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**SNOW HILL MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING**

**Work Session Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 27th, 2023**

**6:00pm – Regular Session**

A Work Session of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held at The Old Fire Hall on Green Street on Tuesday, June 27th, 2023, with Mayor Pruitt presiding.

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Mayor Mike Pruitt

Councilmember Janet Simpson

Councilmember Diana Walsh

Councilmember Margaret Ann Fletcher

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Carol Sullivan, Executive Administrator

Jerry Jeffra, Communications Officer

Rick Pollitt, Town Manager

Randy Barfield, Public Works Director

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1. **Approval of Ayres, Jenkins, Gordy & Almand, P.A,. of Ocean City as the new Town Attorney**

Mayor Pruitt called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. He then requested the council to approve the mayor’s appointment of an in-house Attorney to provide regular legal advice and representation. Councilmember Fletcher asked if we have budgeted for both attorneys? Mr. Pollitt responded that funding for the additional attorney has been a part of the mayor’s budget since February and was adopted intact in June. Councilmember Simpson asked if the travel for the attorney is included in the budget. Mr. Pollitt said yes. Councilmember Walsh noticed that the attorney’s services would be accommodated through an hourly fee rather than a retention fee and asked if that would limit the access the Town has to the attorney. Mr. Pollitt responded no, that they will only attend the meetings that the Town specifically requests. Councilmember Fletcher noticed that Mr. Bright represented the Town of Snow Hill before and asked if the Town knew when he served. Mayor Pruitt believes that it was around the time he was serving as Councilmember, in 2016-2017.

On a motion from Councilmember Simpson, seconded by Councilmember Fletcher, to approve the appointment of Ayres, Jenkins, Gordy & Almand, P.A as the Town Attorney, the following vote occurred on the motion:

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

1. **Passage of a Resolution in support of the Town’s joint application with Pocomoke City for a shared part-time staff position through the State’s Town Manager Circuit Rider grant program**

Town Manager Pollitt reviewed the application that the Town of Snow Hill was jointly filing with Pocomoke City to the State for a shared Circuit-Rider Town Manager staff position. He reminded everyone that the original purpose of the position was to supplement the Town’s part-time grant writer/administrator position. However, since the upgrade of Snow Hill’s grants writer position from part-time to full-time, he is unsure how useful this Circuit Rider position would be for Snow Hill now and noted other potential issues such as office space and overlap. He added that Pocomoke was still very much in need of the position and, out of courtesy to them, was not comfortable withdrawing the grant application at this point. The only step left in the process is for both Towns to pass the required Resolution endorsing the application. Councilmember Simpson remarked that she would love to see Snow Hill commit to still supporting Pocomoke, as we may need their support one day as well. Councilmember Walsh also would want to work with Pocomoke in future partnerships, but is unsure if there is a strong enough case for the position. Councilmember Fletcher also would like to continue potential partnerships. Councilperson Fletcher asked if the grant for this position has already been written, and Mr. Pollitt responded yes, there’s just the last action of passing the resolutions from both towns still to do. With no further questions from the Council, Mayor Pruitt read aloud the resolution.

On a motion from Councilmember Fletcher, seconded by Councilmember Simpson, Resolution 2023-04 to adopt the part-time Circuit Rider position was passed by the following vote:

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Margaret Ann Fletcher** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Diana Walsh** |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **2** | **1** |  |  |  |

1. **Presentation by Dr. Hogan Pesaniello regarding lease of the former PNC bank building**

Mr. Pollitt introduced Dr. Hogan Pesaniello, who is proposing a lease offer for a property from the Town, notably the old PNC Bank building. Mr. Pollitt expressed that this was her chance to demonstrate her works and the potential interest in the citizens of Snow Hill in this request. Mr. Pollitt then passed the floor to Dr. Pesaniello. Dr. Pesaniello delivered her presentation and remarked that she would love to see the unused spaces of Snow Hill be filled, and she noted three ideas that she had to accomplish that. One of those ideas was to display huge exhibitions of zoo-focused figurines, using repainted and repurposed miniatures. Other ideas to use the rest of the space in the PNC Building is for wellness centers, such as mental health services. Councilmember Simpson asked what times would the zoo be open? Dr. Pesaniello stated interest in having it open as much as possible. Councilmember Simpson also asked if she entertained the idea of a gift shop, with Dr. Pesaniello replying yes, she did. Councilmember Walsh asked how would she attract interested parties for the upstairs section of the building. Dr. Pesaniello stated she would do so mostly by word of mouth. Councilmember Simpson asked what the zoning for the building is. Mr. Pollitt replied that it’s in the Downtown Business District and would be considered as commercial. Councilmember Walsh asked the Mayor when can they ask Dr. Pesaniello more questions about what interior changes to the building she liked to see. Mayor Pruitt responded that he would like to have the attorney sit on that discussion before committing to further discussion to keep potential buyers from gaining an unfair advantage on Dr. Pesaniello’s offer.

1. **Brief updates on the Black-Eyed Susan and the county budget**

Town Manager Pollitt reported that the Worcester County Commissioners had recently adopted their budget for the new fiscal year and that most of the Town’s request for funding was approved, including allocations to the fire and ambulance service. However, Mr. Pollitt also remarked that the Town was denied grants for both the Basketball Court restoration and Byrd Park flood mitigation projects.

Mr. Pollitt then updated the Council on recent developments involving funding for the Black-Eyed Susan. He reminded all that the boat’s purchase was partially funded with a $100,000 State grant to the county, which was re-purposed to the Town to assist with the first few annual loan payments. Mr. Pollitt has spoken with the Secretary of Housing Community Development and shared the good news that the Town does not have to pay the $100,000 from the grant back to the State. Mayor Pruitt remarked that he wants to have the attorneys involved so that selling the boat is also honoring the current debt to the county. Councilmember Walsh asked do we have a buyer yet. Mayor Pruitt said we currently have two interested purchasers. Comments centered on alternatives for future use of the boat and whether more aggressive selling strategies should be considered. Mayor Pruitt noted that the expense to move and restore the boat was enormous and the best interest of the Town was in quickly disposing of it.

Councilmember Walsh wants to have a discussion with the mayor and the Council on Article 7 of the Charter. Councilmember Walsh also wants to be able to meet more frequently to discuss town business.

1. **Move to Closed Session to discuss personnel matter**

Town Manager Pollitt read aloud the legal justification for closing a meeting and stated the purpose of the closed session. On a motion from Councilmember Walsh, seconded by Councilmember Fletcher, the meeting was moved to closed session by the following vote. The time was 7:29pm.

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

On a motion from Councilmember Fletcher, seconded by Councilmember Walsh, the meeting was moved back to open session by the following vote. The time was 8:22pm.

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

Upon reconvening in open session, Mr. Pollitt stated that during our closed session a matter of personal was discussed and a resolution decided.

The Mayor and Council then discussed holding another session, and scheduling a meeting with the new attorney.

1. **Adjournment**

With no other business to conduct, on a motion from Councilmember Simpson, seconded by Councilmember Fletcher, the meeting was adjourned by the following vote. The time was 8:37 pm.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerry Jeffra

Clerk I