MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the meeting room at the Corbin Studio and Gallery.

Present
Darlene Taylor, Mayor
Eric Banks, Council Vice President
Ivan Lankford, Councilman via zoom
Laverne Johnson, Councilwoman
Casey Goldsborough, Councilman
Hitesh Patel, Councilman
Joyce Morgan, Clerk Treasurer/City Manager
Andrew Illuminati, City Solicitor

Also, in attendance Valerie Swift, Secretary; Dennis Parkinson, Jr.; Denny Cullison; Jennifer Merritt; A. C. Alrey; Richard Crumbacker; and Captain Lonnie Luedtke.

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Vice President Banks requested approval of three sets of minutes from previous meetings and made a motion to approve. Motion second it by Councilwoman Johnson and carried unanimously.

Recognition of Sergeant Charles Serman – Captain Luedtke

Captain Luedtke noted that Charles Serman had been promoted to Sergeant. He advised that he does a lot of administrative work and maintains training records and scheduling. Captain Luedtke noted that this is a well-deserved promotion. Mayor Taylor noted that he also works with the youth at It Takes a Village.

Councilwoman Johnson noted that he was very helpful counseling a little girl during a shop lifting incident and paid for the items.

Captain Luedtke also advised that Tyler Gillespie had been rehired, noting that he had worked here five years ago.

Mayor Taylor noted that Gillespie, Serman, and Hughes helped Terry white with the lights at the basketball court.

Quarterly reports

Mrs. Morgan presented her quarterly report. She noted that the report indicates we are under budget, but funds collected will be moved back to the budget. She referred to page 12 expenses of 836,000 over budget. She noted that water and sewer took a hit due to unbudgeted expenditures, Mrs. Morgan advised that she would email everyone a full report with comments. She also noted that a discussion is needed concerning the use of ARPA funds.

Captain Lonnie Luedtke, Crisfield Police Department, reviewed his quarterly report and activities at the police station.

Mayor Taylor noted a juvenile incident. Captain Luedtke advised. This was an incident at the Black-Eyed Susan, where trash was set on fire, which was also tied to the attempted untying of the boat at Captain's Quarters.

Mayor Taylor commented that we need youth activities, and she is trying to work with the Housing Authority. She noted that the community center is currently closed for repairs.

Council Vice President thanks asked for a Housing Authority update

Dennis Parkinson junior, Director of Public Utilities, reviewed his quarterly report. He noted that the shut off valve testing is in the works. He also noted that the water system is operating within all permit requirements. He also made reference to SOP training pertaining to any sewer overflows.

Mayor Taylor noted that MDE has agreed that some overflows are out of our hands, but we have to have the SOP. Mr. Parkinson advised we are keeping a logbook of flooding events, sewer stops, water turn-offs and well maintenance. He noted that a lot of non-flushable items are being found at sewer stoppages. Mayor Taylor advised that residents will have to pay for sewer stoppage calls, if we have to go back to the same location again. She also noted that employees must document the incident and take pictures. She also noted keeping a log if water is turned back on after being turned off. Mr. Parkinson advised they are also checking Wells for overuse of chlorine.

He advised that the clarifier is down, and we are looking for the company to repair it. Mr. Loar noted that we are working with a sales rep.

Mr. Parkinson advised that the new hire, John Blagojevich, is doing well. Mayor Taylor advised Mr. Parkinson to keep following up on employee, Mike Cannon, who has been out on sick leave. Mayor Taylor inquired of the status of the leak on Broadway. Mr. Parkinson advised that we are waiting on a part as well as on Myrtle Street.

Mayor Taylor referred to the issue on Somerset Avenue. Mr. Parkinson advised that the cleanout was found located under a building on Myrtle Street.

Mr. Parkinson also advised he had received an equipment list from Moonshot.

Mayor Taylor commented that we need a ground penetrating radar to detect water and sewer lines.

Council Vice President Banks commented that we need to try to be more proactive as far as keeping items to operate the plant in stock. Mayor Taylor noted that Moonshot is looking at spare equipment.

Denny Cullison, Public Works Director reviewed his report of activities that have taken place since he was hired on May 28.

Councilwoman Johnson inquired if the dock and depot are separate. Mr. Collison noted that if there is a board that pops up, we install stainless screws. Mrs. Morgan noted that if wind damage is found it is turned into our insurance.

Mr. Collison also noted that he is preparing a surplus equipment list. He also commented that a thank you letter to Steve Cullen needs to be written for mowing the grass at the airport.

Mrs. Morgan noted that there have been no sales of AV Gas at the airport for over a year. She advised that the airport commission has suggested pricing it at what we paid for it to get rid of it.

Mr. Collison also made reference to the pre-bid meeting to tear down the hangars.

Council Vice President Banks made reference to the need to revamp and revisit street signs and speed signs. Mayor Taylor also commented about the need for speed bumps.

Council Vice President Banks also made reference to a community cleanup in the fall and cleaning up dirt that is on the streets

Jason Loar, City Engineer, reviewed his report highlighting various items. He noted that the wind turbine company sent three purchase order requests to the City for them to order parts for the turbine. Mayor Taylor commented that this months the electric bill at the treatment plant was $14,000 due to the turbine being out of order.

Mr. Loar went on to review all of the other city projects, including the 1936 Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project (Chesapeake Environmental Services, LLC) project is complete and under budget. Seven (7) lines could not be rehabilitated; six (6) are in such bad condition that the contractor was concerned with a collapse if rehabilitation work commences, and one (1) line has settled with a sag in the pipe that prevents the possibility of rehabilitation. The remaining budget will be reviewed with the City with a request to use of the remaining funds to replace the previously mentioned

The Mayor and Council also noted it is OK to order the valve exerciser. At this time, Councilman Patel made a motion to approve up to $7,000 to purchase the valve exerciser. Motion second by Council woman Johnson and carried unanimously.

Councilman Patel made reference to locating the six sewer lines. Mr. Loar advised we are working on a map.

A.C. Alray, Business Development Consultant, highlighted several items from his quarterly report. He noted that project restore needs a focus location.

He also noted that the Jazz on The Waterfront event is scheduled for September 14.

Councilwoman Johnson inquired where the money from the jazz festival goes to. Mr. Alrey noted that there was no money made last year.

He also noted that he had finished work on the business retention grant.

Mayor Taylor advised Mr. Alrey to focus on an industrial park, main street revitalization, a water park, and Hotel Conference Center research, as well as how to start a business.

Councilman Patel noted that CAED had given $1000 to the jazz festival last year. Mrs. Morgan advised that this goes to the city of Crisfield.

Councilwoman Johnson noted that she would like Mr. Alrey to stay on the Tri-County Council. Mayor Taylor advised that she would check.

Jennifer Merritt, grants writer/administrator presented her quarterly report highlighting city matches in funding required for grants.

Mayor Taylor briefed on the Low-Income Housing Initiative.

Mrs. Merritt also reviewed the request for $38,000 for Conceptual Design of the Dock and Depot. Approval so moved by councilwoman Johnson, second by council, vice president banks during discussion Councilman Patel commented that he would like to be on the review committee and would like to attend committee meetings. Mayor Taylor noted that anyone can attend. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Merritt went on to review the EPA Change Grant, noting that an RFP is needed for a consultant to write the grant in the amount of $20 million.

After a brief discussion, Council Vice President Banks made a motion to approve the application for the grant for the wastewater treatment plant/moonshot. Motion second by councilwoman, Johnson and carried unanimously.

Personnel Policy, Final Review and Approval – Mr. Illuminati

Mr. Illuminati advised that he redistribute a redline draft copy at the next meeting to present the Personal Policy Ordinance for first reader. Mrs. Morgan noted that most of the policy is already state law.

Mr. Illuminati made reference to the previously discussed surplus properties and noted they must be advertised for 20 days prior to public sale. At this time, he read resolution number 486 aloud.

Councilman Goldsborough inquired if the city has the right to reject bids. Mr. Illuminati advised that this is correct.

At this time, Councilman Goldsboro made a motion to approve Resolution number 486. Motion second by Councilwoman Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mayor Taylor reminded everyone that at the next regular meeting on August 14, there would be a work session at 5 o’clock, a public hearing at 6 o’clock and the regular meeting at 7 o’clock.

Mayor Taylor also noted that work sessions are needed concerning ditch maintenance, ARPA funding use, and revenue. After a brief discussion, it was determined that this meeting would be held on Wednesday, August 7 at 5 PM.

Council Report

Councilman Patel noted that he would need to abstain from voting on the minutes of June 5, as he was not in office at that time. He also asked to receive the agenda earlier. In reference to the upcoming WOW, he asked that everyone wear Blue in memory of Jenna Drewer.

Councilwoman Johnson thanked all of the department heads for their reports

Council Vice President Banks thanked the department heads. He also asked for volunteers for the community cleanup in September.

Councilman Goldsborough thanked all of the department heads. He noted that he had some fundraising ideas which he will email to the Mayor and Council.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Taylor noted that September is going to be a busy month with the city hosting the Lower Eastern Shore Mayors Association dinner, which is planned to be a boat cruise, the Heritage Festival, the jazz festival, and the J. Millard Tawes Clambake.

She extended her congratulations to the Eastern Shore Long-Term Recovery committee for winning the VOAD award for the year. She also made reference to receiving the Pride Lodge Appreciation award.

Adjournment

Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to adjourn, second by Council Vice President Banks, who noted we will be going into a closed session following this meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Joyce L Morgan Clerk Treasurer/City Manager

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary