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**SNOW HILL MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING**

**Town Hall Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, April 11th, 2023**

**7:00pm – Regular Session**

A regular meeting of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held at The Old Fire Hall on Green Street on Tuesday, April 11th, 2023, with Mayor Pruitt presiding.

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Mayor Mike Pruitt

Councilperson Regina Blake

Councilperson Janet Simpson

Councilperson Jenny Hall

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Andy McGee, Police Department Chief

Carol Sullivan, Executive Administrator

Jerry Jeffra, Communications Officer

Lounell Hamstead, Finance Manager

Rick Pollitt, Town Manager

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1. Mayor Pruitt called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and led the gathering in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silent prayer.He then acknowledged Governor Wes Moore’s recent appointment of Brigadier General Janeen Birckhead to lead the Maryland National Guard and the State’s emergency response division. The Mayor noted that General Birckhead grew up in Snow Hill and graduated from Snow Hill High School. The Mayor is hoping to invite her to join us at a future Town Hall meeting to be recognized and congratulated by the Town on her accomplishments.
2. **Approval of Minutes**:
	1. March 14th Town Hall Meeting:

On the motion of Councilperson Simpson and seconded by Councilperson Hall, the minutes for March 14th’s Town Hall Meeting were approved by the following vote.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

b. March 28th’s Special Town Hall Meeting:

On the motion of Councilperson Blake and Councilperson Simpson, the minutes for March 28th 2023’s Special Town Hall were approved by the following vote.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

On the motion of Councilperson Hall and seconded by Councilperson Simpson, the treasurer’s report was approved by the following vote.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

1. **Town Manager’s Report**

Town Manager Rick Pollitt stated that we completed our first budget work session with the town council just prior to this meeting. A formal Public Hearing on the budget is scheduled for April 25th, at the Old Fire Hall at7pm. Public comment will be available at that time. Mayor Pruitt followed up by asking Town Manager Pollitt to announce to the public the status of the Black-Eyed Susan. Town Manager Pollitt stated he is confident of having enough information to be given to the council soon to move on to the next step and has heard back from an appraiser. There has been some interest from potential purchasers of the boat, with an additional contact to visit and check the boat next week. Afterwards, Town Manager Pollitt will draft a report to deliver to Mayor & Council. Mayor Pruitt wanted to confirm when the next meeting of the Charter Committee is and Town Manager Pollitt replied April 20th at 5pm at the Train Station. He also stated that the Ethics Committee will meet tomorrow at 4:30pm in the Old Fire Hall to review the financial disclosure forms submitted by the candidates for Town Council.

1. **Department Reports:**
	1. Economic Development Report

Town Manager Pollitt noted that the town has an application ready to be sent to the state to renew Snow Hill’s Enterprise Zone benefit program. Mayor Pruitt wanted to confirm if we signed the Legacy Mural agreement MOU and Town Manager Pollitt responded that it was completed yesterday.

* 1. Code Enforcement Report:

Town Manager Pollitt reported that he and Code Enforcement Officer Marty Sullivan met with county staff last week and discovered that although some years ago Snow Hill adopted a storm water management ordinance the Town did not institute a mechanism or means to inspect or enforce it. An MOU between the Town and the County was prepared but never adopted. He is now in the process of picking that up again, which would be useful in addressing the recent issue of a potential project on Morris Street which brought in a lot of rubble as fill material. Currently as is, the activity is a violation of our ordinance and the owner has been issued a Stop-Work Order.

* 1. Public Works Report:

No further discussion

* 1. Water & Wastewater Report:

Town Manager Pollitt explained that we should be receiving a complete analysis report from Davis, Bowen & Friedel by the end of the week. State Department of the Environment has been asking the Town for such a report, and he commented that the report from Davis, Bowen & Friedel turn around will be timely as a response to the State’s request. Mayor Pruitt asked Town Manager Pollitt if we were still in good graces with the Department, and Town Manager Pollitt replied that we seemed to be.

* 1. Museum Report:

Town Manager Pollitt stated that the museum successfully presented an Ann Strickland Hope exhibit recently and encouraged attendance by the public.

* 1. Police Department Report:

Police Department Chief Andy McGee wanted to remind people that there have been recent calls about loose dogs and to please keep all dogs on leashes and in secure enclosures. Mayor Pruitt asked Police Department Chief McGee to comment about the trucks, in which the chief replied that he’s been keeping an eye out on Bay Street and Market Street, and while the truck traffic has mostly died down due to harvest slowing down, he has spotted a few violations.

* 1. Fire Department:

No further discussion.

1. **Unfinished Business**

Mayor Pruitt had nothing to add to the Unfinished Business section.

1. **New Business**

Mayor Pruitt asked Board of Elections Chair Jan King to speak about the upcoming election. Ms. King shared with the audience where and when to vote, namely at the Train Station on May 2nd from 7am-7pm, and then proceeded to introduce the candidates for election to two seats on the Town Council. Up for Central District is incumbent Councilperson Jenny Hall, challenged by Diana Walsh. In the Western District, incumbent Councilperson Regina Blake is being challenged by Margaret A Fletcher. Mayor Pruitt gave Councilpersons Blake and Hall the opportunity to speak about their positions and experience as council members, and afterwards gave Diana Walsh and Margaret Fletcher a chance to talk about themselves and their vision as prospective council members.

 Mayor Pruitt then proceeded to the First Reading of Ordinance 2023-02 to adopt the proposed budget for FY 2024, commenting that it still needs to be worked on and hoping that the second reading will take place at the regular meeting on May 9th. Mayor Pruitt then read aloud the ordinance.

On the motion of Councilperson Simpson and seconded by Councilperson Blake, ordinance 2023-02 was accepted for First Reading by the following vote.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

 Mayor Pruitt then turned to the First Reading of Ordinance 2023-03, a declaration of surplus public property, which the Mayor requested Town Manager Pollitt to read aloud. In order to potentially dispose of public property, it must first be declared surplus and then the public must be offered an opportunity to bid on its purchase. Town Manager Pollitt then read the ordinance aloud.

On the motion of Councilperson Blake and seconded by Councilperson Hall, Ordinance 2023-03 was approved by the following vote.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
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1. **Comments from the Council**

Councilperson Simpson was happy to see a full house for tonight’s meeting, and wanted to strongly remind the public that the time to make input about the budget is coming up. Councilperson Hall was also thankful for the attendance tonight, and to highlight again that elections are May 2nd. Councilperson Hall also extended her gratitude to the police department, Public Works and Economic Development Director Lorissa McAllister for their hard work during the Oyster Roast. Councilperson Blake gave her gratitude to the public for their participation and to urge people to vote during the elections.

1. **Comments from the Mayor**

Mayor Pruitt gave a short recap of what was discussed during the budget work session prior to tonight’s meeting, and now is the time to reach out to the council to discuss any concerns with the budget the public may have.

1. **Comments from the Public**

Rita Williams’s commented on the large increase in the Water / Wastewater fees; will there be notifications, such as mail, going out to the public about this change? Mayor Pruitt replied that this was alluded to in the Apr/May/June newsletter but will make sure that a mailed notice is sent out. Rita Williams then asked was about the list of properties mentioned by Ordinance 2023-03, specifically about the properties behind her residence and if they were included in the list. Mayor Pruitt confirmed that they are.

Eddie Lee wanted to ask the Mayor what his views are, and what the public should do, when it comes to Snow Hill’s municipality and its relationship with the school system, and the problems originating and circulating in the school systems, surrounding the recent event. Mayor Pruitt responded that in all respects, in his view, his perspective is to stay in his own lane, but will take steps to understanding the situation that happened a week or two ago. Eddie Lee mentioned a program called ‘Eagle’s Nest’, which prompted Councilperson Simpson to ask what the Eagle’s Nest was, and the response was that it used to be a youth center.

Diana Walsh wanted to appreciate the comments made by Eddie Lee, by increasing more community involvement such as block parties.

1. **Adjournment**

Adjournment –Motion to adjourn by Councilperson Simpson, seconded by Councilperson Hall for approval. The time was 7:43pm.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

 Respectfully Submitted,

 Jerry Jeffra

 Communications Officer