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Description automatically generatedSNOW HILL MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

**WORK SESSION**

**Tuesday, September 27, 2022**

* **Minutes -**

**4:30pm – Work 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, September 27th, 2022, with Mayor Pruitt presiding.

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Mayor Mike Pruitt

Councilperson Regina Blake

Councilperson Janet Simpson

Councilperson Jenny Hall

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Jerry Jeffra, Communications Officer

Lorissa McAllister, Director of Economic Development

Randy Barfield, Public Works Director

Rick Pollitt, Town Manager

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1. **Brief reports/updates –**
   1. Britt Goff Way/Tommy Mason Pavilion
      1. Mayor: Prior administration discussed and passed motions to co-name a street after Britt Goff and the pavilion after Tommy Mason. Staff will contact the families for a public activity. Rick: Got everything in place for the golf. Looking for prices for a plaque (for Tommy Mason) to put on the pavilion in Sturgis Park.
   2. Shore Transit
      1. Mayor: Concerns about Shore Transit locations, especially on east side, 2 residents were approached to see if they can offer some space for possible locations, but no comment was given back. Rick: After losing both possible properties, got in contact with Andrew Wile, new Director of Shore Transit in Salisbury to explore different options for sheltered stops. Councilperson Simpson: There is a designated flag stop, but repairs need to be done. State Highway has set a barrel there to designate there is an issue there. Some of the residents did ask to investigate to find a place that works.
   3. Sewer Plant Pump Issues
      1. Mayor: May become critical. Last weekend, a pump at the sewer plant stopped, and the alarm that was in place to warn of the pump malfunction failed, resulting in a backup and overflow spillage at the plant. MDE and DBF engineers were notified immediately, and although it began working for a time, it has since stopped one more additional time despite an evaluation of the pipe every 2 hours. Wants to also identify the thresholds. Rick: While we did have a second spill, we got John McGee (principal architect) to help us find the issue; valves were not properly being opened/sealed. Verizon also found where the failure in the line of the alarm was and has now fixed it. All thresholds should be reported immediately. We do have back-up pumps.
2. **Presentations/Discussion –**
   1. State Open Meetings Act: Kevin Karpinski, Town Legal Counsel
      1. Rick: Introduced Kevin, the Town’s attorney. Wanted to make sure no one was in violation of the Open Meetings Act, and to give the public enlightenment of the process of what’s behind closed doors and what’s public knowledge. Wanted to also know what can be and cannot be discussed between Councilmembers in both official and unofficial capabilities. Kevin: Unless at least one person has the Open Meetings, Compliance Act training and is certified, no executive meeting can be held under Maryland law. Kevin also addressed some of the unclear language in the Town’s Charter as well (The Mayor is designated as ‘president of the council according to the Charter as is currently written’). There’s no violation of the Open Meetings Act unless it is in discussion of a public business. The charter also needs to be cleaned up so that two members of the council can discuss items without needing to rely on monthly meetings. Emails can be a violation, to avoid ‘reply all’s, avoid language that confers the contents or the email chain as a ‘meeting’ if its going to be a quorum. Mayor can talk to any councilperson. Minutes must be maintained on everything meaningful and retained for a year. Closed sessions are not problematic if you have open meeting follow ups. The public needs to have the ability to object for the meeting to move forward into closed session. Councilperson Simpson: Acknowledged that there needs to be clearing up the charter (on the Charter Committee). Kevin: Recommended that all of council, and key staff members, should take the course to be certified. Councilperson Hall: Even though a closed session isn’t officially announced, can we still move to one if necessary? Kevin: Yes, Mayor and Council would need to complete forms. Councilperson Blake: Can we move to open meeting after closed? Kevin: Yes, indicate if there was any action taken or not, Mayor and Council should save what was discussed in closed session during the next meeting as to not waste the public’s time on what could be hours’ worth of discussion. You can also move from closed to adjournment; you don’t have to go back to open. Councilperson Hall: What’s off limits to discuss? Kevin: If it’s involving a personnel matter (Giving an example), you can be generic, no need for details. Announce that you took an action following a dispute or discussion. Rick: What’s the distinction between an unofficial talk and official talk that could possibly get the Town and its members in trouble. Kevin: Recommends closed sessions. Councilperson Simpson: Who would investigate if there was a violation? Kevin: A person would need to file a report to the Open Meetings. Mayor: Quorum of 3 is uncomfortable to him. Is the issue of an appearance of discussing public business more present? Kevin: It’s how people take the information, but it’s nothing to worry if you are following the rules.
   2. Workplace Safety Proposal by Safety Resources, LLC. Charles Northam, Pres.
      1. Rick: Took a tour of the Water and Wastewater facilities and was concerned greatly by the chocking vines/ivy growing on structures (ladders). Northam’s company goal is to recognize and eliminate all potential hazards and dangers around the Town’s functions. $4k to the employees for the training, with an option to upgrade the service for $2k more. Northam: Employees fall under Maryland OSHA regulations; and could have multiple violations if the facilities aren’t following certain standards. Offers 24/7 assistance. Mayor: Wouldn’t our own insurance require this anyways? Rick: It is different (more focused). Northam: While Legit gives you a broad check-list of what the issues are, his company will give a much more detailed breakdown and offer to fix the problems. Councilperson Simpson: What will the training be? Northam: Bring in the employees and use PowerPoints to train in subjects such as toxic materials and electrical equipment, amongst other subjects. Councilperson Hall: Is there not a local company that does this? Northam: No. Mayor: If we were to decide to do this, where is the money going to come from? Rick: Talked with Lounell, more revenue is coming in, and could use this to pay for the service. Recommends doing the lower-level payment. Mayor: Will decide next Town meeting.
   3. Updated Town Logo
      1. Mayor: Prior administration wanted to change logo. Councilperson Hall: What was wrong with the old logo (that’s on Dr. Plak’s building). Lorissa: Showed a presentation on PowerPoint. While the old logo is beautiful, it is hard to translate into print (Including merchandise). After working on the project for a year and going through Plak That and a public submission contest, Lorissa showed all the potential new logos for the Town to adopt. Mayor: How much engagement have we gotten on this subject? Lorissa: 260 public Facebook comments discussing between 2 logos (Plak That’s designs, before public contest). Mayor: To restore the logo on Dr. Plak’s building as it is but move onto a new logo for print and other publications. Council felt the same way. The new logo will go for official voting next Town meeting.
   4. PNC Bank Elevator Grant
      1. Mayor: Have to make an unofficial action. Prior administration applied and received a grant to install an elevator in the old PNC Bank. Since then, the money has been untouched, and John Rankin, the Town’s Grants Administrator, has been contacted by the state that the money will expire soon if there is no action committed. Mayor wants to try to see if John can have an extension, or possibly terminate the grant altogether. Rick: Connection to the flood plane is an issue. If you perform more than 50% of what the building is worth (today’s value) of work, you must also elevate the building to comply with flooding regulations. John was previously able to get an additional 30-day extension. Friday is the last day to report either we are keeping or giving back the money, and Rick can see if John can get another extension so there can be enough time to evaluate how much an elevation would be. Councilperson Hall: Are there no grandfathered clauses for this? Rick: No. Flood insurance is also federally mandated as well. Councilperson Hall: The grant doesn’t cover the elevator entirely? Rick: No. The grant was for $170k of the $250k total cost. Mayor: Leaning on respectfully rejecting the grant due to other important obligations to other properties. Councilperson Simpson: This money can only specifically be used for the elevator? Rick: Yes. Council also leaning on respectfully declining the grant money.
3. **Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Councilperson Blake, seconded by Councilperson Simpson, all in favor. The time was 5:43pm.**

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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