



## MINERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 09, 2024 at 6:30 PM

312 Mineral Avenue Mineral Virginia 23117

Phone: 540-894-5100 | [townclerk@townofmineral.net](mailto:townclerk@townofmineral.net)

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### A. CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

### B. ROLL CALL

The Mayor established that all Council members were present at the meeting.

### C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### D. ADOPT/AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented. During the meeting, Councilman Chapman asked that the agenda be amended to change the order of voting for the Vice Mayor to before the voting of the vacant Council position.

### E. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were five (5) people who signed in for public comment:

1. Debbie Moon – Commenting on water rates, the inventory grants expired in March. The inventory and replacement application due May 3, 2024. Ms. Moon had several questions related to the water project: Do you have an estimate of how much it might cost since it could be capped at \$250,000 inventory / \$500,000 replacement? Is there a plan for homeowner education on the dangers of lead in drinking water? A funding strategy for conducting lead service line replacements, which considers ways to accommodate customers that are unable to pay to replace the portion they own?
2. Paul Snyder – owner of the town laundromat – on water rates. Mr. Snyder has owned the laundromat since February 22, 2024. He is concerned about the cost of the water

and sewer in town, especially since water is his business. Asked Council to consider not increasing the fees for the Water. Asked if there is there financial assistance for towns of less than 10,000 people

3. Catherine Blair Nipper - Commented on the Town giving the Fire Department free water as they file a 501-C and would like for the Town to give the VFW free water as they file a 501-C as well, or at least discount the real estate taxes for them by not charging them tax. She noted the VFW will consider leaving town over this matter.
4. Eric Washington - He is concerned about the property beside his property – 611 Mineral Ave, Mineral VA 23117. The property beside his is abandoned and has squatters and large vultures going in and out of the house. He would like for the Town to do something about this as it is a danger to his family. He would like it cleaned up, boarded up and possibly knocked down.
5. JoAnna Van Arb – commented on the water rates, particularly about in and out of town rate differences.

#### **F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the 03/11 2024 meeting were not available for approval due to staff turnover.

- G. ACCOUNTS PAID** – Motion by Councilman Chapman to approve, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman McGee.

**Approved** 5 -1 Vacant

#### **H. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **1. Water and Sewer (Covert) Comprehensive Report included in Agenda Packet**

LEAP application was submitted on March 29, 2024. Water inventory is due on 10/16/2024 and repairs will start in 2025. The funding will cover the cost of the homeowner's side. Alex Casillas, Rodney McCain and Ken Talley from Virginia Rural Water Association attended the meeting to provide information to Council and the public. Plan was to discuss their role in reducing losses/costs, cutting operations costs and caring for assets & infrastructure. They are working on a long term water plan for the town. Ken is currently focusing on discovery of leaks. Once this is done, they will have a report to the Town and provide us with information to move forward.

Councilwoman Covert discussed repairs if needed, fixing the sewer linings and

extending those where needed. Gathering quotes for all of these possible expenditures that come up with the water and sewer. Possible programs to participate in for citizens are the rain barrel programs, monitoring water intake and use of water closely. The membership to the VRWA is \$400.00 annually and they will help the Town address concerns of the water pressure, use and leaks if any. The Mayor spoke about the raising of water rates and explained that the Census Bureau, when looking at Mineral, looked at all of the Mineral District and not just the Town of Mineral for the average income rate. Now that this has been addressed and it has been noted that the Town of Mineral's average income is less than the district, we will not need to raise the water rates.

2. **Beautification & Anti-Litter (Chapman)** Beautification festival is scheduled and should have good vendors and turnout.
3. **Police, Legal/Fire & Rescue (McGehee)** Fire department is getting renovated and will be out of the Town until this summer. There is a presence of black mold in the station, HVAC and ducts, and it is not safe for them to stay there. The volunteers will stay at the Kentucky Springs location. Police made 29 stops on Mineral Avenue the month of February. Tom Runnett spoke regarding the fire department and the black mold that was found. They will remove the mold, hire the experts to do the remediation. They will possibly bring in a mobile unit in town, but right now they are staying at the Kentucky Springs station
4. **Planning Commission:** (E. Kube) Kube reported that he spoke to Ms. Wade about being on the PC now that there was a vacancy and he asked to appoint her to the vacancy. Chairman Kube completed the PC training class 4/9/2024. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District will present a draft of the Comprehensive Plan in May and both the PC and the Council will hold public hearings. Approximately 15 people attended the public Comprehensive Plan meeting in March, some providing input. After the Comprehensive Plan is approved then the zoning ordinance should be rewritten. No report from PC Liaison Chapman.
5. **Personnel** (B. Kube) New Town Manager Nicole Washington began on 04/08/2024.
6. **Streets** (Unassigned) - No Report
7. **Cemetery** (McCarthy) - No Report
8. **Finance/Audit** (McCarthy) – No Report

## I. STAFF REPORTS

1. **Attorney** - Attached in the packet
2. **DMV** - Attached in the packet
3. **Treasurer** - No report
4. **Town Manager** Nicole Washington spoke regarding her new position, thanking everyone and looking forward to working in the Town.
5. **Mayor's Comments** - Negotiated the contract for the water and sewer expansion that goes along Mineral Ave beside 904 Mineral Ave, 14 dwellings that are schedule to be developed. The quotes for installation of the piping came in and the town is going with the vendor they use. Torrey Williams spoke up and acknowledged that he and the mayor spoke about the utilities for the 14 houses, he wants to work together and get an outcome for the development. Mr. Torrey Williams said the \$25,000 is a demonstration of good faith, of being a good neighbor, and he is not sure when the work will start.

**Extension of the water and sewer lines to the 14 houses on Mineral Avenue at Seventh Street.** Motion by Councilwoman Covert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilman Chapman.

**Approved 5 - Ayes, 1 – vacant**

## J. OLD BUSINESS

### 1. Council Vacancy

There were two nominations for council: David Hempstead and Tom Runnett

- A. **Mr. David Hempstead** said has lived here since 2011, he has 40 years in commercial construction and has a background in civil engineering. He bought his home in the town in 2018. He said he has never attended a council meeting but thinks being on the Council will be fun. Questions for Mr. Hempstead:
  - a. Councilwoman McGhee's questions: What made you decide to run? He spoke with Mr. Kube and talked through the nature of the position. Have you been involved in anything? He said no, just construction.
  - b. Councilwoman McCarthy's questions: What primary items to focus on: He said the AirBNBs that lake is attracting, the town needs to attract them. He said we need to do something to grab the attention of those travelers to spend money in the town.

- c. Councilwoman Kube – no questions to ask
- d. Councilwoman Covert – no questions to ask
- e. Councilman Chapman' questions: How to handle adversity during meetings? He said projects need to get done, close mouths and get to the issue. Getting everyone involved is the big step. What does the position on the Town Council mean? Mr. Hempstead said he has no idea. If you were selected, would you run again? He said yes.

**B. Mr. Thomas Runnett** said he has lived here his whole life, Mineral is his hometown. He was a successful write-in candidate for Council but was not able to accept it due to health issues and now he is ready to be on Council. He helped get meters in at no cost to the Town through grants. Big challenges are the two Amazon warehouses. Another is providing places for stay and live making it affordable. We need to provide safety for the citizens, more sidewalks, clean streets, etc. We need to be ready for the influx of travelers. The passenger train service will most likely use this rail. Questions for Mr. Runnett:

- a. Councilwoman McGhee – Tommy has served people in the Town of Mineral and been with the Fire Department for 47 years. He is very involved in the Town and active in the community.
- b. Councilwoman McCarthy – how do you see working with Council? He said have to do it, come to agreements and understand we are working for the citizens.
- c. Councilman Chapman - What is the next most important thing? He said Cemetery roads need to be fixed. Sidewalks and markets bring people to towns.
- d. Councilwoman Covert – What would you do different this time? He said He sees in a change in council, and he wants to do more for the Town.
- e. Councilwoman Kube- What about data centers? They do not bring a lot of people, maybe 15.

**2. Vice Mayor Election** - Voting for Vice Mayor - Motion presented by Councilwoman Kube, for Councilman Chapman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman McCarthy.

4 – Ayes, 1-vacant, 1 – abstain for Councilman Chapman as Vice Mayor

**3. Status of Old Town Hall and Mineral Historical Foundation (MHF)**

- a. According to Mr. Chapman, they (MHF) are closing up the Museum at the Old Town Hall.
- b. Ron Chapman said he is working to return items back to the town and the owners.
- c. He also said the MHF is not going out of business and will keep the artifacts even if closing museum. He was asked where he would keep them by Council woman McGehee but did not respond. She stated the items that belong to the town should be returned to the town.
- d. Mr. Chapman said MHF will be out of the building by end of April 2024.

**K. NEW BUSINESS**

LEAP (Lead Elimination Application Program) discussion – Federal Requirement.

***Council took a short recess from 8:02 pm to 8:11 pm***

**L. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

In accordance with §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, Town Council convened in Closed Session. Council members certified they spoke only of the subject matter stated while in closed session.

**M. BACK IN SESSION**

1. Motion to elect the new Council member. Motion by Councilman Chapman for all applicants to be considered, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman Kube. There were 2 ayes and 3 nays for Mr. Runnett and, for Mr. Hempstead, there were 3 ayes and 2 nays. At 8:17 pm Mr. Hempstead was voted in as the new Council member.
2. Councilwoman McGehee requested a closed session to discuss Personnel Committee activity and other matters. She noted that despite being on the committee, she had

been excluded by Councilwoman Kube from knowing about or participating in Personnel matters and wanted to lodge a complaint. Town Attorney Lea noted that discussion of committee matters is not a valid reason for a closed session. Council woman McGehee then asked to address the subject in open session, saying she would like a opportunity to make a comment. Her request was denied by the Mayor who stated that she was only wishing to express emotions and he was not going to allow that. Councilwoman McGehee then asked to address Councilwoman Kube directly in the meeting and that request was also denied by the Mayor, again stating he was not going to allow Councilwoman McGehee to express her emotions. He said it would be disruptive. Councilwoman McGehee then resigned from the Personnel Committee and asked that she never be assigned on a committee with Kube again.

**N. Adjourn** - The meeting was adjourned at 8:19pm by a motion made from Councilman Chapman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman McCarthy.

**Approved** 5- Ayes,1-vacant

**Respectfully Submitted:**

*Nicole Washington &  
Michelle V. Covert, PhD*

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Mayor Edwin Jarvis - Vice Mayor, Ronald Chapman

Council Members: Ronald Chapman, Michelle Covert, Bernice Kube, Olivia McCarthy,  
Rebecca McGehee

Town Manager, Nicole Washington; Town Clerk, Vacant; Town Treasurer, Kelly Singletary;  
Town Attorney, Catherine Lea

Town Council meets for its regular session on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
Persons wishing to be heard or having an item to be placed on the agenda should make  
their request to the Clerk of Council (Town Clerk) by the final Monday of the month  
preceding the meeting.