

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FARMVILLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON AUGUST 19, 2020**

At the special meeting of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, at 6:00 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 S.O. Amos.

The staff present were Town Manager C. Scott Davis, Town Attorney Gary Elder, Deputy Chief of Police William Hogan, IT Support Ashley Atkins, and Deputy Clerk Jackie Vaughan.

Mayor Whitus called the meeting to order and welcomed guests appearing in person, on the conference line, and viewing by social media.

Reverend James P. Ashton of First Baptist Church in Farmville provided the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Mayor Reid.

The Deputy Clerk called the roll, noting all member present.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

To hear citizen's comments on the following:

*The consideration of the Town Council to remove, relocate, contextualize, or cover a Town owned monument or memorial currently located at the intersection of High Street and Randolph Street in the Town of Farmville.*

Mayor Whitus called the public hearing to order and reminded guest to limit their comments to three minutes. He mentioned that tonight Council will hear comments, they will not participate in dialog and they will not be acting on the matter tonight.

The following individuals addressed Council via conference call:

- Mr. Chris Calkins provided Council with a map of the Confederate Cemetery and stated he supports relocating the monument to the Confederate Cemetery located in Town.
- Ms. Flora Bolt stated she is opposed to the removal of the statue and feels Council "stole the statue in the heat of the night". She requested the soldier be returned to the original location.
- Mrs. Naomi Tsigaridas expressed support of the removal of the statue and the relocating of the monument to the confederate cemetery or a museum.

The following individuals addressed Council in-person:

- Mr. Chris Burk stated he opposed the removal of the confederate statue and indicated the matter should be placed on the ballot in November for taxpayers' voices to be heard, fair and square. He stated the statue needs to be returned where it has stood unharmed for over 120 years.
- Ms. Deserae Bowlin expressed opposition to the removal of the confederate statue. She stated she was the proud descendant of several confederate veterans and shared information about Captain Sam Paulette, a former Town Council member and one of the many war veterans that the Prince Edward County Veterans Memorial represents.
- Mr. David Easter opposed the removal of the confederate statue and stated he was proud of his ancestors that fought in the war between the states and mentioned they did not own slaves. He mentioned the monuments do not stand for slavery. They stand for the honor of those that fought for their state. Mr. Easter stated the monument should stay where it is.
- Rev. James Samuel Williams, Jr stated he has been a resident in the Town of Farmville for 87 years and has seen many changes take place. He stated the Town is moving in the right direction, and "we do not need in any community, any type of physical symbol that will resemble slavery, the horror of slavery, the unethicalness of slavery, the immorality of slavery". He commended Council for taking the action they did regarding the removal of the statue.
- Mr. Southard Brumfield stated if the monument is relocated to the Confederate Cemetery, no one will be able to see it, and feels the monument should be put back where it was. Mr. Brumfield suggested the Town honor Reverend Dr. L. Francis Griffin with a statue for the civil rights work he did.
- Mr. James Ghee, representing the Prince Edward County Branch of the NAACP, commended Council for the brave and bold actions in removing the statue. He requested Council not return the statue and to continue in the removal of the base. He spoke briefly on the history of the placement of the confederate monument. Mr. Ghee suggested the monument be relocated to a museum.
- Mr. James Early spoke of being a descendant of Confederate General J. A. Early, and his connection to the name given to Early Street, located in the Town of Farmville. He detailed General Early as a white supremacist, a coward, and an adject failure as a human being. He

stated, “The concept of heritage, not hate, is a false dichotomy and an insufficient reason to display and maintain monuments of people who would have been 35% of our country’s residents be defined as property.” He stated, “Farmville deserves better than a monument like this.”

- Mr. Griff Adlrich commended Council for the decision to remove the statue. He stated Farmville is a very welcoming community that values peace and reconciliation, and added the statue was another symbol that was offensive to sufficient portion of the community.
- Rev. James Ashton stated Council did a marvelous job in making the decision to remove the statue, and he knows it was not an easy one. He encouraged Council to be helpful in service and to say what they mean and mean what they say.
- Mr. Joseph Stanley stated he was a concerned citizen. He spoke of recent events occurring across the United States with confederate monuments being vandalized and removed. He stated the statue needed to be put back in its original place, because it represents a soldier who was willing to stand up for the confederacy.
- Mr. Tom Dennison stated as he looks towards the future of Farmville, if anyone is offended by anything, that anything should be questioned and talked about, and that is exactly what everyone is doing tonight. He stated we are making steps towards a much better future.
- Mr. Ernest Toney thanked Council for making a decision that was right and safe, knowing it would not be popular with some of the constituents. He stated he is happy that Council choose to be on the right side of history. He spoke briefly about the history of the confederacy, and an incident his parents endured as blacks. Mr. Toney stated the statue would be better suited for a confederate museum, cemetery, or battlefield.
- Ms. Alanna Rivera stated individuals can honor their loved ones in the privacy of their homes. Ms. Rivera stated when people speak of honoring things, they need to make sure those things being honored are not hurtful for people in the community. She thanked Council for bringing the conversation to the forefront and moving the community into the right direction.
- Mr. Nat Layne stated he was a historian and the cause of the civil war was to protect the institute of slavery. He explained that he had ancestors that fought in the civil war and growing up he was taught that they were heroes, but later he learned how poorly he was taught. Mr. Layne stated he moved to Farmville in 1978, and one of the proudest moments

he has had as a resident of the Town was the night the statue was removed. He stated, “we can remember our history, but we don’t have to memorialize the darkest parts of it.”

- Mr. Michael Lucas stated he was upset that the statue was dismantled and stored away. He described the monument as a “general monument” dedicated to all the citizens that served to defend Prince Edward County, the state of Virginia, and the Confederacy. Mr. Lucas stated, “Shame on you for doing what you did. It was wrong.” He stated to have a better community, individuals need to be more inclusive of the confederate past and their humanity along with everyone else’s.

The following individuals addressed Council via emails and letters:

- Dr. Robert P. Webber expressed support in relocating the monument to the Confederate Cemetery. He stated it seems like the ideal location, and those who want to honor the statue and what it represents can do so, and those who are offended by it can avoid seeing it. Dr. Webber stated he does not support a referendum, noting Farmville does not need more arguing and controversy.
- Ms. Emily Hollingworth thanked Council for holding the public hearing offering to hear citizens comments on the matter. She asked that the statue not be reinstated on High Street and instead be installed at the Farmville Confederate Cemetery.
- Mrs. Alejia “Mickie” Carrington stated, “Only those of us who have experienced and still experience racial discrimination would know how it feels to be continually be reminded by objects, such as the confederate statue.” She stated the statue should be placed in the Confederate Cemetery or anywhere except in public view.
- Ms. Kerry Mossler wrote, “Please put the confederate statue in the Confederate graveyard, where those who want to enjoy it can, and those who are hurt by it, don’t have to look at it every day.” She stated, “Taking it down was huge step in healing for Farmville.”
- Mr. Robert A. Mottley stated the Town of Farmville Council has the responsibility and challenge to assure a democratic process is followed in deciding what should be done with the Confederate Monument. He stated he support the position that the matter should be decided by a vote of the people of Farmville. He stated, “The Confederate Monument has stood in Farmville since 1900, 120 years, as a memorial to our relatives and local confederate soldiers who died in the civil war and should remain in that location.”

- Mrs. Faye Green thanked Council for their swift and appropriate removal of the confederate statue. She wrote, “The Town of Farmville certainly did not need this symbol of repression.” Mrs. Green stated she is hopeful the protected monument can be safely placed at the Town’s confederate cemetery.
- Ms. Vickie Lee stated it is her wish that the statue be retired to a museum or an appropriate area where someone can visit it if it is their desire.
- Mr. Charles Ironmonger stated to disrespect a monument to veterans of any war is to disrespect the veterans of all wars, and the monument represents someone’s ancestor who valiantly died on the field of battle. He asked if the Town Council proceeds with the removal of the Confederate War Memorial, how well will they sleep at night?

With no one else to speak, the public hearing was closed.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 197 – ORDINANCE INSTITUTING TEMPORARY MEASURES FOR CERTAIN GATHERINGS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19**

On motion by Mr. Pairet, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote with Council members Cole, Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, and Amos voting “aye”, the motion was approved to adopt Resolution No. 197 - Ordinance Instituting Temporary Measures For Certain Gatherings To Prevent The Spread Of Covid-19, as presented, with the contingency to revise if a need arises in the future, effective August 20, 2020, at midnight.

**BACKGROUND:** Town Attorney Gary Elder stated the Council has reviewed the draft Ordinance presented to Council at the regular meeting on August 12, 2020. He stated there have been two changes since last week to further clarify who is exempt from the Ordinance. Mr. Elder stated for clarification the Ordinance now exempts schools and restaurants.

Mayor Whitus reiterated the exemptions to the emergency ordinance as religious gatherings, wedding ceremonies and receptions, funerals, and protests as permitted by a special event permit, and the ordinance prohibits the gathering of more than 50 people.

Mrs. Amos voiced concerns about the “gathering of more than 50 people.”, stating people are going to call dispatch when they see groups of 30 or less. Deputy Chief of Police William Hogan explained that the police department has been receiving calls for people holding events that have less than 30 people. The Town Attorney stated the emergency ordinance can be revised and replaced with another emergency ordinance.

The Town Manager reminded Council if the number for “gatherings” is lowered, it will be for the entire Town, not just a select group of people. He stated if the number for gatherings is reduced to twenty, it will be for everyone in Town including family gatherings and meetings for civil organizations. Deputy Chief Hogan stated it will be a complaint-based offense.

Mayor Whitus stated he spoke with a representative at Longwood, and they assured him they will send out an email to all the students informing them of the emergency ordinance.

**APPOINTMENT OF CLERK OF COUNCIL**

On motion by Mr. Pairet, seconded by Mr. Vincent and with a recorded vote with Council members Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, Amos, and Cole voting “aye”, the motion was approved to offer Mrs. Sherry Scoggins the position of Clerk of Council, with terms in the Employment Agreement.

**BACKGROUND:** Mayor Whitus stated the Clerk of Council Employment Agreement has been reviewed by Council members.

**REINSTATE CONVENIENCE FEES, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 AND AUTHORIZE THE TOWN TREASURER TO SELECT THE HYBRID PLAN WITH EDMUNDS FOR ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS**

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote with Council members Vincent, Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, Amos, Cole, and Hunter voting “aye”, a motion was approved to reinstate convenience fees for credit card payments, effective September 1, 2020, and authorize the Town Treasurer to select the Hybrid Plan with Edmunds for electronic payments with the customer paying the credit and debit card fees and E-Checks with the Town paying the .68 fee.

**REINSTATE ADDING THE 10% PENALTIES TO PAST DUE WATER AND SEWER ACCOUNTS, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2020**

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote with Council members Pairet, Dwyer, Reid, Amos, Cole, and Hunter, and Vincent voting “aye”, a motion was approved to reinstate adding the ten percent penalty to past due water and sewer accounts, effective September 1, 2020.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR THE TOWN TREASURER TO SEND DISCONNECTION NOTICES TO WATER AND SEWER ACCOUNTS OVER 90 DAYS PAST DUE**

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote with Council members Dwyer, Reid, Amos, Cole, and Hunter, Vincent, and Pairet voting “aye”, a motion was approved to authorize the Town Treasurer to send disconnection notices to water and sewer accounts over 90 days past due, giving them fifteen days to bring their account current, make payment arrangements, or provide proof that they have applied for/received assistance. If payment is not received, they are subject to be disconnected with an additional \$20.00 reconnection fee.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR THE TOWN TREASURER TO SEND A LETTER TO DELINQUENT ACCOUNT RECEIVABLES UNDER \$500.00**

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote with Council members Reid, Amos, Cole, and Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, and Dwyer voting “aye”, a motion was approved to authorize the Town Treasurer to send a letter to delinquent account receivables under \$500.00.

**REINSTATE ADDING PENALTIES AND INTEREST FOR PAST DUE FOOD AND LODGING, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2020**

On motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote with Council members Reid, Amos, Cole, and Hunter, Vincent, Pairet, and Dwyer voting “aye”, a motion was approved to reinstate adding penalties and interest for past due food and lodging, effective September 1, 2020.

**BACKGROUND:** Mr. Cole gave a brief verbal report of the Finance and Ordinance Committee meeting held on August 18, 2020. He stated the Committee discussed the reinstatement of operational items that had been suspended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated the Committee agreed to recommend to Council to reinstate the collection of fees, interest and penalties, effective September 1, 2020.

Mr. Cole mentioned, with the Town’s new financial software, the Town have new options available for convenience fees on electronic payments. He gave a brief description of the three options:

- Agency Funded – the Town bears the burden on fees for all electronic payments made. He stated the Town is not interested in this plan.

- Hybrid Plan – the customers will pay a 2.95% fee for credit and debit transactions. The Town can offer E-Checks as an option to pay with no cost to the customer and the Town would pay the \$.68 fee associated with e-checks. If the Town does not absorb the fee associated with e-checks, the customer will be charged \$1.05, and all e-check transactions must be done online, not over the phone, using the customer’s routing and account number from an active checking or savings account.
- ACH – Automatic Withdrawal – the customer’s amount due will be withdrawn from their account on a specified day each month. The Committee elected not to consider this as an option.

There being no other business, on motion by Mr. Pairet, seconded by Mr. Reid, and with all Council members voting “aye”, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

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David E. Whitus, Mayor

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Jacqueline B. Vaughan, Deputy Clerk