



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 3, 2023 - 10:00 AM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

10:00 AM Workshop with EVFD.

Present:

Mayor Robert C. Willey
Council President Megan Cook
Councilmember Al Silverstein
Councilmember Elmer Davis

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

Present from the Easton Volunteer Fire Department were Brett Whitehead, Ed Forte and Daryl Caldwell.

Discussion occurred regarding fundraising and asking for money from private citizens.

Mr. Forte discussed first responders also using the training facility as a retention recruitment aspect. He stated their thoughts are to use this facility as it is in town and will leave the equipment in service and still be able to respond to emergencies. He stated that the department thinks the law enforcement may be able to use the training facility for dog training, search and rescue training, and active shooter training, as they don't have anything around here to do training. He talked about mutual aid drills and enhancing communications between agencies.

Mr. Whitehead stated that the sheriff's department also considered classroom training. He said that looking at all these entities will also help with fundraising, whether private money or grants.

Rev. Davis stated that the facility could be beneficial for a lot of people in the area; a nice facility for everybody.

Mr. Forte discussed writing grants and applying as a collaboration of agencies. He stated they plan to meet with a number of agencies. He stated there will be a group created to run the facility.

Mr. Whitehead discussed the proposed logo. He stated that they are calling it Emergency Services Regional Training Campus recognizing EVFD and the Town of Easton.

Mr. Silverstein suggested considering an indoor shooting range. He stated he has thought about the area at the wastewater treatment facility. He discussed other uses with a lot more area.

Mr. Caldwell stated that the footprint will remain the same. He stated that nothing is off the table. He said no one is just going to step on the property and use the property due to liability issues. Mr.

Caldwell discussed discussions with the sheriff's department. He stated that the sheriff's department's wish list was very simple. They can train at the facility and still stay local.

Mr. Forte discussed the cost of maintaining the training facility. He said if the fire department owns the building and grounds, how do they insure the facility. He said the fire department does not really want to own the building and ground and would like to come up with the same type of arrangement as the current firehouse. He stated that they would like to utilize and maintain the training facility.

The Town Attorney, Mrs. VanEmburch asked Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Forte if what they are proposing is the town own the ground and the building and insure and the Easton Volunteer Fire Department maintain it. Mrs. VanEmburch asked if that includes paying for the utilities and Mr. Forte stated that it does. The Town Attorney stated electric, gas, water, sewer and internet. She asked about the initial capital charges and they stated that is correct as well as the ongoing utility bills. Mr. Caldwell stated he is working on getting operational costs from University of Maryland. He stated he did get some information from Delaware Fire School that he can forward. Mr. Caldwell stated that those costs may have to be tweaked. He said that due to multiple uses, they will have to have waivers.

Mrs. VanEmburch stated she has found some agreements from other facilities.

Mr. Caldwell stated that someone from EVFD will need to be present for any training uses.

Mr. Richardson stated that insurance certificates associated with specific events could be required.

Mr. Forte stated the fire department may need to put a committee together to

The Town Attorney stated that if the council is okay with it, for the purpose of this agreement, it can state that there will be waivers and insurance in a form that is acceptable to the town.

The Town Attorney asked if there are any other financial obligations being asked of the Town.

Mr. Forte and Mr. Whitehead stated at this time, the Town is being asked to own the facility and insure it for property and liability.

Mr. Richardson stated that more information for waivers will help with insurance.

Mr. Whitehead stated they are building costs into their fundraising and they will look at the costs during their budget going forward.

Mr. Forte stated they expect another line item in the budget.

Mr. Silverstein stated he likes an expanded idea and if the campus they are looking at is big enough to meet all their needs. He stated there would be other businesses in that park.

The Town Attorney asked if they anticipate any help with grants such as the Town being the applicant.

Mr. Forte stated they will.

Mr. Whitehead stated they have sent a letter to the Governor and getting on the radar for state funding as well as discretionary aid from congress.

Mr. Silverstein thanked the members for their effort and time.

Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk