

**CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VIRGINIA
Regular Meeting of City Council
Tuesday, July 14, 2020**

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of City Council was called to order by Mayor Kochuba at 7:13 P.M.

2. Roll Call

The following members of Council and Council's staff were present for roll call by the Clerk:

Present: Councilman Michael A. Cherry
Councilman Kenneth B. Frenier
Councilman W. Joe Green, Jr.
Councilman John T. Wood
Vice Mayor Elizabeth G. Luck
Mayor T. Gregory Kochuba

Absent: Councilman John E. Piotrowski

Also Present: Mr. Douglas E. Smith, City Manager
Mr. Hugh P. Fisher, III, City Attorney
Mrs. Jeri-Ann Tomlin, Deputy Clerk

3. Devotion

A devotional prayer was led by Mrs. Luck.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Kochuba.

5. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Frenier, seconded by Mr. Green, to adopt the agenda as presented.

**Vote: 6-0
Yes: Cherry
Frenier
Green, Jr.
Wood
Luck**

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Kochuba
No: None
Absent: Piotrowski
Abstained: None

Motion: UNANIMOUS PASS

6. Declarations of Personal Interest

A Declaration of Personal Interest was read by Mr. Frenier and filed with the Clerk.

7. Commendations and Presentations

A. Introduction of Erin Barr, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney

Mr. Gray Collins, Commonwealth's Attorney, introduced Mrs. Erin Barr.

8. Reading of Manner of Addressing Council.

Mr. Fisher read the Manner of Addressing Council.

9. Written Petitions and Communications

A. Councilman John Wood – Enhancements of City Parks

At the request of Mr. Wood, the following are his verbatim comments of the initial presentation:

“I want to bring a subject formally before Council with regard to our city parks because in the recent past, I have noticed controversies over historical monuments. It is rare that Council members or elected officials have the opportunity to do both a good and righteous thing and have that good and righteous thing be economically beneficial. So frequently what is economically beneficial might not necessarily be morally or ethically the best path to follow. I think we now have such an opportunity. Recently, we have viewed the destruction of historic monuments/statues erected by previous generations to honor those who made some type of contribution to the betterment of society. Today historical statues and monuments are being vandalized or destroyed or removed. In watching that with dismay and alarm, I am reminded of the Chinese character for crisis. The Chinese character for crisis or danger also is interpreted as the character for opportunity. I think we have an opportunity that may not avail itself again for a very, very long time.

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I don't suggest that we take any specific action with any specific statue or monument at this point in time because that is not my purpose. We have seen the destruction or removal of all sorts of statues. Initially the objection was to Confederate monuments. But now others are targets, such as George Washington, Christopher Columbus or presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt and Ulysses S. Grant or perhaps Hans Christian Heg, a Norwegian who immigrated to the United States, became an abolitionist, and fought for the Union. Also, statues of Saint Louis and the Virgin Mary are under attack. It is not my intent here tonight to propose a political statement for choosing any particular historical monument; whether it be a monument to unknown Civil War or Revolutionary War soldiers or whether it be a statue of Abraham Lincoln. That's not my point and it is not my desire for us to debate the merits of each particular historical monument throughout the country – this is not the purpose of my presentation tonight.

On the contrary, I regard myself as one interested in addition rather than subtraction. So rather than idly watch the destruction of various historical monuments of statesmen or composers or captains of industry or explorers or doctors or generals, or whoever may now erroneously be thought to be a burden on some communities, I suggest we act. If such monuments are now adjudged intolerable to some, we have an opportunity. I recall the parable of Noah. A new deluge is upon us. We stand at a precipice. God warned Noah that a deluge was imminent. Noah was directed to build an ark; and place into that ark a male and female of each animal without regard to whether that animal was large or small or whether the animal was fierce or tame. But each animal, regardless of its character was to be placed in the ark so when the deluge came, and the flood wiped out life on earth, the animals would be saved.

