



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

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

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance.

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, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

At 5:30 p.m., Pres. Gunsallus called the workshop to order and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Gunsallus thanked the town staff for working on the budget.

Economic Development.

Ms. Dekarske stated the Economic Development budget is basically flat. She stated they looked at areas to cut. She discussed foot traffic data and the AI program that shows where visitors are going. She discussed A Taste of Easton, which will be a ticketed event.

Rev. Davis discussed the Avalon funding. She stated she does not work for the Avalon. The mayor stated that the Avalon falls under Economic Development but not EEDC.

Interim Town Manager Alan Lowrey stated that some events, especially non-profits, might be able to be funded by the town.

Ms. Dekarske stated she does not want to dial back on advertising, especially with spending less. She discussed weekend and day trips.

Corporate sponsorship was discussed. Ms. Dekarske stated Tom at EEDC is working with corporate sponsors.

Dr. Montgomery asked where EEDC might be able to cut back. Ms. Dekarske discussed proposed cuts which total \$13,500.

Ms. Curry asked for clarification regarding the \$6000 allocated for May Day. Ms. Dekarske stated a merchant asked that Easton try to do the event like is held in Annapolis..

Rev. Davis thanked Ms. Dekarske for her explanations and presentation.

Mayor Cook stated she has reached out to Mr. Bond regarding the Avalon's line items.

Ms. Dekarske introduced the Board members that were present.

Ms. Dekarske and the EEDC Board members departed at 6:10 p.m.

Fire Department.

At 6:23 p.m., Chris Hash, Treasurer was present from EVFD. Mr. Hash thanked the council for their continued support. He stated there was an increase for the PPE for the department from \$35,000 to \$45,000. He stated the continuation of LOSAP is greatly appreciated. He stated the county is going to a step increase based on years of service. He stated that helps with retention. Mr. Hash discussed updating the restrooms at Station 60 and making them ADA-compliant. Mr. Hash discussed space constraints. Mayor Cook stated that at some point, discussions may need to occur to discuss building a new firehouse. Mr. Hash discussed needing a second aerial in the future.

Rev. Davis asked when the tower truck is due to be replaced. Mr. Hash stated 2038 - 2043.

Mayor Cook suggested getting the training facility done, then considering a study for another building, but in the meantime, look into bathroom renovations.

Mr. Hash discussed incentives and putting the \$4000 back in the budget for members that are active.

Pres. Gunsallus thanked Mr. Hash for all they do.

At 6:54 p.m., Mr. Hash departed the workshop.

Building Department.

At 6:55 p.m., Mr. Diem was present.

Discussion occurred regarding not funding the OPEB account to close the gap in the budget.

Mr. Diem discussed where the department is in terms of permits issued. He stated that with prices going up, he doesn't think the department will hit their projection.

Mr. Diem stated they have no capital expenses until FY2028. He discussed an increase to the

Schedule of Fees. He stated the rental inspection will go from \$25 to \$50 when there is management on site and \$75 otherwise.

Mr. Gunsallus stated that the increased costs of inspections will be passed on to the person that rents the units.

Mr. Abbatiello asked how long the rental inspection fee had been \$25. The Town Attorney stated it has been \$25 since the inception of the program. Mr. Diem asked that the \$25 rental inspection fee where a landlord does not show should be increased to \$50.

Mr. Diem discussed increasing the fees for trades and issuing to them as they are needed.

Maintenance expenditures were discussed.

At 7:37 p.m., Mr. Diem departed.

Police Department.

At 7:47 p.m., Deputy Chief Greg Wright and Kay Spence were present. Chief Lowrey discussed the capital budget requests; what was deleted and what remains in the budget.

Discussion occurred regarding the deletion of the SWAT vehicle and the upkeep costs.

Rev. Davis discussed the department having their own SWAT vehicle.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if there is anything the department would like to have added back in if money is found.

Deputy Chief Greg Wright stated he is most concerned with officers' safety. He discussed ballistic shields and the trim around the front of the cruisers when hitting deer.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if salaries for the upcoming year are competitive with other agencies. Deputy Wright stated the salaries are competitive, but retirement has been discussed to help with attraction.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if revenue sources are going to be discussed.

Adjournment.

At 8:18 p.m., upon motion by President Gunsallus, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, the budget workshop was adjourned.

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk