

COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLADENSBURG
COUNCIL SESSION MINUTES - DRAFT
January 8, 2023 – 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Takisha James called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

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

OPENING PRAYER

CM Dixon gave the Opening Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CM McBryde lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Brown made a motion to approve the December 11, 2023 minutes, which Council Member McBryde seconded.

Correction to be made:

-under the COG Appointments, would be stating the full name “Region Forward Coalition” not just “Reaching.”

The motion passed 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Police Department Promotions- to Police Officer First Class

The following officers were recognized and promoted from the position of “Police Officer” to “Police Office First Class”

- *Colton Burnett*
- *Tyrone Merritt*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Renee Green-- Zoom—Ms. Green stated the need for a flag replacement at the shopping center in front of the library. The flag at the memorial site was recently replaced but the shopping center flag is severely damaged and weathered. She further noted that the Battle of Bladensburg occurred on August 24, 1814, marking the 210th anniversary, along with the 10th anniversary of the Battle of Bladensburg Memorial. She will be assisting the Town in event planning.

- Susan McCutchen noted that she was glad to hear in the work session meeting the focus the Town of Bladensburg is doing on the legislative priorities and the Maglev. Regarding the Maglev, Delegate Nicole Williams has pre-filed a bill against the Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail to get money from the State of Maryland. Along with the opposition of the Tier 2 Water permitting application with the Baltimore- Washington Rapid Rail by campaigning and writing in to advocate against it. She was also very pleased to hear the processes and procedures that the Board of Election Supervisors is taking to improve the election procedures moving forward.
- Gerry Katz, President of the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department- Gave an overview of the number of calls within the community: 5,563 total calls this year, 2,732 calls for fire using the latter truck, and 2,831 calls using the ambulance. The total calls for Bladensburg exclusively total 1,047 calls between the fire truck and ambulance, with 54 fires for this year. The ambulance was bought and put into service last year and has made 964 by itself since the beginning of its use. The Chief and President bought two new vehicles and have advanced the yearly donation funds to purchase these vehicles and outfit them with the proper equipment that will be in service in 2 to 3 months to update the fleet of vehicles. They also purchased the Comi Tool to open doors at the end of November 2023 and they are awaiting proper training for this equipment and hope to include the BPD in case they ever find the need to use this equipment.
- Steve Weitz- Thanked Public Works for the leaf vacuum use for starting the leaf collection ahead of schedule and that now that the leaf collection program has ended, the residents are responsible for bagging paper leaf bags to keep the streets and water drains clean of leaves. He encouraged the town residents to stay vigilant and notice anything you see to keep the town safe and clean.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Board of Election Supervisors Update

The Town Administrator provided an overview of the January 3rd, 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 that there be a timeline set up to address the matters that will be addressed, but that will be done by the new Town Clerk, who will be hired hopefully by March. Town Administrator Bailey-Hedgepeth will replace the Town Clerk for the BOES February meeting.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

1. FY 2024 Budget Update

Treasurer Tinelli gives us an overview of the Town Budget update for FY2024 up to November 2023 for the Mayor and Council to review. Available for review online.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of Maryland Legislative Session Items

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 Georges County and the state of Maryland as a whole during the previous Work Session Meeting. The following were addressed and will be sent to the Council and to our Legislative Consultant, Mr. Perez, to keep an eye out for updates or to move forward with support for legislation.

2. Community Leaders Meeting

CM Blount wants to reintroduce the Community Leaders Meeting that was started by former Mayor Walter James, which will bring the school leaders and apartment complex managers together to speak on topics that are going around in Bladensburg and how to improve the community as a whole. She wants to reach people and make these meetings more accessible for the apartment managers and leaders, whether in person or online, and CM Blount wants to spread the word to those groups so that the Town can prosper.

STAFF REPORTS

- **Treasurer:** Mr. Tinelli provided his report online and did not present due to time constraints.
- **Public Safety:** Chief Collington gave an overview of all the events that occurred throughout the community in December. Chief Collington also reminded the community to download the MyBladensburg App to report anything that is actively happening throughout the Town.
- **Public Works:** Supervisor Hall informed us that one of the Public Works Staff Members, Gambino Cordoza, was injured over the Thanksgiving holiday and to please keep him in your prayers. Mr. Hall also gave us an overview of the events that occurred throughout the month of December and how he and his team have helped throughout the town.
- **Code Enforcement:** Mr. Rhinehart noted that only two people applied to participate in the Town Holiday Light Competition; however, next year, the Town will seek out more participants from various areas.
- **Town Administrator:** Town Administrator Bailey-Hedgepeth submitted her report online but wanted to state that the leaf collection program that Public Works did is not going to waste as it is going to as they were taken and used at Eco Farms to be used as fertilizer.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

- Council Member Brown – Ward 1- Wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the Town Staff for a wonderful and successful 2023. She also provided a brief overview of the Maryland General Assembly that begins Wednesday, January 10, 2024, over the next 90 days. CM Brown encourages the residents to be vigilant about potential bills that could turn into law on the passing of both the House and Senate. There are over 600 bills to be reviewed even before the Assembly has begun.
- Council Member Dixon- Ward 1- Wished everyone a Happy New Year and had a wonderful time at Night with Santa event. Also provided an overview of all the events she could attend during December. She also stated that one of the residents of the Town had unfortunately lost her grandchild and requested that we keep her in our prayers.
- Council Member McBryde – Ward 2- Wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated a few of the events that she attended throughout the month of December and, most importantly, she noted the Maryland PGCMA Meet and Greet.
- Council Member Blount – Ward 2- Wished everyone a Happy New Year and provided an overview of events that she attended throughout the month of December, but the most important to note for her was the Senior Gala and thanked the rest of the Council and the Town Staff for all senior involvement.
- Mayor James- The Mayor submitted her report online. The mayor stated the success and wonderful turnout for the Senior Gala and voiced the importance of spending time and speaking with the seniors in our community as the holiday season can be a trying time for older residents, but the event was a great turnout.

Further noted that the Governor selected her to represent the Maryland 250 Commission on July 4, 2026, commemorating the 250th anniversary of this nation's independence from the British. Mayor James continued to state other highlights of events and meetings that were attended throughout the month of December.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor James asked for a motion to adjourn. Council Member Blount made a motion which was Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned 8:10 PM.