

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. with all members and department heads attending via Zoom.

Barry Dize, Mayor
Eric Banks, Council Vice President
Jimmy Ford, Councilman
Mike Atkins, Councilman
Charlotte Scott, Councilwoman
Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer
Michael Sullivan, City Solicitor
David Dalfonso, Chief of Police
Dean Bozman, Code Enforcement Director
July Bellamy, Grants Writer/Administrator

Mayor Dize called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Dize requested approval of the minutes from the meetings of December 9, 2020, and January 13, 2021 – Special Meeting and Work Session. Motion to approve by Council Vice President Banks, seconded by Councilman Atkins, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Dize noted the passing of former City Councilman Roy Alison Milbourne, and extended his sympathy to the family. He advised that City flags would be flown half-staff in his memory.

ANDY HAYNIE – PKS, AUDIT REPORT

Mr. Haynie presented a shared screen with the 2020 summary of financial highlights. Mr. Haynie noted that the City had received an Unmodified Audit Opinion, which is the highest opinion that can be received. He noted that major changes are reviewed in length in the detailed report that the Mayor and Council have.

Councilwoman Scott made reference to the PILOT agreement with the Housing Authority, noting that revenue was down. She noted that the Housing Authority had been working to collect rent payments that were in arrears, and felt that the amount would have gone up.

Mr. Haynie advised that he is not sure of the status of the arrears collections and advised that there might be a lag in their reporting.

Mr. Haynie also noted that expenditures are up this year due to Streets and Highways.

Councilwoman Scott inquired if Public Safety Expenditures includes Grants. Mr. Haynie advised that if it is an operating grant expenditure, "yes"; if it's to buy a vehicle, "no".

Councilman Atkins made reference to page one – Assets, and noted that Tax Receivables are down and questioned the amount of difference in OPEB.

Mr. Haynie advised that the long report shows the OPEB details standing charges and prior period adjustments. It didn't update 2019's prior year numbers.

Councilman Atkins commented that the difference between 2019 and 2020 is about \$300K.

At this point, Mayor Dize suggested having another meeting to address any further questions for Mr. Haynie.

Councilman Atkins also asked for information concerning an increase in Miscellaneous Expense.

Councilwoman Scott advised that she had two questions; 1) What is the trend for tax receivable in the past 3-5 years and 2) Notes and Bonds payable - what kind of borrowing power do we have?

Mr. Haynie advised that in the full package, Pages 34-39 provide detailed information on Notes and Bonds. He advised that taxes were up slightly in 2019 and down in 2020. He advised that there is a decrease in assessed value due to vacant and derelict properties. Councilwoman Scott commented that the City is now working on steps to get these properties back on the tax roll.

Council Vice President Banks made reference to page 3 Streets and Highway Increase. Mr. Haynie advised that there were some extensive street repairs done in early 2020. Council Vice President Banks inquired if the repairs done on Chesapeake Avenue fell under the Water Department or Streets and Highway. Mr. Haynie advised that it fell under Streets because of the drainage issue and collapsed street. Council Vice President Banks thanked Mr. Haynie for his presentation.

Mayor Dize noted that the repair of the Chesapeake Avenue, as well as several other areas at that time, required several contractors to be in here at one time, and the rising and falling tide made the Chesapeake Avenue repairs difficult. He advised that he came into office to fix City infrastructure and if we don't fix it now, it will be here for the next group that comes in

At this time, Councilman Ford requested a short break. Following completion of the break, Mayor Dize called the meeting back to order.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Bozman briefed the Mayor and Council concerning a recent Planning Commission meeting and the request from Cliff Drewer for a lot configuration for the rear of his property in order to construct a shed. Mr. Bozman advised that the application is in order and the fees have been paid. Mr. Bozman advised that per the Planning Commission's recommendation, he would also concur that this be approved by the Mayor and Council.

At this time, Councilman Atkins made a motion to approve the recommendation. Motion seconded by Council Vice President Banks.

During discussion, Council Vice President Banks made reference to the easement shown on the map. Mr. Bozman advised that it is on N. First Street and crosses on Columbia Avenue. Council Vice President Banks made reference to losing taxes when the lot is reconfigured. Mr. Sullivan advised that it would be taxed as one property, but the assessment would increase. Mayor Dize added that the value would also increase due to the shed. Mr. Bozman also noted that it would not affect the Bradshaw property right of way.

Councilwoman Scott made reference to the tax impact and a person requesting consolidation of a property regardless of tax assessment. Mr. Sullivan advised that otherwise, the property would be un-improvable. The motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Bozman advised that he has the Mylar for the Mayor's signature. He also advised that the other Planning Commission recommendation for the Crisfield Pharmacy drive through was tabled due to the need for more information.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Mayor Dize noted that Mrs. Morgan had yielded her report to Mr. Haynie and had emailed everyone a copy of her report.

CHIEF DALFONSO – CRISFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Dalfonso presented his Quarterly Report highlighting its contents.

Councilwoman Scott inquired of the Chief what he finds as his biggest challenge. Chief Dalfonso advised Councilwoman Scott that his biggest challenge is keeping his team in place. He advised that his big fear is that due to pay and location, he won't be able to keep staff. He added that the Department has been making a log of progress. Councilwoman Scott noted that she was impressed with the quality of the cameras adding that they are a great tool.

Council Vice President Banks commented that the City Watch Program will be a great crime deterrent.

Mayor Dize commended Chief Dalfonso for his professionalism and the fantastic job the Department is doing. He advised that he will support the Department to keep the officers. He also asked the Chief for his opinion on incentives to maintain staff and thanked him for his report and efforts.

Council Vice President Banks joked that we need to make the Chief a tax payer/resident.

Mayor Dize noted that as a follow-up to the Chief's report, the CARES Act provided a lot of security funding.

DEAN BOZMAN – CODE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTOR

Mr. Bozman reviewed the Code Enforcement report. He noted that permits are down and condemnation notices are up. He thanked Mr. Sheppard for the fine job he is doing with code enforcement letters and inspections.

Council Vice President Banks made reference to the progress on It Takes a Village. Mr. Bozman noted that Mrs. Bellamy would brief on this during her report.

Mayor Dize inquired about the wrap for the sign poles. Mr. Bozman advised that he was checking for this at Lowes.

JULIE BELLAMY, GRANTS WRITER/ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Bellamy reviewed the City's grant information and provided updates and status. She noted that the final design for ITAV is still in discussion and advised Council Vice President Banks that she would copy him on her emails.

Mayor Dize made reference to the last Façade Grant and advised that he would like to get pictures done with the recipients, the current and former Councilmembers LaVerne Johnson and Barbara Ward, and the big publicity check.

Mayor Dize made reference to the Armory status and inquired if the Maryland Historical Trust hold up will affect the grant funding. Ms. Bellamy advised that she would look into this.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORT

Council Vice President Banks noted that his Marketing Team is meeting every other week on Zoom. He noted that there are four new events to add to Crisfield 24. Council Vice President Banks noted that the Mayor, Tracey Gordy, Charlotte and himself met last week concerning the Downtown Waterfront Development and had a good meeting. Mayor Dize added that Ms. Tracey Gordy, MDOP, was a big help to the City with information she provided at this meeting.

Councilwoman Scott made reference to the status of the Carvel Hall RFP and going back to those who had submitted and ask them to re-submit their best and final offer. She proposed that we ask for their best and final offer by February 10, 2021.

Mayor Dize inquired of Mr. Sullivan on how to proceed. Mr. Sullivan advised that we should ask for supplementation on the quality aspect; not just their best and final offer. He suggested sending notice to the three bidders giving them two weeks to give their final monetary offer. He advised that there should be no communication with them off-line and to reach outside the scope of the three current bidders, we must re-advertise.

At this time, Councilwoman Scott made a motion to contact the 3 bidders to submit their best and final offer by February 10, 2021. Motion seconded by Council Vice President Banks.

During discussion, Councilman Atkins noted that Element is not in Maryland. He suggested opening up the RFP for all, in order to find a better fit and cast a wider net, with bids due in four weeks on 2/24/2021.

Councilman Ford advised that he concurs with Councilman Atkins.

Mayor Dize called for a vote. Councilwoman Scott and Council Vice President voted “aye”. Councilman Atkins and Councilman Ford voted “nay”. Mr. Sullivan advised that the motion died for lack of a majority and the bid remains open and undecided.

Councilwoman Scott commented that she loves the new digital sign as did Councilman Atkins.

Councilman Atkins briefed concerning following up on the Hometown Heroes Project. Councilman Atkins also thanked everyone for holding the virtual meeting.

There being no further business for discussion, Councilman Atkins made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Vice President Banks and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary