

## Town Council Meeting August 9, 2021

Present: Todd Greco, Lee Adams, Frank Vari, Ed O'Hara, Frank Hill, Mayor Rich Taylor, Town Attorney Tom Yeager

Staff: Town Manager Rob Bernstine, Clerk Tonya Lockwood, Clerk/Treasurer Valerie Walls

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:34pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

### Approval of Minutes

Town Council Meeting July 12, 2021

**MOTION:** Councilman Vari made a motion, seconded by Councilman Greco to approve the minutes from July 12, 2021. All in favor, motion carried.

Closed Session July 12, 2021

**MOTION:** Councilman Hill made a motion, seconded by Councilman Adams to approve the minutes from the Closed Session on July 12, 2021. All in favor, motion carried.

### Reports

Councilman Adams: No Planning Commission meeting. No water breaks or backups since our last meeting. Read minutes from Progress Meeting #8, contract completion is July 2022. No change in the contract amount, billed over two million dollars, 23.39% of the total project. Discussion of where to store the salt over the winter; Lecco will be removing where it is now and we will buy it as needed from him. Storage will be off-site.

Councilman Greco: We have doubled the time for police coverage, extending it to 3am. Read the statistics from last month; we do have coverage out there. Looking for volunteers to discuss options for parking and the viability of a resident police office.

Councilman Hill: Read the account balances of the Howard Bank; Reviewed minutes from the previous historic meeting.

Councilman O'Hara: Not a lot to report, the Farmers Market is on a temporary hold to reassess if Fridays are the right day, difficulty getting vendors to committed dates, last market had five drop out. Saturdays are hard because of other markets, putting together a committee to work on it.

Councilman Vari: Public Works: Met with KCI on design of the First Street Project. Mayor & I attended MML dinner meeting in Elkton; their focus is on Highway User Fund. There hasn't been a date set for the county recycling appreciation certificates; we are the top recycler for the 11<sup>th</sup> straight year. Awards are nice, but the avg percentages for the County has increased,

which is good news. Parks & Rec meeting tomorrow night at Town Hall; we are now members of the MML group. Music in the Park concludes the end of August. The Arts Council will sponsor four bands in September on Sundays. Aug 22<sup>nd</sup> Blessing of the New Elementary School, program is outside; 8/28 Car Show; Aug 30 Ribbon cutting at 3p at the new Elementary School, 9/11 Service at the VFW; Putting together things for the New Year's Day 5K; As for Covid, preparing for "it getting worse than better". Been a strong promotor, encourage your friends to get vaccinated, wear masks if you're not vaccinated. Be responsible, do what's right to protect yourself and your family.

Town Manager Rob Bernstine: Nothing else to add.

Treasurer Valerie Walls: We have received the first half of the Covid Funds. The money has been moved into the savings account.

Mayor Rich Taylor Welcomed County Council President to our meeting, Bob Meffley. Has been made aware through email, on the Northside of unregistered vehicles. Suggested a ride around with Rob and Tonya to check on the properties. Tonya reminded that we are complaint driven. Rich to fill out form on behalf of the north side residents. Preview of the work on the bridge – to start in fall/winter, a one year project. Lane closures during the day, maybe in the night. Will give more information as available. No risk of a complete closure for Safety reasons.

Residents listening to the Zoom stated that the voices are muffled. Need to work on volume/clarity.

#### New Business

Prime 225 Outdoor Dining -Regarding removing the deck on Tuesday after Labor Day Trying to balance the business concerns and residents. Would usually do in a workshop, but allowed residents and the owners to speak tonight. Council does not have to vote tonight. Can defer to make a decision down the road as needed.

Councilman Adams: Has there been a change in the County with Covid? Are they the same as the last month?

Mayor: The infection rate continues to increase.

Bob Jones, Bud & Bobby Walls. Infront about a month ago – it looked as though we were at the late stages of the pandemic. News indicates it has returned and getting worse every day. Letters included claim its not the right decision to force people inside.

Councilman Vari –The Delta Variant on the rise. In favor of the discussion, against doing anything tonight, but we need assurances for the residents. If we look and come to an agreement, we will set no date, but will evaluate monthly or bi-monthly. Also 8pm cut-off time for outside seating and music. Closed by 10pm for the night and make sure the cleanup of street are and trash cans against the establishment is your responsibility. Before we vote, need to hear the concerns of residents. You need to show you are good neighbors. First time with neighbors against neighbors, you went to social media with a campaign making the Town look bad. You went to the county for the information, don't you think you could have asked without creating a hassle through the county? You took the low road for the second time. I think you need to step up and be the neighbor you claim to be. Been getting phone calls about what 225 wants. I take representing the residents of Chesapeake City very seriously. The buck stops with me. You know I follow through. try to represent everyone equally. We need resident's concerns in a special session at the workshop.

Councilman Greco: feels this is blown out of proportion. Given the Covid numbers, nobody is anti-business. What Frank is trying to say, we need to work together, have a discussion to make it work. Given Covid, we need an extension.

Councilman Adams: The residents came to us and said it was not something they want in their neighborhood. I agree with Frank, to hear from residents. No vote tonight. Wants the county's view on numbers before he makes a decision.

Councilman Hill: What is the update on the work done outback? That's a solution to the problem. Solves a lot problems. Not opposed to extension, but what are the details? We need firm ground rules, to know where we are going.

**MOTION:** Councilman Greco made a motion to extend the deadline to September 14th with a vote taken by Council on 9/13<sup>th</sup> on any action beyond. Councilman Adams seconded. *The Town requests additional input by the workshop by August 19th.* All in favor, motion carried.

#### Public Comments

Pres Meffley – Mentions that the bridge can be closed up to 16 times. Believes the increase in Covid cases is concentrated with the youth not being vaccinated.

Congratulations to the new council. Serving is tough and you can never make the right decision.

Biggest item is with the old Elementary school going to the County and not the Town. County Council has no direction from the Town – we really need to know what you're going to do. There are some options, there are some others looking at it for a school. Administrator is working on that. If all else fail, it can go to a developer. He would like to preserve it. If you

have a plan, we've been working on it, jump start your ideas. 30-day window when school opens, it goes out to bid.

**Mayor and Council Comments**

Councilman Adams, final comment on restaurant, sees the tables and seats outside, they have barriers. If extended, cars can pass safely, thinks cars can't run into the tables.

Councilman Greco: In terms of Prime, we don't want them to disappear. This has been, blown out of proportion.

Councilman Hill: to add what Frank mentioned about car show; the event is on track. Details settled. Lions club is doing a good job as in the past. Encourage the Towns people on that day, please be tolerant. Be kind and move your vehicles in lots.

Councilman O'Hara: Nothing else to add

Councilman Vari: I agree with Todd, we need to move forward and make our choice known on 13<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor: Regarding the old school, your point was well made/taken. The County is getting interest about the school. We've cast a wide net looking and not getting any response.

**Closed Meeting Contractual/Personnel Issues**

**MOTION:** Councilman Vari made a motion, seconded by Councilman Greco to convene into a Closed Session after a five-minute Break. All in favor, motion carried.

**MOTION:** Councilman Adams made a motion to enact what was discussed in the Closed meeting. Councilman Greco seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

**MOTION:** Councilman Vari made a motion, seconded by Councilman Hill to adjourn. All in favor motion carried.

Submitted:



D. Valerie Walls  
Clerk/Treasurer



Richard L Taylor, III  
Mayor