The ark was a refuge – a sanctuary. This is essentially what I am proposing to Council. To take no specific action with regard to any particular monument but to adopt a general policy of sanctuary. Adopt a policy, on a case-by-case basis, if there is any community in our state, primarily, or in a region, or throughout the nation, that finds itself so offended by a mute relic of a by-gone era that they can no longer tolerate its countenance, I suggest that we explore, with that particular jurisdiction/city/county/state, the opportunity to have that relic, monument, statue transferred to us and that we take that statue, without any sort of political or social agenda, and provide a plaque with just a name, the date of birth, and date of death. We then take that monument or statue and place it in one of our parks. We have a historical park. It is Fort Clifton, the Civil War fort on the Appomattox River. We also have White Bank Park and Appamatuck Historical Park, the site of an Indian village, and we do have an area that is in the center of the

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Roundabout at Temple Avenue and Interstate 95. We have been told it will cost a sizeable sum to erect a sign at the Roundabout entrance to our city. I'm not asking we choose any particular monument, but wouldn't it be just, wouldn't it be beneficial, wouldn't it be economically helpful, if people traveling from Boston to Miami on Interstate 95 could pull off the Interstate and see this little town called Colonial Heights, the little mouse that roared. A town that decided perhaps, these monuments can be displayed without a political agenda or historical dispute.

We will have a place, a sanctuary, an ark for all those monuments that have fallen from favor for whatever reason. When the current upheaval subsides and more rational times return, the monuments will be preserved. And again, I am not suggesting any particular one. I am proposing a sanctuary here for all such monuments where visitors can view and decide for themselves their value. Now, I know that my proposal will be attended with some controversy but nothing worthwhile has ever been attended without controversy.

I also understand my proposal will have some economic cost. However, one of the benefits of the Web and the ubiquitous ability to communicate with people across the country and the globe is access to a web site called GoFundMe. I believe that if we were to ask a particular locality for their monument and then go on that site and ask for funds, I'm almost certain there would be enough people willing to make financial contributions sufficient to offset our costs. Because actually folks, most of the monuments of which I speak, were erected with the nickels and dimes of school children, the donations from those of modest means, the contributions of civic organizations and subscriptions that were offered for years. Consequently, previous generations sacrificed economically to erect monuments to individuals held in esteem. I think there are enough of us who still honor these monuments. We would receive adequate donations allowing us to transport and erect in our parks and in our town these now disfavored monuments.

I am most certain that there would be many travelers north and south on Interstate 95 motoring through our little town of Colonial Heights willing to stop and see what others in other jurisdictions decided should not to be seen. This sort of censorship creates awareness. When communities prohibit or ban something, it generally generates an interest in the banned item. We should do the right thing in preserving the esteem of previous generations and we can benefit from it economically. The economic benefits of tourists spending money in our town during their visits are obvious. I suggest, as a policy, that this Council adopt my proposal to relocate monuments here. And as the opportunities present themselves, we ask or seek the placement of the

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fallen heroes in our city rather than in jurisdictions which regard them as undesirable burdens of the past. Now, many, many times, historical monuments and statues will be placed by other communities in some historical context or some particular historical park or museum or cultural association or they may be returned to people that initially sponsored and built historical monuments and, in those cases, that is all good and well. However, there will be many situations where some monuments will be orphans. And to those orphans I think we should offer a sanctuary.”

At the conclusion of Mr. Wood’s comments, Mayor Kochuba asked if Mr. Wood would like to put his request in the form of a motion. A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Frenier, that the City of Colonial Heights adopt a policy of seeking the repatriation of those historical monuments and statues that have been removed from various locations in the United States and consider having those transferred to the City for the purpose of erection in City parks and on City property.

Mrs. Luck stated she was opposed to Mr. Wood’s proposal stating the proposal had been brought before Council twice prior to the meeting, with no support. Continuing, Mrs. Luck stated it was her belief that Mr. Wood’s love of history is driving, what she considered an insane promotion of bringing the statues to the City. Mrs. Luck stated she was sure Mr. Wood was aware that the Mayor of Crewe, Virginia attempted this similar proposal, with the jurisdiction calling for his resignation soon thereafter. Mrs. Luck stated people do not see this as a love of history but rather with emotions and sensitivity versus insensitivity to what has happened in the past; so even considering this proposal, was beyond her belief. Mrs. Luck stated she felt this action would bring nothing but chaos.

Mr. Wood stated this was not a love of history but a love of civilization. Mr. Wood stated we could run from this but we would not be able to hide from it.

Mrs. Luck stated she did not want to be in the middle of it and does not feel the City is the place to place statues that, at the present moment, were causing huge demonstrations and chaos. Responding to Mrs. Luck’s comment, Mr. Wood asked if it was the statues themselves that were causing the chaos or the political movement that intended to destroy what the nation was founded upon. Mr. Wood stated citizens must defend society and culture.

Mr. Green stated he appreciated Mr. Wood’s concern with such issues; however, there are historical items in the City besides city parks, i.e. Violet Bank which the City struggles to maintain and to spend additional money on statues, monuments, etc. that have been removed for one reason or another removed because of popular opinion – whether right or wrong. Mr. Green

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stated bringing those statues to the City would not change that opinion and only bring attention to Colonial Heights that was not needed. Mr. Green stated if the City had enough money to take care of what it already had, he may feel differently; therefore, he did not see how the City could afford to implement such a proposal.

Mr. Frenier stated he did not agree with moving monuments to City parks, especially those that are in residential areas; however, suggested a person in Louisa who is collecting such statues. Mr. Frenier stated, the City did not have the space; however, would not mind them if there was one areas away from residential areas but with this not being the case, he could not support the proposal.

At this time, Mayor Kochuba called for the vote.

Vote:	1-5
Yes:	Wood
No:	Cherry
	Frenier
	Green, Jr.
	Luck
	Kochuba
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion FAIL

10. Advertised Public Hearing

There was none.

Before continuing, Mayor Kochuba recognized Cub Scout Robert Wheeler who was present in the audience.

11. Hearing of Citizens Generally on Non-Agenda Items

Glenn Royster, 321 Bristol Avenue – Spoke on the affects the current events have on young people.

12. Consideration of Uncontested Minutes, Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions in accordance with the Consent Agenda.

- A. AN ORDINANCE NO 20-21
(Second Reading) Awarding the City Manager a 4% bonus.**

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- B. AN ORDINANCE NO 20-FIN-11**
(Second Reading) To amend the General Fund Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, to increase appropriations by \$73,000 to 1) appropriate \$40,000 in insurance recoveries to cover the City's expenses for accidental losses; 2) transfer \$32,500 in savings from incarceration expenses to debt services for the 2019 computer lease; and 3) appropriate \$33,000 in proceeds from the sale of the courthouse property to purchase property adjacent to Violet Bank.

- C. AN ORDINANCE NO 20-FIN-12**
(Second Reading) To amend the General Fund Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, by increasing appropriations by \$4,320 to 1) transfer anticipated revenue for vehicle rental tax in the amount of \$210,701 from use of money and property to intergovernmental revenue; and 2) appropriate \$4,320 in state forfeiture funds for training.

- D. June 9, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes**

- E. June 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Frenier, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

<u>Vote:</u>	6-0
Yes:	Cherry
	Frenier
	Green, Jr.
	Wood
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

13. Introduction and Consideration of Ordinances and Resolutions

- A. AN ORDINANCE NO 20-20**

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(First Reading) amending § 286-530.26 of Chapter 286, Zoning, of the Colonial Heights City Code by allowing donation collection bins in the City under certain circumstances.

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mrs. Luck, to adopt Ordinance No. 20-20.

Mr. Fisher recalled Council's request that an exemption be added to the current ban on donation bins within the City, which would allow donation bins to be located on property of a store that is operated by a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Mr. Fisher stated, he was aware of two places within the City which fall under this category and he tried to draft the ordinance in accordance with Council's wishes to limit it to just those locations where there was a retail store operated by a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Mr. Fisher advised the ordinance passed the Planning Commission last week by a 4-2 vote.

Mayor Kochuba thanked Mr. Fisher for his efforts to include Council's wishes into the proposed Ordinance No. 20-20.

<u>Vote:</u>	6-0
Yes:	Cherry Frenier Green, Jr. Wood Luck Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

**B. AN ORDINANCE NO 20-FIN-13
(First Reading) To amend the General Fund Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, by transferring appropriations in the amount of \$45,000 from Contingency to Buildings and Grounds for emergency repairs of the Courthouse HVAC system; and 2) transferring \$28,191 from Contingency to the Emergency Response Fund for hazard pay for certain public safety employees.**

To amend the Emergency Response Fund Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, to appropriate a total of \$594,051 for direct costs of the COVID-19

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response, comprised of \$565,860 received from federal sources and \$28,191 from the City.

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Frenier, to approve Ordinance No. 20-FIN-13.

Mr. Smith provided a brief overview of the ordinance then turned the floor over to Mr. Skalak and Mrs. Minor.

Mr. Green thanked staff for their attentiveness to the numbers and for keeping Council informed.

Addressing Mayor Kochuba's question relative to the appropriation for the Courthouse HVAC system and the time frame for completion of the maintenance, Mr. Smith advised he did not have a date for maintenance completion, and referred to Mr. Skalak for additional information. Mr. Skalak advised both contractors provided 30 to 31 days to receive the equipment, with the removal and installation of equipment to start soon thereafter.

Addressing Mr. Cherry's question relative to the receipt of any type of warranty on the equipment, Mr. Skalak advised the Courthouse had been open for six and one half years; however, the coils were only warranted for one year and the compressor for five years.

Mr. Wood asked if it would be more cost effective to locate the cooling units on the ground instead of the roof where accessibility would be better and the use of a crane would not be necessary. Addressing Mr. Wood's question, Mr. Cherry advised the cooling units were placed on the roof for noise abatement.

Vote:	6-0
Yes:	Cherry
	Frenier
	Green, Jr.
	Wood
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

- C. **AN ORDINANCE NO 20-FIN-14**
(First Reading) To amend the General Fund Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021, by appropriating \$31,013; 1) to appropriate \$17,216 in Office of Emergency Medical Services grant funds for the purchase of EMS equipment, and 2) to appropriate \$123,797 in CDBG funds anticipated in excess of the current budget.

To amend the Emergency Response Fund Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021, to appropriate \$512,237 received from federal sources for direct costs of the COVID-19 response.

To amend the Capital Projects Fund Budget, as previously adopted by Council, by reducing appropriations by \$210,972 and transferring funds from the Boulevard Enhancement Project and the Appomattox Greenway Trail Project (ARGT) to the North Elementary Sidewalks Project, and Redevelopment Project.

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mrs. Luck, to adopt Ordinance No 20-FIN-14.

Mr. Smith provided brief comments relative to grant funds received, after which time Mrs. Minor further explained anticipated CDBG funding as previously presented by Ms. Payne. At the request of Mayor Kochuba, Mrs. Minor provided further explained the purpose of the CDBG Program stating it was an entitlement grant for specific purposes to help moderate and low income individuals which the City uses for a housing assistance program primarily to assist with the rehabilitation of homes that may have substantial infrastructure problems to ensure a safe environment.

Continuing, Mrs. Minor reported on the appropriation for COVID response funds to be used for Utility Bill Assistance Program as well as other allocations Council had been previously made aware of. Additionally, Mrs. Minor advised staff had been working with VDOT regarding the transfer of funds between projects; specifically, the transfer of funds from the two Boulevard enhancement projects approved in the CIP and allocation of those funds to the Appomattox River Greenway Trail and the North Elementary Sidewalk project. Mrs. Minor further explained a discrepancy noting the over-appropriation of funds for the Appomattox River Greenway Trail, which will be corrected to match the VDOT allocation. Additionally, Ms. Minor explained that the remainder of the funds would go to the North Elementary Sidewalks Project to complete the project.

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Vote:	6-0
Yes:	Cherry
	Frenier
	Green, Jr.
	Wood
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

- D. A RESOLUTION NO 20-34**
Authorizing the submission of funding applications to the Commonwealth Transportation Board through the bi-annual SMART SCALE program for the following projects: 1) Lakeview Modernization Phase II (Brijidan Lane to City limits); and 2) Boulevard Modernization Phase II (Westover Avenue to Temple Avenue).

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Cherry, to adopt Resolution No. 20-34.

At the request of Mr. Smith, Mr. Flippen provided a brief overview of the two requested projects and asked that Council indicate their support for committing funds to these projects should they be awarded; however, Mr. Smith indicated funding may not be available for several years even with approval.

