



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 1, 2023 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM 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, Town Attorney Ms. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Ms. Kathy M. Ruf.

Department Heads that were present: Deputy Chief Greg Wright, Rick VanEmburch, Rick Farr, Scott Messick, Charlie Connolly, Miguel Salinas, Carol Callahan and Trevor Newcomb.

President Cook called the workshop to order at 4:30 p.m.

Mayor Willey discussed the budget and the increase in the FY2014 budget. He stated a lot of the capital items were put back in the budget.

Mr. Silverstein discussed exempt employees getting overtime.

Mr. Richardson discussed compression with the employees.

Mr. Silverstein stated that employees need to get to the 50th percentile.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed overtime. He stated those that received overtime were exempt employees and should not receive overtime.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed using ARPA money to balance the budget and stated it's a dangerous thing for the budget as we definitely don't know what tomorrow will bring.

Mr. Engle stated he has issues with the Doverbrook funding in the budget.

Mr. Silverstein stated he has spoken with Mr. Bibb and they are having trouble getting qualified tenants for the Nicholas Landing housing.

President Cook asked if Port Street would be complete with the funds that are allocated.

Mr. Richardson stated it would be complete.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed value engineering for the Port Street project.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed the timing and the ballpark figure for the design.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if the amount in the budget request will get them where they need to be. Mr. VanEmburch stated it will.

Rev. Davis stated that there are department heads that are not in the 60 percentile. He stated the HR person and the Finance person is not where they should be. He stated that compression has confined the Town of Easton. Rev. Davis stated there is a study and we are not utilizing it. Rev. Davis discussed affordable housing. He stated that a police officer starting employment with the town cannot afford to live in a town they protect.

President Cook asked how the positions that were added back in were decided on.

Mayor Willey stated that the supervisors are out in the field doing inspections, so an inspector was added.

The multipliers for the Building Department's permits were discussed.

Rev. Davis stated the Building Department is sustainable with their fees.

President Cook asked if the council's concerns regarding salary will be addressed.

Mr. Farr, Chief HR discussed the salary survey and the establishment of the salary survey and where the employees' salaries should fall.

Mr. Engle discussed performance evaluations.

Rev. Davis asked what the timetable is to be fair and equitable to all employees. Mr. Farr stated it will take approximately a year.

Mr. Richardson stated there needs to be funding for any adjustments to salaries.

Mayor Willey stated that a performance evaluation has been done before.

Mr. Richardson stated that employees need to be included.

Rev. Davis asked that each department get the salary survey for their entire department.

President Cook asked how the council feels about using ARPA funds for the budget.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed shaving off a few things to not use so much of the ARPA funds.

Mr. Connolly discussed using ARPA funds and the rules and regulations of one-time expenditures.

President Cook stated the budget goes to Mr. Richardson and the Mayor.

President Cook adjourned the budget workshop.

5:30 PM: Call to Order by President Cook.

At 5:30 PM, President Cook called the meeting to order.

President Cook stated that a budget workshop had been conducted prior to tonight's regular meeting.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Silverstein.

Mr. Silverstein gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the April 11 Budget Workshop.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 11, 2023 meeting were approved as written.

Minutes of the April 13 Budget Workshop.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 13, 2023 meeting were approved as written.

Minutes of the April 17 2023 meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 17, 2023 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Boards and Commissions Confirmation.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Mr. Jim Bent was confirmed to the Board of Canvassers.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by President Cook and carried unanimously, Mr. Michael Stuart was confirmed to the Historic District Commission.

Mayor Willey discussed recent promotions at the Easton Police Department. Sgt. Tim Larrimore has been promoted to Lieutenant, Sgt. Pat Sally has been promoted to 1st Sgt, Sgt. Gordon Lee has been promoted to Acting 1st Sgt.

President Cook offered congratulations to the officers on their promotions.

Talbot County has sent a letter that they have made an appropriation of \$52,200 for funding the crossing guards..

Items by the Town Manager.

Mr. Richardson stated he has nothing specific for the agenda.

Mr. Richardson offered a reminder that the Parks and Recreation sports camps are taking applications and are on the town's website.

Items by the Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney, Mrs. VanEmburch, stated that originally, there was a workshop for zoning and subdivision regulations. President Cook stated that she will email a few dates around and confirm.

Fire Board.

President Rick Stacey from Easton Volunteer Fire Department was present on behalf of the Fire Department. He wished all the candidates the best of luck.

President Stacey stated there have been 66 fire calls in April. He discussed fundraising efforts. The next big event is the golf tournament on September 16 then the Beer Fest on October 7. He stated that the day room project is coming along. Pres. Stacey discussed training.

Pres. Stacey thanked the Mayor and Council for their support.

President Cook discussed accidents on Black Dog Alley.

President Stacey wished the candidates good luck tomorrow.

Legislation.

Resolution No. 6163, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH PHILLIPS WHARF ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, INC. FOR A PORTION OF THE IMPROVEMENTS AT EASTON POINT PARK."

The Town Attorney discussed the lease with Phillips Wharf. She stated this resolution renews the lease with some terms changed. Mrs. VanEmburch stated that the term increased from one year to three years and the rent could increase from \$500 to \$1000 when the storage is available. She stated the Executive Director was updated.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6163 was approved.

Mr. Richardson stated that the Records and Retention Policy has to be approved by the Maryland State Archives to empty the storage. He stated he anticipates 6-12 months to move the things from storage.

Presentations.

Mr. Jim Bent, Affordable Housing Chair to discuss Home Purchase Assistance Program.

Mr. Richardson discussed how to implement the assistance program.

Mr. Silverstein stated he does not think \$5000 is enough. He asked that a maximum of \$10,000 be considered.

Rev. Davis stated he is more concerned about the first line worker and what it costs to live in the town of Easton. He stated he is not sure \$5000 is enough.

Rev. Davis stated that the program needs to be looked at. He stated he is more concerned with the first line worker and the expense it costs to live in the town of Easton. He stated that he is not sure \$5,000 is adequate. Rev. Davis stated he thinks it is a great program but needs a little tweaking here and there.

Mr. Abbatiello stated that Mr. Bent thinks the \$5,000 closing cost is sufficient.

Mr. Richardson stated that we know we may need to make adjustments.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the assistance program was approved.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 4/5/23 thru 4/26/23 totaling \$1,969,344.32.

Mr. Abbatiello questioned a payment to Dunkin on the invoice run.

Mr. VanEmburch stated that as part of permit approval, Dunkin had posted a cash bond. He stated it is being given back to them.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,969,344.32 were approved.

President Cook set the Budget Public Hearing for May 15 at 5:40 p.m.

Public Participation/Comments.

There was no one present to come before the Council.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein encouraged everyone to get out and vote tomorrow in the town election.

Mr. Abbatiello stated it's been a pleasure working with everyone. He encouraged everyone to get out and vote.

Mr. Engle discussed working on a flooding issue this weekend on Corbin Parkway and gave kudos to the Public Works Department.

Rev. Davis thanked everyone for being a part of this council. He stated he is grateful for being part of this government. He encouraged everyone to vote. He thanked everyone for the collaboration and hard work.

President Cook stated it has been an honor and privilege to work with everyone.

President Cook stated that NAACP would come before the council at a later date.

Adjournment.

At 5:55 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk

Workshop with NAACP.

Not present at this time.