Minutes of the New Market
Town Council Meeting
Monday, April 20, 2020
6:30 pm

The New Market Town Council met via a virtual GoTo.com telephone meeting and a YouTube Live broadcast on Monday, April 20, 2020 with the following members present via phone: Mayor Douglas Bradley, Peggy Harkness, Tim Palmer, Daryl Watkins, Larry Bompiani, Scott Wymer and Peter Hughes. Also present via phone was Town Attorney Jason Ham.

Present in the Town Office were the following staff:
Town Manager — J. Todd Walters
Town Treasurer — Teresa Green
Chief of Police — Chris Rinker
Administrative Assistant — Donna Lohr

Mayor Bradley called the meeting to order and established a quorum with six members present. Mayor Bradley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda:

Mr. Wymer made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Hughes seconded the motion which passed on a unanimous 6-0 voice vote.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Palmer moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes from the March 16, 2020 meeting of the New Market Town Council, the minutes from the March 31, 2020 Special Called Meeting of the New Market Town Council as well as the Financial Statements for March 2020. Mr. Hughes seconded the motion which carried on a unanimous 6-0 voice vote.

Public Hearing:

There were no Public Hearings.

Citizen Comments and Petitions:

There were no citizen comments nor petitions.

Committee Reports:

There were no Committee Reports.

Staff Reports:

Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus and in the interest of limiting exposure, there were no staff reports this month in an effort to shorten the duration of the meeting.
Action Items:

The first item on the agenda was the discussion and consideration of a request from the Community Care and Learning Center, LLC. Mr. Walters advised that included in the packet was an email from Ms. Frazier asking if the Town would consider reducing its percentage from 8% to 4% for the mixed delivery grant for which she is applying for next fiscal year. This would mean the reduction would be from $10,000 to $5,000. Mr. Walters and Mrs. Green have discussed this and determined that it does not take a lot of staff time each month for this grant. They did not see an issue with reducing it to $5,000. The Town would still be getting back the time that is spent on the grant throughout the fiscal year.

Dr. Bompiani made a motion to reduce the percentage that the Town receives for the mixed delivery grant from 8% to 4%, which is a reduction from $10,000 to $5,000 for the Town for the next fiscal year. Mr. Hughes seconded the motion. Under discussion, Dr. Bompiani mentioned that he would rather make this motion than one for the next action item which is to make a donation to cover the cost of the conditional use permit. Council members were in agreement that since Town staff’s costs would be covered by the $5,000 then they are fine with the reduction. With no further discussion, the motion then carried on the following unanimous 6-0 roll call vote:

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<th>Aye</th>
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<td>Mr. Hughes</td>
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<td>Mr. Watkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Wymer</td>
<td>Aye</td>
<td>Dr. Bompiani</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Palmer</td>
<td>Aye</td>
<td>Mrs. Harkness</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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The next item on the agenda was the discussion and consideration of making a donation to the Community Care and Learning Center, for 197 E. Lee Highway. Mr. Walters stated that this was discussed at the last meeting and Council members had requested additional information. Mr. Walters reported that an estimate was put in Council’s packet. Mr. Walters mentioned that the estimated cost for the Conditional Use Permit was $454.10. Mr. Walters mentioned that staff’s time was estimated, but the advertising and postage costs were actual costs. Mr. Walters mentioned that in Ms. Frazier’s email, she had indicated that if Council passed the action item to reduce the amount of money to the Town for the Mixed Delivery Grant, than they are not interested in getting a donation made back to them for the C.U.P request. Mr. Hughes suggested that there be no motion made for this action item. Mr. Walters asked Mr. Ham if it would suffice to have no motion made for this action item. Mr. Ham answered in the affirmative. No action was taken for this item.

The third action item was the discussion and consideration of waiving fees and penalties. Mr. Walters stated that at the last meeting, Council members had discussed what might be done to help citizens during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Town staff discussed several options. One thing that was done during April, was that water was not disconnected on April 15, 2020 for residents who owed the February bill. This left seventeen customers who are over 60 days behind, amounting to approximately $2,800 in charges due. Mr. Walters also mentioned that the Town would be sending out reminder letters to customers who had not yet paid their March bill. There are 72 customers who will receive a delinquent letter. Mr. Walters advised that customers are going to get further and further behind. Council members discussed options for water bill
customers. Mr. Ham advised Council members to review the Ordinances presented to
them with the packet and consider what they wish to do. Mr. Walters advised that
council consider at least passing the Ordinance that says that the Town will not cut water
off to customers, since the Town has already foregone turning water off for the month of
April. He advised that the other Ordinance also discusses discontinuing shut offs, but it
also addresses the penalties during this time. Mr. Ham advised Council members that
they only need to pass one of the Ordinances. The second one that addresses penalties
also stops disconnection of water. Council members discussed the timeframe for which
the Ordinance applies.