Mr. Flippen advised the two proposed projects had been submitted for scoring previously and had received the highest score of those submitted; Mr. Flippen stated staff was making efforts to ensure these projects were more competitive.

Continuing, Mr. Flippen provided information on the Lakeview project indicating this would be a continuation of Phase 1, which staff looks for construction to begin in the fall of 2020. Mr. Flippen noted the improvements to the corridor; specifically noting ornamental street lights, sidewalks, curb and gutter as well as replacement of the water and sewer infrastructure.

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Addressing Mayor Kochuba's question, Mr. Smith stated the total cost of the project was \$11M, with the City's contribution being \$500,000; therefore, this would be a \$10.5M request.

Mr. Flippen addressed Mrs. Luck's question relative to the addition of ornamental lighting along Lakeview Avenue stating staff made alterations relative to the spacing and placement of the lighting.

Continuing, Mr. Flippen moved to the second project, Boulevard Modernization Phase 2 at which time he explained that it was planned to include the enhancement work from the Boulevard Enhancement Project with Phase 2 of the Boulevard Modernization Project.

Mr. Flippen advised staff was searching for local matches for the two projects clarifying that VDOT was looking for cost benefit ratios; essentially, the more funding the locality can provide, increases the cost benefit ratio from the state and federal agency perspective. Mr. Flippen stated staff was looking for \$1M in local match for the Boulevard Modernization Project and \$500,000 for the Lakeview Modernization Phase 2.

Addressing Mayor Kochuba's question relative to commitment of funding, Mr. Smith clarified that commitment would be made to provide the funds for each of the project should they be approved and at such time, funds would need to be allocated. Comparing a previous project, Mr. Flippen advised that funding would not be likely be available for expenditure until 2024 or 2025.

<u>Vote:</u>	6-0
Yes:	Cherry
	Frenier
	Green, Jr.
	Wood
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

- E. A RESOLUTION NO 20-35**
Supporting the submission and approval of funding of applications of the City of Petersburg and the Tri-Cities MPO to the Commonwealth Transportation Board through the bi-annual SMART SCALE program for the following projects: 1)

City of Petersburg Proposed Appomattox River Trail Project (Squaw Alley to Patton Park to the north shore of the Appomattox River and existing CHARTS trail); and 2) Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization Proposed Trail Project (part of the Ashland to Petersburg Trail) from River Road through Virginia State University to Patton Park in Petersburg with a spur trail to Colonial Heights.

A motion was made by Mayor Kochuba, seconded by Mrs. Luck, to adopt Resolution No. 20-35.

Mr. Smith introduced Wendy Austin, Executive Director of FOLAR and Heather Farrar, Regional Director of Trails, via telephone, to address Council in reference to the projects and how they connect to the City of Colonial Heights. Mr. Smith displayed a map showing both of the proposed trails.

Ms. Austin thanked Council for the City's representation on the FOLAR board, recognizing Mrs. Karen Epps and Mrs. Betty Estes. Additionally, Ms. Austin thanked City staff for their professional and knowledgeable responses; specifically recognizing, staff from Recreation and Parks, Public Works, and Planning. Concluding her comments, Ms. Austin congratulated Council and staff on the opening of the new CHARTS portion of the Appomattox River Trail.

At this time, Heather Farrar provided an overview of the applications for the proposed trail sections depicted in her presentation. The first trail viewed was a more urban trail beginning at Patton Park and continue through Old Town Petersburg. Ms. Farrar noted the application included a bicycle/pedestrian bridge using the historic train trestles and connecting Pocahontas Island with Colonial Heights. Ms. Farrar clarified FOLAR was supporting Petersburg and this was a Petersburg project and supporting application and advised Chesterfield would be providing a resolution and the Corp of Engineers will be involved.

Moving to the second project, Ms. Farrar indicated this was a Tri-Cities MPO Application which was part of the Ashland to Petersburg Trail. Ms. Farrar indicated the route would begin at the north edge of the VSU campus at River Road continuing along the east edge of the campus; also including a bicycle/pedestrian bridge across the Appomattox River tying into the trail off of Patton Park. Ms. Farrar indicated there was a third trail not indicated in her presentation; however, it extends from the Ashland Petersburg Trail to the Colonial Heights City line, making an easily accessible link to the future Colonial Heights North/South trail. Ms. Farrar indicated partners with this project were Chesterfield, Petersburg and Virginia State University.

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Continuing, Ms. Farrar addressed questions regarding the crossing of the Appomattox River at Patton Park.

Addressing Mr. Green's question relative responsibility of maintaining these trails, Ms. Farrar stated that each locality was taking a different approach regarding long-term maintenance. Ms. Farrar stated it was the goal of FOLAR that each locality own and maintain their section of trail and FOLAR would provide the long-term support; fundraising/volunteer support for their trails.

Mr. Smith addressed Mr. Wood's question clarifying the Petersburg location to cross the river into Colonial Heights. Additionally, Mr. Smith clarified future additions to the spur trail from Patton Park in Petersburg to Colonial Heights.

At the conclusion of the presentation and discussion, Mr. Smith stated staff was seeking Council's support of the resolution.

Vote:	6-0
Yes:	Cherry
	Frenier
	Green, Jr.
	Wood
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Piotrowski
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

- F. A RESOLUTION NO 20-36**
Approving two Water Connection Agreements, whereby the City will furnish a supply of public water to serve two residences in Chesterfield County; and authorizing the City Manager to execute the Agreement.

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Frenier, to adopt Resolution No. 20-36.

Mayor recalled Council's prior discussion in both closed and open session at the previous meeting. Mr. Smith had nothing to add.

Vote: 5-1
Yes: Cherry
Frenier
Green, Jr.
Luck
Kochuba
No: Wood
Absent: Piotrowski
Abstained: None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

14. Unfinished Business, Contested Ordinances and Resolutions, And Items Removed From the Consent Agenda.

- A. A RESOLUTION NO 20-14**
Requesting the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to Amend the Local Urban Archery Restrictions for the City of Colonial Heights.

A motion was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Frenier, to adopt Resolution No. 20-14.

Mr. Fisher advised that the resolution was brought before Council at the March 10, 2020 Regular Meeting as well as the Council Retreat. Mr. Fisher stated the resolution included Council's request to add language specifying that any urban archery activity be from an elevated position of 10 feet in the air. Continuing, Mr. Fisher noted, at the request of Mr. Cherry, the resolution was tabled at the March 10 meeting in an effort for Mr. Fisher to include Mr. Cherry's request that an exception be made for the 10' high requirement for target shooting. Mr. Fisher advised that subsequently, the resolution was not brought back to Council at the March 17, 2020 meeting due to Council's decision to address only essential issues relative to the COVID-19 crisis.

Vote: 6-0
Yes: Cherry
Frenier
Green, Jr.
Wood
Luck
Kochuba
No: None
Absent: Piotrowski

Abstained: None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

15. Reports of Officers and Documents Related Thereto.

A. City Manager

1. Emergency Management Updates

At the request of Mr. Smith, Chief Hoover provided Council with an Emergency Management Update advising there had been an up-tick in COVID-related calls; however, there had been no staff exposure to public safety employees. Chief Hoover expressed his thanks to Mr. Melvin, Ms. Whitt, and Mrs. Minor for their attention to the supply of PPE to his department. Chief Hoover advised there had been 10 employees with potential COVID contact and he was awaiting the test results. Chief Hoover stated there continues to be COVID test sites at Patient First and Rite Aid through appointments via the internet. Chief Hoover stated he and his staff were working on plans to properly maintain required social distancing requirements in the EOC with the hurricane season beginning. Additionally, Chief Hoover reported he and his staff had been working with the American Red Cross and Social Services addressing sanitation and proper social distancing in the event a congregate shelter needed to be opened. Addressing Mrs. Luck's concerns relative to employee exposure to COVID, Chief Hoover provided the City protocol for such situations.

In conclusion, Chief Hoover thanked Council for their approval of the Hazard Pay for certain EMS personnel stating that this was a big morale booster for his department.

2. General Activity Report

With regard to the COVID Small Business Grant Program, Mr. Smith advised that 56 applications had been requested, 20 have been received, with 11 approved for a total of \$60,000 funds awarded.

Continuing, Mr. Smith updated Council advising that the Chili Peppers, although they were not able to have their regular season, are hosting several youth baseball tournaments at Shepard Stadium.

Mr. Smith advised that several offices within City Hall will be closed for the implementation of the new Finance Department software.

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Mr. Smith reported on the ongoing situation regarding the vegetation in the pond at the Roundabout stating that staff will be purchasing a boat to address maintenance and cleaning issues. Additionally, Mr. Smith stated staff was moving forward with VDOT to receive approval addressing vegetation growth in the pond.

Mr. Smith reported that the closing on the property adjacent to Violet Bank was complete and thanked Mr. Fisher and his staff for their efforts. Regarding the Violet Bank Restoration Project, Mr. Smith stated that the consultant currently has the drawings and specifications about 90% complete and staff was inquiring as to the time frame in which the plans and bid specifications would be complete. Mr. Smith will advise Council when they are received.

Continuing, Mr. Smith stated that VML indicated that the Governor and General Assembly were likely to decide in the next several weeks whether to allocate an additional \$400M of the Federal CARES funding to Virginia localities. Mr. Smith requested Council to support the following: 1) sending of letters to appropriate state offices in support of the possible allocation and 2) request the City's federal congressmen and senators for their support in allowing localities more flexibility in an effort to offset certain revenue loss.

There was additional discussion relative to the allocation of CARES funding for the schools and the extension of the EDA grant funds.

Mr. Smith provided an update relative to the loss of the IT Director stating he has been working with ProActive to provide a second tier technical support system, with Andrew Blais, former IT Director, still providing the first tier support to Department Directors. Mr. Smith stated this was temporary, lasting for approximately 6 months then moving to a month to month basis. Mr. Smith stated there was no increase in funding for this change as funding was already budgeted.

Mr. Green thanked staff for the update and efforts addressing the issues relative to the pond at the Roundabout. Additionally, addressing Mr. Smith's previous update relative to contracting with ProActive for IT services, Mr. Green stated it was more cost effective in the long run to support a Department Director than to pay contract services over a length of time. Concluding his comments, Mr. Green provided complimented staff for their efforts in keeping the City groomed and asked if there was a timeline for which VDOT will address the aesthetic condition at the I95/Temple Avenue interchange. Mr. Smith stated he would request staff to coordinate with VDOT maintenance to address these issues.

B. City Attorney

Mr. Fisher stated he spoke for the staff in saying that everyone was sorry to see Andrew Blais leave; he was a professional and trusts that his replacement will be as good as him. Additionally, Mr. Fisher advised his office contracted with a company to scan all files over three years old and destroy the hard copies. Mr. Fisher also advised that the files stored in the house next to City Hall are being cleaned, scanned, and destroyed.

Concluding, Mr. Fisher provided additional comments on the property next to Violet Bank noting there had been some confusion with the chain of title in the deed to the property and in the process discovered a defect in the title of Lot 2. Mr. Fisher stated there was no additional cost to the City for the additional research in the closing of the property.

C. Director of Planning and Community Development

Ms. Hall reported the Planning Commission met July 7, 2020 hearing the following:

- Ordinance 20-20 – Addressing donation bins.**
- Ordinance 20-22 – Special Use Permit requested by St. Michaels Church for an electronic message board.**

Ms. Hall noted both ordinances passed and would come before Council at the August meeting.

Ms. Hall stated the Planning Commission would not be meeting in August but will resume their regular schedule in September. Additionally, Ms. Hall advised the Board of Zoning Appeals received an application for a variance and will be meeting August 19, 2020 to review.

Referring to Ms. Hall's report on the request for a special-use permit for an illuminated sign, Mr. Cherry advised there was discussion at the Planning Commission Meeting that since these requests have become more frequent and more and more businesses/organizations are turning to this type of signage, Mr. Fisher may want to look at changing the ordinance. Weighing in, Mr. Fisher stated that he was aware of this and stated Ms. Hall and Ms. Payne were in the process of reviewing the sign ordinance and Council would be receiving information to this effect.

16. Adjournment

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There being no further business, a motion was made by Mayor Kochuba, seconded by Mrs. Luck, and carried unanimously on voice vote to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 P.M.

APPROVED:

T. Gregory Kochuba, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pamela B. Wallace, City Clerk