



MINERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2025 at 6:30 PM

312 Mineral Avenue Mineral Virginia 23117

Phone: 540-894-5100 | townclerk@townofmineral.net

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Ronald Chapman

Michelle Covert

Olivia McCarthy

Rebecca McGehee

David Hempstead

ABSENT

Bernice Kube

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance stood for the pledge of allegiance.

D. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion to remove "bylaws review" from old business, add "discussion of 9th street development" to executive session, and remove "employee performance" from executive session.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by Hempstead.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Fishtery:

Owner, Kelly Taylor:

" I'd like thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to speak. My name is Kelly Taylor and my business is Fishery Local Fish Store we are in the Town Square, for local people you have to go into the Town Square and go around and behind underneath, so we do have people that have trouble finding us from using the Google Maps. We advertise primarily on Facebook and on Google Maps and even just last week I had someone local walk in that said 'I had no idea you were here,' because the local people aren't, that have lived here forever, aren't looking for what the new things are they. They think they know the town of Mineral it's only this big and so they don't realize that there are things changing all the time. We have 550 square ft. We specialize in freshwater aquariums and freshwater fish only. I've had lots of people ask us about reptiles and other things, the shop was very small and I sell out of 10 gallon tanks, so because I am limited and I care about the welfare of the animals. We specialize in nano-fish, which means less than an inch and a half, and community fish which means that you can mix different types of fish together in a single aquarium and they should get along with each other. We're not limited to that but that is what we specialize in. I think that aquariums, particularly in the home but also in the office in businesses and churches and schools and stuff like that, are very peaceful and beautiful. I think it's a living work of art. I love the natural backgrounds with plenty of plants and things for the fish to hide from each other in. I don't have any bare bottom tanks. I don't have a problem with people that have bare bottom tanks, but it's just not what we specialize in in the shop. We have hosted two events so far at our location. We are getting ready to host a third this coming Saturday at noon, we will have a student-led event that the kids will be speaking to people that come out at noon about how to set up an aquarium and how to be focused on the health of the fish. You should consider setting up your aquarium for at least a couple of weeks, preferably even six weeks before you put fish in it, because it will allow you the opportunity to establish the bacteria that set up the nitrogen cycle for the health of the fish, so you don't put fish in them and then lose them probably in a day or two. A waste of money sometimes, it's a waste of emotion you fall in love with the fish, and then your aquarium on them and you lose them right away we don't want that to happen to any of our customers. We don't want that to happen to any of our fish. Saturday's event will be student led. The kids have been studying up, they've been putting together some bingo games and some games that they can play with each other, that are all freshwater fish focused and teaching each other and the crowd about how to set up a healthy aquarium for your fish. I got to tell you that we've been open for a year now we opened in the middle of February of last

year and one of the things that surprises me, that may or may not surprise any of you maybe, longtime fish keepers won't be surprised, but it surprises me at how much water we do not use once we get the water balanced and it's healthy for the fish it doesn't take a lot of water to keep it maintained up to speed and the fish are healthy. I am really pleasantly surprised at how much water we don't use from the town. and being able to establish pets. I tell lots of customers, I welcome people to come in and spend as much time looking as they would like to. I tell them that we are the only zoo in Mineral, so if they want to bring their kids in have something to look at for entertainment they can do that. I also want to thank the Town of Mineral for the invitation to come and speak to you. Thank you."

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Stewart Cameron, Jr.:

"First, I'm Paul Stewart Cameron, Jr., I'm here for I believe it's under 'old business' item number three 623 Mineral Avenue and 110 St. Cecilia, so I'll just hold my comments until we get to that portion and I'll let you all lead and I'll answer."

Debbie Moon:

"Hi, Debbie Moon, 232 Mineral Ave. I've been told that I don't write or say enough positive things so we're going to start positively. Treasurer's report this month, clear, concise, so well put together with information that I don't have any questions, so well done on that. It is nice to see all of the meeting minutes posted online including the drafts, so thank you for that. Nicole, thank you for holding the town, together I don't have anything specific, but thank you. Mineral shopping, thank you for the advertisement for last weekend, Jen was away and I held down the fort and did a little "Mineral Shopping Days." I am asking each of you to visit all of the Mineral businesses by the end of March. Encourage your friends to do the same, building awareness and promoting the town businesses helps to keep them here and in business. We were very surprised that we only had less than about five people through the door on Saturday. We can't pay the bills continuing to do that and would have to leave, so you know, like a lot of us and people just don't know that the businesses are here. It's not just you as Town Council members but also you and your friends promoting the businesses, so we appreciate that. I have never been to your store [Fishery], so I will make sure I get there by the end of March, and that will conclude all of my businesses

visiting at least once. On the agenda tonight is also the open seat on Town Council, I encourage all of you to vote for JoAnna. She has been attending meetings and speaking during public comment long before her multiple Town Council applications. Most of you have all said in the past that you support her and would vote for her the next time, well we're at another next time. She's not aligned with any council members, she is the voice of the citizens, she is also a veteran, please give her your vote for the open seat. Thank you."

Pam Harlowe:

"Pam Harlowe, 202 West 8th Street, For the record I served council 33 years; 12 Mayor, 12 Vice Mayor, and nine as a regular council member before I got the upper jobs. I'm here because of concerns for your budget numbers. One your revenue with DMV is severely down by a considerable amount \$371,000. My other concern was the total on when I add up all the salaries on here for a town of less than 500, your salaries were estimated or planned to be \$510,000 which sounds considerably high to me. There are lots of expenditures on here that I would question as to why some of them are so high, but my concern is there are things to be discussed tonight, to be voted on that are not necessary. Before you spend money that's not necessary, you need to look deeply into getting a well, because as I see you're spending considerably over your estimated amount on water consumption. You need to look into wells and forget all this other stuff that's going to take money that we don't have."

Eric Washington, via letter:

I'm Eric Washington 611 Mineral Ave. I'm sorry I can't be here I have to take my kids to soccer practice and will try to attend before it is over. I have concerns and I want to express them. I'm doing a project for a property owner clearing trees on Ninth Street. In order for the owner to get to their property they have to develop the road and I'm subbing the work out to someone and they have been doing this type of work for over 40 years. Before I started, I spoke to VDOT, to Louisa County and Mrs. Washington the town manager of Mineral. Even though she is my wife she holds me accountable just like she does everybody else and sometimes it frustrates me a little bit but she takes her job very

seriously and shows no favoritism. She treats everyone the same. I wasn't on the site but Mr. Groome came down and told the guy that was working how could we do the road because he was going to get the property but he can't afford to do it to VDOT standards. Then 10 minutes later Mr. Hempstead came and told them they had to shut it down. They called me and put Mr. Hempstead on the phone and he asked me how could I afford it. Really it's none of his business or anyone else's what I can afford or not afford but I've had a store for 5 years and sold it. Then he said you have to do it to VDOT standards and I told him I am going to do it to VDOT standards. Mr. Hempstead told them they had to shut the job down and he can't do that he had not even spoke to the town manager because had called the town and I don't believe he spoke to council either. It seems that Mr. Hempstead likes to try and bully citizens and intimidate them and I am not one that could be bullied or intimidated. Bear with me for a minute because it is water under the bridge now but Mr. Hempstead was so passionate about the 14 houses that that were being put up and I agreed with him that they shouldn't be put up or at least some so many of them shouldn't be put up. My point is that you can't pick and choose when you are a council member. Being a council member I realize that's a lot of responsibility but that is what you were sworn in for, that's your job to do what is right for the town and not friends. You are passionate about one thing and want to do the right thing but with these ran down houses in the town and because you are friends with people that have these properties you don't do your job. Your job is doing what is best for the town not just for some citizens and friendships which I thought is what the town wanted to get away from. The one house that is beside mine, and I have no problems with the owner, it is it has no footers and cannot be saved. There's a tank that goes to the second floor that is not stable and could fall. I try to clear it up and do my best but it is not my property. There are squatters, vultures living in the house and last summer they were bird droppings in my driveway and I have small children that I worry if something will happen to them. I tried to buy the property over market value knowing I would have to put money out to tear it down but the owner couldn't sell. Mr. Byrd owns the property on the other side of this house that he purchased and fixed up. He was not able to sell it because of the property, the vultures and the overall look of the property. It seems like council cannot hold people accountable but want to hold others accountable for every little thing. Just like the road, Chestnut Avenue, that was put in and isn't even up to VDOT standards it is only Crush and Run which is why it is so muddy and easily washed out. Then there was a long driveway

besides 9th Street that didn't even have a covert and not enough road frontage in that zoning district and whoever built that should have made been made to develop Ninth Street according to the ordinance. But now when someone does the right thing they are still given a hard time because certain people on council do not care for them and it isn't right. They are still a citizen and a property owner. I bought the house and I wasn't sure if I was going to live here or not. It's a small town and seemed like there are good people here from what I could tell as people introduce themselves to me I decided to stay and help build the town and make it better. My wife took a job as manager. She wanted to be a part of making the town better too, but it seems like people some people have lost a vision of what good they want for the town since they have been here. When it gets to town business it shouldn't be family or friends because it blurs the lines, it should be what is good for the town."

Tracy Hempstead:

"Alright, I think first of all we all ought to show up in person if we have something to say. That's a bunch of whining, and I can't be here because my child has a soccer game, I don't think so. Mr. Washington with, you can leave the dirty looks for later, Mr. Washington did a house, put one, renovated one, built another one and he's here to help the town. I'm I'm just not happy right now. Mr. Washington has a state contractor's license to do paint and wall coverings. You can affirm that on the state business license site contractor's licenses. He, that's all he has. He has no license to build a house paint and drywall. Two years ago both him and his wife under WW Construction were disciplined by the contractor's board because they were fixing up a kitchen and did work outside their scope. They were charged \$1,750 and one of them was ordered to go to class about that. Mr. Washington, I think would need some form of legitimate contractor's license to put a road in and all he's got is a paint and wall covering license. There's a, and I have, this is for the lawyer: Mrs. Washington is the Town Manager, I believe she would have given the consent for her husband to put the road in as a Planning Zoning Manager, that's a state conflict of interest right off, I don't know if her issuing permission to her husband because she stands to make a profit also on the money that he makes. So, if you could check with the state conflict of interest laws and see if the Town Council is legal or breaking a law, I'd appreciate it, but that that's what I have to say. I think that a lot of this is a lot of nonsense and Council needs to be smart. You have a lawyer, he'll help you, but you don't do, you don't do things in construction without licenses, and I, I do know David's my husband. He was over

because he's done this stuff a very, very long time professionally, so he'll give you, I'm sure he'll probably say something, but I would appreciate listen to him because this is a public road, and I agree with you. We're all here, we may not like each other, that's fine, but we should all have the same goal, which is to keep our Town growing happy and safe, so thank you."

Rebecca McGehee:

Rebecca McGehee, 714 St Francis, all I got to say is your children come first and I can understand why Mr. Washington is not here, because by golly your family comes first, that's all."

F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. 10.15.2024 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as presented.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by Hempstead.

Voting Yea: Covert, Hempstead

Voting Abstaining: McCarthy, McGehee

2. 11.7.2024 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as presented.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McGehee.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee

Voting Abstaining: Hempstead

3. 11.12.2024 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as amended.

- Council Member Hempstead Amendments:
 - Council Comments:
 - Paragraph 3: "stating he has no idea who you are and what you are talking about."
 - Paragraph 7: "claims" to "stated" and "called" to "email."
 - Paragraph 8: "claims" to "stated"
 - Paragraph 11: "claims" to "stated"

Motion made by McGehee, Seconded by Covert.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, Hempstead

Voting Abstaining: McGehee

4. 11.21.2024 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as amended.

- Amendment:
 - Add when decision was reversed.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McCarthy.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee

Voting Abstaining: Hempstead

5. 12.9.2024 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as amended.

- Council Member Hempstead Amendment:
 - Public Comment:
 - David Hempstead's public comment: changed "claimed" to "stated."

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McCarthy.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

6. 12.19.2024 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as amended.

- Council Member Hempstead Amendment:
 - He would like to have that he was arrested added to the minutes.

Motion made by McCarthy, Seconded by Covert.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

7. 1.13.2025 minutes

Motion to approve minutes as amended.

- Council member Hempstead amendments:
 - Public Comment, Dave Hempstead's comment:
 - Amending "representative's" to "Commonwealth Attorney's"

- Amending "believes" to "stated."

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McCarthy.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

8. 1.21.2025 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as presented.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by Hempstead.

Voting Yea: Covert, McGehee, Hempstead

Voting Abstaining: McCarthy

9. 2.3.2025 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as presented.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McGehee.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

10. 2.10.2025 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as presented.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McGehee.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

11. 3.3.2025 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as presented.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McGehee.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

G. OLD BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Council Member

Council reviewed applications and asked questions to both applicants.

Applicants were also given the opportunity to speak to Council regarding their interest to be on Council.

Motion to appoint JoAnna Von Arb as Council Member.

Motion made by McCarthy, Seconded by McGehee.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee

Voting Nay: Hempstead

2. Bowman Asset Management

The Town Manager presented the Bowman Asset Management system.

The Town Manager, Utility Committee Chairman, and Town Maintenance Superintendent spoke in favor of the Bowman Asset Management system.

Council discussed the purchasing the Bowman Asset Management system in the amount of \$32,845.

During the discussion, Mayor Chapman found members of the audience to be disruptive and called for a sheriff's deputy.

Motion to allow the Town Manager to move forward with purchasing the Bowman Asset Management.

Motion made by McGehee, Seconded by McCarthy.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee

Voting Nay: Hempstead

3. a. 623 Mineral Avenue

The property owner and Council discussed the property and possible solutions.

Council agreed by consensus to allow the property owner time to mitigate the property.

The property owner must stay in communication with the Town Manager regarding the progress of the property. Council wants an update by the next meeting.

b. 500 West Third Street

Council agreed by consensus to allow the Town Manager to send a letter to the property owner regarding the plans for the building.

c. St. Cecilia

The property owner and Council discussed the property and possible solutions.

Council agreed by consensus to allow the property owner to only repair the windows at this time.

Council took a 10 minute recess.

4. Scheduling a Town Hall

Council scheduled a Town Hall for April 17, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. Civic Plus Municode

The Town Manager presented the Civic Plus Municode system.

The Town Manager and Town Clerk spoke in favor of the Civic Plus Municode system.

Council discussed the purchasing the Civic Plus Municode system in the amount of \$4,576.

Motion to authorize the Town Manager to purchase the MuniCode Code Hosting System.

Motion made by Covert, Seconded by McCarthy.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

2. Little League Sponsorship

Motion to authorize the Town Manager to make a donation in the amount of \$550 to sponsor a Little League team.

Motion made by McCarthy, Seconded by Covert.

Voting Yea: Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

I. REPORTS

1. Treasurer's Report & Accounts Paid

Treasurer's Report & Accounts Paid attached to this month's corresponding agenda.

2. DMV Report

DMV Report

Council would like to have the total retail revenue added to the report.

Council member McCarthy added:

"I would also like to, I think there was a comment earlier about a decrease in DMV revenue over a time period, and would just like to note, I guess for the minutes, that this has been discussed multiple times. Perhaps the person who made this comment was not present for those prior meetings, but that the values were not being accurately reported prior. There is a grading on the percentages that we received depending on the value amount and so some of the prior reports in previous years are not actually accurate to the amount of money that is received on those months, and so I just want the minutes to reflect that."

3. Town Manager's Report

Town Manager's Report attached to this month's corresponding agenda.

Council would like for the Town Manager to get a second quote for the electric project in the Whitlock Family Park.

4. Committee's Report

Cemetery Report:

A committee member requested the comprehensive plan as it relates to the cemetery.

Police and Fire Report:

Council member McGehee did not have a police report for this month.

Council member McGehee reported that the fire department is still working on repairs.

Bylaws and Charter Report:

Mayor Chapman provided each Council member with a book of guidelines from the VML.

Mayor Chapman reported that he has provided the VML with a copy of the Town of Mineral's potential bylaws for review. He is awaiting a response.

The Mayor and Council member McGehee would like to work with the Utility Committee to create a program for residents who are facing financial hardship.

Personnel:

Mayor Chapman reported that the committee will have staff performance evaluations to review at next month's meeting.

J. CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Scheduled Meeting: April 14, 2025

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Vice Mayor Covert gave a COIA statement and recused herself from closed session and the rest of the meeting.

Council asked that JoAnna Von Arb join them for the closed session.

In accordance with §2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia to consult with legal counsel related to probable litigation.

In accordance with §2.2-3711 (A)(8): Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

Motion made by McGehee, Seconded by McCarthy.

Voting Yea: McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

Voting Abstaining: Covert

Council went into closed session at 10:38 pm.

L. BACK IN SESSION

All members certified the closed session and went back into session at 11:35 PM.

Voting Yea to Certify the closed session:

Chapman, Covert, McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

Council decided to allow the Town Manager the ability to oversee the development of 9th Street.

Council member McCarthy specifically added: " I'm not going to comment on the specific project, as I feel that we have the appropriate people in the position administrator to be able to handle this project, however, I would like for the record to reflect that I am encouraging everybody on this Council, and in this room, to bear in mind that only an act of the Council of the entire body or the Zoning Administrator can intervene in projects such as these and that no individual has the authority, or has been authorized by this body, sorry my brain's not working great it's late, to take any action regarding this project or any other projects, at this time on behalf of the Town."

M. ADJOURN

Motion made by McCarthy, Seconded by McGehee.

Voting Yea: McCarthy, McGehee, Hempstead

Council adjourned at 11:40 pm

DRAFT