

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the meeting room of the Corbin studio and gallery.

Present

Darlene Taylor, Mayor (arriving shortly after start of meeting)
Ivan Lankford, Council Vice President
Eric Banks, Councilman
Laverne Johnson, Councilwoman
Ruthie Todd, Councilwoman
Joyce L Morgan, Clerk Treasurer/City Manager
Andrew Illuminati, City Solicitor

Also, in attendance, Valerie Swift, Secretary, Tiffany McMahon, Richard Crumbacker, Dennis Parkinson, Jr., William Brown, A.C. Alrey; Francis Meyer, Bob Rauch, Casey, Rauch, Jeannie Haddaway – Riccio, Danny Thompson, Jennifer Merritt and several others in attendance to observe the swearing in of the incumbent and new elected City Council members.

Absent; Councilman Casey Goldsborough, out of town

Councilman Banks noted that Mayor Taylor was running a little late from a previous meeting. He called the regular meeting to order the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes from the closed meeting of May 21, 2024, and the regular meeting of June 12, 2024. The motion was second by Council Vice President Lankford and carried unanimously.

Swearing in of City Councilmembers

At this time Clerk of the Court for Somerset County, Charles Horner, administered the oath of office of Councilmember of the City of Crisfield to incumbent Councilman Eric Banks & Councilman Hitesh Patel.

Mayor Taylor thanked councilwoman Ruthie Todd for her service. Councilwoman Todd commented that she had enjoyed serving the public and had met a lot of new friends.

Nomination and Appointment of Vice President of Council

Council Vice President Lankford noted that the vice president nomination goes to the council member receiving the most votes. He then made a motion to nominate Councilman Banks as Council Vice President, motion seconded by Councilwoman Johnson, and carried with a vote of nay from Councilman Patel. At this time councilman Patel nominated himself as Council Vice President with no motion or carry, the motion died. Mayor Taylor thanked Councilman Lankford for his service as Council VP.
Investors Day Presentation – GCAC

Mrs. Francis Myers made reference to the upcoming investors day and introduced Mr. Bob Rauch and Mrs. Jeannie Haddaway Riccio. Mr. Rauch noted that he has a background and lead pipe detectors.

Mrs. Haddaway Riccio advised that she is happy to work with the city of Crisfield, the county, and GCAC. She briefed on the Investor's Day event, and who would be attending. She noted that they will be looking at the diversity of Crisfield as well as the needs.

Mrs. Myers advised that she has also invited 100 local developers

Mr. Thompson thanked Mrs. Myers, Mr. Rauch and Mrs. Haddaway, for their years of excellent public service.

Councilwoman Johnson requested a list of the investors.

Mayor Taylor noted that the city is looking at jobs and businesses for residents.

Council Vice President Banks noted that he appreciates Mrs. Myers work.

Wind Turbine Status - Mr. Parkinson

Mr. Parkinson advised that the city has reached out to the company that handles wind turbine maintenance for Talbot County. He noted that he had heard nothing from Aeronautica concerning the replacement valve and installation.

Mayor Taylor briefed on the status of the turbine being out of operation, and the increased cost of electricity at the wastewater treatment plant.

Council Vice President banks inquired about the part that is broken. Mr. Parkinson advised that this is a hydraulic valve that controls the speed of the turbine, through braking.

Mr. Parkinson went on to brief the city concerning the status of the isolation valves. He advised that the plan is ready, but it includes the isolation valves for the large diameter meters, and we need those turned to ensure that they work because previously, they did not work when needed. Therefore, we are holding off on paving the areas in town with cut-outs just in case.

Mr. Parkinson also noted per Mr. Jason Loar, that the city has been offered additional funding from MDE and USDA – RD for the Cove Street Rubberset pumping station project. Mrs. Morgan noted that MDE has better terms.

Mr. Parkinson made reference to water leaks on Broadway, and at the Marina, advising that a new hydrant is needed at the Marina.

Stormwater Utility Fee - Mayor

Mayor Taylor made reference to the previous CDM Smith presentation and noted that she needs a work session with the Council as well as a committee, concerning the storm water utility fee. She noted that there is no fee being charged to customers at this time.

Watermen's Park, Mrs. Merritt

Mrs. Merritt reviewed a PowerPoint slide concerning the Waterman's Park. She advised that a grant will handle all of the facets.

She also advised that the RFP will be on the city's website.

Mayor Taylor noted that she attended the presentation today for the money for planning for the Waterman's Park.

Fire Department and Emergency Shelter Earmark – Mrs. Merritt

Mrs. Merritt reviewed a slide concerning the fire department and emergency shelter earmark, noting that all three legislators passed this to the appropriations committee. She advised that this is a good sign but no commitment. She also noted that there will be a \$425 k match.

Mrs. Merritt advised that Charles Cavanaugh, CFD, was a lot of help with writing the grant feasibility study.

Mayor Taylor noted that the city received the dock elevation and business incubator earmarks.

Councilman Patel inquired if there is a parking plan for the Waterman's Park. Mrs. Merritt advised that this will be part of the planning process.

Update on Rental Manager – Mrs. Morgan

Mrs. Morgan advised that they had advertised for a rental manager for the former Maple Shade property, now owned by the city. She advised that the ad was posted on May 24 and June 5. She advised that she is in negotiation with a rental manager who will take over the building rental units and space.

Mrs. Morgan advised that she needs permission to allow the mayor to sign the contract for service.

After a brief, discussion Council Vice President Banks made a motion to allow Mayor Taylor to sign the contract for services after drafted by the attorney. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mayor Taylor noted that the space is part of Main Street Revitalization.

Memorial Bench Replacement - Mayor Taylor

Mayor Taylor noted that the metal benches in the green space are rusted and she would like to have the Park Commission look into getting some of the wooden type, similar to the ones at the Depot. Councilwoman Johnson, who is a member of the Park Commission said she would look at some catalogs as well as awnings for the park. Mrs. Morgan advised that we may be able to turn in an insurance claim on the awnings due to wind damage.

Mrs. Merritt noted that there is one more year before we can apply for grant funding to replace the awnings.

Councilwoman Johnson commented that it is hard to use the facility without the awnings due to the high temperature.

Change in Charter Reference to Day/Date of Election-Mayor Taylor

Mayor Taylor made reference to this past election falling on Juneteenth, which could not be changed due to the city charter requirement. Mr. illuminati suggested having the election either the week before or after. This is Morgan advised that the next election date that would fall on Juneteenth would be in six years, after a brief discussion, it was determined that the topic would be revisited

Solar Farm Update – Mayor Taylor

Mayor Taylor advised that the planning commission will approve the site plan for the solar farm On July 9. She advised that the PILOT must be discussed and suggested meeting in closed session on Wednesday, July 10 at 5 PM.

Councilman Patel inquired if they had received critical area clearance. Mayor Taylor advised that they had.

Public Input

Mrs. Gayu, who operates the art studio at 940 West Main St. noted that she loves the people here and wants to engage artist to create. She advised that she is open to a maker studio with no age limits. She noted that her hours are 9 AM to 6 PM every day and on Friday Saturday and Sunday they are full days. She advised that she is there to teach something new.

George Friedley May reference to the Watermen's Park and noted that this is a fantastic idea. He suggested addressing the parking shortage first.

Council Comments

Councilman in Lankford congratulated councilman Patel on being elected and advised he is looking forward to working with him.

Council Vice President Banks commented that he is humbled to have been re-elected. He commented that he looks forward to making progress in the future. He noted that public works is understaffed. He added that he would like to have a community cleanup done, as well as curb, gutter, and sidewalk cleaned up, he also advised that the city needs to schedule a boat pick up day and encourage people to volunteer. In reference to the high school youth survey results, showing that they want a water park, he would like to see a private company set up and run.

Councilwoman Johnson advise she will begin to look at benches for the city.

Councilman Patel noted that Guya has beautiful items.

Councilman Patel, thanks everyone for electing him and noted that he will work hard to make the city better noting that everyone has different ideas.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Taylor congratulated the newly elected and incumbent council members. She thanked the voters for coming out and advised that everyone will work together.

She also made reference to the upcoming Stars and Stripes festival on July 6 and the upcoming Wheels on the Waterfront event.

Mayor Taylor made reference to the postponement of the Pines Motel public hearing scheduled for July 10 at 5 o'clock, noting that there needs to be a work session with City Council first in reference to the zoning recommendation by the Planning Commission, and noted that no decision has been made by the City Council yet.

Adjournment

There being no further business for discussion Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Lankford and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer/City Manager

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary