

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting
April 15, 2024

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, April 15, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Carlos Oliveras, Robin Fisher-Cornish via ZOOM, Cheryl Martin via ZOOM, Jonathan Kellam, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Acting Chief Tyler Bryan, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Melissa Cassimore, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Public Works Director James Foskey was absent.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session Minutes of March 18, 2024, were presented for review. Councilman Kellam made a motion to accept the regular session minutes of March 18, 2024. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin abstaining.

The March 2024 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he had no additions to his report.
- Mayor Shwed stated Public Works Director Foskey is not in attendance, but his report was submitted to Mayor & Council for review.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Finance Manager Cassimore stated she had no additions to her report. Mayor Shwed stated the permit income is a sign of businesses and residents doing construction or remodeling on their property.
- Acting Chief Bryan stated he no additions to his report. Councilman Oliveras inquired if the department had any implementations in preventing higher crime rate during the spring and summer months. Acting Chief Bryan advised he could have a private conversation with Councilman Oliveras. He stated the department are taken proactive approaches. Acting Chief Bryan stated they're working on community events including the Youth Police Academy, a National Night Out, and a SRO Program.
- Town Manager Smith stated Tidewater Park is nearing completion with sight work preparation beginning within two weeks and the equipment delivered within four weeks.

Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the March Department Head Reports as presented. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Town Manager Smith presented Development Updates.

- **Globe Building:** The owner is currently getting prices for construction and his architectural plans are complete.

- ***Central Avenue Property:*** Property owner received permit for construction.

Mayor Shwed presented a Discussion on Zoning Ordinance Amendment on Grand-Fathering Properties. Town Manager Smith stated the Mayor & Council requested her to look into this matter and she reached out to the town's attorney. She advised the towns attorney wants to look into this further and to determine if legal action can be done. Town Manager Smith advised she will have a further update at next month's meeting with the town's attorney's response.

Mayor Shwed presented an Elm Street Update. Town Manager Smith advised she received a request pertaining Elm Street to be One-Way between West Seventh Street and Center Street. She advised she and Public Works Director Foskey and Acting Chief Bryan met and they have no objections with the proposal. Town Manager Smith stated the next step would be for the Street Committee to meet and make a recommendation to Mayor & Council. Councilman Kellam stated he has spoken with residents and heard their concerns regarding the one-way proposal.

Town Manager Smith exited the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Mayor Shwed presented the Residential Trash Bid Review & Approval. Mayor & Council proposed to table the discussion of the Residential Trash Bid & Approval until Town Manager Smith could provide a report. President of Council Calio made a motion to table the Residential Trash Bid & Approval. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish invited Mayor & Council to a dinner hosted by the Southern Delaware Racial Alliance on Saturday, April 20, 2024.

Mayor Shwed stated he attended the Carvel Garden's Pop-Event on Friday, April 12, 2024. He stated this was a good event that is helping building a better bridge between our community. The next pop-up event will be held at Hollybrook Apartments with date and time to be determined.

Mayor Shwed stated on Saturday, April 13, 2024, he presented the Laurel Public Library with a Proclamation.

Mayor Shwed presented an update on the DNREC Boat Ramp and the King Street Bridge.

Councilman Oliveras thanked all the residents for coming out tonight.

Councilman Kellam thanked the town staff for all their hard work and the residents coming out tonight. He stated One-Laurel meets on the second and fourth Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. of each month at Vital Church.

Mayor Shwed welcomed Daneil Webster from Capitol Ministries. Mr. Webster stated Capitol Ministries is a non-denomination bible study for those who are seeking a better relationship with god. Their goal is to begin reaching out to the local governments.

Mr. George Ladato, resident of Lake Drive, thanked the Mayor & Council with following up on his concerns that he made at the past Mayor & Council Meetings.

Mr. Ladato inquired if the town heard when the Oasis Truck Stop and R&R Bar property was closed on. President of Council Calio inquired that property falls under Sussex County.

Councilman Oliveras made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss personnel and contractual matters. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Regular Session Recessed at 7:38 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:54 p.m.

Councilman Oliveras made a motion that the Town of Laurel accept the trash contract proposal from the lowest bid from Dehims Disposable with a 3-year proposal with the same services already provided. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman Oliveras made a motion that the Town of Laurel to purchase land indicated by Town Manager Smith to obtain grant funding for purchasing of the land. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

President of Council Calio made a motion that Chief of Police Candidate #1 and Chief of Police Candidate #2 are contingent to a completion of an abbreviated background check with the salary offered with Candidate #1 offered the position and if refused by Candidate #1 then Candidate #2 will then be offered the position. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-1.

With there being no further business, Councilwoman Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Regular Session Adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary