



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

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

5:00 PM Drug Demo Workshop with K-9 and Lt. George L. Paugh, III, Commander Patrol Division, Easton Police Department.

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, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf. From Easton Police Department was Lt. George Paugh and Patrolman Cullings were also present.

At 5:00 p.m., Officer Cullings and Lt. Paugh were present for the K-9 demonstration. Officer Cullings demonstrated some of the obedience of the four-year-old shepherd dog which is trained in narcotics and tracking. He stated that Dietz is aggressive and does not like anyone close to the car. He stated that the dog came from Holland and has had 16 weeks of training.

Lt. Paugh and Officer Cullings departed the meeting at 5:24 P.M.

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

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

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Rev. Elmer Davis.

Rev. Davis gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Closed Session minutes of December 5, 2022.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the December 5, 2022 Closed Meeting were approved as written.

Minutes of the December 5, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the December 5, 2022 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Approval of the Easton Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., election of Chief Morris (Sonny) E. Jones.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Mr. Silverstein and carried unanimously, Chief Morris E. Jones was approved as Chief for the Easton Volunteer Fire Department.

Mayor Willey thanked Easton Police Department for the demonstration regarding the drugs that are prevalent in the community.

Items by the Town Manager.

Mr. Richardson wished everyone a happy holiday and happy new year.

Items by the Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney, Mrs. VanEmburch asked President Cook to schedule a public hearing at the next council meeting. President Cook scheduled a Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 793,

to approve the purchase of the 197- acre property along Oxford Road for a park for January 3, 5:35 p.m. She stated the purchase would be contingent on receiving a grant from the state.

Presentations.

EEDC Update with Christmas Parade Winners.

Ms. Holly DeKarske was present to present the Christmas parade winners.

Best Marching Band: Easton Middle School

Best Non-Profit Float: Third Havens Friends Meeting

Best Commercial Float: Soitsman Family Dentistry

President Cook thanked Holly DeKarske for the work on the Christmas Parade. She stated it was a great kickoff for a great holiday season.

Discussion of Salary Survey.

Mr. Rick Farr, Town of Easton's Chief Human Resource Officer, was present to discuss the salary survey. He stated he was asked in June to provide a salary survey to see where the town is compared to salaries and the market.

USI performed market analysis, matched jobs, comp analysis. He stated USI has provided these services for over 50 years. He discussed their experience. Mr. Farr stated HR provided job descriptions to make appropriate updates and capture responsibilities for jobs. He stated the Town now has updated job descriptions.

Mr. Farr discussed how USI determines market-based pay ranges. He stated the information was pulled from information from October 2022.

Brad Smith, CPA, and his team discussed pulling benchmarking data for the Town of Easton.

Mr. Smith discussed the background and objectives, the approach to benchmarking and the pay ranges.

Mr. Smith stated the town has 136 employees and 70 jobs. He stated the town has done a lot in pay in the last year.

Mr. Smith discussed market analysis results. He stated USI used 3 data sources. He stated that there is no bonus opportunity or incentive in government. Mr. Smith stated that the recent raises from a market standpoint make the Town of Easton very competitive. He discussed freezing pay, offering bonuses or allowing some employees to continue to earn above-competitive range pay.

Mr. Smith stated that 70% of the jobs are covered. He suggested reviewing ranges at least annually and adjusting them to reflect market movements. He stated he will distribute a pay administration template guideline.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mr. Smith for the presentation. He asked about overtime and if it is included.

Mr. Silverstein stated his concern is that they are paying managers overtime.

Mr. Smith stated that this is not typical and managers are exempt from overtime and are salaried.

Mr. Engle discussed the Federal grade step and identifiers. He asked to see job descriptions.

Mr. Smith stated that they used the town's job description for jobs.

President Cook asked what the next step would be.

Mr. Farr stated that the next step is to meet internally and make sure the town maintains consistency as we move forward. He stated there are four employees' salaries that are below need to be addressed.

Rev. Davis asked if the four salaries that are below 25% would be discussed. Rev. Davis questioned exempt employees.

Discussion occurred regarding overtime. Rev. Davis discussed being exempt.

Rev. Davis stated that the town is not going to be able to sustain the salaries and maintain this budget.

Mr. Silverstein stated that senior employees that manage people should not have overtime paid.

Mr. Silverstein stated he would like to see the last four to five months of overtime to see who has been paid overtime. He stated he does not think this is in the best interest of the citizens to continue the system we have. Mr. Silverstein stated that the town will not have the ARPA funds in next year's budget.

Mr. Richardson stated that this study shows we are competitive in our salary compensation.

President Cook stated that the study shows that the raises have put the town in a good position and budget discussions will help to determine what needs to be considered.

Mr. Farr stated the \$5,000 increase is what put the Town to market competitive rates, but there is still some catching up to do.

Rev. Davis asked if the budget can be changed such as salaries once it has been voted on and passed.

Mr. Silverstein asked if it could be changed by the Mayor's office.

Mr. Richardson stated that the budget is an estimation of what we think the future year is going to be.

Mr. Silverstein discussed what the Charter says. He asked if when the budget is passed, are

some employees eligible to get more than what was approved.
The Town Attorney stated that what is approved is technically a category of items in the budget and there is a lot of discretion the Mayor can have.
Mr. Silverstein stated the matter can be disc used at a later time.
President Cook thanked Mr. Farr and Mr. Smith for the salary survey study presentation.

Public Hearing.

5:35 PM Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 792 to adopt an updated map establishing boundaries for the election wards for the Town of Easton.
At 6:37 p.m., President Cook opened the 5:35 p.m. scheduled public hearing regarding updating the map for the wards for the Town of Easton.
The Town Attorney Mrs. VanEmburch discussed the results of the 2020 Census and where we are on the wards. She discussed conflicts in the blocks. Mrs. VanEmburch displayed the changes and recommendations. There are nine houses that would be changed. She stated there would be no residents or population changes for the Block Conflict 2. The third Block Conflict is on the bypass. The recommendation is to make the entire block Ward 2. For connectivity purposes, Royal Farms would be changed to Ward 3. There will be a 36 population change from Ward 3 to Ward 2. She stated the deviation would be 8.93% and the courts say it could be 10%.
President Cook asked for comments. There were none.

Legislation.

Ordinance No. 792, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES FOR THE ELECTION WARDS OF THE TOWN."
Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 792 was passed following a roll call vote.

President Cook read into the record Ordinance No. 793, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO PURCHASE A 197.6734 ACRE PARCEL OF LAND ALONG OXFORD ROAD (MAP 42 PARCEL 45) FOR A PARK."
President Cook set the public hearing for January 3, 2023 at 5:35 p.m.

Public Participation/Comments.

President Cook asked for public comments. There were none.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein wished everyone a happy holiday. He wished all peace, health and prosperity.
Mr. Abbatiello wished everyone a happy, safe holiday. Mr. Abbatiello thanked the Planning Commission for all their hard work.
Mr. Engle wished everyone a happy holiday. He reminded the community to show up for First Night Talbot.
Rev. Davis, wished everyone a Merry Christmas.
President Cook wished everyone a happy holiday.

Adjournment.

At 6:47 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk