



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM Workshop: Wallace Montgomery Complete Streets & Safety.

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

Also present was the Acting Town Manager Mr. Alan Lowrey, Deputy Chief Greg Wright, Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch, Kody Cario Project Manager, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

At 4:30 p.m., the Council President, Mr. Gunsallus called the workshop to order.

Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch discussed the study from Wallace Montgomery for complete streets.

Wallace Montgomery representatives were virtual.

Larry Wallace discussed what a street study is. He discussed the purpose of the initiative, policies and guidance for safer streets, innovative street design standards, monitoring framework to track progress. Safe Streets for All: From Vision to Reality.

Wallace Montgomery stated the next step is a commitment letter which would consist of a letter from Town leadership committing to a safety culture.

Modal Hierarchy: Collaborate with Town staff to establish a default modal hierarchy: collaborate with Town staff to establish a default modal hierarchy that guides design decisions.

5:00 PM Police Board.

Police Board Report: 2024 Quarter 4.

Acting Chief Greg Wright was present to discuss the Police Board.

He stated a pedestrian had been struck by vehicle on South Aurora Street near South Lane.

He stated the pedestrian walked out in front of vehicle and should be released today after being transported with a fractured foot.

Acting Chief discussed the statistics and stated that violent crimes have declined by 12.

Rev. Davis asked how the new police cars are working out.

Chief stated that the all-wheel drive makes it easier for officers.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there are any leased police cars. Acting Chief Wright stated that there are some vehicles leased for detectives.

Mr. Abbatiello asked what is working for recruits. Acting Chief Wright stated it is a number of things. Some like the town itself and the attention to detail.

At 5:14 p.m., President Gunsallus recessed the Police Board meeting and stated the regularly scheduled meeting would reconvene at 5:30 p.m.

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

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

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Abbatiello.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Meeting Minutes from December 16, 2024.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the December 16, 2024 meeting were approved as written.

Presentations.

EEDC Awards for Christmas Parade Participants.

Lance Morris, Communications Coordinator for EEDC presented the awards for the Holiday Parade:

Best nonprofit: Hockey Team

Best Commercial Float: Mid-Shore Veterinary Service

Best Marching Band: Easton Middle School

Ms. Joan Brooks to update on Hometown Hero Program.

Ms. Brooks updated on where they are with the Hometown Heroes Banner Program. She stated they have placed a total of 73 banners. Ms. Brooks stated they have received donations for those that cannot afford banners. She stated their goal is for residents to get out, walk and enjoy the nonprofit town of Easton.

Ms. Brooks discussed the next steps. They will be going to Ward 3. She stated they would like to place on high traffic streets.

Members of the Council thanked Ms. Brooks for the work they have done.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook discussed the record snowfall and the effort to remove the snow. She stated that the garbage was picked up as scheduled.

She discussed the MLK Basketball Classic which had 60 - 70 basketball players.

Mayor Cook updated on the Dover Station.

Boards and Commission Appointments.

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|-------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| • Tim Glass | 5-year | Housing Authority |
| • Glen Klakring | 3-year | Ethics Commission |
| • Paul Weber | 3-year | Board of Zoning Appeals |
| • Zachary Krebeck | 3-year | Board of Zoning Appeals - Alternate |

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the appointments were confirmed.

Acceptance of Election of JR Dobson to the office of EVFD Chief for 2025.

Mayor Cook thanked Chief Jones for his service as Chief of EVFD. She welcomed JR Dobson as the newly elected Chief. She welcome JR Dobson, as the newly elected Chief.

Items by Interim Town Manager

Approval for Wallace Montgomery Complete Streets & Safety Plan.

Interim Town Manager Alan Lowrey stated that the Council President had asked for an update on the metal detectors. He stated that the cost estimate for the system they have looked at is a subscription based system with a rough cost estimate of approximately \$35,000 to \$37,000 per year. He stated that in comparison, the officers that are using the wands are costing \$8,000 to \$9,000 for all the council meetings so we are actually relooking at the budget and questioning if there is a better way to provide security.

Mr. Lowrey discussed the Wallace Montgomery Streets & Safety Plan and asked for consideration. He stated the proposal is for \$60,000 and is in the FY2025 Budget.

Ms. Curry brought the approval to the floor.

Mr. Montgomery stated he has questions.

President Gunsallus asked Ms. Curry to withdraw her motion.

Ms. Curry withdrew her motion for approval.

Mr. Montgomery questioned a part of the proposal that gives recommendations for green stormwater structures. He asked if that is necessary given the plan to fix everything as it is.

Mr. VanEmburch stated that they would like to get them under contract and get them to come back and talk to the council and the community to determine the importance. Mr. Montgomery questioned getting a manual. Mr. Montgomery discussed GIS applications.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the Wallace Montgomery Complete Streets & Safety Plan was approved.

Recommendation from Town Engineer for Brookletts 4-way stop.

Council President Mr. Gunsallus asked the council if there were any questions regarding the

Town Engineer's recommendation for Brookletts 4-way stop. There were none.

Acceptance of 2025-2027 Grass Cutting Bid from Good Life.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, acceptance of 2025-2027 Grass Cutting Bid from Recon in the amount of \$410,850 was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

Review of timeline for upcoming election.

The Town Attorney discussed the dates for the 2025 Election and the requirements to be a candidate.

Park Board Overview.

Ms. Gould, Parks and Recreation Director was present to update on the Park Board. She stated they are moving forward on their strategic plan. She discussed improvements to the Matthewstown Park. New playground equipment for Golton Park. Would like to see additional parking for Moton Park. working with Engineering Department. Hosting youth events. May add kickball and maybe flag football.

Saturday, July 19 National Parks and Recreation Month: Health Fair in Idlewild Park.

Maintenance Division moved to Public Works.

Working with Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio for grant opportunities.

President Gunsallus asked about the tiles at Idlewild Park. Discussed possible amenities.

Legislation.

Resolution No. 6204, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING ALL WAY STOPS (4 WAY STOP) WITH STOP SIGNS AND STOP BAR MARKINGS ON THE PAVEMENT AT ALL FOUR (4) LEGS OF THE INTERSECTIONS OF BROOKLETTS AVENUE AND HARRISON STREET AND BROOKLETTS AVENUE AND HANSON STREET."

Council President stated he asked if the amber blinking lights would remain. Mayor Cook stated they would be blinking red lights with the stop signs.

Mr. Abbatiello asked about painting the shoulder on Brookletts to alleviate cars side swiping parked vehicles on Brookletts.

The Town Engineer stated some of the areas have been painted.

Mr. Montgomery asked for information regarding painting on Idlewild near Wishing Well Liquors. The Town Engineer stated he will look at the schedule.

Upon motion by President Gunsallus seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6204 was approved.

Ord. 838, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 2 ARTICLE VI OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE TO UPDATE THE TOWN'S ETHICS PROVISIONS."

President Gunsallus brought Ordinance No. 838 to the floor for a first reading.

The Town Attorney discussed the changes to the Ethics Ordinance which were recommended to come into compliance with state law.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 12/4/24 thru 12/30/24 totaling \$1,897,505.14.

Mr. Montgomery received clarification on invoices on the accounts payable register.

Upon motion by President Gunsallus seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,897,505.14 were approved.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked the Mr. Lowrey and Ms. Callahan for clarification on invoices.

Public Participation/Comments.

Zebulon "Hoppy" Stafford to address Council regarding rental inspection fees.

Mr. Stafford was not present.

Mr. Kevin Full, a volunteer committee member with Talbot Thrive, stated he was in complete support of the Wallace Montgomery study. He thanked the Town Engineer for including them.

Items by Members of the Council.

Ms. Curry reminded those listening that Chesapeake Fire & Ice, will take place February 14 and 15. She gave a very special thank you from EEDC to Preston Automotive Group for funding for EEDC. Mr. Abbatiello stated that the MLK basketball tournament was great. He thanked Sonny Jones for his service and commitment to the EVFD.

Mr. Montgomery stated he has been appointed to the Advisory Council for the Maryland Agricultural Extension. He stated they are there to make suggestions. Mr. Montgomery stated he is impressed by the 4-H programs. He congratulated Easton High School for a successful skeet program. Mr. Montgomery congratulated President Trump and hoped for a peaceful and cooperative legislation session.

Rev. Davis thanked Sonny Jones for his service as well as current Chief JR Dobson. Rev. Davis reminded everyone to be safe in walking.

President Gunsallus wished everyone a Happy New Year. President Gunsallus expressed his gratitude to the town staff. He stated we need to look at ways to support those that dedicate themselves to the community's safety and well-being. Mr. Gunsallus stated that one idea to explore is the reduction or removal of property taxes for our emergency responders as well as active duty and military responders.

CLOSED SESSION: General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(4) To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand or remain in the State.

At 6:15 p.m., President Gunsallus made a motion to move into Closed Session, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously.

At 6:42 p.m., upon motion by President Gunsallus, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the Closed Session and moved back into the Regular Meeting.

Adjournment.

At 6:42 p.m., upon motion by President Gunsallus, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk