

**COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLADENSBURG
WORK SESSION MINUTES - DRAFT
January 8, 2024 - 5:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Takisha James called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Council Members Blount, McBryde, Brown, and Dixon were in attendance. Also in attendance were Code Supervisor Rinehart, Public Works Supervisor Hall, Chief Collington, Treasurer Tinelli, and Town Administrator Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

An Amendment to forgo the items of the Community Leaders Meeting update along with the Town Administrator reports/updates, as we will see those same reports later in the Council meeting. This change allowed the Council to discuss the Legislative and Fire Department updates for additional time.

Mayor James requested a motion to approve the amended meeting agenda. CM Brown motioned, and Blount seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Brown motioned to approve the December 11, 2023, minutes, which Council Member Dixon seconded. There were a few corrections needed within the minutes.

Those corrections were as follows:

- The COG appointment alternate for CM McBryde was not Mayor James but CM Blount.
- Under the pedestrian safety update should be changed from “Peace Crossing” to “Peace Cross.”
- On the crash report, it should say “To the Prince George’s County State’s Attorney’s Office,” not just “to the Attorney’s Office.”
- Final correction: under the COG Appointments, it would include the full name “Region Forward Coalition,” not the word “Reaching.”

The motion passed 5-0.

APPEARANCES

None

OLD BUSINESS

1. Board of Election Supervisors Update

The Town Administrator provided an overview of the January 3, 2024 BOES meeting. The Board of Election Supervisors reviewed the material provided to them by the Town of College Park. Moving forward, the BOES will tackle one specific issue they want to

correct at a time so they can address each issue in depth. The BOES also requested a timeline for the group's actions until the 2025 election. Much of this work will be taken on by the new Town Clerk, who will be hired in March. Town Administrator Bailey-Hedgepeth will continue to work with the BOES February meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Note: *The order for the presentation was changed. The Fire Department Update was moved ahead of the Legislative Update due to the Fire Department's time constraints if they get called away for service.*

1. Legislative Update:

Legislative Consultant for LA Perez, representing the Town of Bladensburg, Tony Perez. Mr. Perez presented an overview of his report that will be provided monthly regarding legislation and bills being passed locally within Prince George's County and the state of Maryland as a whole. The following were addressed with a brief description:

- 105-24: Municipal Zoning Authority: The bill will allow the Town of Bladensburg to determine zoning, and it may help empower and grow the community as a whole.
- 106-24: A Bill to allow standing for those outside of the affected area; this legislation would allow an individual to have standing in hearings that may impede or prevent developments from beginning, continuing, or completing, which could pose a problem if this does happen.
- 107-24: All to change the percentage of impacted residents; this will allow 25% of impacted residents to impede or prevent proposed developments and may be a concern as the "impact zone" has not been specified in depth, which would potentially open that to non-residents of Bladensburg to impede projects for the town.
- 4010-24: Accessibility for Disabled Driver; this would mandate that Gas Stations provide attendants at the regular prices (self-service prices) from midnight to 6 AM. This would create another job at gas stations to assist with this service and a safer environment against crime.
- 409-24: Representation of a Health and Wellness Group
- 303-24: Creating more cigar lounges – Mayor James mentioned the previous Council's opposition to these types of uses.
- 501-24: A comprehensive study of the schools in Prince Georges County and changing the location of the administrative building.
- 504-24: A bill enhancing early childhood education throughout the county.
- The Violent Firearms Offenders Act: will be labeled as a felony instead of a misdemeanor. The use of a firearm holding a magazine holding more than ten rounds of ammunition or assault weapon in the commission of a felony or crime of violence. Also, there is a delay in parole eligibility for prohibited persons who are caught possessing firearms.

- The Juvenile Justice Reform: Children under 13 can be found with any firearms and are released to their parents right away before the officers can complete their police reports. It's becoming a problem because these children are being used in racketeering ploys by criminal adults due to the children not getting any jail time.

2. Fire Department Update:

Chief Dave Sumner, President Gary Katz, and Treasurer Donny Wells from the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department were present for the report.

Chief Sumner presented the new general order from the Prince Georges County Fire & EMS, general order #5-19, released December 11, 2023, regarding the ambulance billing fee. He reviewed what the ambulance billing fees were meant to be used for, and with this new general order in place, that removed the needed funding for new volunteer apparatus to facilitate and help the BVFD.

Further, the ambulance billing revenue would be generated from 25% to 20% for each affiliation fund. Chief Sumner explained that the Prince Georges County Fire & EMS are charging them more than what they make in revenue within the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department. The BVFD and 36 other corporations are advocating that they go from 20% to 5%, which would be a more reasonable number as they work from donations and fundraising through Bingo games in the community.

3. Community Leaders Meeting:

This was not reported due to the time constraints and will be presented in the council meeting.

4. Town Administrator updates on Town Events and Projects

This was not reported due to the time constraints and will be presented in the council meeting.

5. Budget Update and Overview

This was not reported due to the time constraints and will be presented in the council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor James asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting, which Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 PM