

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TOWN OF SNOW HILL, MARYLAND

Town Meeting

April 14, 2020

A regular meeting of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held via telephone conference on Tuesday April 14, 2020 with Mayor Gary Weber presiding. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT

- Mayor Gary Weber
- Councilwoman Melisa Weidner
- Councilwoman Alison Gadoua
- Councilwoman to be Sworn In – Regina Blake

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

- Martin Sullivan, Code Enforcement Officer
- Lounell Hamstead, Finance Officer
- Randy Barfield, Public Works Director
- Cindy Byrd, Director of Purnell Museum
- Police Chief Andy McGee
- Margot Resto, Administrative Assistant
- Jeré Johnson, Media, Marketing and Promotions Coordinator

SALUTE TO THE FLAG/INVOCATION

Mayor Weber called the meeting to order. The pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by an invocation.

MAYOR’S OPENING COMMENTS

Hardwire in Berlin are making face guards, light weight plastic material, supplying to police and EMS and Healthcare workers to add to face masks.

Swearing in of Regina Blake, Western District Council person.

MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve March 10, 2020 minutes. Council request Motion to allow public to review minutes before approving them at a later date, seconded and approved.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Report for March, 2020 was presented. Motion to approve, seconded and approved.

MEDIA, MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR

The Finance Report for March, 2020 was presented.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Code Enforcement Report for March 2020 was presented.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Public Works Report was presented for March 2020 was presented.

WWTP REPORT

Wastewater Report was presented for March 2020 was presented.

MUSEUM REPORT

The Julia A. Purnell Museum Report was presented for March 2020. Big thanks to Randy and Public Works with repairs, moving everything from bottom and top floors, couldn't have done it without them, help us to plan for grant opportunities for uncertain times.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

The Police Department Report for March 2020 was presented. Most of time spent on COVID right now. Wor. Cty. 21 cases, 11 in Berlin. Should be prepared that it's in our town, use social distancing, washing hands, they're telling us surge is coming, we're doing a good job adhering to protocols, continue to use precautions.

OLD BUSINESS – None to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Election – no date decided yet; researching options for a ballot machine, trying to get a mail in ballot, talked with attorney, will do it according to law; discussion about referendum possibility; would be effective as of July 1st for all Council if voters decide yes, per attorney; discussion on mailing costs.

Current offices held: Mayor Weber, incumbent, unopposed, Regina Blake, unopposed – new Council, Councilwoman Melissa Weidner and Councilwoman Alison Gadoua.

Candidates – Lisa Outten Harrison and Catherine Freeman running for Eastern Council District.

Budget –

Ordinance 2020-01 – First Reading introduced and read into record. Motion to approve first reading, seconded, all in favor approved.

Ordinance 2020-02 – First Reading introduced and read into record. Motion to approve first reading, seconded, all in favor, approved.

Budget consultant – reduction of Mayor’s proposed Town Manager salary, put 11K in general fund, and 1500 each in water sewer – put in as expenses; as Mayor said, the budget is a changing document; Snow Hill’s budget will not experience a big effect from current crisis; unlike Berlin and Ocean City; as far as 20 days verbiage – per charter – all Ordinances that council would pass are subject to referendum by residents to petition to overturn ordinance.

Discussion – 2021 re: part-time admin position not listed in Police Dept budget

Explanation that if change, not significant amount, budget changing document.

Council advocated for admin position; discussion on need; revisit in 6 months, adapt then if needed

Cindy – correction to Museum budget part, p 37 – combined all line items into one, but one that got combined insurance on building, alternates each year; \$400 that town pays for museum building into insurance, please change

Budget Consultant – will make change, won’t affect overall totals of budget for Ordinance

Resident – increase in salary for Mayor and Council – if passed, everyone receives that?

Mayor – yes, in July, have to have budget amendment, because those who benefit weren’t involved in crafting of increase discussion.

Discussion on how best to get information to those who can’t go out, don’t have access to social media, internet, etc; discussion on what is okay for residents to have access to and when

Comments on communication – Town Hall Staff and Mayor open to phone calls, will give any information that will be put before Council

Question raised – is it in budget to raise prices for rental prices from \$60-\$100; how many properties that affects?

Mayor – yes, approx. 340

Motion to accept first reading of budget, seconded, all in favor.

HUD LOAN APPLICANT

Façade renovation –\$23,000 project, loan request \$20,000; Mayor – comment on need for clarification of procedure, approval sheet presented; details of project. Motion to vote, next step.

Councilperson Gadoua – disagreed; commented not how done with prior loans; discussion on process: loan vetted by Mayor and Town Manager; if bad credit score or history of non-payment, not brought to meeting for vote; if good loan, should be discussed in Work Session because it is public’s money; collateral on this loan is there, concern is HUD account (no longer HUD money actually, but people’s money); \$38K balance, loaning more than half; maybe should leave more money in account right now; maybe find grant money for them; should disclose who it is, talk about in Work Session.

Mayor discussion that collateral is substantial, credit is excellent, information provided to Council as discussed prior. Inquired if concern more the amount than the borrower.

Councilperson Gadoua comment that there could be grant money available for façade improvements, maybe utilize that first and lower amount of HUD loan

Mayor comment that if applicant did apply for grant money, only be \$7,200; money is to build new business, applicant is trying to expand business.

Councilperson Gadoua concern about letting go of loan money and nothing available for other businesses. Let's see where Town is at with grant money for this applicant before deciding to give large amount to one applicant.

Unknown if applicant has applied for grant money.

Mayor comment that we have given other loans such as this, first come first serve. If got grant, won't get money until after paying for work to be done, and only a portion. Approved by MD Historical Trust. Project won't happen if not funded.

Councilperson Gadoua commented on support of loan but need for more information; if it is determined that the grant money won't be available at all or until later, then will approve.

Mayor comment on façade grant process - only be 1/3rd of total loan; \$7,200. Applicants playing by rules, first come-first serve; grateful business is still willing to do this.

Councilperson Weidner – commented that in past conversations with applicant is very familiar with grant/loan money out there.

Councilperson Gadoua – clarification that the façade grant money would be reimbursed after loan money is spent; in support.

Mayor confirmed; commented on grant availability after spending total, 30% reimbursed.

Councilperson Blake commented on not being as familiar with process, asked about time limit.

Councilperson Gadoua – no time limit.

Mayor commented on support, applicant waited long enough already. Asked for motion to approve.

Councilperson Weidner motion to approve loan, seconded by Mayor,

Resident commented on Councilperson Blake's being new and not knowing enough to be able to vote about it.

Mayor comment on Councilperson Blake's right to abstain, vote yes or no, resident is interrupting Council, out of order, Council is in middle of vote. Councilperson has right to vote or table it.

Mayor asked for a motion to vote on loan.

Resident commented, Mayor warning on not interrupting Council process.

Councilperson Gadoua comment on need to disclose applicant name before making motion; comment on not having approved a loan of this size previously, supplement part of loan with grant money.

Mayor second request for motion, seconded.

Councilperson Weidner commented that we need one more Councilperson to vote.

Mayor noted there was a motion on floor, seconded, up for a vote. Council can vote no.

Councilperson Blake voted no.

Councilperson Gadoua voted no with intent to table until next session for possible grant money to supplement loan. Instructed Councilperson Weidner not to make a motion to vote before disclosing to public info on who loan is for and collateral. Council comment that it is no longer HUD money but now people's money.

Mayor commented that loan money is earmarked for Town Businesses only, loan applicant has done all that is asked of any applicant. Comment on need to finish vote. Councilperson Blake and Councilperson Gadoua voted nay, Councilperson Weidner voted yea, loan not approved. Will be brought to next Work Session.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

Thank you to Chief, Public Works, Town Hall, coming together for safety and awareness; DBC, Sylvester, Melisa, Town, volunteering and contributing is tremendous and heartwarming. Work in progress, will get through this, get out there and get involved.

COMMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Encouraging public to cover face in public areas with others, protects you and others, stay safe.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Resident – concern about pit bulls coming in yards killing others' pets, more have happened, pit bull chased man. Mayor aware, police dept all over this. Re: post on FB - no one actually reached out to police or animal control; removed 2 offending pit bulls from property; are aware and will follow-up in public and with resident personally.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn, seconded and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Margot Resto