

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, July 10, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.in the meeting room in City Hall.

PRESENT

Barry Dize, Mayor

LaVerne Johnson, Council Vice President

Barbara Ward, Councilwoman

Nelson Sheppard, Councilman

Gail Lankford, Councilwoman

Jimmy Ford, Councilman

Richard M. Pollitt, Jr. City Manager

Michael Sullivan, City Solicitor

Also in attendance; Valerie Swift, Secretary; Mike Tabor, Chief of Police; Dean Bozman, Code Enforcement Director; Jimmy Charles, Superintendent of Public Works; Dennis Parkinson, Jr., Public Utilities Director. (see sign in sheet for others in attendance)

INVOCATION, LORD'S PRAYER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Dize called the meeting to order, opening with the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Dize requested approval of the minutes from the regular meeting of June 26, 2019. Approval so moved by Councilman Sheppard, seconded by Council Vice President Johnson and carried unanimously, 5-0.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Chief Mike Tabor presented his quarterly report, highlighting its contents.

Linda Riggin made reference to hearing about overdoses in the County. Chief Tabor advised that his report only reflects City limits. He also noted that no deaths have been shown per MSP reports.

Councilwoman Lankford made reference to the section on Emergency Petitions and inquired why they aren't taken to McCready as it has a Psych Unit. Chief Tabor advised that they must go to PRMC and does not feel McCready is capable of handling them.

Senator Mary Beth Carozza inquired of Chief Tabor if any grant applications had gone to the Governor's Office of Crime Control and prevention. Chief Tabor advised that CPD was just denied a grant application for cameras.

Senator Carozza offered to do a letter of support for further grant applications.

Dennis Parkinson, Jr. Public Utilities Director, presented his quarterly report, highlighting its contents.

Mayor Dize inquired about the rust on the water tower by Food Lion. Mr. Parkinson advised that it is just surface rust, but the company that made the repairs to the Broadway Water Tower will be submitting a plan for inspection.

Francis Myer inquired what the City does to educate people concerning sewer stoppages. Mr. Parkinson advised that when personnel goes to a location, they advise the property owner and he and Mr. Pollitt have also discussed putting information on the City web page. Tim Howlett suggested Facebook.

Dean Bozman, Code Enforcement Director, reviewed and highlighted his quarterly report.

Jimmy Charles, Superintendent of Public Works, reviewed and highlighted his quarterly report, and noted the upcoming City events, including Crab Derby.

Mayor Dize noted plans to again have steamed crabs at the Marina for Crab Derby. He thanked Mr. Charles and his staff for all of their hard work and also thanked Commissioner Laird for inmate help. He also addressed Senator Carozza concerning assistance with re-instating help for the City using inmates from ECI. Councilman Sheppard advised that if ECI is given notice, they will still provide workers. Mayor Dize advised Mr. Bozman to look into this.

Rick Pollitt, City Manager, presented his report, highlighting its contents. He noted that one bid had been received for repair of the roof at the Police Department, from Ken Build, in the amount of \$11,836, meeting all bid specifications. Mr. Pollitt requested approval from the Mayor and Council to accept the bid. Approval so moved by Council Vice President Johnson, seconded by Councilman Ford, and carried unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Pollitt also reviewed the Circuit Rider report, highlighting its contents.

Councilman Sheppard made reference to the Façade Grant recipients noted on the report and inquired if they will be awarded funding if taxes or rental inspection fees are owed. Mr. Pollitt advised that they will have to satisfy any outstanding debts or code violations.

Mr. Charles commented on the Wellington Beach and the huge asset it is to the City. He thanked the County Commissioners for the 5-6 loads of sand that they donated and Billy Gene Swift for spreading it. He commented that the beach is always crowded. Mr. Charles also noted that the American Legion had the restrooms upgraded and advised that Public Works takes care of the beach, trash and mowing.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Councilman Sheppard requested an amendment to the Agenda to present an update on the progress of the Steering Committee related to a proposed hotel/conference center.

At this time, Councilman Sheppard made a motion to amend the Agenda to discuss matters related to the Steering Committee. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lankford.

During discussion, Council Vice President Johnson expressed concern that the Council has not formally met regarding the committee. Councilman Sheppard advised that he announced that he was going forward with selection of the committee members at the May 22, 2019 meeting. He stated that on Monday, he inquired of Secretary Swift as to why the workshop meeting had not been scheduled prior to the regular meeting this evening, since he had previously submitted a request to the Clerk-Treasurer. Secretary Swift stated that she was advised by Council Vice President Johnson that she (LaVerne) had spoken to Councilman Sheppard and had discussed that there would not be a meeting at this time due to lack of a quorum.

Councilwoman Lankford also noted that she had questioned Secretary Swift by phone, as to the reason that the meeting was not scheduled, as she had returned from vacation early to attend said meeting.

At this time, the motion to amend the agenda was denied with a vote of three opposed (Council Vice President Johnson, Councilwoman Ward, Councilman Ford), and vote of two for (Councilman Sheppard and Councilwoman Lankford)

Councilwoman Lankford inquired if anything can be discussed under “Old Business”.

Mr. Sullivan advised that Mayor Dize must approve public comment that is available tonight. He noted that there is a Resolution adopting Rules of Procedure.

Council Vice President Johnson stated that the issue is that the Council has not met collectively concerning the Steering Committee and she had spoken to Councilman Sheppard previously concerning the fact that there wouldn't be a review until they all met.

Mr. Sullivan advised that as there was a closed meeting after the regular meeting, time was of the essence to move along.

#### New Business, the Joint Airport Resolution

The only agenda item under New Business was adoption of a resolution creating, with the Somerset County Commissioners, a commission to oversee and plan operations for the Crisfield/Somerset County Airport. Prior to Mr. Sullivan reading the resolution aloud, Councilwoman Lankford exited the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Following the reading of the resolution, Council Vice President Johnson made a motion to accept the Resolution. Motion seconded by Councilman Sheppard and carried unanimously 4-0.

#### PUBLIC INPUT

(At several points during Public Input, frequent interruptions from the audience and numerous offensive comments directed at the Mayor and members of the City Council caused Mayor Dize to appeal for order and respect, noting, that, if necessary, he would terminate the discussion.)

Darlene Taylor commented that she is disappointed that there was no discussion on the agenda about the Hotel/Conference Center. She commented that it is not about who is on the committee, it is about jobs for our children and you are preventing any movement forward.

Erik Emely commented about Mr. Pollitt's report concerning golf carts being permitted for use on City Streets and commended on the idea, but cautioned changes due to enforcement of City laws, noting that children must be 14 years old to ride.

Mr. Emely commented that Senator Carozza had not been formally introduced at tonight's meeting. He also commented that the audience is full of business owners and intelligent people, but we are still arguing over the conference center. He addressed Councilwoman Ward that even though she speaks on unity, the people are not united.

Greg Cain stated that he had been told there was no interest from the State, but had found out there was interest. He stated that we need to get past ourselves and stopped kicking the can down the road.

Jay Tawes commented that this is a golden opportunity and time is of the essence.

Peck Miller asked that he be allowed to use the two minutes from others who had wanted to speak.

He commented that he had tried to meet with Mayor Dize and Mr. Pollitt since February. He stated that this is a Christian town, but everyone hates each other. He noted that he had met with Secretary Kelso, who is excited about the project. He commented that if the Maryland Stadium Authority says the project is ok, he will need a letter of support from the City, to them. (Councilwoman Lankford returned to the meeting at this time – (7:12 p.m.)

Mr. Miller also stated that Secretary Holt will not bother the infrastructure money designated for the City. Mr. Miller also made reference to the meeting with Council Vice-President Johnson and her concern that the conference center and park would result in a tax increase for everyone.

Mr. Miller stated that the City has nothing to lose with the project. He commented that he does not know why he was not invited to a workshop meeting for the steering committee, which does not need to be approved by the Mayor and Council. Mr. Miller went on to comment that he is aware that some don't like GCAC, but we just need to fix Crisfield. He went on to read aloud the letter written on Crisfield Revitalization letterhead, to the Maryland Stadium Authority, for signatures by the Mayor and Council.

Sam Davis stated that he is disappointed in the three council members.

Linda Riggan commented that she is disappointed that the Mayor did not return Mr. Miller's phone call and will not sign the support letter, stating that this is a Gift Horse. She went on to say that the City will die without the project and the Mayor and Council should be ashamed if they don't send the letter.

Jim Macko inquired what the objection is to signing the letter.

Tim Howlett commented that he is embarrassed for the City and it doesn't have to be this way. He went on to say that people look at us like we are animals and we must agree to disagree and build a bridge to fix this problem, not leave it as is.

Linda Singh commented that her parents recently visited Crisfield and said the City was dead.

Councilwoman Lankford and Councilman Sheppard asked why it would take so long to set up the meeting concerning the Steering Committee and asked that the date for the meeting be set at this time.

Charlotte Scott briefed on GCAC and how all of these plans came about. She commented that dragging your feet is a way of not doing anything.

Jay Tawes commented that he is very disappointed and demanded that the Mayor and Council sign the support letter now and send it out today.

Senator Mary Beth Carozza commented that she ran for Senate to represent Crisfield and wanted to partner with Governor Hogan to help the City. She stated that she can't promise State funding, but consensus gives momentum with the State, adding that we need unity to move forward. She advised fixing the steering committee issue. She stated that she will do what she can to help.

#### MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Lankford apologized to the Mayor and Council for stepping out of the meeting earlier. She commented that we are just spinning our wheels and apologized that we can't move forward with the proposed hotel/conference center project.

Councilman Sheppard read into the record a statement commenting that the three members of Council will not support the hotel/conference center. (see attached in meeting file)

Councilman Ford stated that he had gone out and spoken to the public and there are business people that have said "no" to the project. Sam Davis asked for the names of those business people.

Councilman Ford commented that the supporters have said there would be no money coming from the City, but in the recent packet he received, there was a request for \$12,500. Mr. Miller commented that this was incorrect.

Councilwoman Ward noted that she has concerns that the proposed project will be taking part of the Housing Authority property for the convention center.

Buddy Carson interjected that he is ashamed of the Mayor and Council.

Mr. Miller stated that they will never be using part of the Housing Authority. Council Vice President Johnson stated that the concern is about the area around the Marina and the demolition of part of the Housing Authority. Mr. Miller advised that the plan would be to build new homes for those residents.

Council Vice President Johnson stated that she has been accused of not being a Christian, among other things, and commented that she hates the way things are being done. She stated that she is looking for a better Crisfield. She stated that there would be a work session for the next meeting and noted that she seconded the motion at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting because she wants to help the City. She noted that at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> work session, it was discussed that members would be selected for the steering committee. She advised that she refuses to be browbeaten and noted that she would like to see the results of the study concerning the hotel/conference center that is being done by the County.

Council Vice President Johnson went on to say that the City would do things step-by-step and the Council has a right to review who is on the Steering Committee.

At this time, Mr. Sullivan reminded the Mayor and Council that an important Closed Session was forthcoming.

At this time, Councilman Sheppard made a motion to adjourn into a Closed Session and read into record the Closed Session notification concerning a Personnel Matter. Motion seconded by Council Vice President Johnson and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary