

Town of Edmonston
Town Council Work Session Minutes September 8, 2020
Via ZOOM Teleconference

1. Mayor Gant called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. with Council Members, Turberville, Chester and McCauley. Council Member Johnson was not in attendance. Staff present were Town Administrator Rod Barnes, Town Clerk Averil Gray, Police Chief Demetrius Harris and Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson.
2. The Mayor and Council Members reviewed the Town Council Meeting Agenda noting a Special Presentation would be given by Maryland's State Comptroller Peter Franchot at the regular Town Council meeting.
3. New Business discussed included the review of minutes for the following meetings. No edits were suggested for any of the following.
 - i.
 1. Work Session Meeting minutes from July 15, 2020.
 2. Regular Council Meeting minutes from July 15, 2020 virtual council meeting.
 3. Regular Council Meeting minutes from August 6, 2020 virtual meeting.
 - ii. The Council reviewed the job description for the Community Compliance Inspector (formerly Code Officer). Chief Harris reclassified the job title and description to reflect new and revised responsibilities. Council Member Chester asked about the elevated pay grade and qualifications. Council Member Turberville asked if the salary was within the budget. Chief Harris shared the new job functions merits the pay increase which also stays within budget. Mayor Gant was satisfied with the new title and changes to the job description and then asked when it was posting. Chief Harris plans a posting strategy to begin within the next two weeks and hopes to attract bilingual candidates as well. Chief Harris will conduct panel led interviews with candidates.
 - iii. The Council reviewed the consideration to award the bid for the purchase of streetlights for Crittenden to Wesco Energy Solutions in the amount of \$63,928.64. (CDBG Grant). Mr. Barnes described a plan 3 years in the making to create green streets with plantings, sidewalks, and decorative streetlights

matching those of Decatur. The lighting is planned for placement 4 for each street of 51st & 52nd and 51st Place. There will be a light at mid-block also. Council Member Chester asked if there is a standard amount of lighting and if a visual plan would be available to residents. Council Member Turberville asked if residents have been made aware of the plan and when the work will occur. Mr. Barnes indicated there has been a lot communicated with residents about the plan with much more to be shared once the engineering plan has been approved by the state. The work will begin in late Fall.

- iv. The Council reviewed the purchase of green power at a proposed 5-year savings from Consternation Energy. Mr. Barnes shared that Consternation Energy, a competitor to Pepco, would provide electricity for streetlights for the Town through wind power. It is proposed that the yearly savings could be over \$3900 with a 5-year savings estimate over \$15K. Subject to approval, contract language would need to be modified. Council Member Chester asked if the Town was locked into a 5-year plan and Council Member McCauley asked if the rate was adjustable or fixed. Town Attorney Ferguson indicated a buy-out applies if the contract is terminated and she shared rate information within the document. Mayor Gant commented that if we were to decide to move forward, it would show the Town's commitment to using "green power".
- v. The Council reviewed the consideration of the lease purchase of body worn camera equipment for the Police Department was (LGIT Grant). Chief Harris shared that the LGIT Grant of \$5,000 will be used toward the purchase of body cameras under a new Service agreement with the Axon company. The previous company used by PD is no longer servicing the equipment the department currently has and the cameras are not functioning. Council Member Turberville asked if other quotes were considered. Chief Harris indicated other company quotes were reviewed but chose Axon for their expertise in the industry and benefits the agreement includes. It is a 10-year contract and includes a refresher clause that provides upgrades to "cloud" storage for footage, data update and training. Chief Harris is looking into the possibility of a lower interest rate with First Government Lease Co. as well, he will seek grants to assist with the purchase. Council Member Chester wanted clarification of documents being reviewed and Mayor Gant and Attorney Ferguson asked for copies of the Service agreement with Axon to review. Chief

Harris also indicated that the camera system prohibits cameras from being turned off and the system turns on automatically if a weapon is used. Mayor Gant noted the importance of the body cameras to protect both the resident and police also mentioning numerous cases in police departments where protocol was not followed. Council Member Turberville asked if a witness asks for cameras to be turned off and she and Council Member Chester asked about the policy for body cameras. Chief Harris indicated the cameras are designed not to be turned off and if attempted it would be flagged and he would be notified. He could then determine at that point on how to proceed. He also said the camera use policy needs updating. Council Member Turberville recommended not moving ahead until the lease, service agreement and camera policy were in place. Council Member McCauley suggested moving forward with the purchase but do not put cameras in use until the policy is in place. Chief Harris also noted that the officers would be trained and certified before body cameras are used. Copies of the Service agreement with Axon will be provided to the Mayor and Council for review.

- vi. The Council reviewed the consideration of the agreement to work with LA PEREZ Consulting for government and community relations services. Mr. Barnes shared information about the consulting company work lobbying on behalf of the Town at the state and county legislatures for grant dollars for economic development and other purposes. Their costs would be \$45,600 a year. Council Member Turberville asked about our objective in using LA PEREZ. Council Member McCauley asked what other Towns have worked with LA PEREZ. Council Member Chester suggested the Council could specify the tasks needed by LA PEREZ and not place them on retainer status. Mayor Gant offered that this company has provided services for the County Council and groups such as PGCMA. It was agreed to table moving forward until it is clearer as to what the Town needs and what LA PEREZ can provide.
- vii. The Council reviewed the consideration to approve the establishment of a Police Reserve Program for the Town of Edmonston. Chief Harris wants to implement this program to maximize coverage for the Town. It is a volunteer staff working 15 – 20 hours a week with yearly training provided. Once that field training is done the volunteers can work on their own. Council Member Chester asked about the turnover

with a volunteer staff. Chief Harris said the Town sets the work hours and volunteers benefit because they stay up to date with training that keeps them attached to the police force. Also, volunteers sign an agreement to reimburse the Town if they leave. Mayor Gant has seen this program work in other municipalities and believes it to be beneficial to the reservist and the Town.

- viii. The Council reviewed the consideration of Resolution R-2020-04 authorizing an application to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Department, Prince George's County Planning Department, Community Planning Division, Neighborhood Revitalization Section for technical planning services up to \$50,000 at no cost to the Town. Mr. Barnes shared the plan to seek assistance in developing a strategic plan for the Town.
- ix. The Council reviewed the consideration of an agreement with the Hyattsville Community Development Corporation to install art wraps on 7 electrical boxes located in Edmonston at a cost of \$18,200 (Potential Maryland Arts Commission Grant). Mayor Gant shared the Town did not receive a grant for this project but is still moving forward. Mr. Barnes indicated there will be 7 locations within the Town where artwork will be displayed such as on utility boxes.
- x. The Council reviewed the introduction of an ordinance amending the Edmonston Town Code, Part 1 Administrative Legislation, Chapter 41, Article 41-2 Conflict of Interest. Mr. Barnes indicated language was updated and clarified addressing private use of the Town vehicle and the removal of metal or other objects deposited in dumpsters provided by the Town. Mayor Gant indicated it will be introduced at tonight's meeting.
- xi. The Council reviewed the introduction of an ordinance repealing Chapter 10, Administration, Article 1 Committees of the Edmonston Town Code. Mr. Barnes indicated language about the assigning of committees by the Mayor was being removed as it is no longer necessary and is outdated.
- xii. The Council reviewed the introduction of a charter resolution amending Article 1 Charter, Section 9 Appointments, power and duties of certain positions, Paragraph C allowing the Chief of Police to appoint police officers, code and police

administrative personnel. Language was adjusted for this update to the charter resolution.

- xiii. The Council reviewed the introduction of a charter resolution amending Article 1 Charter, Section 7 Election Procedures, registration of voters, Paragraph A. Language was clarified and updated to describe the election process; indicate upon the Mayor's recommendations a board of Supervisors of Elections who will be selected and approved by the Town Council. It was clearly stated there will not be a need to publish the names of the Supervisors of Elections.
- xiv. The Council reviewed the introduction of a charter resolution amending Article 1, Charter, Section 6 Mayor Pro Tem. Language was updated to indicate the Mayor can appoint a pro-tem as needed from among the membership of the Council.

4. Other Business

- i. Report on Unity Rallies – September 26, October 3, & 10. This 3-day event is in planning and will include a music host, speakers presenting information on cyber bullying, tips/resources about distant learning and will culminate with an observance against domestic violence led by the Police Department.
- ii. Update on Food Distribution - Victory Grace Center is set to provide food every Saturday going forward.

- 5.** The work session meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Mayor, Tracy R. Gant

Averi Gray, Town Clerk