

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Corbin A & E Gallery.

PRESENT

Eric Banks, Council Vice President
Jimmy Ford, Councilman
Mike Atkins, Councilman
Charlotte Scott, Councilwoman
Casey Goldsborough, Councilman
Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Absent due to illness; Mayor Barry Dize

Also in attendance; Valerie Swift, Secretary; David Dalfonso, Chief of Police; Dean Bozman, Code Enforcement; Kate Finucan, Grants Writer/Administrator; Michael Sullivan; Mac Baldwin; Robin Cockey, via Zoom; Jason Loar; Tyler Davidson; and Richard Crumbacker.

INVOCATION , LORD’S PRAYER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Vice President Banks called the meeting to order, opening with the Lord’s Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Atkins made a motion to approve the minutes from the closed and regular session of October 27, 2021. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Scott. During Discussion, Council Vice President Banks noted that the heading of the Closed Meeting notice needed to be corrected. Motion carried, 5-0.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer, presented her four month financial report, noting that the Council could find comments on the back of the report in their packet. She noted that we are 2.3M above Budget in revenues, but this includes American Rescue Funds, taxes, and account receivables that came in after July 1. Mrs. Morgan went on to highlight various areas of her report.

Councilman Atkins noted that we were over budget by \$30K the first 4 months of the Fiscal year.

Councilwoman Scott commented that this is a lot to absorb and asked Mrs. Morgan if there were any financial surprises or unanticipated expenditures. Mrs. Morgan advised that we will have the rescue funds to work with and we want to get the most out of that money.

Councilwoman Scott inquired if there was any revenue increase due to tax base. Mrs. Morgan advised that any new builds will receive a half year assessment. She also noted that water customers have found a lot of leaks. Councilwoman Scott inquired if there had been any increase in tax revenue. Mrs. Morgan advised that there had been none yet; maybe in February.

Councilman Atkins inquired about Page 5, Item 9. Mrs. Morgan advised that this pertained to the PD body cameras, benevolent fund and new I.T. Contract.

Councilman Goldsborough made reference to \$13K for City mowing and inquired if it was more cost effective that using summer youth help. Mr. Bozman advised that this was not an option due to Covid and lack of personnel. He noted that the mowing company did a good job. Mrs. Morgan added that they did a great job.

Councilwoman Scott made reference to the \$204K per year contract with Davis, Bowen and Friedel for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Mrs. Morgan noted that this includes all operating costs. Councilwoman Scott inquired if there were plans to look for a Superintendent. Mrs. Morgan advised that there were plans. Councilwoman Scott inquired who is working on a plant to get a direction. Mrs. Morgan advised that she sat in on private contractor interviews and a lot of licensed operators are bound to companies such as Davis, Bowen and Friedel.

Mr. Jason Loar, City Engineer, advised that it is a 4-5 year process to get licensed and they must train with a licensed operator and pass the test. He advised that two operators are needed, adding that they are very few and hard to find. Councilwoman Scott suggested expanding our search and enticements. Mr. Bozman added that we ran an ad for a year and there were very few takers. Mrs. Morgan noted that the Mayor wants to have two licensed operators. Councilwoman Scott commented that this is a bad situation for Crisfield.

David Dalfonso, Chief of Police, presented his quarterly report, highlighting its contents. He noted that the report heading should say "Third Quarter – July through September".

Councilman Atkins inquired what the acronym SCOUT stands for. Chief Dalfonso advised it stands for Somerset County Opioid funding to be used for overtime for drug operations.

Councilman Atkins made reference to the BBQ next Saturday. Chief Dalfonso advised that it will be held at the Ambulance Squad and is to help raise money for the K9 and for Station 8. He noted that the BBQ is from 11:00 to 2:00.

Council Vice President Banks inquired if there will be a new K-9 Vehicle. Chief Dalfonso advised that there was. Council Vice President Banks inquired about the 4,100 calls. Chief Dalfonso advised that this includes every kind of call.

Councilman Goldsborough inquired if we keep the old vehicles once we get the two new ones. Chief Dalfonso advised that we keep the vehicles and can use during flooding. He also noted that CPD needs the type of vehicle specifically made to be used during flooding and will be looking into surplus vehicles for one.

Councilwoman Scott inquired of Chief Dalfonso how the trespass program is working at the Housing Authority, in reference to keeping out opioids. Chief Dalfonso advised that he had an issue in court, previously, due to the MOU, but feels they will be ok in upcoming cases. Councilwoman Scott made reference to the 7 overdoses, with 2 being fatal. She asked if Narcan saved the 7. Chief Dalfonso advised that he was not sure. He added that a lot of fentanyl is involved in these cases.

Councilwoman Scott commented that she had previously asked the Chief what his biggest challenge was, and he had advised her that it was keeping staff. She inquired how this was progressing. Chief Dalfonso advised that he would be having no problems, as long as the Department is on the right track for getting LEOPS. Councilman Atkins commented that having young officers will make the cost go down.

Mr. Dean Bozman, Code Enforcement Administrator/ Public Works/Public Utilities Director, presented his quarterly report, highlighting its contents.

He noted that Building Permits have doubled since last year. He also noted that his assistant, Mr. Sheppard, is tagging houses for demo and is doing a good job.

Council Vice President Banks commended Mr. Bozman for being on top of his work.

Councilman Ford inquired when the work on the two Cove Street pump stations will begin. Mr. Loar noted that plans are 90% complete, though there is an issue with DP & L. He advised that he is going to push to get it done now.

Councilman Goldsborough inquired if the demolition order that Mr. Sheppard has been issuing include businesses. Mr. Bozman advised that it does.

Councilwoman Scott thanked Mr. Bozman for his report, noting that there has been a lot of positive activity and demand for housing. She advised that there is a lot of hope in Crisfield right now.

Kate Finucan, Grant Writer/Administrator, presented, reviewed and highlighted her quarterly report. Councilwoman Scott commented regarding the report on Façade Grants, and advised that some of the applicants had contributed more of their own money, once their project had gotten started.

Ms. Finucan noted that Myrtle Street had been added to the Drainage Study.

Councilwoman Scott inquired about the Norris Harbor Drive Culvert Repair. Ms. Finucan reviewed the emergency costs that came up while doing the project.

Councilman Atkins made reference to the funding for this project. Mrs. Morgan advised that this will come from Grant money.

Ms. Finucan noted two additional items; a request from Maria Maroon, DAR, regarding the Somers Grave, for a permission letter to place a patriotic marker there. She advised that this will be included in their application.

She also noted that on November 6, a ceremony to place a Patriotic Marker on the Sacker Nelson grave site was also held.

At this time, Councilwoman Scott made a motion to approve the letter which would be included in the application packet concerning placement of the marker on the Somers Grave Site. Motion seconded by Councilman Atkins and carried unanimously, 5-0.

Jason Loar, City Engineer, presented his first quarterly report to the City concerning water and waste water. Mr. Loar reviewed his report, highlighting various areas. He noted a new test sampling for P. Phos sampling. Mr. Loar also noted that some items had been found that may cause disinfection issues. He also noted that the Cove Street pumps had failed.

Councilwoman Scott made reference to the fine to the City from MDE in 2016, which got lowered due to negotiations by Mayor Lawson.

Council Vice President Banks commented that it was good to see Mr. Loar's report in order to know what is going on.

Mr. Loar advised that there are no new updates on the wind turbine. He advised that it is down due to a lightning strike. He advised that parts have been ordered. He noted that the five year maintenance contract expires next year.

Councilman Atkins suggested going to the manufacturer to find a better way to prevent lightning strikes.

Councilwoman Scott inquired about the status of the arrival of the parts. Mr. Loar advised that he had not been notified as of yet.

Councilwoman Scott made reference to Mr. Donn Bibb, Housing Authority Director, presenting a report, as they are an integral part of the City.

Mrs. Swift advised that he had given an update in August, and would be reporting in January.

PRESENTATION TO MICHAEL SULLIVAN

Mrs. Morgan read a tribute to Mr. Sullivan and presented him with Keys to the City thanking him for ten years of service as City Solicitor.

Council Vice President Banks advised Mr. Sullivan that it has been great working with him. Councilman Atkins noted that Mr. Sullivan always goes above and beyond and loves Crisfield.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the Mayor and Council does a really good job despite many challenges, having to do what is best, fastest, for the good of the City. He advised that he thinks the world of Crisfield and has the greatest respect for everyone.

CARVEL HALL UPDATE

Councilman Atkins made reference to discussion about the requested exemption in either closed or open session, if Mr. Sullivan feels there would be anything negative or adverse about discussing in open session.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the use of the property is non-negotiable and a change in purchase price will be a pass through to DHCD. He advised that a penalty will result in a higher purchase price. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the history of Carvel Hall and its issues and need to have the property annexed, etc. He commented that the developer has been overt on their outreach to the City and they are not a fly by night. He noted that this is a chance to sell the property to someone with a particular need.

After a further brief discussion, Councilman Atkins made a motion to approve the Contract of Sale with Phoenix Real Estate. Motion seconded by Councilman Goldsborough.

DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Scott advised that she is going with the statement "show me the money" and feels that the deal had been dragged out. She commented that their object was to lower the penalty and stated that this property is a steal and she doesn't know why they haven't gone to settlement. Mr. Sullivan commented that he does not feel that it is a steal; and after his first time visiting it, he felt that it was not habitable.

Councilman Goldsborough also commented that it was his first time seeing it, and it is not a steal; it's a horrible building, and they are taking our mess and will have a lot of work to do for a long time. He commented that the penalty should not stop the deal.

Councilman Atkins advised that he wants to see the sale go through asap to settle on November 30th, but he is concerned about them asking for a reduced penalty for fear they will drag the settlement out.

Council Vice President Banks advised that he does not feel they are going to drag it out. He advised that he was blown away by their presentation. Councilman Goldsborough added that they want to grow hemp by January 2022. Councilman Atkins commented that he hopes his concerns are unfounded.

Councilwoman Scott advised that she agrees with Councilman Atkins' doubt about the settlement date and she still wants to see the money, but she will agree with the vote, but still feels the settlement should have been three months ago.

The motion carried 5-0.

STREET RATING DISCUSSION

Mr. Bozman advised that he had given 5 streets and a scoring sheet to the Council; 1) South Somerset Avenue; 2) Norris Harbor Drive; 3) 5th Street, 4) Canal Street, 5) Wellington Road.

Councilman Atkins inquired if we have received any notification about Highway User Revenue. Mrs. Morgan advised that we will know in March.

Council Vice President Banks also noted a lot of pot holes on 9th and Spruce Street.

Councilman Atkins made reference to next steps;

- 1) have each Councilmember assess the streets
- 2) Score the streets
- 3) Check available money and how to spend it.

Councilwoman Scott commented that we can only do so much and we can agree on one street to do now and then identify the next three. She advised that she doesn't agree with Wellington Road. Mr. Bozman noted that the City has done a lot of patching there and some new homes have been built. Councilwoman Scott inquired if we can use Cares Act money for South Somerset Avenue. Ms. Finucan advised that we need design and engineering first. Councilwoman Scott noted that Hudson Street is also bad. Mr. Bozman added that all streets can use work. Mrs. Morgan noted that South Somerset is a priority due to Woodson School.

Councilman Goldsborough commented that we need to do 5th asap or block it off. Councilman Banks concurred that people use that street. Councilman Goldsborough also noted that Norris Harbor is also bad and we should check with the State to split the cost.

Mrs. Morgan noted that we have \$55K left from last year and \$80K current. Mr. Bozman noted that \$28K would do 5th Street.

At this time, Councilwoman Scott made a motion to approve the paving of 5th Street, putting it out for bids and paving it this year. Motion seconded by Councilman Goldsborough and carried unanimously, 5-0.

Council Vice President Banks advised to continue evaluating streets.

Councilman Goldsborough commented that Pine Street is also bad. Mr. Bozman advised that it has 1931 Sewer issues.

Councilwoman Scott advised putting this on the Agenda for the December meeting.

ROCK POINT PROPERTIES

Mr. Sullivan advised that the deed has been prepared.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Scott commented that she had talked enough tonight.

Councilman Atkins commented regarding the high tide in October, which was a bad thing. He had advised that he had several good things to mention; the grand opening of Witches Stitches the pit beef sale next Saturday from 11-2, November 23rd, grand opening of King's Pizzeria, the 27th; Miracle on 10th Street, and December 3rd, the Christmas Parade.

He thanked the Department Heads for their report.

Councilman Ford had no comments.

Councilman Goldsborough made reference to the high tide and the damages he had seen doing storm assessments. He commented that the City was not prepared again. He also commented that people driving through the water cause further damages.

Mrs. Morgan advised that volunteers will be coming in this Saturday and Sunday to help with the clean outs. She advised that they need local volunteers.

Councilman Goldsborough commented that the State and Federal Government did not see the flooding as damage at all.

Council Vice President Banks commented that the flood was an act of God and we couldn't stop it as it came over the depot bulkhead and we were caught off guard. Councilman Goldsborough commented that we could be pro-active by stopping unnecessary driving to help our citizens.

Councilman Atkins commented that the vehicles probably caused a lot more damage.

Chief Dalfonso noted that use of the 5 ton truck also caused damages taking nurses to the hospital.
Councilman Goldsborough noted that Hall Highway was the worst for drive through.

Councilman Atkins inquired if those drivers could be charged with damages. Chief Dalfonso advised that they could be charged with Failure to Obey a Lawful Order.

Council Vice President Banks advised that he hopes the Mayor feels better, and commented that this was a good meeting with progress made.

There being no further business for discussion, Councilman Atkins made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Ford and carried unanimously, 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary