



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 19, 2022 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

5:00 PM ARPA Funds Workshop.

Mayor Robert C. Willey
Mr. Al Silverstein
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Mr. Ron Engle
President Megan Cook

Rev. Davis was excused.

At 5:00 p.m., President Cook called the workshop to order.

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

Mayor Willey discussed the ARPA funds. He stated that 3.5 million dollars would be distributed to Easton Utilities for broadband, \$950,000 is earmarked for traffic signal coordination, \$379,000 is for the balance on the fire truck that has been ordered and due in March or April, and hopefully, some will be used for affordable housing; leaving \$3.87 million. He stated that requests had been received totaling \$718,000. He stated he would like to hold some money for later. Mayor Willey stated that the \$413,000 for take-home cars would also come out of this money which was approved at the last meeting and \$513,000 for the retrofit for fire hydrants that will handle the 5" hose that fire companies are going to. Mayor Willey stated that Elks, Lions and Post 70 have submitted requests totaling \$45,000. He stated that Talbot Interfaith Shelter wanted \$125,000, Habitat for Humanity asked for \$165,000 and the Housing Authority had requested \$1 million for the Doverbrook project. Mayor Willey stated there are three that should be funded but the Town of Easton can hold the funds until 2024. Mr. Silverstein discussed additional requests. Mr. Silverstein stated he would like to see some money put aside for the businesses, such as has been done in the past. Mr. Engle said he is not in favor of the large amounts for businesses but feels the way it has been distributed before was successful.

Mayor Willey stated he would like to retain some of the funds and go through the next budget process. President Cook stated she would like to see Habitat for Humanity and Talbot Interfaith Shelter funded. Mr. Richardson stated that the Mayor wants to roll out a process of 2.9 million that needs to be allocated.

Mr. Silverstein agrees that the funds do not have to be spent right away.

President Cook stated she is in favor of the larger requests.

Discussion occurred regarding the gap in the funding for the Doverbrook project. President Cook stated that the state doesn't seem to be funding smaller projects.

Mr. Richardson discussed Mayor Willey's intent to roll out a process and being prepared for an audit.

Mayor Willey made a recommendation that the funding for the \$3.5 million be allocated.

Mr. Richardson discussed funding for the traffic conversion project which will bring all the signals together so they can talk to each other. He stated this system would talk to the SHA system as well, so our traffic pattern moves better.

President Cook discussed dangerous intersections.

Mr. Richardson stated he would like to bring a traffic consultant to the council for a demonstration regarding the upgrade.

It was the consensus to discuss how to handle requests by businesses and non-profits.

Mr. Engle stated that we should be looking at state grants for additional money.

Mayor Willey stated that the Town Engineer is looking at the 14 lots near Chapel Farms and the cost of roads in that vicinity.

At 5:27 p.m., President Cook adjourned the workshop.

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

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

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance from Councilmember Abbatiello.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Meeting minutes of September 6, 2022.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, meeting minutes of September 6, 2022 were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Mayor Willey stated he would like to honor the request for the \$3.5 million request to Easton Utilities for the installation of broadband from the ARPA Fiscal Recovery Fund Allocation, and \$379,000 for the balance on the fire truck.

Mr. Hugh Grunden, P.E., President & CEO at Easton Utilities to address increasing energy costs.

Mr. Grunden was present to discuss increasing energy costs. He stated he would like to get the word out to customers that energy costs are rising. Mr. Grunden stated there are conservation and programs to help customers to pay their bills. Mr. Grunden showed the council and audience the front page of the Wall Street Journal reported that energy costs are rising.

Mr. Grunden discussed the energy charge on the bills that are passed through at no markup. Mr. Grunden showed an increase, which has doubled. He discussed why customers are seeing these increases. He stated this is a real issue as we go into the winter season.

Mr. Grunden stated there is a 28% increase in bills that customers have been seeing just this year. He discussed how energy is purchased. He stated they are doing a lot of things to tamp down the costs.

Mr. Grunden will forward how many times the PJM called on EU.

Mr. Grunden stated people have to know ahead of time and engage in conservation. He stated they are doing training for CSR as customers are calling in to modify their usage.

Mr. Grunden discussed services which are available from Neighborhood Service Center, the budget billing program, and helpful info.

Mr. Grunden discussed running broadband expansion. He stated that they are not funding this initiative by increasing electricity bills.

Mr. Grunden stated that they have to go before the PSC to substantiate their bills.

President Cook suggested customers contact Easton Utilities. Paula Taylor heads up that group. He stated they are happy to work with customers.

Mr. Grunden extended thanks for the support for the ARPA funds. He stated that funding this initiative is a great way to benefit all customers. He stated that they want to get a piece of fiber to everyone out there and this will benefit the citizens of the town. Mr. Grunden told the community that any time you have questions, call Easton Utilities; day or night.

Items by Town Manager.

Approval of bid for 801 Port Street Site Clean-Up.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, approval for the Southern States demolition at 801 Port Street Site in the amount of \$43,270 was approved.

Public Assembly Event - Pump It Up Hospice, 10/15

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Public Assembly Event - Pump It Up Hospice, scheduled for October 15, 2022 was approved.

Public Assembly Event - Academy Art Museum Craft Show, 10/21-10/23

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event - Academy Art Museum Craft scheduled for October 21 thru October 23 was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

Town Attorney, Mrs. VanEmburch, requested a workshop on redistricting before the regularly scheduled meeting on November 7, at 4:45 p.m.

Mr. Silverstein asked that the information be distributed regarding redistricting prior to the

workshop.

Public Hearing.

cont'd. - PUBLIC HEARING to receive comments on Ordinance No. 791, "...REVISING PORTIONS OF ARTICLE III, SECTION 28-312 MIXED USE WATERFRONT DISTRICT OF CHAPTER 28 ZONING."

At 6:03 p.m. President Cook opened the continued public hearing.

President Cook asked for comments. There were none.

At 6:04 p.m., President Cook closed the public hearing.

Legislation.

Ordinance No. 791, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON BY REVISING PORTIONS OF ARTICLE III, SECTION 28-312 MIXED USE WATERFRONT DISTRICT OF CHAPTER 28 ZONING."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 791, was approved following a roll call vote.

Resolution No. 6158, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A REVOCABLE LICENSE AGREEMENT TO ALLOW A DRIVEWAY WITHIN THE UNIMPROVED PORTION OF MECKLENBURG AVENUE."

Town Manager, Mr. Richardson discussed the interest of the property owner to obtain a revocable license agreement to access this property. He stated the owner will be making improvements in this area.

President Cook tabled Resolution No. 6158 for the next meeting until legal representation can be present.

Review of Invoices totaling \$1,552,308.16.

July 28 to August 31, 2022 Invoices.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,552,308.16. were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

There were none.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mr. Grunden for bringing information to the community about the increase of bills. He thanked Public Works for starting the sidewalk on Elliott Road to keep pedestrians safe walking to the store.

Mr. Engle stated he had a good time at the multicultural event. He stated the food was good and they had a great crowd.

President Cook stated that she hopes by the next council meeting the east west connector rails to trails will be paved. She thanked EVFD for a great tournament. She stated they had a lot of fun. It was well staffed and well attended.

Adjournment.

At 6:12 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

