

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
Town Hall
Wednesday, August 24, 2016
3:30pm

Mayor Paulin, Vice Mayor Sitoula, and Councilman Smith met in work session on Wednesday, August 24, 2016 at the Town Hall. Also in attendance were Town Manager Ryan Hicks, Town Clerk Andrea Brady and Maryland Independent Reporter, Tiffany Watson.

June 22, 2016 Closed Session – During the closed session held on June 22, 2016, the Mayor and Council discussed employee bonuses. No action was taken on the discussion topic. The closed session adjourned at 4:23pm.

Water & Waste Transition Planning – This item was moved to closed session. Article §10-508(a)(14) Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

Town Economic Strategy – Councilman Smith said since the Town no longer has the services of Gary Hodge he felt it was important to discuss thoughts on development and continuing to pursue the times already listed in the Town's Economic Revitalization Strategy to keep momentum going. Town Manager Hicks said the Town is currently working on some of the items on the list such as broadband, blighted buildings and streetscaping. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested revising the list to come up with allocation of interest to pursue and have an update on this topic at each work session moving forward. Mayor Paulin recently met with SHA to discuss streetscaping and they mentioned several potential funds to utilize for this project. SHA will be emailing Mayor Paulin further information on the subject. Councilman Smith suggested the Town should consider acquiring properties and possibly opening franchises to demonstrate the ability for the desired types of businesses to thrive here. Town Manager Hicks mentioned the possibility of starting these businesses then potentially sell them to interested parties and the success of these businesses will bring more businesses to Town. Town Manager Hicks also mentioned the possibility of coops. Councilman Smith said it is important to entertain new ideas, the ideas may require capital but the Town can look into lending options. Mayor Paulin mentioned a DHCD program to acquire property. Vice Mayor Sitoula said he has not yet seen a municipality run a business and it is a really novel idea, but the Town will need to consider potential risks. Vice Mayor Sitoula also suggested issuing ownership to Town residents which is similar to the coop idea mentioned by Town Manager Hicks. Council unanimously agreed to move forward on researching the possibility of acquiring property and the potential for opening franchises. Town Manager Hicks will reach out to Town attorney, Fred Sussman on how to proceed.

Planning Commission Member Removal was removed as an agenda item.

Review of September Town Meeting Agenda – Vice Mayor Sitoula would like to make a presentation to Officer Elliot. Town Manager Hicks suggested the presentation include

recognition for his years of service and locating to the Town. Council unanimously agreed to do the presentation at the September Town meeting if the gift Vice Mayor Sitoula ordered arrives on time. Councilman Smith has set up a briefing from the Charles County Department of Mental Health and he will provide further information to have it added to the agenda.

Roundtable:

Mayor – Mayor Paulin encouraged the other members of Council to attend his upcoming Mayor’s Youth Advisory Team meeting. At the meeting, Mayor Paulin plans to discuss the leaders of the team moving forward.

Vice Mayor – Vice Mayor Sitoula thanked all involved with the Bassmasters event on the Village Green. He said despite low attendance due to the heat the event went well.

Councilman – Councilman Smith is still working with Pam Hayes on the Farmers Market and they anticipate it starting in September. Input on the seal from Mr. Harley is delayed while he is on travel. Councilman Smith asked Mayor Paulin to move forward working with the graphic design student for her input on the seal. Mayor Paulin asked Councilman Smith to provide a rough draft layout of what he had in mind. Councilman Smith encouraged everyone to attend the Big Day of Play on Saturday, August 27th. Councilman Smith ended by thanking Public Works for all of the projects they have completed at the Senior Center.

Town Manager – Town Manager Hicks anticipates the Broadband project to start and be completed in September. Town Manager Hicks has been receiving calls in reference to solar panels and he asked Council if they would like him to move forward with further research on cost analysis, and available grants. Council unanimously agreed to move forward. Town Manager Hicks explained that currently when bills go out they go to the owner of record often resulting in tenants not receiving their bill. The Town’s utility bill system is capable of doing duplicate billing but it will raise the cost of each billing cycle for printing and postage. Council agreed to move forward with duplicate billing. Town Manager Hicks will run numbers for discussion of duplicate billing fees. Town Manager Hicks asked Council for a final decision on the fee to use a credit/debit card in the Town Hall. Town Clerk Brady said she feels the residents will be extremely upset if the fee is reinstated. Town Manager Hicks will provide Council with further information at the September meeting on fees associated with credit/debit use before they make their final decision. Town Manager Hicks will also check with other municipalities to see how they handle fees for credit/debit payments.

Town Clerk – Town Clerk Brady asked for RSVPs for upcoming meetings and the MML Fall Conference.

Councilman made a motion to move into closed session. Vice Mayor Sitoula seconds the motion. Mayor Paulin adjourned the open session at 3:56 pm and Council moved into closed session.


Andrea Brady, Town Clerk