

Town of Chesapeake City

Town Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 13, 2025

Present: Mayor Rich Taylor, Sarah Ford-Ferrara, Frank Vari, Lee Adams, Ed O'Hara, Hunter Dann, Tonya Lockwood (staff), Brian Hunsberger (staff), Rob Bernstine (staff), Tom Yeager (attorney)

Absent:

Mayor Rich Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Approval of Minutes:

December 9, 2024, Meeting

Motion: Lee Adams made a motion, seconded by Hunter Dann to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2024, Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

No Workshop held in December

Council Reports:

Lee Adams

Water and Sewer- The WWTP is nearing completion, KCI is working with Wickersham on the last two pay applications (CO and Final). KCI is preparing a summary letter recommending a project close out. Lee read the WWTP flows for last month from the County Report (distributed). There was a curb stop replacement at 412 Lock St. There were unfortunately a few water-main breaks and repairs on 2nd St. They were fairly significant repairs and sometimes they are a bit costly. We are estimating this set of repairs to be approximately \$18,000.00.

Planning Commission- The Planning Commission met on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, they reviewed and approved 2 applications. There were also elections for Chair and Vice Chair with Rick Webster (Chair) and Dan Malloy (Vice Chair) winning. We will be losing Vicki Lowman-Griffith from the Commission soon as she is moving out of town. The Zoning Administrator, Rob Bernstine, approved 1 application this month, reviewed a comment letter for the proposed Chesapeake Village II Project, and started to review the Zoning Ordinance Update.

Hunter Dann

Public Safety- The Public Safety Committee has not met since November but will be scheduling to meet some time in February. The police have video from the car break-ins, but are waiting for some other investigations to be completed before they can act on anything. They also looked into helping us with parking tickets for folks in states other than Maryland, but they are unable to help us. Trooper Kim stated that there was no foul play regarding the issue that happened over on the levees near the Corp property. It was an unfortunate, tragic accident. One outstanding item from the committee was a plan to place signs on alleys stating No Parking and No Outlet and other directional signage to help visitors find parking. Trooper Kim has been promoted, and we may lose him as our liaison, but hopefully we can keep him!

Sarah Ford-Ferrara

Historic District Commission- The Historic District Commission did not meet in December due to a lack of Action Items.

Docks- Things have been extremely slow with the ice in the canal and basin. We received a \$73,990.00 reimbursement from the recent dredging.

Ed O'Hara

Economic Development and Tourism- The Christmas Market and Parade of Horses were successful, as was the Candlelight Tour. Some of the market vendors felt like their sales were down, but it was quite cold that day. Our local shops and other businesses had great days. The Holiday Variety Show was impacted a bit by the cold weather too, as only about half of the tickets sold showed up. However, those in attendance enjoyed the show.

Looking forward in 2025 we have the Snowman Sprint on Jan 25, the Sip and Stroll on Feb 22, and St. Patrick's Day Parade on Mar 15.

Thanks to Karyn Huddleston and the owners of the Old Grey Mare for the last 15 years of service in our Town. Thanks to Johnny Towers and others for the Boat Parade. Thanks to Greg Shelton for the Christmas events.

Frank Vari

Public Works- No yard waste until March 3, 2025. Tuesdays in Jan and Feb will be Christmas Trees Only. Our recycling numbers are looking good already this year.

Parks and Rec- The next meeting will be held on Feb 16. They will be scheduling and planning the town events starting with the Easter Egg Hunt. We received a VLT grant reimbursement of \$5,000.00. The New Year's Day 5k was a huge success with about 200 participants. We will receive about \$1,800.00 from this recent race.

Rich, Tom, and Frank attended Cecil Night in Annapolis and met the new County Administrator. They will meet on Jan 24 regarding discussions about the former Elementary School Property.

Rob Bernstine, Town Manager

The Town Manager's Report was distributed to Council.

Brian Hunsberger, Treasurer

The Monthly Financial Reports were distributed and the account balances as of today were read.

Mayor Rich Taylor

Thanks to staff for the hard work on the water breaks and repairs.

One business owner has requested a change in parking near their specific business through an email addressed to himself and Ed O'Hara. We could have a discussion later tonight or at the January Workshop.

Action Items:

Event Application – Crush the Chesapeake 5k

New 5k that will benefit the BJ Harris Scholarship.

Motion: Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Ed O'Hara to approve Event Application – Crush the Chesapeake 5k. All in favor, motion carried.

Event Application – Pain in the 5k

Annual 5k held to benefit the BJ Harris Scholarship.

Motion: Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve Event Application – Pain in the 5k. All in favor, motion carried.

Event Application – St Patrick's Day Parade and Vendors

Annual event held each year in Town.

Motion: Sarah Ford-Ferrara made a motion, seconded by Lee Adams to approve Event Application – St Patrick's Day Parade and Vendors. All in favor, motion carried.

Discussion Items:

Former Chesapeake City Elementary School Property

On Jan. 7 the Cecil County Council had a discussion regarding conveying the property to the town and they are more than amenable to conveying the property to the town. Their attorney is ready to prepare a deed for the transfer of the property. The County will need to review this deed, and we also would need time for a review. There are also guidelines required by the County to convey property and those would need to be followed. They are aware of all of the projects that have come before the Town, and they are allowing the Town to make all decisions moving forward.

We need to find out what the County is paying monthly for the upkeep of the building. A call should go out ASAP. We could also try to split the cost of the upkeep with the County or continue to have the police use it as a training facility for their dogs. How much do they make from that?

We need to reach out to the managers of the previous projects to see if they are still interested and also possibly put out an RFP for other project ideas.

Rich, Rob and Frank will meet with the County on Jan 24.

Public Comment:

Karyn Huddleston – Do the police use the inside and outside of the school? Rent is a large factor as to why businesses are unable to stay here.

Council Comments:

Rich Taylor – Yes, different agencies use both the inside and outside, sometimes the full entirety of the Town. Thanks to Tom for driving to Annapolis.

Tom Yeager – Happy New Year and he enjoyed Cecil Night in Annapolis.

Adjourn:

Motion: Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Lee Adams to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm. All in favor, motion carried.

**An audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Tonya Lockwood

Richard L. Taylor, III, Mayor