

COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLADENSBURG
COUNCIL SESSION MINUTES
February 12, 2023 – 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

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

Council Members McBryde, Brown, and Dixon were present. Code Supervisor Rinehart, Treasurer Tinelli, and Town Administrator Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth also attended.

OPENING PRAYER

Council Member Dixon gave the Opening Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member McBryde led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor James requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Council Member McBryde motioned and was seconded by Council Member Brown. The motion passed 4-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Dixon moved to approve the January 8, 2024 minutes, and Council Member Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

APPROVED ABSENCE

Mayor James said Council Member Blount could not attend this evening’s meeting and requested a motion to approve her absence. Council Member Brown motioned to approve her absence, which Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Police Department Promotions - This will be rescheduled to the next monthly meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Susan McCutchen gave an update on the MAGLEV to include a bill that would prohibit state funding of the project
- Renee Green, via Zoom, gave a patriotic committee update to include planning the Battle of Bladensburg 110th anniversary event; she also discussed Memorial Day and Women’s Day events.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. FY 2024 and FY 2025 Budget Update:

Treasurer Tinelli presented the financials through January at the Work Session before this meeting to say revenues were just ahead of budget and expenses were in line with budget through this point of the fiscal year.

The FY25 budget calendar and planned work sessions and the formats of each were discussed.

- April 8th – The draft budget will be introduced at the Mayor and Council meeting.
- The April 15th budget work session will discuss revenues and administrative department expenses, which make up about 15% of the total budget.
- The April 22nd budget work session will primarily focus on the larger Public Safety and Public Works departments.
- May and June work sessions were also discussed, and their content depends on how much will be accomplished in the April work sessions.
- Challenges were discussed again, as in the work session, with issues such as the expiration of ARPA funds, staffing increases, increases to insurance, fire department support, funding a new Town Hall, etc.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

1. Adoption and Approval of the FY 2023 Financial Statements and Audit Report—this was completed by LSWG-certified Public Accountants. Eva Webb presented the FY23 audited financials to the council.

- The Town was issued a clean audit opinion for FY23, which is the best audit opinion the Town could receive.
- The statement of Net Position (Balance Sheet) shows assets and deferred outflows of almost \$14M. Total liabilities and deferred inflows were just over \$7M, leaving a net position of just over \$7M. Part of this \$7M net position is \$3.3M of unrestricted net assets.
- The Town’s net position increased by almost \$600K in FY23.
- Accompanying schedules were also presented, such as the budgeted revenues and expenses versus actuals. There were significant budget variances, and Ms. Webb suggested that these budgeted variances be corrected to match the actuals closely.
- The Town had to do a separate audit engagement for governments receiving less than \$10M of ARPA funding instead of having a separate single audit engagement. Payroll transactions under ARPA were tested, and there was only one finding where three-time sheets were not signed. This was because of the vacancy in the Town Administrator position, but the Town has since hired a full-time administrator to ensure the procedures are followed. Ms. Webb said the employee time was accurately reflected, but the time sheets were not signed. It is more of a documentation finding and less of a payroll issue.
- 403(b) deferred comp plan has a balance of \$103K of surrendered funds still available if the Town wants to renew this as a contribution plan.
- The Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Webb for this year’s audit, and Mayor James read the positive audit opinion from the FY23 audit.

Mayor James called for a motion to accept the FY23 audit, Council Member Brown motioned, and Council Member McBryde seconded it. The motion passed 4-0.

- Budget Adjustment Ordinance 6-2024:** Administrator Hedgepeth read the proposed emergency budget ordinance related to the purchase of two (2) 2023 Ford Police Interceptors (1) 2023 Dodge Ram 1500 from New Holland Auto Group for the Police Department in the amount not to exceed \$135,188 from Speed Camera proceeds.

Council Member Brown moved to approve the budget ordinance, which Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- Budget Adjustment 7 –2024:** Administrator Hedgepeth read the proposed emergency budget ordinance related to the purchase of Light Towers from Mobile Pro Systems, not exceeding \$158,230 from Speed Camera proceeds.

Council Member McBryde moved to approve the budget ordinance, which Council Member Dixon seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- Contract Approval 11-2024:** Approval to allow the Town Administrator to execute a contract with Bates for a five-year trash collection contract with two (2) one-year renewals beginning March 1, 2024, for \$26 per household for twice weekly trash pickup along with bulk trash; there is a CPI adjustment in March 2026; and a new location for an additional dumpster at Town Hall. We are currently out of contract with Bates, and this contract will still be cheaper than the state contract for vendors in our area.

Council Member Dixon asked why we have been out of contract. Mayor James and Administrator Hedgepeth said we came out of contract during the pandemic. Since then, we have had staff as acting Town Administrators and have had turnover in the position. At the same time, we had to administer the large influx of ARPA funding. Administrator Hedgepeth made this a priority soon after she started.

Council Member Brown moved to approve the contract, which Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- Contract Approval 12-2024:** Requesting approval for the Town Administrator to enter into a contract with The Low Impact Design Center for engineering and consulting services for flood planning and other related documents for \$30,227. This will allow us to build support around our stormwater infrastructure to obtain funding for these projects. The Town is piggybacking on similar contracting work done with the City of Hyattsville and Cheverly.

Council Member Dixon moved to approve the contract, which Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- Resolution 6-2024:** Administrator Hedgepeth read A RESOLUTION of the Town of Bladensburg, Maryland, Supporting Legislative Initiatives that Re-establish Local Land Use Authority in Prince

George's County. This is a resolution of support for pending State legislation that would allow local municipalities within Prince George's County to have the option to form a Planning Body.

Council Member McBryde moved to approve the resolution, which Council Member Dixon seconded. Council Member Brown asked about the opt-out clause discussed in the work session, and a sentence was added to the resolution stating that the Town has the option to opt in or out should the state legislature approve this matter. The amended resolution passed 4-0.

- 4. Resolution 7-2024:** A RESOLUTION concerning a Taskforce to Plan Celebrations for the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America to create the United States of America Semiquincentennial taskforce to plan celebrations in the Town of Bladensburg commemorating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. This task force will consist of five to nine members appointed by the Mayor representing various community sectors, including residents, community leaders, educators, business owners, and historical societies. They will meet quarterly and report to the Mayor and Council.

Council Member McBryde moved to approve the resolution, which Council Member Brown seconded. The resolution passed 4-0.

- 5. Legislative Updates** – these were discussed at length in the work session.
- 6. Green Team Update:** They met earlier this month and discussed this in the work session.

STAFF REPORTS

- Treasurer:** The complete financial report was presented at the work session. Still concerned there was an audit finding regarding three unsigned timesheets over thousands of transactions totaling \$1.9M, but should not take away all of the good the ARPA program has accomplished with helping hundreds of families stay in their homes with rental assistance, utility, and food assistance as well, along with staffing support to administer this program.
- Public Safety:** Code Supervisor Rinehart gave an update in Chief Collington's absence. Please use the MyBladensburg app to let the Town know of any issues. This app has a follow-up system.
- Town Administrator:** Town Administrator Bailey-Hedgepeth submitted her report online but wanted to thank the Public Works Teams for their work during the recent snowstorm since Mr. Hall was not at the meeting this evening. They could also piggyback on Washington Gas's work to have 46th St. milled and overlaid.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Brown – Ward 1

- Thanked the staff for all the work to keep the Town clean and safe.

- Provided a brief overview of the Maryland General Assembly legislative process, which begins Wednesday, January 10, 2024, and continues over the next 90 days.
- Three thousand (3,000) bills have been introduced, but they need to be passed out of either the House or Senate committees by the beginning of March to be heard in a timely manner by the other Chamber.
- All bills have to be passed by both Chambers and then sent to the Governor to be signed. Any bill that has not passed either Chamber by April 9th, Sine Die Day, will not be taken up again until next year.
- More information on bills going through the legislature and your legislatures can be found at www.mgaleg.maryland.gov
- The Public Safety meeting had to be rescheduled because of the weather to March, with more information to come.

Council Member Dixon – Ward 1

- Attended the MWCOG meeting for the Chesapeake Bay Coalition.
- Supported Council Member McBryde on her first prayer breakfast.
- Attended the Bladensburg Business Roundtable meeting and understand how important the businesses are for the Town.
- Participated in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park.
- Met with coaches of the Boys and Girls Club they hope to reinstate.

Council Member McBryde – Ward 2

- She hosted a prayer breakfast on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day, which was very well attended.
- She attended the Emerson House officer installation. Congratulations to all the officers.
- Attended the PGCMA meeting.
- Working on bringing a grant-funded composting project to the Town.
- Working with the Pastoral Lay Council to bring the local churches together to address the needs of our residents by providing food, clothing, and any other assistance.
- Encourage our residents to sign up for our email lists to stay informed about what is happening in your Town. We are here to serve the residents.

Mayor James

- The Mayor and Council Member Dixon met with coaches about reinstating a Boys and Girls Club to provide youth athletic and academic activities. She will be bringing back a proposal for approval from the Council.
- Attended the 295 Coalition Meeting with Delegate Nicole Williams about the proposed bill on February 22nd.
- Swore in the new officers of the Emerson House Resident Council along with Council Members Dixon and Blount.
- Working with our Economic Development consultants to bring something back to the Council.
- She especially thanks her husband for taking her place on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's Day of Service while she was out of Town.

- Gave testimony for the Town before the Maryland Budget and Taxation Committee.
- Attended the MML Board Meeting and still serves as the MML Outreach Committee Chair.
- Restarted the Bladensburg Business Roundtable and had our business community attend along with legislative representatives.
- Beginning in March, working with the Pastoral Lay Council and our desire to help with food resources, we will distribute 30,000 pounds each month through our shared resources.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor James asked for a motion to adjourn. Council Member Brown made a motion, which Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.