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**SNOW HILL MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING**

**Mayor & Town Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, December 12th, 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, December 12th, 2023, with Mayor Pruitt presiding.

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Mayor Mike Pruitt

Councilmember Diana Walsh

Councilmember Janet Simpson

Councilmember Margaret Ann Fletcher

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Rick Pollitt, Town Manager

Maureen Howarth, Esq. Town Attorney

Lounell Hamstead, Finance Manager

Andy McGee, Police Department Chief

Carol Sullivan, Executive Administrator

Melissa Kempfer, Clerk

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Mayor Pruitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The Mayor led the Pledge to the Flag and called for a moment of silence following.

1. **Approval of Minutes**:

Councilmember Fletcher made a motion to approve November 14th 2023’s Town Hall Meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilmember Simpson.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

Councilmember Walsh made a motion to approve November 28th 2023’s Work Session minutes. Seconded by Councilmember Simpson.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
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Councilmember Simpson made a motion to approve December 4th 2023’s Special Work Session minutes. Seconded by Councilmember Fletcher.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

The minutes of December 5th 2023’s Work Session were approved with the following correction: Page 3, item 2D. Town Manager Pollitt stated research is being done to find the exact purchase price of the former PNC building to record in the minutes

Councilmember Simpson made a motion to approve December 5th 2023’s Work Session minutes with the stated correction. Seconded by Councilmember Walsh.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

Finance Manager Lou Hamstead stated that the Total in Bank Account in October 2023 was $5,342,987 and in November 2023 was $5,387,502

Councilmember Walsh made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Seconded by Councilmember Simpson.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

1. **Proclamations**

Mayor Pruitt shared that he, the Town Manager and Town Council were invited to ceremonies celebrating the 20th Business Anniversaries of Bishop’s Stock and Sassy Girl Boutique. Proclamations were presented and read at each event and signed documentation will be given to the businesses Wednesday, December 13, 2023.

1. **Presentation: Annual audit report from PKS**

Leslie Michalik & Ryan Taylor in attendance.

* + 1. Leslie M. gave presentation after already having presented it to Mayor, Town Manager and treasurer
       1. Gave clean/unqualified opinion of Town’s finances. Highest level can give.
       2. No instances of non-compliance
       3. Internal procedures & controls – no material weaknesses.
    2. Ryan T. gave an over view of the following: general fund, general expenditures, capital outlay-significant decrease, 7 months operating expenses, grants, expenditures, water and sewer fund review, ARPA funds: breakdown of expenditures.
    3. Town books and records are found in good order and the town is in a good financial position
    4. Councilmember Walsh asked about the plans for the remaining ARPA funds
       1. Finance Manager Hamstead stated that the remaining funds would be used in improvements on Purnell Street. Once the project is finished, the town must determine the purpose of remaining funds by the end of 2024.

1. **Town Manager’s Report**

Town Manager Rick Pollitt updated his report with additions.

1. Mr. Pollitt updated Charter Review Committee schedule, the committee will meet on Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 5:00pm.
2. Mr. Pollitt also announced that Town Code Enforcement Officer Marty Sullivan submitted his resignation from his position, with this final day on January 4, 2024.

Councilmember Simpson asked Mr. Pollitt for more information about the cannabis board he is forming. Mr. Pollitt stated that he spoke with Joy Strand, the executive director of the Maryland Wholesale Medical Cannabis Trade Association. Mr. Pollitt stated that Mrs. Strand volunteered to assist with putting a panel together for the next public forum on cannabis in Snow Hill. Mr. Pollitt went on to say that the forum will be held in January.

Councilmember Walsh asked for more information about the MACO Conference that Mr. Pollitt attended. Mr. Pollitt shared that conference did not address what he expected. The conference addressed environmental and public health issues instead of the waste water treatment personnel that he was hoping for.

Councilmember Walsh also brought up the need for Public Works assistance and the possibility of developing an apprenticeship program with the Tech School or other organizations. Town Manager Pollitt shared that the state legislation addressing the process of reaching into high schools for apprenticeships is very recent and that a second round of legislation before the program can be implemented.

Councilmember Simpson asked Mr. Pollitt about the pause in work being done on Market Street. Mr. Pollitt shared that the workers ran into some undocumented utility lines The lines are owned by Verizon, but there are no records for them. A meeting is set up with Verizon and the engineers on Wednesday, December 13, 2023 to find out how to move forward.

Councilmember Simpson inquired about the new Superintendent of the Waste Water Plant and his certification progress. Mr. Pollitt shared that the new hire just started the job the previous day and was making contacts to start with his Maryland certification.

Councilmember Walsh addressed a need to identify the buildings in town that are not billed for water and not metered. Mr. Pollitt shared that the topic would be on the upcoming meeting agenda.

Councilmember Simpson inquired about the progress of finding a Circuit Rider. Mr. Pollitt stated that he has interview with a possible candidate on December 14th. Mr. Pollitt also stated that he would be sharing the job description of the Circuit Writer to the Council members.

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

Councilmember Simpson shared that Lorissa had done a great job getting the Sustainable Community application completed.

Councilmember Walsh asked about the Bank Street project and inquired if Main Street was going to submit a MOU to the town for support. Mr. Pollitt said that it is in the plan to do so, but the project was currently working with the County on another part of the project.

* 1. Code Enforcement Report

Town Manager Pollitt added that the town would be actively looking for a new Code Enforcement Officer.

Councilmember Simpson stated that she appreciated the listing of the current code violations.

Mr. Pollitt stated that the town has a current noise complaint about the noise coming from the feed mills in town limits. Mr. Pollitt mentioned that the town does not have a traditional noise ordinance. The town code enforcement official is working with the town attorney to address the matter.

Councilmember Walsh asked if the new software for code enforcement and training would easily transfer to a new employee. Mr. Pollitt did not have that information but added that Mr. Sullivan had offered to help transition the new hire in.

* 1. Public Works Report

Councilmember Walsh asked about progress on removing the gangway. Mr. Pollitt stated that Public Works is working to schedule a time for Danny Scarborough to remove and store the gangway. Mr. Pollitt mentioned that he would check with Randy Barfield for an update.

* 1. Water & Wastewater Report

Town Attorney Howarth spoke about working with Mr. Ludy on the topic of septic, he is reviewing the town’s ordinance to see where changes need to be made.

* 1. Grants Office

Councilmember Walsh asked if there was a projected number of funds that the grants office was seeking this year and what kind of progress was being made. Grants Administrator Bessette explained the revenue from grants that he works on are determined by projects that are presented to him. Mr. Bessette stated that there is no current target number and that the grants that he is working on are project based.

* 1. Museum Report

No additional comments were made at this time.

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* 1. Police Department Report

Police Department Chief Andy McGee added that on Sunday there would be a drive through Christmas parade traveling through town at 5:45pm. Chief McGee spoke about social media post reminding townspeople to lock their doors after 9pm and other security reminders during the holiday season.

Councilmember Walsh asked about parking enforcement. Chief McGee stated that if the Council wanted the department to enforce parking, that they would do so under the city ordinance which is a $20 parking ticket. The department would also integrate the use of town cameras to view the parking areas. Chief McGee mentioned that in January that the police department would be presenting a parking solution, specifically for the downtown.

* 1. Fire Department

No reports were submitted. No comments were made.

1. **Unfinished Business**
   1. Appointments to Boards & Commissions

Mayor Pruitt requests that Mr. Rob Culbertson be appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Councilmember Simpson made a motion to appoint Mr. Culbertson to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Seconded by Councilmember Fletcher.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
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Mayor Pruitt swore in Mr. Culbertson to Board of Zoning Appeals at 8:00pm.

* 1. Ordinance No. 2023-06 re: 209 Petitt Street. Second Reading

Town Attorney Howarth reviews the 209 a & b Pettit Street property. Town Manager Pollitt did the second reading of the ordinance.

