

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting
November 16, 2020

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held in the Mayor & Council Chambers at the Laurel Town Hall, on November 16, 2020 beginning at 7:16 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members: Randy Lee, Jeff Hill, Jonathan Kellam, Cheryl Martin via Vast Conferencing, and Robin Fisher-Cornish via Vast Conferencing. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey via Vast Conferencing, Chief Dan Wright, Alderman Kelly Pettyjohn via Vast Conferencing, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session Minutes and Closed Session Minutes of October 19, 2020 were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Hill made a motion to accept the regular and closed session meeting minutes of October 19, 2020. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

The October 2020 Department Head Reports were presented for review. Director of Code Enforcement West emphasized there has been 199 works orders for grass cuts, clean-ups, and vehicle tows that has resulted in invoicing \$65,457.96 in fees for this year to date. Public Works Director Foskey explained the Receptive Receiving temporary unit is in now place and a permanent unit will take up to five weeks to install. Chief Wright stated he had no additions to his report. Alderman Pettyjohn advised she had no additions to her report. She explained her Monthly Collection Report stated the month of September, but the report should state the month of October. Finance Manager Introcaso stated she had no additions to her report. Town Manager Smith stated she had no additions to her report. Mayor Shwed inquired about the Wednesday, November 18, 2020 Planning & Zoning Meeting. Town Manager Smith stated Planning & Zoning will be holding a public hearing regarding the Mixed-Use District and Large Parcel Overlay District Amendment. After the public hearing, the Planning & Zoning Committee will then recommend approval from Mayor & Council. Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the October 2020 Department Head Reports. Councilman Hill seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Town Manager Smith gave a brief update regarding the MS4 Agreement. She explained the past four years the town has worked together with the City of Seaford, Town of Bridgeville, Town of Delmar, and the Sussex Conservation pertaining the MS4. She advised the Town of Bridgeville and the Town of Delmar's population were too small to comply with MS4, which lead to the City of Seaford and Sussex Conservation to be Co-Permitees with the Town of Laurel to help share the cost. She explained the 3-year contract with the City of Seaford, Sussex Conservation, and the Town of Laurel's has expired and we've begun working again together to help implement the cost. She stated the contract will be the same with the addition of the Sussex Conservation cost estimate of \$95,000. She advised the Town of Laurel will cover 35% of the estimated cost and the City of Seaford will cover 65% of the estimated cost. The town will pay \$32,000 broken down into three years. She explained the Town of Laurel and the City of Seaford have requested an extension due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. She stated there is grant funding available that will help cover the Sussex Conservation estimated cost. Town Manager Smith made a recommendation for Mayor &

Council to move forward with the Sussex Conservation Agreement. President of Council Calio made a motion to move forward with the Sussex Conservation Agreement pertaining to the MS4. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Board of Election Appointments for the Municipal Election 2021. Town Manager Smith stated the town will be holding their Municipal Election 2021 on Thursday, March 24, 2021. The following seats are open for re-election: the Mayor, Council-At-Large, Ward 2, and Ward 3. Town Manager Smith recommended the following names for Appoint on the Board of Election: Inspector Kathy Wooten, Judge Pam McCumbers, Judge Eddie Downes, and Alternate Vatina Hooper. The clerks working the election will be Alexis Oliphant and Vatina Hooper. Town Manager Smith advised Mrs. Hooper will serve as an alternate for the Board should one of the members not be able to participate. If this is to be the case, Ann Lee will fill in as a clerk. The clerks are not part of the Board of Election and are not required to be appointed. Councilman Hill made a motion to accept the Board of Election Appointments for the Municipal Election 2021. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Bid Opening/Approval for Wilson Street Repaving. Town Manager Smith stated the town received funding from State Representative Dukes and Senator Richardson for this paving project. The paving project will take place at Discount Land Road and go to Delaware Avenue. Town Manager Smith stated GMB recommends the town accept the lowest bid in the amount of \$106,400.04 from George & Lynch. Town Manager Smith stated Delaware Avenue's sidewalk didn't receive any bids. Town Manager Smith explained if the contract is appointed to George & Lynch the town will contact GMB to prepare a change order to include the Delaware Avenue Sidewalk Paving Project. Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the bid from George & Lynch in the amount of \$106,400.04 for the Wilson Street Repaving Project. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Voter Registration Charter Amendment for discussion. Town Manager Smith explained she has received information regarding voter registration from the City of Seaford. She explained the City of Seaford is changing their requirements with their voter registration. She stated the City of Seaford currently operates like the town as they require citizens to register separate from the state and federal elections. In order for the town to change their voter registration, the town would need a charter change. After completing a charter change the town would work the Department of Elections to get a print out of the registered voters in the 19956 zip code and then the town staff would go through the list and remove those who are not in town limits. Town Manager Smith advised she believes town citizens will benefit as they no longer would have to register twice. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the Voter Registration Charter Amendment. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Town Manager Smith stated this voter registration charter amendment will not be in effect until the 2023 Municipal Election. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the qualifications of Mayor & Council Charter Amendment Discussion. Town Manager Smith stated she's reviewed the City of Seaford requirements in order to run for office, the individual must have all property taxes paid to the city for at least one year next preceding the annual election. Town Manager Smith advised this may be something we wish to consider. She explained the town would be willing to work with individuals who are interested in running for office if they needed to be on a payment plan. President of Council Calio advised this makes sense as the town doesn't allow individuals to obtain building permits if they have outstanding bills. Councilwoman Martin advised it's the integrity of holding office. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the qualifications of Mayor & Council Charter Amendment. Councilman Hill seconded the motion. Councilman Kellam inquired about property that is left to their heirs and whose name the property would be under to collect taxes. Town Manager Smith advised she will reach out to the Town Solicitor regarding wording with the Draft Charter Change. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the qualifications of Mayor & Council Charter Amendment to create the proper wording regarding the specific property owner working with the Town Solicitor to address Councilman's Kellam concern with heir property. Councilman Hill seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Mayor & Council Meeting Schedule for December 2020. Town Manager Smith stated we are proposing to hold only one Mayor & Council Meeting in the month of December. We are proposing to keep open the first meeting of the month December 7, 2020 if needed and meet at the second meeting of the month December 21, 2020. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the Mayor & Council Meeting Schedule for December. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2020-6 endorsing the project to be submitted to the Delaware State Housing Authority for funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development authorizing Todd F. Lawson, Sussex County Administrator, to submit application. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept Resolution 2020-6. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2020-7, where the Town of Laurel recognizes the importance of fair housing for the citizens of Laurel and where the Town of Laurel Supports the goals of the Federal Fair Housing Law. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept Resolution 2020-7. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Citizen Participation Certificate of Assurance. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the Citizen Participation Certificate of Assurance. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman Kellam stated New Zion Methodist Church will be giving away food boxes away again next Monday, November 23, 2020 and Thanksgiving boxes.

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Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish thanked everyone who participated at the Youth Festival on Saturday, November 6, 2020 at North Laurel Early Learning Academy. She also thanked all the cheerleaders, Lions Club, and volunteers.

Councilman Hill stated the Laurel Fire Department has had a small outbreak of COVID-19. He stated the Fire Department is on lock down to all public except staff members.

Town Manager Smith stated she will be reaching out to Mayor & Council for final say regarding the Christmas Parade at the end of this week.

Mayor Shwed complimented the town staff and the police department for a during a great job in the midst of a pandemic.

Mayor Shwed thanked Mr. Windsor for the article in the Laurel Star pertaining the well.

Mr. Windsor stated she has spoken with Town Manager Smith about the difficulty of hearing from Mayor & Council Members when they're speaking. Town Manager Smith stated she is working with the gentleman who installed the system about acquiring new microphones for the table.

With there being no further business to discuss, Councilwoman Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Hill seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary