



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 - 6:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

6:30 PM Departmental Budget Workshop

Mayor Robert C. Willey
Mr. Al Silverstein
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Mr. Ron Engle
Rev. Elmer Davis
President Megan Cook

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Finance Officer Carol Callahan, and Assistant Finance Manager Charlie Connolly and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

Call to Order by President Cook.

Mayor Willey opened the meeting. He stated it is a balanced budget.

Departments:

6:24 PM BUILDING INSPECTION

Present from the Building Department were Tom Diem and Ryan Heckler.

Mr. Diem said the Building Department has not submitted anything for the Capital Budget but will be asking for vehicle replacements in 2026 and 2029. He stated his position for an additional Building Inspector was eliminated and they may need to limit inspections per day or use third party to offset inspections. Additional inspections are \$100 each. He stated the other option is for overtime. The department is going to need an influx as four of the six in the department are over 60. There has been a decrease in building permits.

Mr. Diem discussed the Operational Budget for the Department. He stated Professional Services has increased which is due to legal services. He discussed the increase in Schedule of Fees; reinspections and permit fee multiplier. Tom said we need to increase fees due to the quality of contractors and the need to teach code compliance. Tom discussed revenue.

Rev. Davis stated the Building Department is self-sustaining.

Ryan Heckler and Tom Diem departed at 6:54 p.m.

Rev. Davis wants to see each employee's salary with 1%, 2%, and 3% increases.

6:58 PM CODE ENFORCEMENT

Present from Code Enforcement was Jackie Naylor. She stated her budget has stayed the same for three years. She stated the Department is overworked. She stated Easton Club has been a huge expense due to cutting issues but they do have a contractor cutting now. Ms. Naylor stated she will be retiring June 2.

Susan Filbird is doing the Code Enforcement and is doing an excellent job.

Mr. Engle stated the Town should be advertising for the replacement of the Code Enforcement position due to Ms. Naylor's retirement.

Jackie Naylor departed at 7:08 p.m.

7:09 PM ENGINEERING

Rick VanEmburch was present to discuss the Engineering Department. He discussed the employees in the department.

Sierra Clem is doing plan reviews and grading permits.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed salaries and overtime work. He discussed the additional stress on the department if the overtime hours are cut.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed operating costs in the budget. He stated that the paving allotment won't keep up with the necessary repairs for the aging streets in town. He stated the town is not anywhere near able to complete the repairs. The repairs to sidewalks were discussed.

Mr. Silverstein suggested taking money from the bond funds to complete Engineering projects.

7:31 PM PUBLIC WORKS

Mike Dickerson was present to discuss his budget. Rick VanEmburch stayed for the Public Works Department presentation.

Mr. Dickerson discussed being moved to exempt purposes. He stated his overtime is taken as compensation time and is based on weather conditions. Mr. Dickerson stated he met with his Division Managers and they provided what they need the most. He asked for a large screener to help with rails-to-trails and milling. He asked that the mulching head be added back in. They have 57 ponds and 19 stormwater ponds. He asked that the mobile lift be added back to the budget to enable them to work on two large trucks at a time. He stated they could give up their dump truck. Mr. Dickerson said the storm drains around town are failing. The material used now is not what the older storm drains are made of. He discussed the need to re-stripe streets in town.

Mike Dickerson departed the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

7:54 PM PARKS & RECREATION

Ms. Gould discussed being switched to exempt. She discussed needing additional staff and the overtime that she works.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed the new parks that will be transferred to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Ms. Gould asked for upgrades to the pavilion at Moton Park. She asked that John Ford Park and Mulberry Park funds be restored at a cost of \$15,000 and installed with engineered wood fiber. Mr. VanEmburch discussed re-paving the rails-to-trails path from North Easton Park to Dutchman's Lane. He discussed carrying forward of \$25,000 and adding an additional \$5,000 for Hatcher Field.

Rev. Davis asked that Moton Park pavilion upgrades be reinstated from ARPA funds. Mr. VanEmburch asked that a vehicle be reinstated. They have three employees with two vehicles. Mrs. Gould departed at 8:16 p.m.

8:17 PM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Holly DeKarske, Board Members Ted Bautz, Scott Beatty and Secretary Tony Kern were present. Ms. DeKarske stated her budget is asking for a 5% budget increase. She stated they have taken on Discover Easton as well as the management of the Visitor's Center. They currently have three full-time employees. They applied for several grants - beautification grants, as well as public arts master plans. Ms. DeKarske stated she feels they have dramatically improved relationships with merchants downtown and have been more engaged. EEDC has had 12 events as well as parades. She stated they have taken on a lot. President Cook asked Holly how they are taking on the Visitor's Center. She stated it will be manned on weekends, maybe with volunteers. She said she is working thru the budget and plans to make First Night Talbot free for all those that attend. Holly DeKarske and the Board members departed at 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Richardson discussed other obligations and revenue sources.

Mr. Abbatiello asked about the Veteran's Retirement Service for members of the Police Department. He asked Mr. Richardson to look into that.

Mayor Willey discussed having a workshop regarding ARPA funds.

President Cook discussed the timeline for the budget. She suggested May15 for a public hearing, passage of the Budget on June 5, which would make it effective prior to July 1 fiscal year. The last possible date that could not effect July 1 fiscal year is June 9.

Adjournment.

At 8:36 p.m. President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk