

**TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
May 9th, 2024**

COUNCIL PRESENT:

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

Absent: Robert Williams

Charlie Gible

Outgoing Town Clerk

Susan Springer

Incoming Town Clerk

Town Council Meeting

Meeting began at 7:00

TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE COUNCIL MEETING

I. Mayor Charles Elliott called the meeting to order.

II. Glenn Schagelin led the prayer.

III. Charles Elliott led The Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Public comments

Town residents Carrie Jacobson and Dave Groshong presented a case for increased wages for Town employees. Carrie cited current low wages and lack of benefits for each position. She cited current local and national wage averages and their belief that Town employees are above average, and are dedicated, kind and loyal. Carey further cited the desire and advantages of good employee retention, whether that be for long standing employees or new recruits. In closing they recommended wage increases for Town Employees.

Resident Linda Jones praised outgoing Town Clerk Charlie Gible, citing her dedication and hard work toward the wonderful events hosted by Charlie. A strong round of applause was given in honor of Charlie.

Resident Randy Powell spoke of the recent discussion of the drainage issues around town. He cited Church and Custis being one area and cited his 50 years residence in the area and the transit shots he has taken to study the issue. He cited the recent culvert work at the end Paul St. that has helped the drainage to flow correctly, however those ditches have been allowed to fill in, especially those on Paul and Powellton Streets. Randy Powell also mentioned ditches on both sides of Church St are beginning to fill in. He suggested cleaning them and keeping them clear as the only solution. He suggested the Highway Administration be invited to come out and evaluate them and stated he would be willing to meet with them. Mayor Charlie Elliott stated he would contact the Highway Administration. Resident Robert Hippel

spoke and stated he video taped many of the flooding events and issues and offered everyone access to the video. He stated he is a resident of Church St. and video taped that area and the Custis area. Resident Dave Moon also spoke in support of the two previous speakers and the issues they raised and also spoke of his gardens often being underwater as well as one of his buildings. Mayor Charles Elliott committed to working with each of the speakers. Randy Powell suggested shovels and a mini excavator used by Town Maintenance staff as a possible assist to the problem of keeping the drainage ditches open and flowing correctly.

V. Town Council Meeting

April 11th, 2024, minutes were reviewed.

Councilman Steven Josephs motioned to accept the minutes for April 11th, 2024.

Councilman Bob Bilicki 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

VI. Review of Financial Report

The Council reviewed the Town's financials for April 2024.

Councilman Glen Schagelin motioned to approve the town budget.

Councilman Steve Joseph 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

The council reviewed the port's financials for April 2024.

Councilman Steven Josephs motioned to approve the Ports April Financials.

Councilman Sandie Puchalski 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Maintenance

Councilman Glenn Schagelin reported a grant had been applied for by John Joechel for replacement of the Town's garbage truck and thanked him for that. He suggested that incoming Town Clerk Susan Springer research further grant money possibly available. Clerk Susan Springer agreed to research availability. Councilman Glen Schagelin quoted the grant currently applied for amounted to \$356,000.00 It was noted this is not an 80/20 Grant but a full coverage grant.

Discussion was given to Maintenance attendance. Councilman Sandie Puchalski noted that trash cans have not been returned to their proper place and suggested a reminder should be given to crews.

Town Clerk Charlie Gibble reported that there will be a next phase of Hometown Heroes banners. Lucky has been clear he does not want to be involved but Charlie reported that several other residents have reached out and are willing to be involved, including Bonnie Munn who has much experience with the program. Charlie cited that it would need to be a 10 poster minimum. Steven Josephs stated he would install the next phase.

B. Powell Park

Council Sandie Puchalski noted that money needed to be set aside to address issues at the tennis court. Most notably the ripped tarp and cracks in the tennis court surface.

C. Seaside Park

Steven Josephs cited the need to install the brackets. The Contractor should be contacted to return and install the brackets. He also noted the need for more weeding. Councilman Bob Bilicki noted the black walnuts that were cut down have resprouted and contain thorns so they also need to be removed for safety reasons.

Mayor Charles Elliott noted a loose sign panel and asked whether it was something the Town could repair. The agreement was that yes, the town could secure the sign panel.

D. HRSD

Councilman Bob Bilicki reported that most of the main line is now installed and focus is now on grinder pumps and property connections. All property owners have submitted their right of entry agreements and the next phase should occur in 60 days, followed then by the electrical component, which may involve electrical upgrades for some property owners. Steven Josephs stated that in a phone conversation with Phil Hubbard that they are experiencing some supply issues and that may delay the project to September. The questions was then raised as to whether anyone attended the grease interceptor meeting between HRSD and Blake. Town Clerk Charlie Gibble responded that she recorded a portion and discussion was given to the unforeseen extra expense with the grease interceptor issue. Steven Joseph noted that Anne Doyle was attempting to secure additional grant funds. Councilman Steven Josephs stated that this issue may also be contributing to the delay to September as Blake will not give right of entry until this extra cost issue is resolved. The extra cost was cited as \$53,000.00 and that is to separate the grease removal if necessary. HRSD needs to inspect the system to see if it is working as designed, which was to collect the grease and shells prior to entering the sanitary septic system. It is not known for certain if that is how the system is actually working.

E. Derelict Properties.

Bob Bilicki stated 15 Main St, Seaside kayak Rental has had some improvement, the branches on the compromised tree have been removed and it is now down to the trunk. The owner has given commitment that the front and rear elevations will be repaired within 30 days.

Discussion was given to the home at the entrance to the town, owned by Patricia Braggs. It was agreed upon that further contact and pressure should be given. It has been over a year since the first letter was sent.

Thanks were given to Arthur and Craig Baker for mowing the lot on High Street. Discussion was given to going through the Court House to lien the property for current and future clean ups.

F. Marina

Councilman Sandie Puchalski reported that the VPA Project is complete and the slips have been reconfigured and the floating docks installed. The costs was higher than originally quoted due to the extra pilings needed. Mary Jo assured this could be addressed in the upcoming budget planning. The VPA Grant money for next year has been approved and will be used for some plumbing improvements and dock repairs. Council Sandie Puchalski reported the Flounder Tournament went well and the Town did well. It was noted this was despite the Town having only one ramp available.

G. Tourism

Councilman Aileen Joeckel noted that the recent visit by the Influencer Sam Oppenheimer went well and recommendations were given. The town truly did shine. The visits included the Mercantile and visits to several artist's homes.

H. Floodplain Adm/CRS

Bob Bilicki reported the 2024 Stormwater Management – Existing Conditions report has been submitted to FEMA CRS. It was noted areas discussed during the budget meeting were North of Liberty, South of Bayview and the Main Drain North of Main St. VDOT has been contacted regarding the pitch and drain with notation that the Town itself has some maintenance responsibility as noted during the Open Session of this meeting.

I. Town Beautification

There was nothing to report.

J. Safety and Security

Nothing to report.

K. Historic District

Jim Bell was not present.

L. Streets and Drainage

Discussed under Flood Plain/CRS.

M. Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is hoping to change to the Planning and Zoning Commission and appoint Zoning Administrator Arthur Mendez to the Commission. That would be with the caveat that Arthur Mendez would recuse himself as appropriate. Some discussion was given to the definition of the Commissions and that are bodies that bring recommendations to the Council and do not have any legislative power of their own.

Councilman Aileen Joechel motioned to combine the Planning and Zoning Commission and appointment of Arthur Mendez to the new Commission.

Councilman Sandie Puchalski 2nd the motion.

All Agreed.

N. Adjournment

Closed Session

Mayor Charles Elliott called for the meeting to adjourn and go into closed session to discuss personnel issues.