



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 4, 2023 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

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

Mayor Megan JM Cook
Council President Frank Gunsallus
Ms. Maureen Curry
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Rev. Elmer Davis

Also present was the Town Manager, Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

Mr. Montgomery was excused.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Rev. Davis.

Rev. Davis gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the November 20, 2023 meeting.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, minutes of the November 20, 2023, meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions.

Mayor Cook discussed Easton's holiday parade. She expressed thanks to the Public Works and Fire Department.

Mayor Cook stated that the housing group met last week and made recommendations.

She stated that there will be discussion regarding Rt. 328 at Easton Middle School tomorrow and a Zoning Workshop December 18.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, appointments to the Boards and Commissions were approved: Peter Cotter to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a three-year term, Thomas Klein moving from Alternate to Paul Weber's position for the remainder of a five-year term expiring December 31, 2028, and Michael Ports as an alternate for the remainder of a five-year term expiring December 1, 2025.

Mayor Cook stated that Asbury Church celebrated 12 years of restoration on December 1.

Mayor Cook informed the public that the Town office will be closing at 3pm Friday for the staff holiday party.

Items by Town Manager

Town Manager Don Richardson stated he was open for questions. There were none.

Items by Town Attorney.

Town Attorney, Ms. VanEmburch gave an update on the Basi Brothers annexation. She stated that there may need to be a county zoning waiver and an annexation agreement.

Mr. Abbatiello stated he appreciates the Town Attorney looking at zooming in if not present at meetings.

Ms. VanEmburch stated that the way to look at this is a workshop on the council's timetable.

Legislation.

Res. No. 6173, "A RESOLUTION TO ANNEX A PARCEL OF LAND OWNED BY BASI BROTHERS, LLC LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF OCEAN GATEWAY/US ROUTE 50, CONSISTING OF 3.231 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, INTO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ANNEXATION."

Not acted on.

Ord. 801, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO APPLY THE COMMERCIAL GENERAL (CG) ZONING DISTRICT TO CERTAIN LOTS OR PARCELS OF LAND ANNEXED TO THE TOWN OF EASTON BY RESOLUTION NO. 6173 LOCATED TO THE EAST OF OCEAN GATEWAY/US ROUTE 50 CONSISTING, OF 3.231 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS."

Not acted on.

Amended Ord. 802, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 5 OF THE EASTON TOWN CODE REGARDING BICYCLES AND SIMILAR DEVICES."

Amended Ordinance No. 802 will be deferred until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Ord. 805, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 FOR OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES."

President Gunsallus set the Public Hearing for the Budget Amendment for December 18.

Ord. 806, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON GRANTING THE APPLICATION OF RISE UP COFFEE ROASTERS LLC FOR A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE EASTON ZONING ORDINANCE."

Ms. Curry stated she had met with Ozzy from Rise Up and she is satisfied with voting as long as she knows the dead tree will be taken care of.

The Town Attorney stated they are heading back to the Planning Commission for discussion regarding the screening.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Ord. 806, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON GRANTING THE APPLICATION OF RISE UP COFFEE ROASTERS LLC FOR A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE EASTON ZONING ORDINANCE" was approved.

Public Hearings.

5:35 PM PUBLIC HEARING to provide the public an opportunity to comment on proposed Electric and Gas Tariff Revisions.

At 5:47p.m., President Gunsallus opened the Public Hearing on the proposed Electric and Gas Tariff Revisions.

Mr. Grunden, President & CEO introduced John Horner, Jr., Executive Vice President and COO, Steve Ochse, Senior

Vice President & CFO and Kelly Simonsen, Manager Marketing & Communications.

Mr. Grunden made a presentation regarding the Easton Utilities Base Rate Revisions.

He discussed Easton Utilities being an integral role in Easton.

He stated he is present this evening to discuss the base gas and electric rates.

Mr. Grunden stated the last rate case was in 2017.

He discussed the procedure and next steps.

Mr. Grunden discussed the rate-making process and history. He stated the previous council had requested more frequent revisions.

Mr. Grunden discussed cost management and cost consciousness.

He discussed saving money with the town health insurance, significant grant funding, and energy charges.

Mr. Horner addressed Easton Utilities' reliability. He discussed recent projects and utility pole repairs and replacements as well as a two million dollar investment in the gas system. Mr. Horner discussed the cost of inflation to Easton Utilities. He stated that underground cable has increased 100% since 2017.

Mr. Ochse discussed the purpose of the base rate revenue. He stated they go for what they have already expended, which is \$.60; the cost of energy with no markup.

Mr. Ochse discussed inflation since 2019.

He stated that Easton Utilities proposes to increase electric base revenue by 4.45 million. He stated that this represents what Easton Utilities needs to get a return on what they have

already invested.
President Gunsallus asked for council questions.
Mr. Abbatiello discussed Easton Utilities' reliability.
Mr. Gunsallus stated that Easton Utilities is an extremely well run organization.
Rev. Davis thanked Easton Utilities for their services.
President Gunsallus asked for public comments. There were none.
President Gunsallus stated the public hearing would be kept open for public comments.

Res. No. 6178, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON APPROVING THE 2023 GAS SERVICE RATE AND TARIFF REVISIONS PROPOSED BY THE EASTON UTILITIES COMMISSION."
Not acted on.

Res. No. 6179, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON APPROVING THE 2023 ELECTRIC SERVICE RATE AND TARIFF REVISIONS PROPOSED BY THE EASTON UTILITIES COMMISSION."
Not acted on.

Public Participation/Comments.

There were no public comments.

Review of Invoices.

Review of invoices from 11/8/23 thru 11/29/23 totaling \$919,268.05.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$919,268.05 were approved.

Items by Members of the Council:

Ms. Curry thanked EEDC for the holiday kickoff.
Mr. Abbatiello thanked everyone that was involved in the parade. He stated that there was phenomenal service. Mr. Abbatiello reminded everyone there is an important meeting tomorrow night at Easton Middle Schools with SHA from 5-7 pm.
Rev. Davis thanked all the town organizations for the help with the Christmas parade. He thanked Easton Utilities for their presentation. Grateful for Asbury Church celebration. Keep positive.
President Gunsallus thanked Easton Utilities for their thorough presentation.

Adjournment.

At 6:37 p.m., upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk