

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF NORTH EAST
106 S. MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND 21901

January 31, 2024

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Michael Kline at 7:00 P.M. Present were Commissioners Hilary Crothers-Moore, Raymond Mitchell, and Kelly Benson. Also present were Police Chief Stephen Yates, Water Superintendent Ron Carter, Director of Finance, Vonnie Stemen, Director of Planning and Zoning Betsy Vennell, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Absent from tonight's meeting, Commissioner Catherine Bernard-Dutton.

A moment of silence was observed.

-OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

Mayor Kline tabled the approval of the minutes for January 10, 2024 Workshop as presented due to corrections that are needed to the document. These minutes will be presented and approved on Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2024 meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner Benson, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved by all.

-PUBLIC HEARING-

None

-APPOINTMENTS-

A motion to elect Maurice Tenney, 114 Howard Street, North East, Chairperson for 2024, to the North East Board of Appeals, Member #5, was made by Commissioner Mitchell. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-GUESTS-

None

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-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

-REPORTS-

Mayor Kline

Mayor Kline reported he attended the following meetings since the January 10, 2024 Town Board Meeting:

- Cecil Day and Night in Annapolis along with Vice-Mayor Benson and Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley, Thursday, January 11th
- North East Planning Commissioner meeting regarding the Chesapeake Club traffic impact study, Wednesday, January 17th
- Cecil-Harford Chapter Maryland Municipal League Legislative Dinner, Thursday, January 18th at the Chesapeake Bay Golf Course
- State of the County Council virtual meeting, Tuesday, January 23rd
- Met with Vice-Mayor Benson and town staff regarding the upcoming proposals from Governor Moore, Housing Expansion and the Affordability Act and the effect on the Town and County, Monday January 29th

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

None

Commissioner Benson

Commissioner Benson reported he attended the Cecil Day and Night in Annapolis along with Mayor Kline and Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley on Thursday, January 11th, 2024.

Commissioner Benson reported he met with Mayor Kline and town staff regarding the upcoming proposals from Governor Moore, Housing Expansion and the Affordability Act and the effect on the Town and County, Monday January 29th

Commissioner Benson reported Winter Lights-Cecil Nights had their first wagon ride on Saturday, January 27th. He wanted to thank town staff, Cecil County Tourism and the Cecil County Fair for lending the town the wagon.

Commissioner Mitchell

None

Town Administrator:

Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the January 10, 2024 Town Board Meeting:

- Department Head
- Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley and