

Town of Edmonston
Town Council Work Session Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2023, Via Teleconference (ZOOM)

1. Mayor Gant called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and teleconference attendees were Council Members Hilary Chester, Betsy McCauley, John Johnson, Town Administrator Rod Barnes, Town Clerk Averil Gray, and Acting Police Chief Eric Beale and Town Attorney Jason Deloach. Council Member Sarah Turberville was absent.
2. The staff requested a discussion and recommended action on the completed Pennoni Traffic Study for 46th Avenue. Administrator Barnes noted recommendations were significant in turning Lafayette into a cul de sac and closing access to 46th Avenue from Hamilton and Gallatin if there were traffic problems. Temporary barriers would be used first before seeking funding to develop a permanent cul de sac. Law enforcement and fire services would need consulting on accessibility to the area with emergency vehicles as well as meeting with area businesses to inform them about plans. The Town might expect pushback from businesses about employee access to Decatur even though the Pennoni's study did not indicate traffic problems due to staggered work hours. Many residents have expressed support for the proposed traffic plan.

Council Member Johnson thinks meetings with businesses will be an important step and noted signage to restrict access will at times be ignored by drivers.

Council Member McCauley suggests violators be fined through the setting up of a camera system like the speed or red-light camera. She also expressed concern about the access of emergency vehicles in the area.

Acting Chief Beale noted that issuing fines at the time of each violation would be difficult to enforce and may be problematic legally. The alternative route onto Ingraham is too crowded to manage two-way traffic even with increased policing of the area.

Mayor Gant is also concerned about legal issues with the use of a camera system for enforcement. As a navigation tool, she suggests research on communication systems gated communities use to convey access information to emergency services. As a first step, the Town should notify businesses and invite them to meet and provide feedback on plans before implementing. Thereafter, meetings at six months and close to a year should be scheduled to determine how the traffic pattern works.

3. Discussion and review of FY22-23 Amended budget and final review of the FY23-24 proposed budget. Administrator Barnes provided final budget information to close out the fiscal year:
 - An automotive distributor company thought to be part of Bladensburg but in Edmonston was assessed by the state to owe approximately \$125,000 for the past four years. The company is discussing with the State about the valuation of taxes owed. However, it does represent approximately \$25,000 per year to the Town.

- Building permit activity has increased
- Fifty business licenses are still due by June 30
- Decreased revenue red light fines and vehicle release fees
- Amusement tax revenue has increased
- Rental inspections are on budget
- M-NCPPC has indicated they want to manage use of the Recreation Center. The Town has operated without a lease since 2015 despite numerous attempts to renew. The Recreation Center is important to the Town, and we will need support from County officials to move forward. The Town has a balanced budget with approximately three million in revenue.

Discussion continued on ways to enhance revenue in FY 23-24 including:

- Increase in real estate taxes & business property taxes.

The Town's constant yield rate for the past ten years which has dropped tax rates and maintained revenue at a constant amount each budget year.

- Increase business license cost from \$250 to \$300

The increased amount is consistent with what other communities charge.

- Review LGIT insurance coverage cost versus State coverage currently used for health insurance.
- Increase impound cost from \$85 to \$100

Acting Chief noted Edmonston has a lower cost than most communities.

Council Member McCauley suggested a slightly higher rate at \$125.

Council Member Chester suggested repeat offenders be charged an increased rate per offense.

- Budget savings potential due leadership change in PD reducing salary in that line item
- Research agency to pursue unpaid tickets.

Administrator Barnes noted ARPA funds need to be obligated by the end of 2023 and spent by 2025.

Council Member McCauley inquired about continued sidewalk work on 52nd Avenue. Administrator Barnes noted a delay by a month or so due to changes requested by the State.

4. Review Agenda – Mayor Gant discussed the agenda items with Council.

Old Business

a. Minutes

- i. May 10, 2023, Work Session Meeting Minutes
- ii. May 10, 2023, Regular Session Meeting Minutes
- iii. May 10, 2023, Closed Session Meeting Minutes

The council offered no revisions to any of the minutes.

- b. The final consideration of ordinance 2023-OR-04 amending the FY22-23 annual budget was presented for discussion. The council indicated they are ready to proceed with final consideration of FY22-23 budget amendments.

- c. The final consideration of Ordinance 2023-OR-03 adopting an annual budget and setting the property tax rate and business personal property tax rates for FY23-24 was presented for discussion. .

The council indicated they are ready to proceed with final adoption of the FY23-24 budget.

New Business

- a. Swearing in Ceremony for Mayor and Town Council members.
- b. The consideration and approval of a resolution authorizing the creation of the Centennial Fund Bank Account with TD Bank and authorize the Mayor, Town Administrator and Police Chief as signatories.

5. The Council reviewed the proposed Edmonston Day activities. Administrator Barnes and the Town Clerk noted the Edmonston Day Parade and Festival participant line-up for the parade and highlighted activities, performances and vendors involved.

At 8:17 p.m., Council Member McCauley moved that the Council adjourn the work session and go into a Closed Session to discuss personnel matter on non-elected officials and to not reconvene, seconded by Council Member Johnson.

Vote: Ayes: McCauley, Chester, Johnson

Nays: None

Absent: Council Member Turberville

Motion carried

Tracy R. Gant, Mayor

Averi Gray, Town Clerk