

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
Teleconference via GoToMeeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2024
3:30pm

Mayor Paulin, Vice Mayor Sitoula and Councilwoman Grumbine met in work session via teleconference on Wednesday, April 24, 2024. Also, in attendance Town Manager Ryan Hicks, and Town Clerk Andrea Brady.

Council Vision Plan – Mayor Paulin asked if anyone had additional input. Town Manager Hicks spoke about the housing initiative, and the potential for reducing the impact fees and his concern for the needed revenue stream when the fee is already low in comparison to other fees. Mayor Paulin said we need to address accessory dwelling units (ADUs) which help people age in place. Town Manager Hicks spoke further about the reasonable impact fees the Town currently has in place, and the need for that revenue for infrastructure and parks projects. Town Manager Hicks also feels that by the time we push the vision plan forward the Boys and Girls Club will already be pretty established and suggested possibly updating the wording that is included in the plan in reference to this project. Mayor Paulin will work on making edits based on today's discussion, and he will send the updated document to the Town Manager and Council for final review.

Lodging Tax Discounts – Mayor Paulin's biggest contention with the lodging tax discount is that it has not been established and we do not have a baseline for the revenue the tax will bring in to address a request for relief. Over 90% of municipalities assess a lodging tax. Mayor Paulin is not in favor of a lodging tax discount at this time. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested a year after the date of establishing the tax the Council can revisit this conversation once they have the numbers to do an analysis. If additional data becomes available earlier than one calendar year, the Council will decide if they would like to reassess it sooner.

Judy Center MOU – The Council reviewed the MOU and discussed the positive addition the Judy Center has been to the Town. The Council agreed to move forward with the MOU.

Black Box Theatre – Town Manager Hicks discussed the pending lease renewal. At this time the Town is waiting on additional information from the Indian Head Center for the Arts. The Town is also proposing an amendment to the lease to collect half of the rental revenue from the building. Town Manager Hicks discussed the ongoing issues with the roof at the theatre. BRIDGE Church has offered to pay 15 months advance rent to assist with the replacement of the roof. Town Manager Hicks said we can do roof work in May with a budget amendment, or we can do it in July with the new budget. Mayor Paulin expressed concern over the seriousness of the leak, and the possibility of further damage if we wait to make the repairs/replacement. The Town will need a signed lease to allow half of the rent to be put towards the roof. Town Manager Hicks will reach out to Pam with the Black Box/Indian Head Center for the Arts to try to move the process forward more quickly. Council agreed to move forward with the roof repairs as quickly as possible.

Commercial Building Permit Fees – Mayor Paulin suggested the Town continue to waive the commercial permit fees as an incentive for development in the area. Council agreed to continue waiving the fees. They will revisit this each year to decide if they will continue to extend it.

Juneteenth – Town Manager Hicks has had several meetings with the organizations that are planning the Juneteenth event. They are asking for Council to be present to provide a few words of welcome. Mayor Paulin said he will be in attendance. The group puts on a fantastic event and the Town is grateful for the partnership. Some of the organizations include Ivy & Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Inc and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc Nu Zeta Omega Chapter.

May Town Meeting Agenda – No changes or additions. The Council Vision Plan will be placed on the June agenda under new business.

Roundtable:

Mayor – Mayor Paulin asked for an update on the FY25 budget. Town Manager Hicks is hoping to have numbers to the Council by tomorrow for their review. Mayor Paulin reminded everyone that the public hearing was pushed back to May to allow additional time for input. Council will be providing their suggestions and priorities once they receive the first draft of the budget. The Council will also have to consider the possibility of a tax increase which has not been done in decades. Assessments are not outpacing inflation. Town Manager Hicks explained that even a 1 penny increase would be \$41,000 in revenue.

Vice Mayor – Vice Mayor Sitoula took a moment in recognition of Administrative Professionals Day to thank town staff for the support they provide. Mayor Paulin said he would argue that we have the best town staff in all of Maryland.

Councilwoman – None.

Town Manager – An appraisal is being done of the old PNC building as part of the ongoing Boys and Girls Club project.

Town Clerk – Town Clerk Brady reminded Council of the upcoming SMMA meetings and went over plans for National Night Out.

Mayor Paulin adjourned the meeting at 4:05pm


Andrea Brady, Town Clerk