Mayor Pruitt moved to accept a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2023-06

Councilmember Walsh made a motion to accept the ordinance. Seconded by Councilmember Simpson.

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| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
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Ordinance No. 2023-06 is passed.

* 1. Vacant Property Registration Ordinance

Attorney Howarth stated that she had made further revisions to the ordinance and is working with Code Enforcement Officer Sullivan. Mrs. Howarth said that once she received Mr. Sullivan’s feedback that she would present a final version of the Vacant Property Registration Ordinance.

Councilmember Walsh stated that she would like to see the ordinance address commercial properties and residential properties separately using different wording and fee schedules. Councilmember Fletcher agreed that the ordinances should be separate.

Attorney Howarth stated that it was a Council decision and that she would need time to write the second separate ordinance. Councilmember Walsh shared that the Council was not ready to move on a residential ordinance. She continued to say that she would like to do more research before moving forward.

Councilmember Walsh shared that she would like to keep the “blight” wording in the ordinance. Attorney Howarth stated that she doesn’t want the wording to be duplicative with other code enforcement sections. Attorney Howarth will revise the ordinances accordingly.

1. **New Business**
   1. Requests regarding 211 Petitt Street

Attorney Howarth shared that the owners of the 211 Petitt Street property, BMW Rentals confirmed that they intended for 209 & 211 Petitt Street properties to be deeded together to the town. BMW Rentals would like to issue a confirmatory deed to the 211 Petitt Street property. Attorney Howarth stated that she needs the Mayor and Council to confirm that that will accept the confirmatory deed.

Councilmember Simpson makes a motion to accept the confirmatory deed of 211 Petitt Street. Seconded by Councilmember Fletcher.

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| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
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Attorney Howarth stated that a motion was needed to request a public hearing be scheduled to determine if 211 Petitt Street is no longer needed for public use. The public hearing will be held on January 9, 2023.

Councilmember Fletcher makes a motion to request a public hearing be scheduled on January 9, 2024 to determine if 211 Petitt Street is no longer needed for public use. Seconded by Councilmember Walsh.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
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| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
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* 1. Request a public hearing be scheduled to determine if PNC Bank is no longer need for public use.

Town Attorney Howarth stated that the Town Council requested to move forward with declaring the previous PNC building surplus. The property needs to be set for public hearing to declare that the building is no longer needed for public use.

Councilmember Walsh makes a motion to request a public hearing be scheduled on January 9, 2024 to determine if the PNC building is no longer needed for public use. Seconded by Councilmember Fletcher.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

* 1. Approve Holiday schedule for 2024

Town Manager Pollitt reviewed the Holiday schedule for 2024

Councilmember Simpson made a motion to adopt the Holiday Schedule for 2024. Seconded by Councilmember Fletcher.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

1. **Comments from the Public**

Rita Williams commented on the Vacant Property Ordinance. As a property owner in the town’s business district, she is displeased with the ordinance. Mrs. Williams shared that she doesn’t believe vacant buildings kept in proper order should be fined.

Fran Price commented on the active noise complaint from the feed mills. She shared other areas have disclose if a property is an area with constant noise. She suggested researching if there was a similar policy in our area. Ms. Price also commented that the Planning Commission was working on addressing traffic and parking issues in the town.

An attendee mentioned that they were having trouble hearing some of the meeting tonight due to the sound system. The sentiment was shared by others. Mayor Pruitt shared that the microphones were purchased within the last year and would look into addressing the issue in the upcoming budget year. Councilmember Walsh shared the need for a Communications Work Session and have a consultant come and help with the sound equipment.

1. **Comments from the Council**

The councilmembers shared their comments, thanking everyone’s hard work over the recent successful events, and wished everyone a happy holiday.

1. **Comments from the Mayor**

Mayor Pruitt also wanted to recognize the recent events and their success.

1. **Adjournment**

Councilmember Janet made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilmember Fletcher. The time was 8:33pm.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Kempfer

Clerk I