

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

**TOWN OF NORTH EAST
106 S. MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND 21901**

March 24, 2021

In order to comply with Governor Larry Hogan's declaration of a State of Emergency as part of Maryland's response to COVID-19, and in order to comply with public gathering restrictions during this time the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East conducted a virtual meeting on this date.

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kline at 7:01 P.M. Participating via computer and/or telephone were Commissioners Kelly Benson, Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Hilary Crothers-Moore and Raymond Mitchell. Also present were Police Chief Jim Just, Maintenance Supervisor Phillip Meekins, Director of Finance and Administration Ken Natale, Assistant Town Administrator Robb Carey, Town Administrator Melissa B. Cook-MacKenzie, and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean.

A moment of silence was observed.

-OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2021 meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. Commissioner Benson abstained due to his absence from the March 10, 2021 meeting.

-PUBLIC HEARING-

None

-GUESTS-

None

-APPOINTMENTS-

None

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-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-REPORTS-

Mayor Kline

Mayor Kline reported he administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Benson on Monday, March 15, 2021. His term expires, March 2023.

Mayor Kline reported he administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Bernard-Dutton on Wednesday, March 17, 2021. Her term expires, March 2023.

Mayor Kline reported he attended several Maryland Municipal League Virtual Meetings on March 12, 2021 and March 19, 2021 regarding the COVIC-19 pandemic. After plateauing to over 800 new cases in a week, the number of cases have now increased to 1100, typically, hospitalization usually follows by a week or two, lapsing. Mayor Kline also advised, vaccines will be increased and the Mass Vaccination sites will be doubled.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a meeting with Maintenance Supervisor, Phil Meekins, Chief Just and Mr. Richard Baker, Assistant District Engineer, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) regarding the approval of the radar speed signs and the locations on Mauldin and East Cecil Avenue.

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

None

Commissioner Mitchell

Commissioner Mitchell reported on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 he attended the Oath of Office for Commissioner Bernard-Dutton.

Commissioner Mitchell entered into the record February 2021 Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.

Commissioner Benson

None

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

None

Town Administrator, Melissa B. Cook-MacKenzie

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following virtual meetings since the March 10, 2021 Town Meeting:

- Assistant Town Administrator, Robb Carey
- Cecil County Health Department and the Cecil County Tourism regarding the status of holding events due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Assistant Town Administrator, Robb Carey and Mrs. Debbie Shears, Weiner Benefits Group, Wilmington, Delaware

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a virtual meeting on Friday, March 12, 2021 with the Maryland Municipal League and the Maryland Municipalities. U.S. Senator, Chris Van Hollen of Maryland gave pertinent information regarding the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and outlined information regarding eligible expenses, how the funding is calculated and the time frame the towns will see the funding. Other items discussed during his quarterly meeting:

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Rollout of the vaccine
- Capitol Hill, January 6, 2021

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie suggested to the Board to hold a workshop in the near future to go over the information that was collected in regards to the American Rescue Plan Act 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported on Wednesday, March 15, 2021, she attended the Oath of Office for Commissioner Benson and on March 17, 2021 she attended the Oath of Office for Commissioner Bernard-Dutton.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she along with the Water Superintendent, Ron Carter, met with town's engineer, regarding Fiscal Year 2022 Water Department Capital Budget request.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she met with the Director of Tourism, Sandy Turner and the events committee regarding the 2021 Fishing Tournament for children. Mayor Kline asked the Town Administrator if the public will be involved. Per the meeting with the Cecil County Health Department, Lauren Levy, JD, MPH, Health Officer, it was determined not to have the general public attend due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board, she would like to meet with them and go over various projects and the reason why the town consults with two engineering firms. EN

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Engineering, 1630 Robin Circle, Forest Hill, Maryland, specifically works with the water utility plans, subdivision and site plans and the second firm is Entech Engineering, 201 Penn Street, Reading Pennsylvania, focuses on the towns engineering design and planning.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board, she met with the Assistant Town Administrator, Robb and Chief Just have been going over new candidates for the North East Police Department and starting the process of interviews, on Monday, March 29, 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she met with the Assistant Town Administrator, Robb Carey and the Director of Finance and Administration, Ken Natale regarding the revisions to the job descriptions for the Finance Department and the time frame this will go into effect.

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Carey reported as of the last meeting on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, he has had various projects assigned to him and these projects are moving forward nicely.

Mr. Carey reported he along with the Town Administrator, Melissa Cook-MacKenzie and Chief Just have been going over new candidates for the North East Police Department and starting the process of interviews, on Monday, March 29, 2021.

Mr. Carey reported he attended a virtual meeting on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 with a representative from the Cecil County Agriculture Department, regarding a Farmers Market to be held in the Town of North East. Mr. Carey advised the Board, this event has been requested and all inquiries have been presented to the County so they can determine if this will be feasible and beneficial to the town.

Mr. Carey reported the project he was assigned for the towns water customers regarding credit card payments and direct deposit have been mailed to the town's property owners this week. Additional information that was included in the mailing:

- How to pay online with a credit or debit card on the town's website www.northeastmd.org
- Enroll in free direct debit to automatically pay your water bill from the customers checking account with a Town of North East direct debit terms and conditions

Mr. Carey advised this information was also released on social media, such as the town's website and Facebook. With this effort being put forth by the town, hopefully this will increase the percentage of customers paying with these services and decreasing the employee's time and effort to process the water utility payments and not relying on the postal service.

Director of Finance and Administration, Ken Natale

Mr. Natale reported the water bills for the March 2021 quarter have been mailed with a due date of Friday, April 30, 2021. Mr. Natale also advised there was an insert from Artesian regarding the Water and Sewer Protection Program Agreement.

Mr. Natale entered into the record the list of payments issued since the last Board Meeting along with the March 2021 purchasing summary.

Mr. Natale reported the town will be receiving a significant amount of money from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the initial estimates from multiple sources could be around \$3,000,000.00 dollars. Mr. Natale advised there will be work session with the Board in the near future to go over the conditions of the disbursement.

Water Superintendent, Ron Carter

Mr. Carter gave the February 2021 report for both the Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Treatment Plants.

Mr. Carter reported the grates for filter number one were installed on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at the Rolling Mill Treatment Plant with the help from the North East Maintenance Department. Mr. Carter advised the braces will be installed tomorrow and the I-beam which holds down the grates. The next step will be the wash on the media and placing back in service by Wednesday, March 31, 2021.

Mayor Kline asked if there has been documentation of the process and or pictures taken. Mr. Carter advised yes, several pictures have been taken before and after the project and the Board will receive a report with the photo's attached.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie requested a time frame when filter number two will be replaced at the Rolling Mill Treatment Plant. Mr. Carter advised he would like to run the first filter that was replaced for two weeks to make sure all is well prior of moving forward with the second replacement.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Work Session

Mr. Natale reminded the Board of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Work Session, prior the scheduled board meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Personnel Matter, North East Maintenance Department

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board a request for an extended leave of absence for a staff member form the North East Maintenance Department. This employee who has been on long term disability is requesting an additional three months leave of absence.

A motion to approve a leave of absence without pay to Ronnie Griffith was made by Commissioner Mitchell and seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie wanted the Board to know, she will be sending an email regarding a Training Work Session at their convenience. Mayor Kline stated he would like to see the newly elected Commissioners take the time to meet with the Town Administrator to go over any information that will be beneficial to their seat on the board.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

None

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Ms. Kathy Jamison re: North East Chamber Events

Ms. Kathy Jamison, 90 Bayview Boulevard, North East and her business address, 120-122 South Main Street, North East. Ms. Jamison who is representing the North East Chamber of Commerce Events Committee had several questions regarding the town's policy in hosting events in the town. If possible, the committee is considering having it catered with alcohol being served. Town Administrator, Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie advised Ms. Jamison this would be a Planning and Zoning question, and she would be happy to relay the message to the Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell, to address any questions or concerns, Ms. Jamison gave her cell phone number, 443.907.2415. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie also explained, there will also be a requirement from the Cecil County Liquor Board for approval.

Ms. Kathy Jamison stated the North East Chamber of Commerce has planned several events in the future and would like to know the town's expectations and the Town Representative, Robb Carey is aware of these events at all times. Mr. Carey advised Ms. Jamison, he is not on the events committee but would be happy to sit down with her and go over the events and dates and refer this information to the Town Administrator and the Director of Planning and Zoning. Ms. Jamison did assure the Board, the events committee has not made any arrangements as of yet, they were waiting for clarification from the town, these events are:

- Saturday, May 1, 2021, Garden Market
- Saturday, June 19, 2021, Father's Day

Mayor Kline asked Ms. Jamison if she has contacted the Cecil County Health Department regarding these events due to the COVID pandemic, she stated not at this time. Mayor Kline advised this would need to be addressed prior of the events being held.

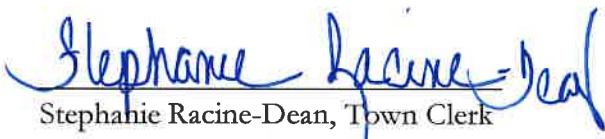
Mrs. Jamison requested for the town to keep in consideration the North East Chamber of Commerce and the funding that will be given to the municipalities from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. If received, this will help not only with the events that are held in the town, but also it will help the local businesses. Mayor Kline advised once the funds are received there will be a workshop to determine on how to spend, the most intelligent and the most responsible way to distribute of the money.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Benson and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk


Michael Kline, Mayor