



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 20, 2021 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

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

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

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, Assistant Town Attorney Mr. Will Chapman, and Town Clerk Kathy M. Ruf.

Opening remarks by Councilmember Silverstein and Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the December 6, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

Old Business.

Ord. 773, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING ARTICLE IV OF CHAPTER 2 OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE REGARDING THE PARKS AND ADVISORY BOARD TO ADD AN ALTERNATE FOR THE EASTON PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Ord. 773 was approved.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey:

Introduction of New Police Department Hires:

Mark Anthony Schinault
Kyle Matthew Hardy
Blair Bennington Barstar
Scott Edward Finch, Jr.
Logan Davis Daniels

Holly DeKarske, Director of Downtown Development to Present Trophies for Christmas Parade Winners

Best Nonprofit Float - YMCA of Chesapeake
Best Commercial Float - Nelson's Auto Body Concepts
Best Marching Band - Easton Middle School Marching Band

Appointments to Park Board.

Mayor Willey introduced the new graduate officers that took the Oath of Office this morning; Mark Anthony Schinault, Kyle Matthew Hardy, Blair Bennington Barstar, Scott Edward Finch, Jr., and Logan Davis Daniels.

Mayor Willey asked for confirmation for the following three-year appointments on the Park Board: Mr. Thomas Klein, expiring July 5, 2024 and Mr. James Perry (alternate), expiring December 20, 2024.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the appointments for the Park Board were approved.

Mayor Willey asked for council confirmation for the appointment of CR Chance as Chief of the Easton Volunteer Fire Department.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Mr. Silverstein and carried unanimously, CR Chance's election as Chief was approved.

Items by Town Manager:

Public Assembly Event - New Year's Eve Crab Drop, 12/31/21 9pm - 12am

Approval of recommendation to award the Glenwood Avenue Stream Restoration Design/Build project to Coast Bourn for \$198,880 and the West Glenwood Avenue Stream Restoration Design/Build project to Coastsal/RRG for \$161,264.

Mr. Richardson asked for approval for the Public Assembly Event for the New Year's Crab Drop, December 31, 2021. He stated this will be a live event.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the council approved the Public Assembly Event as recommended by staff.

The Town Manager, Mr. Richardson asked for approval for the Glenwood Avenue Stream Restoration and West Glenwood Avenue stream restoration design/build bid as recommended by staff. The award for the design/build stream restoration to Coastal/RRG is in the amount of \$161,264 with the remaining \$109,870 from the Glenwood Stream Restoration using remaining ARP funds to cover the remaining \$51,394.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously the bids for the Glenwood Avenue stream restoration design/build project and the West Glenwood Avenue stream restoration design/build project award to Coastal/RRG was approved.

Items by the Assistant Town Attorney.

Mr. Chapman had nothing for this evening.

New Business.

Resolution No. 6148, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN AMENDING THE TOWN OF EASTON EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RELATED TO ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION, HOLIDAYS, SERVICE AWARDS, MARYLAND FLEXIBLE LEAVE ACT, AND THE MARYLAND PEACE ORDER LAW."

5:45 PM PUBLIC HEARING to provide the public an opportunity to comment on proposed Water and Wastewater Tariff Revisions.

Mr. Richardson discussed changes and updates to the employee handbook. He stated some of the changes are driven by state law, housekeeping and some changes address facilities and locations. He discussed ranges for retiree awards for appointed officials and staff levels also recognizing years of service.

It was the consensus of the council to hold Resolution No. 6148 until the January 3 meeting.

At 5:47 p.m., President Cook opened the public hearing to provide the public an opportunity to comment on proposed water and wastewater tariff revisions.

Mr. Hugh Grunden, President and CEO, Easton Utilities, was present to discuss water and wastewater tariff revisions.

Mr. Grunden introduced colleagues, Doug Abbott, Manager of Water and Wastewater; Steve Ocshe, Senior Vice President of Finance and CFO, John Honer, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and Kelly Simonsen Marketing and Communication Manager.

Mr. Grunden stated that the current revenue generated is not sufficient to meet today's demands. The last rate case was in 2015.

The previous council suggested more frequent intervals and smaller increases. Following that direction, EU is proposing 6%, \$.16 per day per customer. Mr. Grunden stated that they follow the cost of service rate making principals and what is required.

Mr. Doug Abbott, Manager Water and Wastewater Dept. for Easton Utilities provided remarks about the system and discussed reinvestment in the system. He stated that their goal is to

provide customers with an uninterrupted supply of safe drinking water.

Mr. Abbott discussed the Glebe water treatment plant which has served since 1980's. He stated that they are currently in the design phase with an estimated construction cost of \$10 million.

Mr. Abbott discussed preventative maintenance and scheduled improvements.

Mr. Steve Ochse discussed the last rate case in 2015 and revenues in the last four years. He stated that the operating income is half of what it was last fiscal year.

Mr. Ochse discussed EU rates compared to surrounding communities.

President Cook asked for questions.

President Cook stated that the public hearing will remain open until January 3 for public comments and questions.

Mr. Silverstein asked about the effects of the pandemic. Mr. Ochse stated the levels are close to positive balances. He stated they are seeing significant inflation and a delay in parts.

President Cook clarified that the increase would be approximately \$60 per year; \$5 per month.

President Cook asked for questions or comments. There were none.

Mr. Grunden stated a resolution would be forthcoming.

At 6:12 p.m., President Cook stated the Public Hearing would be continued at the next meeting.

Public Participation/Comments.

President Cook asked for public comments. There were none.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein stated he has been appointed to the board of Chesapeake Multi Cultural Festival. He stated he is honored to have that opportunity.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked EU for answering questions and wished Happy Holidays to everyone.

Mr. Engle wished everyone Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas. He reminded the listening audience to use caution with Covid.

Rev. Davis thanked EU for their thoroughness and the ability to ask questions. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

President Cook suggested everyone have a restful New Year and a Happy Holiday.

Adjournment.

At 6:14 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