

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
August 17, 2020

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held virtually by Zoom, on August 17, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members: Randy Lee, Robin Fisher-Cornish, Jonathan Kellam, and Jeff Hill. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Chief Dan Wright, Alderman Kelly Pettyjohn, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Councilwoman Cheryl Martin was absent.

Mayor Shwed opened the Court of Appeals at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of holding the Court of Appeals is to listen to any citizen who wants to appeal the town's tax assessment for the FY 2021. Mayor Shwed inquired if the Court of Appeals was properly advertised. Town Manager Smith stated yes. Mayor Shwed stated we gave adequate time and there were no questions or comments. Mayor Shwed closed the Court of Appeals at 7:05 p.m.

The Mayor and Council Regular Session Minutes of July 20, 2020 were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Hill made a motion to accept the regular session meeting minutes of July 20, 2020. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

The July 2020 Department Head Reports were presented for review. Mayor Shwed advised due to limitations of teleconferencing we will not be going into great details pertaining the reports. Mayor Shwed advised reports were submitted by email to Mayor & Council for their review. Town Manager Smith advised the two previous annexations have been reported at Sussex County and both properties are now in town limits. She explained the town has been approved for a Preliminary Approval Grant from the Delaware State Parks Matching Grant of \$100,000 regarding Tidewater Park. The grant will be used for the development and installation of the nature-based playground. The projected cost to complete the nature-based playground is \$800,000. Town Manager Smith stated MS4 is working its way back and the town is continuing to work with the City of Seaford and the Soil Conservation on the required permit. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the July 2020 Department Head Reports. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Reading of Ordinance 2020-4, an Ordinance Amending Chapter 92 Licenses, Section 12 License Application. Town Manager Smith advised it has been the town policy that business or rental properties cannot obtain a license if they have an outstanding balance. Town Manager Smith recommended to create an ordinance rather than keep as a policy to have more authority. Town Manager Smith explained late fees will still be charged if the license has not been obtained in the time frame. Councilman Hill made a motion to accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Reading of Ordinance 2020-4. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Town Manager Smith presented an update regarding In-Person Meetings at Town Hall. She advised she met with Mr. Dwayne Kilgo, IT for Sussex County regarding the Vast Conferencing with a video and a dialer. The town must still offer some type of live stream option if the town elects to hold in-person meetings. Town Manager Smith explained the town must adhere to the 6-foot social distancing and maximum capacity requirements. She stated the Mayor & Council Chambers can hold up to 18 persons regarding the maximum capacity limit. She advised the 18 persons would include the Mayor & Council and staff, which leaves 3 to 4 chairs open to the public. She suggested we could open the Mayor's door that is connected to the Chamber Council that leads to the conference room for an overflow. Town Manager Smith stated the initial cost of the program is \$1,700 and the subscription cost is \$400 a year. She explained the town may receive a reimbursement for the first year under the COVID-19 expense. President of Council explained Sussex County uses this type of video conferencing, which there is a video with no interaction. The resident must type their question which is relayed to the members of the meeting. Mayor Shwed inquired if this will comply with the Governor's requirements. Town Manager Smith advised yes. President of Council Calio made a motion to proceed with Mayor & Council proposed Operational System. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Mayor Shwed stated the Mayor & Council must adopt the Town's Assessment List for FY 2021, which is based on the Sussex County 1974 Assessments of all properties. Councilman Hill made a motion to adopt the Town's Assessment List for FY 2021. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the discussion/possible approval of amendment of Lease with Telamon/Head Start Program to be Operated by Children's & Families First. Town Manager Smith explained Telamon agreed to a 15-year lease term for Dunbar. In late June Telamon was notified they were losing the Head-Start Program and in late July Children & Families First would be taken over the program. Town Manager Smith advised Children & Families First proposes to amend the lease to their name and continue the lease as is. Town Manager Smith advised the current lease will leave them at a 14-year lease agreement. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish made a motion to accept the proposed lease amendment for Children's & Families First. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Town Manager presented the proposed September Mayor & Council Schedule. She explained during the month of September we normally hold one meeting the third Monday of September. We usually leave the first Monday of the month open, but since the first Monday of the month is Labor Day, we propose to leave that Tuesday open. We propose to keep open Tuesday, September 8, 2020 open if needed and meet Monday, September 21, 2020. Councilman Hill made a motion to accept the September Mayor & Council Schedule. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Town Manager Smith presented Resolution 2020-4, a resolution acknowledging the Town of Laurel's Grant Application through the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Trails. The Town of Laurel submitted a Pre-Grant Application for the development and installation of a nature-based playground, that will feature four age specific play areas with each relating the folklore of the Nanticoke Tribe. The town was approved for the Pre-Grant Application in the amount of \$100,000 a 50/50 match. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish inquired about the design of the playground. Town Manager Smith advised a presentation of the design will be made at the September Mayor & Council Meeting. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept Resolution 2020-4. Councilman Hill seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish stated One-Laurel Share, Inspire, & Do will be holding their community meeting Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at Dunbar Gymnasium. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish attended a School Board Meeting on adversity and advised Town Manager Smith the school district will be reaching out for the town's assistance.

Councilman Lee advised the town workers are keeping everything going and looking good.

Councilman Kellam thanked town staff for their continuing hard work and thanked Town Manager Smith and Chief Wright for One-Laurel community outreach.

Councilman Hill thanked Public Works staff for cleaning and clearing roads of trees from the storm last week.

Mayor Shwed stated he is proud of the entire staff and we continue to serve the people the best we can. Mayor Shwed advised there is a lot of remodeling and construction throughout the town.

With there being no further business to discuss, Councilman Hill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

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Mayor

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President of Council

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Town Manager

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Recording Secretary