

Town of Edmonston
Town Council Regular Council Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2022, Via Teleconference (ZOOM)

1. Mayor Gant called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and teleconference attendees were Council Members Hilary Chester, Betsy McCauley, John Johnson, Town Administrator Rod Barnes, Town Clerk Averil Gray, Acting Police Chief Eric Beale, and Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson. Council Member Sarah Turberville was absent.
2. Mayor Gant led the Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence, and it was followed by a moment of silence.
3. Mayor Gant opened Public Comment. Resident Walter Doyle, 5204 Emerson Street expressed concerns about traffic problems caused by the Saturday morning food distribution. Mayor Gant indicated the Police Department will work on improving traffic concerns.
4. Old Business
 - Mayor Gant asked for approval of the agenda with noted changes that removes the approval of the Stormwater Grant program and adjustment to the police officer candidate salary. Council Member McCauley moved, seconded by Council Member Johnson to approve the agenda with noted changes.
Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley
Nays: None
Absent: Turberville
Motion Carried.
 - a. Review and approval of the Stormwater Management Best Practices Grant Program for flood mitigation assistance to residents. This item was removed and will be discussed at the January Council meeting.
 - b. The final consideration of ordinance 22-OR-07 granting a renewal of the cable franchise to Comcast of Maryland, LLC agreement and authorizing a franchise agreement was presented. The ordinance was introduced at the November 9 Town Council Meeting. Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson indicated the negotiating team had reached an agreement with the same terms to all municipalities in the County as the existing agreement while retaining the 5% franchise fee and 3% PEG fee. Comcast is guaranteeing another 10 years of INET service but a strategic plan for another option is underway. Mayor Gant thanked Attorney Ferguson for her years of service and efforts on the agreement. Council Member McCauley

moved, seconded by Council Member Johnson to approve ordinance 22-OR-07.

Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley

Nays: None

Absent: Turberville

Motion Carried.

- c. The consideration of a franchise agreement with Comcast of Maryland, LLC was presented. Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson indicated that municipality review and sign-off is needed on the Exhibits before agreement is finalized. Council Member McCauley moved, seconded by Council Member Chester to approve the franchise agreement subject to final approval by the Town Attorney.
Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley
Nays: None
Absent: Turberville
Motion Carried.

5. New Business

a. Minutes

- i. November 9, 2022, Work Session Meeting Minutes
- ii. November 9, 2022, Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Council Member Johnson moved, seconded by Council Member Chester to approve the November minutes.

Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley

Nays: None

Absent: Turberville

Motion Carried.

- b. The consideration of approval of the job description of the Communications Specialist and authorizing full time status beginning January 1, 2023, at an annual salary of \$41,600 was presented. Administrator Barnes commented that marketing efforts have greatly increased since Ms. Cole's arrival and funding for the position will come from the lag in police staff hiring along with a budget amendment request in June for the remainder. Mayor Gant and Council acknowledged Ms. Cole's contributions.

Council member McCauley moved, seconded by Council Member Johnson to approval her hiring at a corrected rate of \$41,600.

Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley

Nays: None

Absent: Turberville
Motion Carried

- c. The introduction and approval of ordinance 22-OR-08 modifying the Personnel Policies and Guidelines under Section 8-4 Holiday Pay the following sentence: Police Department employees are paid 8 hours of additional pay on all specified holidays unless they are on designated leave was presented.

Council Member McCauley moved, seconded by Council Member Johnson to approve the Police Department holiday pay adjustment and to accept the inclusion of the Juneteenth holiday observance.

Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley

Nays: None

Absent: Turberville

Motion Carried.

- d. The consideration of approval to pay the bi-weekly salary for 6 to 9 months of a potential police officer candidate to attend and become certified through a Municipal Police Academy. (\$18,259.88 Estimated Cost). Acting Chief Beale indicated the Police Department can be involved in the selection of a candidate and help in their training at the onset reducing the need to rely solely on hires from other jurisdictions. Also, 400 hours of training is required by an Edmonston field officer. Administrator Barnes indicated applying for grant with LEGIT for the certification tuition is possible and creating a contract with the understanding of reimbursement if terms are not honored. Council suggests exploring further the possibility of a non-compete agreement with other municipalities.

Council Member McCauley moved, seconded by Council Member Chester to approve a stipend for a candidate at the adjusted 50% salary rate for a 3–6-month period.

Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley

Nays: None

Absent: Turberville

Motion Carried.

6. Police Department Report (Police and Code Enforcement) – Acting Police Chief Beale reported 3 auto thefts and 3 thefts from autos. Revenue generated from Red Light Cameras totaled \$9,900. Under code, 15 municipal infractions with 8 follow-up and 11 violation warnings were given. The Code inspector and Administrator Barnes discussed areas in the Code needing clarification.

7. Town Administrator Report (General Government and Public Works) – Rod Barnes thanked the staff and Council for the year efforts continuing to make improvement to the Town with assistance through grants. Remaining events to occur for the year are Adopt a Child, Shop with a Cop, Santa on the Fire Truck, and the yard decorating contest. Altumint has agreed on the contract which will be sent for final review to the Town Attorney. Five action items were presented to the Town Attorney from Compliance Officer Romero. The Town Attorney will draft ordinances for a future council meeting.

8. Council Dialogue

Council Member Chester attended the PGCMA joint meeting with Montgomery County. They discussed streetlights and in break out groups, information was shared how municipalities are spending ARPA funding to include stormwater mitigation efforts. Riverdale is doing a study and expects findings to be helpful to the Town.

Council Member McCauley had no further comments.

Council Member Johnson noted more Fountain Park residents involved in holiday decorating this year.

9. Mayor's Comments – Mayor Gant thanked Administrator Barnes, Council, and staff for their efforts this year. Mayor Gant attended a Maryland legislative “meet and greet” at the County Equestrian Center with PGCMA discussing upcoming initiatives and priorities.

11. At **8:05** pm Council Member Chester moved, seconded by Council Member Johnson that Council adjourn the meeting.
Vote: Ayes: Chester, Johnson, McCauley
Nays: None
Absent: Turberville
Motion Carried.

Mayor, Tracy R. Gant

Averi Gray, Town Clerk