every year.

She requested the town purchase a gas powered auger to fix posts at Powell Park and the marina. It should cost around \$300.00.

Councilman Sandie Puchalski made a motion to purchase an auger not to exceed \$400.00. Councilman Bob Williams 2nd the motion.

All Agreed.

C. Seaside Park

Councilman Bob Williams said, "didn't we decide to have Rory do the work on the gazebo?"

He stated it was labor only.

It was agreed that we had.

Councilman Stephen Joseph said he ordered the spindles.

Town Clerk Charlie Gible said we used the town card and will get it tax free.

Councilman Bob Williams said the expensive items will be the stainless steel bolts.

Town Clerk Charlie Gible said we will also need 4X4 for the pillars along the ramp. She stated that Rory said he should be able to reuse the rest of the materials.

Councilman Bob Bilicki recommended replacing the brackets. He suggested looking into the company where the spindles were purchased.

Councilman Stephen Joseph said he will check

Councilman Bob Bilicki said everything needs to be replaced with stainless steel.

Councilman Bob Williams spoke about the broken bench at Powell Park in front of the firehouse.

He said he had a conversation with Johnny Williams of Johnny Williams Funeral Home.

Councilman Bob Williams stated that Johnny Williams came to look at it and asked if we want to replace the back of the bench. He said that would be cheaper than replacing the entire bench.
Councilman Bob Bilicki asked if it could be stitched with an epoxy.
Councilman Bob Williams said if you want it do it right, the back should be replaced.
This is a memorial for a family member.
Councilman Bob Williams said he will send an email to everyone once he gets a price.

D. HRSD

Councilman Bob Bilicki stated we received a ceremonial check for the Town of Wachapreague from outgoing Congressman Elaine Luria on December 31st for \$750,000.
He said Outgoing Mayor Fred Janci, Councilman Stephen Joseph and himself were there to accept the check.
Councilman Bob Bilicki stated that this is just a portion of what is needed for HRSD.
We are also receiving money from Delegate Rob Bloxom for \$2,400,000 and \$130,000 from VIMS.
Councilman Bob Bilicki stated that Dr. Adair from VIMS will be sending the town a letter confirming their donation.

E. Derelict Properties

Nothing to report.

F. Marina

Councilman Sandie Puchalski stated the soundings were done and the information was sent to the dredger. They plan to start in March. She said she will get in contact with all of the participating properties. She needs to check with the people next to the Island House to see if they received their permit.
Councilman Sandie said they check for scrapings. The marina ramp sideboards will need scraped and possibly some pilings. There are some areas that need repaired. They will be able to use the wood from the bocce court that was removed. The scrapings will be done prior to the dredging so that they will be picked up by the dredger.

G. Tourism

Councilman Aileen Joeckel spoke about ESVA summit. She said they are having a spectacular speaker that has great ideas on how to help small businesses find their wow factor. There may be a small fee. You will be reimbursed when you attend. The fee may be charged because people sign up and then don't show up.
His name is John Shallert. Date is February 27, 2023 at the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community College. RSVP on line.

I. Flood Plain Coordinator, CRS Coordinator

Councilman Bob Williams will be at a seminar on the 30th.

J. Town Beautification

Nothing to report.

K. Safety and Security

Councilman Bob Williams said some street lights have been replaced.

L. Historical

Jim Bell had nothing to report.

M. Streets and Drainage

Councilman has an email into Rob Duma, and Davis Bowen Friedel INC. who is the company that we contracted with to see what it will take to replace the main drain line. The drain line Councilman Bob Williams is speaking about it the main line that runs from Finney Rd though other properties to the water front.

He said the drain line consist of terracotta pipe and wooden culvert boxes. They ran a camera down the line and could see it is coming apart and falling in do to age and tree roots.

Councilman Bob Bilicki asked if the money was set aside from last year’s budget.

Councilman Bob Williams said yes, I believe so.

N. Planning Commission

Councilman Aileen Joeckel said there will be a meeting on the 17th at VIMS Seaside Hall 6:30 PM.

She said there is information you can pick up at the information box in front of Town Hall.

An Ordinance regarding STR and what you need to do and where they can be located will be discussed.

They will also be discussing Bread and Breakfast, an ordinance regarding them and the special use permit that will go with a B and B.

Jim Bell said you can also find this information on the town’s web site under Planning Commission.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel said there is all kinds of information there regarding The Planning Commission.

O. Maintenance

Nothing new to report.

P. New Business

Town Hall

Sean Fate spoke about hooking up the town to the fire companies well.

He didn’t think there would be a problem on their end.

Councilman Stephen Joseph said he got half of the mini split installed.

Councilman Bob Bilicki said he was going to get a vinyl flooring to replace the floor.

Councilman Bob Bilicki said now that we will be getting water we should talk about an ADA Bathroom being available for public use for the town.

Councilman Stephan Joseph said it should only cost \$2500.00 to put in the mini split. That should free up some money.

Councilman Bob Bilicki motioned to go into Executive session.

Councilman Stephen Joseph 2nd the motion.

All Agreed.