REGULAR
COUNCIL MEETING
May 11, 1981

The regular meeting of the Elkton Town Council was held May 11, 1981 at 8:00 P.M. in the council chambers with the Mayor Maurice W. Lough presiding. The following council members were present: V. L. Cook Jr., S. P. H. Flick, L. C. Life, R. L. Snow and L. W. Winegard. Norma Leap, Clerk, Jim McIntyre, Chief of Police, Gerald Monger, Superintendent, and Bruce Wiles, Attorney were also present.

Mayor Lough opened the meeting with prayer.

Councilman R. L. Snow moved, seconded by Councilwoman L. C. Life and carried to approve the minutes of the public hearing April 13, 1981, the regular meeting April 13, 1981 and the special meeting April 20, 1981 as presented.

Mayor Lough read the following letter of resignation from Carl Schumacher:

"Saturday, May 9, 1981

The Honorable Maurice W. Lough, Mayor
Town of Elkton,
Elkton, Virginia

Dear Honorable Lough:

It is with regret that I find I must resign from the office of council member of the Town of Elkton.

To remain on the council would only be to continue an exercise in frustration.

Three years ago, while seeking the office, I felt I could offer some help to the Town of Elkton in the way of programs of fiscal responsibility. At that time I realized the Town was in financial straits, but until I was elected, and was able to see from the inside the manner in which the business of the Town was being operated, I had no idea of the extent of the problem.

Everyone talks of austerity, but at every turn, any effort toward that end is met with resistance, either from within the council, or elsewhere in the Town organization, or from some outside group.

It seems perfectly obvious to me what must be done, but until the citizens of this town realize that getting out of financial trouble is no fun, and must start with a very determined first step, followed by a religiously pursued path of strictness, there will be little hope of anything being accomplished in this vital area.

Several weeks ago, there appeared in the Washington papers, a story of incredible tragedy when the acting mayor of Annapolis, Maryland took his own life because he was not able to draft a balanced budget without a tax increase.

This was, fortunately, an extremely rare incident, but there is little doubt that anyone who honestly took his oath of office seriously and selflessly, has not tasted the bitter frustration that overcame Mayor Gustav J. Ackerson of Annapolis.

In an editorial on May 4, 1981 the Richmond Times-Dispatch noted that "Gratefully, no other public official, as far as we know, has ever killed himself over a budget. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that some dedicated public officials do agonize over their responsibilities, particularly when trying to please citizen groups that are pulling in opposite directions...

"The most difficult of all public service is probably at the local level, where officials are so close to and so readily accessible to their constituents. The hassles and headaches involved in such service keep many competent citizens from running for, or accepting, public office."

The editorial ended with a salute to those who hold such office and

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are dedicated to providing high service to the community.

I mention this incident only to point out the resolve with which some elected officials accept the responsibility of their office.

It is my conviction that until the council receives support from the citizens of the town as well as from the press there is not much chance that anything good is going to happen, and sad to say, this does not appear to be a liklihood in the foreseeable future.

Criticism is certainly acceptable, but only when it is accompanied by an idea that is more constructive than the criticism itself is destructive. And this has certainly not been the case in Elkton.

My resignation is effective immediately.

Regretfully,
Carl A. Schumacher"

Mayor Lough stated that this resignation, like any other resignation from council, is a severe blow to the citizens of Elkton and the council. Councilman Schumacher has always been dedicated and had the best interest of Elkton at heart. Council is going to miss him and the town is going to miss him.

Councilman S. P. H. Flick moved, seconded by Councilman R. L. Snow and carried to accept Councilman Carl Schumacher's resignation effective May 9, 1981.

Mr. Monger pointed out that in January we had raised the electric rates 8.4% due to a rate increase from Vepco. He anticipates an approximate $25,000.00 increase in revenue which needs to go into the budget. He made the following recommendations as a First Reading for appropriating this revenue and transferring funds in the various accounts:

Electric
Additional appropriation of $12,804.71 in Current
Additional appropriation of $4,200.00 in Wages
Transfer $287.72 from Insurance to Truck Upkeep

Water
Additional appropriation of $2,000.00 in Wages
Additional appropriation of $500.00 in Truck Upkeep

Sewer
Transfer $500.00 from Supplies to Truck Upkeep

Garbage
Transfer $1,000.00 from Private Hauler to Wages
Transfer $535.97 from Insurance to Truck Upkeep

Streets
Transfer $366,21 from Insurance to Miscellaneous

Mr. Monger reported that they had cut the sewer into the new sewer plant at 10:15 A.M. Friday and had trouble all weekend. They are back on the old plant at present.

Councilman Winegard was excused from the meeting due to an emergency.

Mrs. Leap presented the Finance Report for April.

Mr. B. W. Gooden, Chairman of the Elkton Planning Commission, reported that the commission had met twice on the request to rezone the "Old Tannery Property" for apartments. It is the recommendation of the Elkton Planning Commission that the property known as Tannery Property on Rockingham Street not be rezoned but left "as is" for residential.

Councilman V. L. Cook Jr. moved, seconded by Councilwoman L. C. Life to table any action on the rezoning until the next meeting.

Councilwoman Life asked Mr. Gooden if the commission could furnish council with the reasons behind their recommendation not to rezone and if other sites are being considered, a list of the proposed sites by the next meeting. Mr. Gooden stated other possible sites discussed were certain sections in Elkwood and an area on Blue and Gold Drive, but he was not sure if the commission would have definite recommendations by next month. Councilman Snow asked Mr. Gooden what his main objection was to the rezoning and Mr. Gooden stated it mainly

was the opposition by the residents in the area.

The vote on the motion was recorded as follows:

V. Cook	- yea	L. Life	- yea
S. Flick	- yea	R. Snow	- nay

Councilwoman Life called council's attention to the monthly report from the Chief of Police which had been distributed to each member of council.

Councilwoman Life reported that two patrolmen have resigned, Officer May and Officer Harman. The Public Safety Committee will advertise for a certified officer to fill one of the vacancies and they recommended hiring Richard Furr when he goes off the OJT Program in June to fill the other vacancy. This would bring the force back up to five.

Councilwoman L. C. Life moved, seconded by Councilman R. L. Snow to hire Richard Furr as a Police Officer when his OJT time expires. The vote was recorded as follows:

V. Cook	- yea	L. Life	- yea
S. Flick	- yea	R. Snow	- yea

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Councilwoman L. C. Life presented the First Reading to transfer the following funds in the Public Safety Budget:

$1,000.00 from Insurance to Vehicle Upkeep
$1,000.00 from Wages to the following:
- $400.00 to Miscellaneous
- $200.00 to Supplies
- $200.00 to Uniforms
- $200.00 to Radio and Radar Upkeep

Councilman Flick read the following Electric Committee Report which Mr. Schumacher had prepared before his resignation:

> "A report has been received from Electric Cities that their attorneys have won a rate case suit against Vepco in a matter concerning a 1978 increase.
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> Sometime around July, 1981, says Electricities, Vepco is supposed to make refunds to the municipal electric systems, which buy energy from them. The amount of refund to be sent to Elkton is unknown. The superintendent said that he has tried to find out but has been unable.
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> Through the grapevine it was learned that the town's bucket truck has problems. When mentioned to the superintendent he said he has requested prices for a new truck with a longer boom which would be needed only occasionally for work on the tall poles on Shenandoah Avenue. Guesstimate for the vehicle is $50,000.
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> The committee chairman asked Mr. Monger to also get prices for rebuilding the present bucket and also for any engine work that might be necessary to make the present vehicle safe and reliable. His estimate was about $6,000 for the bucket overhaul, and he said that a new engine could be installed for about $1,500 or less.
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> It appears that since the truck is not to be driven over one or two miles at a time, and that the longer boom needed only on extremely rare occasions that the present truck would suffice if repaired and work on the tall poles done by Rockingham Construction. In the event that Rockingham Construction was not available for emergency repairs, the lineman could fall back on the old time way of accessing the wires with climbers, since this is estimated by the superintendent to be done only every year or so.
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> If this route is followed, a savings of about $42,000 would be realized, especially since this money is not included in the new budget and if the refund totaled more than this the excess could be used for more urgent needs than a "perhaps every-other-year" need."

Councilman Flick read the proposed 1981-82 Budget figures again. He stated that as far as cutting anything, the new budget will carry on as before, nothing has been cut. Adequate provisions have not been made in the new budget for contingencies, tax rate will remain the same as last year and there is nothing in the proposed budget for capital improvements or emergencies.

Mr. Wiles reported that the loan with FmHA has been closed.

Mr. Wiles reported on a letter from EPA. The letter states that the grant has been increased and asked that an original and one copy of Assistance Amendment Number Two, reflecting the increase, be executed and return the original.

Councilman V. L. Cook Jr. moved, seconded by Councilwoman L. C. Life and carried to sign the amendment as requested by EPA if there are no problems and no additional appropriations would be required.

Mr. Wiles reported on two letters from FmHA. One revised the payment schedule amount and the other was in regard to the three change orders which council approved at a previous meeting. They are asking confirmation by the town that funds are available in the amount sufficient to cover the change order increase of $2,019.22. Mr. Wiles felt neither of the letters would require council action as they would not require any additional appropriations.

There was some discussion regarding the ordinance amendment to allow certain free-standing signs in B-1 Business District. If the proposed amendment is passed on Second Reading it would present a hardship on most of those merchants which now have free-standing signs. It was suggested a possible "grandfather clause" could be inserted to protect these merchants. Councilwoman Life felt if it were amended to allow present signs to remain a clause should be inserted that any damage resulting directly from any such sign would be the responsibility of the sign owner. Council asked that Mr. Wiles prepare an amendment to the proposed ordinance to incorporate a clause stating that every free-standing sign now in existance could remain and this would be considered a First Reading.

Mrs. Leap presented the First Reading to transfer the following funds in the General Government Budget:

Transfer $500.00 from Elections as follows:
$31.34 to Auto Tags
$234.82 to Conventions
$233.84 to Supplies
Transfer $400.00 from Ordinances to Supplies

The Mayor reported he had received an invitation to attend an open house at Kawneer Co. Sunday, May 17, 1981 from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned.

MAYOR: Maurice W. Lough, Mayor

RECORDER: Norma R. Leap, Clerk