

DRAFT
Town of Edmonston
Town Council Regular Session Minutes

Wednesday April 10, 2019 7:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Gant @ 7:10 pm. In attendance: Council Members: Johnson, Bennett-White, Layne Bee, Turberville, Police Captain Billy Sullivan, Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson, Town Administrator Rod Barnes and Town Clerk Averi Gray

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Gant followed by a moment of silence.

- a. The approval of the agenda was approved as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Johnson, Turberville, Layne-Bee and Bennett-White
Nay: None
Motion carried.

2. Public Comment: There were no public comments.

3.

Presentations: Aaron Markovitz of Maryland Milestone shared information on news about their Art Heritage Center and Visitor Center which features history on the region and a gallery for local artists to display work. Other upcoming initiatives include bike tours and a civil rights trail site about the county.

4. Old Business:

- a. The introduction of ordinance 2019-OR-02 establishing the FY19-20 annual budget and setting the tax levy on real property and business personal property was presented for consideration. Administrator Barnes indicated that the assessed value for real property is .5748/\$100 and for business property at \$1.50/\$100. The real estate taxes generated \$911,761 and the business taxes \$210,000 together generating Town's largest revenue sources. Grant revenue is at \$399,000. Our debt is expected to be paid out by 2028 and it had been determined not to transfer and use reserve funds for this project. All modifications recommended by the Mayor and Council to date have been incorporated into the ordinance.

Council Member Bennett-White queried about membership fee/dues for National League of Cities being included in the FY19-20 budget and what are the benefits since we didn't include it in this year's budget. Council Member Bennett-White inquired what costs had the Mayor incurred attending the NLC conferences and what is the membership fee of \$526 cover. The NLC conference cost the Town the Mayor's registration, hotel and airline fees. Some of the benefits outlined by Administrator Barnes included the annual spring conferences held in Washington, DC. Council Member Johnson added he had gained value from an NLC sponsored meeting. Mayor Gant suggested that we keep that budget line item and invite someone from the NLC to come and speak with Council to better assess the usefulness of membership.

Council Member Layne Bee brought up if a car-lot business on Kenilworth was still in business'. Barnes indicated they had recently paid this year's personal property tax.

Council Member Turberville moved, for the introduction of the 2019 OR-02 and Council Member Johnson seconded to approve the ordinance.

Vote: Ayes: Johnson, Bennett-White, Layne Bee and Turberville.

Nays: None.
Motion carried

5. New Business:

- a. The Town Council minutes from the work session meeting on March 13, 2019 were presented for consideration. Council Member Layne Bee moved with said revisions to be made: include discussion of hiring part time contract police officer. Within the Regular Town meeting minutes, paragraph 2 concerning the budget will be amended to include Decatur Street repair in the amended FY18-19 budget and in paragraph 3 copier options will be reviewed by staff and computer will be changed to IT Services, motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson.

Vote: Ayes: Johnson, Bennett-White, Layne Bee and Turberville
Nays: None.
Motion carried.

- b. The consideration of contract with TMG Construction for \$48,190.56 to correct the structural issues with the Public Works/Police Storage Building was discussed. Mayor Gant described the condition of and issues with the building with water intrusion that is causing a sink hole condition. Council Member Layne-Bee expressed concerns whether the building itself is worth the cost of the bid and whether the work completely will fix the problem. She suggested obtaining the price for a new building. Council Member Johnson inquired if building from scratch would better address the water issues. Administrator Barnes indicated the cost to replace is expected to be more than that to repair and an option is repair the floor by filling with grout at a cost of \$27,000 and forgo re-doing the slab replacement although it's not recommended. Council Member Bennett-White inquired if there were other bids. It was indicated this is a state contract and did not require bidding. Council Member Turberville inquired about the building dimensions. Town Attorney Ferguson added that any re-build would require a site requirement process which likely would add to the costs. It was determined not to vote on this proposal until the May meeting, but Mayor Gant described that in meantime storage Pods should be rented so the Public Works and Police Department can clear out the buildings.
- 6. Police Report** – Captain Sullivan informed Council that the County police conducted a raid at a local address in Town and retrieved hand guns, narcotics which led to two arrests. Information was shared with the Code Officer as property raided is a rental. An applicant for the police officer jobs withdrew due to an arm injury and another already certified applicant with experience isn't looking good. We're now left with two rookie applicants and going through background checks and looking into option through FOP retirees that are interested in a second career. Council Member Turberville inquired about College Park police department structure and budget mentioning it's much larger in size, but the percentage of budget is about 10% compared to the 50% costs for Edmonston. Wants to see what economies are possible as a result. Captain Sullivan is investigating with College Park how they contract with Prince George's County Police Department. He and the Town Administrator are meeting with the Public Services Department Head at College Park. Town Attorney Ferguson shared that we should hire part time officer on an hourly basis and not be assigned personnel to avoid those looking for work to add hours leading to retirement. College Park's hiring practice better guarantees our interest is forefront versus assigned part-time officers. Council Member Bennett-White inquired about professional development activities Captain Sullivan has engaged in since taking over as interim head of the department. Captain Sullivan indicated various classes at LGIT, basic required training and monthly meetings have been completed.

7. Council Discussion:

Council Member Layne Bee – The house next to her is under contract. She is concerned that the area on Tanglewood by the guard rail still has too much trash, and that towing business fence needs improvement. Also asked if the Hamilton house demolition is paid for by the homeowner. Administrator Barnes indicated that the Town business is expected to replace the top of the fence railing and that black tarp is to go around the fencing to improve the look. He also shares that the homeowner bears the costs for the demolition work. She also added that extra signage could better publicize events and asked about that status.

Council Member Bennett-White noted the County Council meetings in the Newsletter and it was shared to her that for Edmonston, we are part of District 3, with meetings held on Wednesdays at Jason’s Deli in College Park at 9:00 a.m. and all the meetings are open to the public. She also suggested the size of newsletter could be reduced going forward.

Council Member Layne Bee queried if the fence around the community garden was going to be a permanent chain link fence. Mr. Barnes indicated that it was..

Council Member Turberville suggested we do something for longtime resident living at Ollies’ Turn since Francisco is moving. Also expressed concern that Bates bulk trash pick-up was way too early at 4:45 a.m..

Council Member Johnson reminded the group about the Town clean ups with Andrew’s Environmental team for Edmonston Refresh 4/12 and Anacostia Watershed clean-up 9-noon on 4/13.

Mayor Gant shared the success with William Wirt Middle School Environmental Club. The students are engaged students and their dedicated teacher Amy Jones and that our Environmental Program Manager, Andrew Jones was doing great work. She expressed gratitude for the grant to allow for an intern. She also mentioned the successful PGCMA hosted by Seat Pleasant that included meeting with local minority businesses.

The Mayor encouraged Captain Sullivan to continue seeking training and mentoring opportunities to support his professional growth and asks that follow-up with Bob Ryan at College Park Police occur soon. Afterward, permission from the County Police Chief is warranted to proceed with proposed plan for part time hiring.

8. Adjournment:

- a. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:31p.m. by Councilmember Johnson, seconded by Councilmember Bennett-White to adjourn the Town Council meeting.

Vote: Ayes: Johnson, Layne-Bee, Bennett-White, Turberville

Nays: None

Motion carried, meeting adjourned.

Tracy R. Gant, Mayor

Averi Gray, Town Clerk