

The Town of Laurel
Mayor and Council Meeting
January 19, 2010

A Mayor and Council meeting was held in the Mayor and Council Chambers of the Laurel Town Hall on Monday, January 19, 2010, beginning at 7:06 p.m. The following persons were in attendance: Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Terry Wright, Council Members Chris Calio, Randy Lee, Don Phillips, and William Trujillo. Also in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Paul Frick, Public Works Director Woody Vickers, Police Chief Jamie Wilson, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, Alderman Paul H. Sheridan, and Recording Secretary Jamie Smith.

Mr. Tom Sombar, of Sombar & Co., was in attendance to review the town's FY 2009 audit with Mayor and Council. Mr. Sombar explained the town's total assets. Currently the town has approximately two months of general fund reserves. Mr. Sombar reviewed the audit documents with the Mayor and Council and explained the different aspects of it. Mr. Sombar stated towns are being hit hard with the slowdown of transfer tax and loss of grant money. It is important that the town maintain a good cash flow and keep expenses in line. Councilman Phillips stated that although the town has been hit hard by the recent economic downturn, the audit report shows that in areas that the town has control over the costs, we have done very well. The problem is in the areas where we have no control, such as state and federal grants and transfer taxes. Mayor Shwed stated the town has experienced higher operating costs associated with the new wastewater treatment plan and increased police department costs due to the force being at full complement for the first time in years. The Town's Finance Committee is meeting monthly to review the town's budget status and afford a quicker response to changing financial conditions. Mayor Shwed further stated he and the Council want to assure the citizens that they are working diligently to turn the situation around. We will focus on short term cost and revenue fixes as well as medium and longer term revenue enhancements. Laurel needs a larger tax base which must be accomplished through new economic development. Mr. Sombar stated that the town's financial predicament is not dire, but there are hard decisions to be made, Laurel cannot have a repeat of 2009 in 2010. Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Sombar for the information he has provided.

The Mayor and Council Regular and Closed Session Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2009 were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Trujillo made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent and President of Council Wright abstaining as she was absent from that meeting.

The Department Head Reports for the months of November and December 2009 and the Police Department Yearly Report for 2009 were presented for review and adoption. Director of Code Enforcement Frick advised the Laurel Furniture Store has cleared their parking lot. He further advised 197 rental license have expired; however his department has worked with the owners of the rental properties to get the licenses paid. Public Works Director Vickers advised

there are two water main projects in progress. The first is the Water Main Improvement Project along Fifth, Sixth, Willow and Fourth Streets. new water mains, laterals, meters, pits and covers are being installed. The project came in under the projected bid, therefore, an additional 1,100 lineal feet of water main will be installed on Fifth, Eighth, and Sixth Street. The West Street project includes a new water main, laterals, meters, pits and covers being installed along West Street, from the westerly town limits to Townsend Street. Both projects should be completed in approximately a month and once the temperature warms up, all roads involved in the projects will be repaved. Public Works Director Vickers advised in regards to the boat ramp project in Laurel River Park, there is a lot of sight work being completed and we have also ordered park benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles through a grant to go in Laurel River Park. We will be working with Delmarva Power to also install lighting through the same grant. Councilman Phillips asked if Public Works Director Vickers could let them know the additional number of water meters that will be installed during the projects and how many properties following these two projects will need to be metered. Public Works Director Vickers explained with the funds left over we are allowed to expand the projects, however it has to be in the same area of the project. New water mains in the area of Fourth, Fifth, Spruce, Willow, and East Sixth, will have all new lines and meters. The areas that will be left and will need to be looked at for new water mains are in the areas West of Central Avenue and northern Central Avenue. Public Works Director Vickers advised that 135 meters will be installed between the two projects. We also have an application to the Office of Drinking Water for potential funding to complete the water meters. Chief Wilson stated in December the department received grant funds for a central surveillance camera system and drug grant to purchase cameras and laptop computers. Chief Wilson advised on the Year End Report, page three, the year should be 2009 not 2008 and one data issue discovered was incorrect. It says 376 radar hours run, it is actually 481 hours run. It was explained the transition from hand written tickets to the e-tickets started in 2009, and it did not count all the hours for the officers that still had their e-ticket system in the training mode. Finance Manager Introcaso stated for December the expenses are less than the targeted amount. The town is trying as much as possible to keep expenses down and it is projected at the end of the fiscal year, we should be ten or twelve percent under budget for expenditures. Councilman Phillips inquired as to how she feels the property taxes are coming in compared to previous years. Finance Manager Introcaso advised about the same as previous years. There are still \$120,000.00 - \$125,000.00 in outstanding property taxes. Delinquent letters were sent out so she foresees more funds coming in. Alderman Sheridan advised with the economic times he is also seeing a drop in the amount of fines he is bringing in, there are people that just cannot pay. President of Council Wright made a motion to accept the reports as presented. Councilman Trujillo seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Mayor Shwed presented for a second and final reading Ordinance 2009-13. The ordinance amends the Town of Laurel Zoning Ordinance, Signage, Section 8.0.4, subsection 6, and adding a new section 8.0.10, discussed at the Mayor and Council meeting of October 19, 2009, the Laurel Planning & Zoning per the request of the Mayor and Council have reviewed the

proposed amendments to the proposed ordinance. The proposed amendments to the proposed ordinance were to include that commercial businesses located in the Town Center District would be permitted under a Special Use Request, to install electronic message signs. The Planning & Zoning agreed at their meeting of November 18, 2009, to recommend to Mayor and Council to adopt the proposed Ordinance 2009-13 without any amendments. President of Council Wright made a motion to accept Ordinance 2009-13 for a second and final reading. Councilman Trujillo seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Discussion was held on the second meeting date for February. It was explained February 15th, the town offices will be closed in observance of President's Day. It was noted that normally the Mayor and Council usually meet the following Tuesday; however in the month of February the Exchange Club usually holds the Police Officer of the Year Dinner and at the December 7, 2009 Mayor and Council Meeting, Mayor and Council requested Recording Secretary Smith contact the Exchange Club and see if they would consider changing the date of the Officer of the Year Dinner. Recording Secretary Smith advised she has spoken with a representative from the Exchange Club and they advised they would change the Officer of the Year Dinner to March. Councilman Trujillo made a motion to hold the second Mayor and Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. Councilman Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Ordinance 2010-1 for a first reading. The ordinance rescinds a previous annexation ordinance (#2009-15) relating to certain property contiguous to the present easterly limits of the Town of Laurel, owned by Betty C. Groton, and for which Samanda Properties of Delaware II, LLC was the applicant, located on Discount Land Road, tax map No. 2-32/12.00/60, which outside the town limits of the Town of Laurel. President of Council Wright made a motion to accept Ordinance 2010-1 for a first reading. Councilman Trujillo seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Councilman Calio made a motion to accept the FY 2009 Audit Report submitted by Tom Sombar, of Sombar and Company. Councilman Trujillo seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Councilman Trujillo stated the passing of Mr. Toby Foskey is sad news, Mr. Foskey was a real asset to the town, and he and his wife are some of the most marvelous people he knows and he will be greatly missed.

President of Council Wright stated during a recent visit of the Police Department she had an opportunity to see the department in action and she was impressed on how they handled the situation and commended them for the great job they did.

W. D. Whaley, representing SCOLDM, stated based on the audit it sounds like the town is doing a good job and he commends the town. He inquired in regards to the property taxes, once annexed are they subject to town taxes. Mayor Shwed advised yes. Mr. Whaley inquired if the taxes have been paid for the lands that were annexed since 2007 were part of the delinquency in tax revenue. Finance Manager Introcaso advised no.

Councilman Trujillo made a motion to hold a closed session. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Regular session recessed at 8:12 p.m.

Regular session reconvened at 9:00 p.m.

Mayor Shwed advised the Council has before them for consideration of adoption, Preliminary Resolution 2010-1, which was discussed in closed session. It was pointed out that the Resolution has a final action date of February 22, 2010. Councilman Trujillo made a motion to accept Preliminary Resolution 2010-1 for adoption. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

President of Council Wright made a motion to hold a Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council on Monday, February 22, 2010, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Councilman Trujillo seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

With there being no further matters to discuss, Councilman Trujillo made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Regular session adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Recording Secretary