Mr. Watkins made a motion to adopt An Ordinance Discontinuing Water
and Sewer Penalties and Disconnection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr.
Hughes seconded the motion. Dr. Bompiani commented that it feels like the Town is
held hostage with the situation since many of the customers are habitually late customers.
He remarked that he realized that it looks bad if council members are against this
ordinance but it is frustrating to think about how the Town can recoup this from those
people who are already habitually late. He advises that he will vote for it, but it is a
frustrating situation. With no further discussion, the motion passed on the following
unanimous 6-0 roll call vote:

Mrs. Harkness    Aye       Mr. Palmer    Aye
Dr. Bompiani     Aye       Mr. Wymer    Aye
Mr. Watkins      Aye       Mr. Hughes    Aye

Mr. Walters remarked that there is one more Ordinance for Council to consider
which is regarding penalties for taxes. Real estate, personal property, and vehicle license
fees are due June 5, 2020 which is 5 days before the end of the Governor’s order. The
Ordinance would allow for penalties to be applied after August 6, 2020, rather than June
5, 2020. Mr. Walters stated that the Town will still be encouraging people to pay their
bills on time so that they do not get too far behind. Mr. Ham mentioned that Shenandoah
County will likely pass an Ordinance similar to this that provides a 60 day waiver of
penalties and interest. It is likely that the County will be following the same time line as
the Ordinance the Town is considering this evening.

Council members and Town staff discussed other possible dates for the penalties
to apply for taxes. Staff advised that anything received by the Town after August 15 will
go on the next fiscal year, by auditors standards. By having the due date of August 6,
2020, payments would be applied to this fiscal year. Mr. Hughes asked if staff could
provide dollar amounts on how much money would be shifted from June to August if
customers don’t pay their taxes until August. Mrs. Green, Town Treasurer, responded
that based on last year’s numbers, the Town collected $126,000 in Real Estate, $34,000
in Personal Property, and $44,000 in vehicle license fees. We have to assume that if
people postpone making their payments, than those dollar amounts would not be
collected in June of 2020. Mr. Hughes asked if Town staff is comfortable with this
Ordinance. Mr. Walters advised that there are some items in the current budget that will
not be spent this year. Items such as engineering work, work at the park, and hiring of
certain personnel will not happen during this fiscal year. With those items eliminated,
and with the Town’s reserved funds, Mr. Walters advised that staff is comfortable that we
will not be devastated if we don’t collect the taxes until August. However, if this
pandemic is prolonged, this issue and several other items will need to be revisited. Mr.
Walters advised that there is a delicate line between helping the customers and the costs
the Town must pay in order to operate. Mr. Walters advised that he is comfortable with
these recommendations. He believes that this Ordinance will help customers without
stretching the Town’s funds too thinly.

Mr. Ham mentioned that there is no mention of interest in this Ordinance and that
is because the Town does not impose interest until July 1 of the following year.

Mr. Hughes made a motion to adopt An Ordinance Eliminating Penalties
upon Certain Local Taxes and Changing a Tax Due Date during the COVID-19
Pandemic. Mr. Palmer seconded the motion which passed on the following
unanimous 6-0 roll call vote:

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<td>Aye</td>
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Mayor’s Comments:

Mayor Bradley read aloud a Proclamation establishing April 2020 as National
Autism Awareness Month. A copy of the proclamation is included with the packet.
Mayor Bradley thanked Town staff and employees for their work during this difficult
time.

Mayor Bradley also thanked Town residents for their support and understanding
as we move through this difficult time. He reminded citizens to contact the Town for any
question or issue they may have.

Council Comments:

Mr. Hughes asked Council members, staff, and citizens to support local business
in Town.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Walters mentioned that a few businesses have applied for the Payroll
Protection Plan and have received it. Other grants have also been received by some
businesses in Town. Restaurants are doing all they can. Meals tax numbers reflect that
restaurants are about 20% of from where they were at this time last year. Mr. Walters
advised that next month is likely when the Town will see the true impact of the pandemic
on restaurants’ meals tax. Mr. Walters mentioned that he hopes to present something on
the budget next month so it can go to public hearing in June, and then be passed at the
June Council Meeting.

Mr. Walters thanked Council for their help in getting through this difficult time.
He also thanked staff for coming in to work every day. He mentioned that the Public
Works department conducted heavy trash pickup, handled several water line breaks as
well as sewer back-ups. Town staff has been cleaning and sanitizing the Town office
themselves since the cleaning company is off due to the COVID-19 virus.

Closed Meeting:

No Closed Meetings scheduled.
At 7:36 p.m. Mr. Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion which carried on a unanimous 6-0 voice vote.

Douglas Bradley, Mayor

J. Todd Walters, Town Clerk