



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 - 6:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

6:00 PM: Call to Order by President Gunsallus.

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

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

6:00 PM Workshop:

At 6:00 p.m., President Gunsallus called the meeting to order.

6:00 Fire Department

Present from the Fire Department was President Rich Williamson and Treasurer Chris Hash. Mr. Hash stated EVFD is moving forward with the training facility. He stated they hope to be able to break ground on the training grounds in July. They received three bids. Funding has been secured for the entire first phase. Mr. Hash questioned the carryover for permits, etc. He discussed the increase in LOSAP.

Rev. Davis asked about repairs and maintenance. He asked why the figure had been reduced. Mr. Richardson stated the HVAC system is starting to give concerns, but he will take a look. Rev. Davis stated he is concerned about the maintenance costs.

President Gunsallus stated the lowest amount from the last five years should be matched.

Mr. Hash discussed making the restrooms ADA compliant and renovating the bathrooms. It was discussed that that project is not in the upcoming budget.

Discussion occurred regarding the cost of outfitting fire personnel.

Mr. Hash discussed the possibility of having to retrofit Station 60 to fit new apparatus in the future as well as exhaust capture equipment.

President Gunsallus asked for additional council questions. There were none.

President Gunsallus recessed for five minutes.

6:30 Code Enforcement

Ms. Jackie Naylor was present to discuss the Code Enforcement/Rental Inspection budget.

Ms. Naylor stated her budget is flat and where it did not stay the same, it decreased. She stated that in the ten-year plan, she has a request for a new vehicle as theirs is a 2009.

Mr. Abbatiello asked Ms. Naylor if she has considered leasing a vehicle. She stated there are three employees in her department.

Mr. Montgomery asked Ms. Naylor to go over her revenues. She stated they have the ability to issue citations as well as rental housing licenses.

Ms. Naylor discussed classes and certifications. She stated they don't have many expenses.

At 6:39 p.m., Ms. Naylor departed the workshop.

7:00 Police Department

At 6:41 p.m., Chief Alan Lowrey, Captain Greg Wright and Kay Spence, Executive Assistant were present to discuss the Police Department Budget.

Chief Lowrey discussed how they started and how they ended with this budget.

Chief Lowrey discussed the capital requests which were 1.3 million until Capt. Wright and Chief Lowrey made revisions to get the requests to \$738,000 and once the cars were

removed the capital requests are \$65,600. Chief Lowrey stated that they have tried to make an effort to cut costs. He stated it is the lowest budget since he has been Chief. Chief Lowrey stated they have added two new police recruits. He stated they have asked for a grant coordinator, which was turned down.

Chief Lowrey discussed EPD's budget requests and hiring practices.

Chief Lowrey stated they currently have eight vacancies. He stated EPD also needs three new dogs.

Rev. Davis asked if all officers have rifles. Chief Lowrey stated all patrol officers have rifles.

Chief Lowrey stated Talbot County allows \$52,000 for crossing guards. He discussed incentives for being able to translate.

Discussion occurred regarding negotiations with the county for the \$400,000 for dispatchers.

at the 911 Center. Mr. Richardson stated the contract has the ability to be reviewed. President Gunsallus asked about increasing patrols on rail-to-trails. Chief Lowrey stated he has hopes of MEOs evolving into Public Service Aides to observe and report. He stated if he could add anything back into the budget, it would be for a dedicated grant writer. He would also like to add in some radar units in the patrol cars, then a CID Vehicle. Mr. Montgomery stated he would like to ensure the safety of the town, run the town efficiently - internally and maintenance throughout the town as well as a K-9. President Gunsallas asked for questions. There were no additional. The representatives from the Police Department departed at 8:00 p.m. President Gunsallus asked for a five-minute recess.

8:00 HR Department

President Gunsallus reconvened the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Rick Farr, Chief HR Officer was present and thanked the council for having him. He discussed his budget requests which mainly are centered around education and training. Mr. Farr stated there would be an employee town-wide holiday party this year that would fall under HR's purview. Mr. Farr discussed the Family Medical Leave Act through the State of Maryland and will be enacted this year. He stated the funding will start mid 2025. He discussed training of managers regarding how to manage staff with a learning environment with specific core areas of study. He discussed promoting the moral and team building of the staff. Rev. Davis asked if Mr. Farr is responsible for the updating of the handbook. He stated there are updates that are needed. Discussion occurred regarding the salary survey. Mr. Abbatiello asked how often a salary survey should be done. Mr. Farr stated that every three years so it should be accomplished again in 2025. Mr. Richardson stated that the HR Generalist would be moved under Mr. Farr's department before the implementation of the 2025 budget. Rev. Davis asked that the new outline for the police positions be forwarded to him. Ms. Curry asked that the salary survey be sent to her again. She stated that she thinks it is wonderful for the training and asked that it be inclusive. Rev. Davis stated that he thinks the breakfast be all-inclusive next time.

Adjournment.

At 8:43 p.m., President Gunsallus adjourned the workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk