At the regular meeting of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia, there were present Mayor David E. Whitus, presiding, and Council members G.C. Cole, D.L. Hunter, B.R. Vincent, T.M. Pairet, D.E. Dwyer, A.D. Reid, and J.J. Davis.

The staff present were Town Manager C. Scott Davis, Town Attorney Gary Elder, and Administrative Assistant Jackie Vaughan.

Mayor Whitus called the meeting to order and welcomed guests viewing the meeting via Facebook Live. Mayor Whitus explained the meeting was being streamed live on Facebook due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Council is following the advice of health experts by practicing social distancing and observing the ten-person limit set forth by Governor Ralph Northam.

Reverend Sam Rabon with Faith Bible Fellowship Church provided the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Mayor Reid.

The Administrative Assistant called the roll, noting all members were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Whitus stated that the public had an opportunity to call-in to address Council, but no one exercised that option.

Mayor Whitus asked the Town Manager to update Council and the public of the steps the Town has taken in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Mr. Scott Davis, Town Manager, briefed Council and the public on the following items related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The Town issued a Declaration of a Local Emergency on March 17, 2020;
- All Town administrative offices are closed to the public. Staff increased cleaning of the buildings, and all staff that handle money, checks and other mail are wearing gloves. Office staff have been instructed to stay in their respective areas, as much as possible, and to communicate by calling or emailing to share information. There are no in-person meetings with external entities. Staff will be using teleconferencing platforms to communicate;
• Staff began sanitizing playgrounds at first, but by the end of last week, all playgrounds and parks were closed to the public, and all public restrooms are closed;
• All Town sponsored recreation activities have been canceled;
• We have closed all Town rental facilities and issued refunds to individuals or groups that had paid for use up until June 10, 2020;
• The Farmville Area Bus (FAB) has reduced certain bus lines, reduced the number of passengers being transported at the same time and staff are deep cleaning and disinfecting the buses after certain stops;
• The Town Council is still being transparent by making the meetings open to the public virtually and offering the opportunity for citizens to call-in to address Council;
• The Town is in continuous communication with Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and other entities, including Prince Edward County, the local health department and the hospital.

Mayor Whitus spoke encouraging the community to practice social distancing, washing their hands often, wearing a mask if they go out in public and staying at home, when possible.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

On motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Dwyer and with all Council members voting “aye”, the consent agenda was approved as presented. The consent agenda includes the draft minutes of the March 4, 2020, regular work session and the March 11, 2020, regular Town Council meeting.

**APPROVAL OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT**

On motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Vincent, and with all Council members voting “aye”, the Treasurer’s Report was approved, as submitted.

**APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF THE BILLS**

On motion by Mr. Reid, seconded by Mr. Hunter and with a recorded vote with Council members Cole, Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, and Davis voting “aye”, the Town Treasurer was granted authorization to pay the bills.
ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION CONFIRMING DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY FOR CORONAVIRUS 2019 (COVID-19), A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Pairet and with a recorded vote with Council members Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, Davis and Cole voting “aye”, Council adopted the resolution confirming declaration of local emergency for Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), a public health emergency.

BACKGROUND: Mayor Whitus, serving as the Director of Emergency Management for the Town, declared a local emergency existed within the Town of Farmville, Virginia, on March 17, 2020. The Declaration activates the Town’s Local Emergency Operations Plan, authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance thereunder and the continuity of local government pursuant to emergency exists within the Town of Farmville pursuant to Virginia Code Section 44-146.21. The Town Manager explained there is an opportunity for the Town to receive additional funding to be reimbursed for some of the items purchased to prepare for the pandemic through the Department of Emergency Management and FEMA. The Town has already started on the guidelines required to receive the funding.

APPROVAL OF SUBDIVISION ON LAYNE STREET

On motion by Mr. Dwyer, seconded by Mr. Pairet and with a recorded vote with Council members Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, Cole, and Hunter voting “aye”, and Council member Davis “abstaining”, declaring a personal interest in the transaction, Council approved the proposed subdivision on Layne Street, as per the plat presented.

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Pursuant to paragraph B.1 of Virginia State Code Section 2.2-3112 and Subsection H of Virginia State Code Section 2.2-3115, I, Jamie Davis, have a personal interest regarding the approval of the subdivision on Layne Street on today’s agenda.

The personal interest regarding the approval of the subdivision on Layne Street is that my company is a subcontractor for the individual requesting the subdivision of the parcel of land. Therefore, I am a member of a profession, occupation, or group of members that may be affected by the transaction and will not be participating in the transaction.

BACKGROUND: Will Nash, Town Subdivision Administrator, submitted a preliminary subdivision plat on behalf of Mr. Mike Papandrea, for Council’s review and approval. The
proposed subdivision is in the 2400 block of Layne Street. The zoning is R-3 and all the lots conform to the minimums of the district.

**AUTHORIZATION TO PROMOTE DISPATCHER FROM TRAINEE TO COMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR I**

On motion by Mr. Pairet, seconded by Mr. Davis and with a recorded vote with Council members Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, Davis, Cole, Hunter, and Vincent voting “aye”, Council accepted the recommendation of Chief Andy Ellington and Jackie Gilbert, Director of 911 Communications, and authorized the promotion of Dispatcher Cassie N. Badger from trainee to Communication Operator I at the hourly rate of $15.20, effective immediately.

**BACKGROUND:** Police Chief, Andy Ellington, and the Director of 911 Communications, Jackie Gilbert, have requested that Dispatcher Cassie N. Badger be promoted to Communications Operator I with a salary of $15.20 an hour. Dispatcher Badger has completed her field training/on the job training. In the past, once a dispatcher completed all the training requirements, the dispatcher is promoted to a Communications Operator I and receives a salary increase. The salary for a Communications Operator I is $15.20 an hour.

**AUTHORIZATION TO USE THE CURRENT UTILITY PROMISE TO PAY FORM FOR DELINQUENT UTILITY ACCOUNTS**

On motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Vincent and with all Council members voting “aye”, Council approved the use of the current Utility Promise To Pay Form, with suggested changes, to set up payment plans for individuals and businesses that become delinquent on their utility bills during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**BACKGROUND:** At the April work session, Council directed the Town Manager and Town Treasurer to consider implementing a payment plan for individuals or businesses that may become delinquent on their utility bill during the pandemic. The Town Manager presented Council with the Utility Promise to Pay Form currently in use by the Town Treasurer. He suggested the language “Your current water/sewer account must be kept current or the terms of this agreement will be revoked.”, be revised. He stated most people utilizing the form during the COVID-19 pandemic will not be able to keep their account current. Mr. Cole suggested that an effective date be added. Mr. Hunter added that Council will revisit the matter before July 1, 2020.
AUTHORIZATION FOR THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN NECESSARY DOCUMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hunter and with a recorded vote with Council members Dwyer, Reid, Davis, Cole, Hunter, Vincent, and Pairet voting “aye”, Council authorized the Town Manager to sign the necessary documents for the 2020-2021 Anthem Local Choice Health Insurance and to make no changes to the employees contribution.

BACKGROUND: Mr. Scott Davis, Town Manager, stated he needed Council’s authorization to sign the necessary documents to accept the Anthem Local Choice health insurance plans for another term, determine what the Town will offer percentage wise towards the cost of each employee’s health insurance and the employee’s cost for their health insurance. The agreement is due by the end of April. The Town Manager previously provided Council with options of percentages for cost to the Town and employees. Council, at the regular April work session, agreed to continue to provide the reimbursement to employees who elect not to take the Town’s health insurance benefit. Mr. Cole stated that Council wished to keep the Town employees health insurance benefit as is through 2021.

DISCUSSION OF THE LOCAL BUILDING OFFICIAL BOARD

The Town Attorney, Gary Elder, addressed Council stating for the first time in six years the Town has a building code appeal, but fortunately the appeal did not need to be heard by the Town’s Board. He stated the Board has not met in over six years and needs to be restructured if the Town wishes to continue with the Board. Mr. Elder posed the question to Council as to whether they want to continue to maintain a Board for local building code appeals? He stated the Code does not require the Town to maintain a Board. The Code allows, if Council wishes, for the Town to send out building code appeals to other localities. Mr. Elder advised Council that if they would like to maintain a Board, policies and procedures would need to be put into place for the Board to follow. He said the Board would consist of five people that specialize in certain professions such as a builder, an architect, etc. Mr. Elder said if the Town decided not to reform a Board, the Town would send the appeals out for other nearby localities to be heard.

Mayor Whitus referred the matter to the Finance and Ordinance Committee for recommendations back to Council.
AUTHORIZATION TO DIRECT THE TOWN ATTORNEY TO SUSPEND PROCEEDING
WITH FILING SUITS FOR LARGER DEBTORS

On motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Hunter and with all Council members voting “aye”, Council directed the Town Attorney to delay proceeding with filing suits for larger debtors for next 30 days and reevaluate the status of the economy at that point.

BACKGROUND: At the April 1, 2020, work session, Council directed the Town Attorney, Gary Elder, to suspend sending out collection notices for delinquent accounts receivable until June 30, 2020. Mr. Elder inquired if Council still wanted him to proceed with filing suits for larger debtors. He said there are currently at least 30-40 accounts, and his plans were to file them in bulk to save the Town money. Previously, Council instructed the Town Attorney to file suit against any debtor that owed in excess of $250. Mr. Elder stated that letters have been sent to every debtor that owes the Town unpaid utility bills, between the years of 2014-2018, encouraging them to pay the debt. He said some have made payments, but the vast majority have not made payment.

AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN AGREEMENT FOR FIREWORKS

Mr. Scott Davis, Town Manager, informed Council that the Request for Proposals seeking a vendor to provide fireworks for the Fireworks After Dark celebration had been advertised and the Town only received one proposal from Dominion Fireworks. He said he has been in touch with the fireworks company about options, considering the current pandemic, and the possibility the event may be canceled. The Town Manager stated due the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor placing a restriction on large gatherings until after June 10, 2020, Dominion Fireworks has agreed to allow the Town to submit the $6,500 deposit after June 10, 2020, once additional information is given by the Governor on the current restrictions.

The Town Manager explained that the annual Fireworks After Dark event is the Town’s 4th of July celebration that is held on July 3rd each year at the Farmville Regional Airport. The event consists of music provided by live bands, food vendors and a fireworks show.

Discussion continued about the possibility of the event being canceled and the options of sponsoring the event on a different date. The Town Manager reminded Council that the airport will be under construction starting July 6, 2020, and therefore will not be available for the suggested Labor Day holiday. Council agreed that the July 3rd event needs to be canceled, and the
Town needs to consider other options. Mayor Whitus referred the matter of a possible community celebration and purchasing fireworks for the event to the Recreation Committee.

**AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN CONTRACT FOR STREET PAVING**

On motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Reid and with a recorded vote with Council members Reid, Davis, Cole, Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, and Dwyer voting “aye”, Council authorized the Town Manager to sign the contract for street paving.

**BACKGROUND:**  
Mr. Scott Davis, Town Manager, stated the Invitation for Bids for street paving are due on Friday, April 10, 2020, and if he waits until the next Council meeting in May to get authorization to sign the contract, the paving will not be done by the end of the fiscal year. He said street paving is funded out of Fund 15, which is all VDOT funds, and we currently have $1.7 million that must be used on street maintenance. It cannot be used for any other purpose and if the Town does not use the money, the Town must submit a request to carry it over or it must be turned back into the State. The Town Manager mentioned VDOT pays the money quarterly.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Finance and Ordinance Committee, Mr. Davis, Chairman: no report.
- Personnel Committee, Mr. Reid, Chairman: no report.
- Town Property/Buildings Committee, Mr. Dwyer, Chairman: no report.
- Infrastructure Committee, Mr. Pairet, Chairman: no report.
- Parks/Recreations Committee, Mr. Vincent, Chairman: no report.
- Public Safety Committee, Mr. Hunter, Chairman: no report.
- Prince Edward Volunteer Rescue Squad Board, Mr. Cole, Representative: Mr. Cole stated that the new director, Deanna, is doing a great job and has made a tremendous impact on the organization. He said she is making sure all the EMTs are wearing their personal protective equipment during this time, and they have designated a squad vehicle specifically for potential COVID-19 patients.

**TOWN MANAGER AND STAFF REPORT**

The Town Manager, briefed Council on the following matters:

- Spring clean-up has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Robin Atkins, the Director of Public Works, does not feel that it is safe for staff to pick-up items due to the current health situation.
• The Mayor received an email from a citizen asking the Town to consider participating a red ribbon campaign to show solidarity during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The red ribbon campaign asks people to tie red ribbons outside of their homes, businesses, cars or anywhere that can be seen, as a sign of hope and love during the coronavirus crisis. Council agreed to move forward with the request and directed the Town Manager to seek additional information to initiate the campaign.

• At the regular April 1, 2020, work session, Council inquired whether the Town could postpone replacing the HVAC for the Town Hall building. Mr. Davis said it is not feasible to cancel the installation because the unit is scheduled to ship from Carrier on April 21, 2020. He stated if the Town were to cancel at this point, we would still have to pay $81,144, which is 75% of the total cost and receive no HVAC unit. He suggested to Council that the Town move forward with the installation of the unit.

• The Town Manager stated after speaking with Bill Caldwell, Deputy Director of Public Works, the Town can delay upgrading the fuel site on Doswell Street. Mr. Caldwell confirmed that the only major occurrences at the fuel pumps were when pumps were not computing correctly.

**AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO WAIVE THE MONTHLY PARKING RENTAL FEES FOR 60 DAYS**

On motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Reid and with a recorded vote with Council members Davis, Cole, Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, and Reid voting “aye”, Council authorized the Town Manager to waive the parking rental fees for 60 days for all current renters.

**BACKGROUND:** At the regular April 1, 2020, work session, the Town Manager presented Council with a request on behalf of Three Roads Brewing seeking a waiver of their monthly parking rental. They currently rent three parking spaces from the Town, but with the business being closed due to COVID-19 they are asking for a waiver of the monthly rental. The Town Manager provided Council with a list of everyone that is currently renting parking spaces. Council agreed that they needed to waive the fees for all renters in order to be fair.

**COMMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF TOWN COUNCIL**

Mr. Vincent thanked all the local healthcare workers and the community for pulling together during the COVID-19 crisis.
Mr. Davis thanked the community for being selfless, instead of selfish, during the current pandemic.

Mr. Cole stated as a healthcare worker, he would like to thank the community for following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and helping keep stress off the healthcare system here. He added as a business leader, he encouraged small business owners to investigate the small business loan/payroll protection loan. He said it is a good program and will help them pay their employees for two months. If they use it for that purpose, the total loan will be forgiven.

Mayor Whitus stated in the near future, he will be having conversations with Longwood University, Hampden-Sydney College and other local business leaders to schedule a virtual round-table meeting discussing the economic impact the pandemic will have on the local economy.

**CLOSED SESSION – PERSONNEL UNDER SECTION 2.2-3711. A.1**

On the motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Hunter and with all Council members voting “aye,” Council went into closed session under paragraph A.1 of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, to discuss the performance of the Town Manager concerning specific personnel matters.

On the motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with all the Council members voting “aye,” the Council returned to the regular order of business.

**CLOSED MEETING CERTIFICATION**

WHEREAS, the Farmville Town Council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Farmville Town Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Farmville Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Farmville Town Council.

VOTE: Seven “ayes,” No “noes”

MOTION: Davis SECOND: Hunter

AYES: Dwyer, Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, Reid, Davis and Cole
NOES: None

ABSENT DURING VOTE: None

ABSENT DURING MEETING: None

Clerk

There being no other business, on motion by Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Vincent and with all Council members voting “aye”, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.

APPROVED: ATTEST:

_____________________________   ______________________________
David E. Whitus, Mayor     Jacqueline B. Vaughan, Deputy Clerk