

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council held their regular meeting on Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 6:00 p.m., via zoom and Facebook live.

PRESENT

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

Also in attendance; Valerie Swift, Secretary; David Dalfonso, Chief of Police; Dean Bozman, Supt. Public Works/Utilities; and Kate Finucan, Grant Writer/Administrator.

Absent- Barry Dize, Mayor (work commitment)

CALL TO ORDER, LORD'S PRAYER AND 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 (2 SETS FROM 8/11/21)

Councilman Atkins made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of August 11, 2021. Motion seconded by Councilman Ford and carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Scott inquired about Mayor Dize. Council Vice President Banks advised that he was late, due to his job.

2ND READER LEAK POLICY – OUTSIDE LEAK/USE FROM METER TO HOUSE

Through a shared screen, Mr. Sullivan reviewed for 2nd Reader, Ordinance 706 amending 94-9 of the Code of the City of Crisfield.

Approval for 2nd Reader so moved by Councilman Atkins, seconded by Councilman Goldsborough and carried unanimously.

CONTINUATION – REVIEW OF LEAK POLICY

Mrs. Morgan went on to review a draft of the Leak Policy pertaining to Toilet Leaks and Interior Leaks excluding outside leak/use from meter to house.

Councilman Atkins noted that this was discussed at the special work session on August 11, but was tabled, so we need a dollar amount.

Mr. Sullivan noted that we can do the first reader at this meeting.

Following a lengthy discussion, Councilman Atkins made a motion to adopt the leak policy adjustment for two billing cycles (monthly) in a three year period with billing adjustments made only when a written request is received with verification of a licensed plumbers bill, including the location of the repair, receipt of parts or pictures to prove the location of the leak. The adjustment will be based on half of the gallons billed with a maximum credit of \$75.00. Motion seconded by Councilman Ford and carried unanimously.

CRISFIELD BROADBAND MOU-AUTHORIZATION FOR MAYOR TO SIGN

Mr. Sullivan presented and reviewed a shared screen of the Crisfield Broadband MOU document and recommended that Mayor Dize be authorized to sign.

At this time, Council Vice President Banks requested a motion as such.

Council Vice President Scott made a motion to approve the Broadband MOU for the Mayor's signature. Motion seconded by Councilman Atkins.

DISCUSSION

Councilman Atkins commented about the proposed 25 MGP's and wasn't sure how good that would be as it is considerably lower than Charter. He also noted that the grant is \$39K and asked about matching funds. Mr. Sullivan advised that this was correct. Councilman Atkins asked why this would be a good deal for the City of Crisfield.

Ms. Finucan advised that she would look into the MB and speed aspect and matching fund requirement.

Mr. Sullivan advised that approval of the MOU is needed to undertake the project and conversations he has had with Tracey Gordy, MDOP, indicated that the project is quite substantial for the City of Crisfield as it provides publicly available broadband for underserved areas and last year's remote learning was advantageous. Councilman Atkins inquired if the public can use it, uncharged. Mr. Sullivan advised that it must serve the underserved rural areas, so "yes" the public can access it, but he is not sure if it is free.

Ms. Finucan advised that they would need an antenna for the water tower for free space to offset the material cost. She advised that they must work with Davis, Bowen and Friedel, and would have free space for three years.

Mr. Sullivan noted that this would be through ISP/Maryland Broadband Cooperative and the City of Crisfield is the pilot area.

Mr. Loar commented that he uses ISP where he lives. He advised it's not hard wired, but more like WiFi on steroids. He commented that underserved is anywhere that Spectrum is not located. He also explained that Maryland Broadband users must go through an ISP provider to use through a line of site, not hard wired. They provide internet to the water tower. Councilman Atkins inquired if Maryland Broadband provides an antenna for the line of site. Mr. Loar advised that they do.

Councilman Ford inquired if a lightning strike would knock out service. Mr. Loar advised that it would. Councilman Goldsborough inquired who would be responsible for repairs.

Councilman Atkins commented that we are just a location on the tower, not a provider.

Mr. Sullivan noted that if the City takes ownership of the project, we are responsible. Councilman Atkins commented that we don't want to get in the ISP business. Mr. Sullivan added that the City is not interested in owning State subsidized high speed internet.

Councilman Ford commented that he feels we would still be liable.

Councilwoman Scott commented that Maryland Broadband has been around for a long time. She noted that Spectrum has upgraded their speed, but it is not accessible to all, and we need internet for all.

Councilman Atkins summarized that all are ok with affordable, fast internet, but he, along with Councilmen Ford and Goldsborough, are concerned about liability; if we break it we fix it, but he is not sure about lightning strikes.

Mr. Sullivan noted that if we don't own it, we are not willful of neglect.

Councilman Goldsborough inquired if our match is the space on the tower. Ms. Finucan advised that is correct, we give them free access for three years and a monthly antennae charge we pay of \$250. Mrs. Morgan noted that we negotiate this after 3 years.

At this time, the motion carried with 4 Aye's and one nay from Councilman Ford.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Ford advised that he would hold his comments.

Councilman Goldsborough made reference to the status of the Crisfield EDC. Mrs. Morgan advised that she had received an email request for contact information.

Councilman Atkins made reference to the August 11, meeting and the \$90K Grant Mr. Don Bibb had applied for, to be used for property acquisition. He advised that Mr. Bibb did not get a support letter from the City. Mrs. Morgan advised that she would follow up with Mr. Bibb.

Councilman Atkins reminded everyone about the upcoming Tangier Classic Fishing Tournament.

Councilwoman Scott advised she had no comments.

Council Vice President Banks noted that real estate sales are high. He noted that Mr. Sheppard is doing a great job working on property issues and demolitions. He noted that this is the right direction to grow our tax base.

Councilman Banks thanked everyone for their prayers and compassion during his illness and the death of his mother, Helen.

With no further business for discussion in the open session, Councilman Atkins made a motion to adjourn in order to open in the Closed Session. Motion seconded by Councilman Ford and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary