

**MINUTES
WORKSHOP
JANUARY 22, 2024
TOWN OFFICE – 300A SOUTH SETON AVENUE**

Present: *Elected Officials* - Mayor Frank Davis; Commissioners: Amy Boehman-Pollitt, President; Jim Hoover, Vice President; Valerie Turnquist, Treasurer, via Zoom: Timothy O'Donnell; and Clifford Sweeney. *Staff Present* - Cathy Willets, Town Manager; Kimberly Mondshour, Town Accountant; Sabrina King, Town Clerk; and Jessica Housaman Recorder.

I. Call to Order

A quorum being present, Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt, President of the Board of Commissioners, called the January 22, 2024, Town meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Upcoming meetings were announced.

Commissioner Comments:

- Commissioner O'Donnell: No comment.
- Commissioner Turnquist: She asked that since the last meeting was cut short due to the power outage, she asked to add an agenda item for next Town meeting. She requested to have a discussion on mending the ordinance for two (2) hour parking to a 24-hour limit.
- Commissioner Sweeney: No comment.
- Commissioner Hoover: No comment.
- Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt: She read out loud a statement related to the reason why the Board of Commissioners were having the workshop meeting.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Davis thanked everyone for coming to tonight's Town meeting. He also explained that during the January 8, 2024, Town meeting, the power was shut off and the generator was working. He thanked the Town of Thurmont for lending Cole Tabler to help with the new Town accountant, Kim, in the office. Mayor Davis also announced that with the recent snowstorm there has been cooperation with residents with the new snow emergency plan. Mayor Davis said that the Town is working on how to spread the word to others and noted that Main Street is doing well but having a harder time in the neighborhood.

II. Agenda Items

Agenda #1 – Discussion of water rates and overall financial status of the Town.

Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt announced that there is no set presentation for tonight's meeting and asked the board where they wanted to begin.

Water and Sewer Fund Balances

Mayor Davis offered to go over the Water and Sewer Fund Balances, that was a breakdown for water, sewer, and ARPA funds from FY22, FY23 and FY24. A question was asked on why the Sewer fund declined from FY23 to FY24. The Mayor and staff explained that due to paying a portion for the new pump station and having to resolve an incident with the current pump station in November. Another raised question was asked about the left-over money, and if that rolls over each fiscal year and where too. Staff explained that the money does roll over to the fund and cash balance and take those reserves to use in the budget, which is what is used for Capital Improvement projects for water and sewer.

ARPA

Staff explained the breakdown of the ARPA fund and each water and sewer project. Staff also noted how the ARPA money will be designated to help those projects.

Historical Water and Sewer Rate Increase/Decreases

Staff briefly explained the water and sewer rates that date from 2002 to present, along with the meter size and charges. Questions were asked related to the in Town and out of Town rates in the past, and concerns regarding the water rates and meter size in the future. Other questions were what consumers have for a meter size and why they are charged based off the size. Mayor Davis explained that some businesses have a larger meter size but are waived the fee of the higher rate due to fire safety with the sprinkler system. The Mayor and staff noted that they will look at all meter sizes and group each for the board. It was asked if staff can reach out to MML to ask if they have studies or charts from other Municipalities related to why water rates are charged a certain way. Mayor Davis expressed one positive outcome is the increase in the water fund and hopes that this will continue each quarter to where the Town can readjust the water rates in the future. Mayor Davis also added that the Town office has only received a few complaints related to the rate increase and noted of those complaints he explained the average increase is about \$15.00 dollars a quarter.

Mayor Davis asked the Board of Commissioners to write down any questions they might have and send them to staff.

Tap Fees-

A question was asked related to businesses being charged for a tap fee or if there is a system already there they do not? Staff explained that the business would have to provide a fixture count since it is commercial and if it is equivalent to what is already there. The only time would be if there is a change of use or if they are increasing the water demand, for example, the new Distillery and Federal Stone. Another question asked was, if the building engineer is the one deciding how many tap fees are needed. Staff answered that the engineer provides the Town with their anticipated flows and their fixture counts, and the Town calculates how many tap fees are needed. Discussion related to increasing tap fees in the future.

Salaries FY22, FY23 and FY24-

Staff explained the breakdown of the salary chart and where the home departments were. It was explained there is one operator with a home department of 40 (water) and noted that the front office coordinator is in Dept. 40 currently but will be presented to the Board in February to be moved to Dept. 13 (financial).

Mayor Davis asked the Board of Commissioners to do homework and write down anything they want to see from staff regarding the salary chart and where they think each employee should be in the department.

With consensus the board agreed to bring an agenda item to the February meeting to move the front office staff to another department.

Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt asked if the Board of Commissioners had any other concerns regarding the information that is in front of them as they will not be able to get through all the information provided tonight.

Questions from Commissioner Hoover

There was concern about contributing 10% of any logging revenue to Fund two (2) in trails to cover any damages or repairs that were caused by logging. Staff explained the Board of Commissioners had approved this due to one logging event that caused significant damage to a trail that was invested in by a grant and needed repairs. Staff added that there hasn't been any logging in the past two (2) years. Commissioner O'Donnell added that it was for the red trail that the Town had invested in but noted that he is not opposed to the 10% being modified to use for another area, for example parks.

Banking Information-

Mayor Davis explained the breakdown on the Banking Information and the positives that has been happening.

Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt informed the Board that it will be in the future to schedule another workshop to discuss this information further as the Board comes together with homework to ask staff what they would like to see.

Set Agenda Items for February 5, 2024 Town Meeting

Agenda Items: (1.) For consideration, move the home department of the following positions: A. Office Coordinator from Dept. 40 (water) to Dept. 13 (financial). B. Town Clerk from Dept. 50 (sewer) to Dept. 10 (legislative). C. Town Manager from Dept. 50 (sewer) to Dept. 10 (legislative). (2.) For consideration, approval of the pump station dedication agreement with Rutters. (3.) For consideration, approval of three-year contract with EOS maintenance of Silo Hill Stormwater Basin as required by MS-4. (4.) For consideration, approval of the updated Rules of Procedures for the Board of Commissioner meeting to include provisions for closed session and workshops. (5.) Discussion to allow 24 hour parking as it relates to Town Code 10.12.090. **Administrative Business:** (1.) Discussion related to advertising Town events and meetings. **Consent Items:** (NONE)

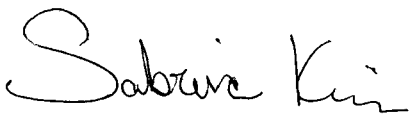
Motion: Commissioner O'Donnell motioned to accept the February 5, 2024, Town meeting agenda as presented; second by Commissioner Sweeney. Yeas – 5; Nays – 0. The motion was adopted.

III. Sign Approved Text Amendments and/or Resolutions

IV. Adjournment

With no further business, Commissioner Hoover motioned to adjourn the January 22, 2024, Town meeting at 9:05 p.m.; second by Commissioner O'Donnell. Yeas – 5; Nays - 0. The motion was adopted.

Respectfully submitted,



Sabrina King, Town Clerk
Minutes Approved On: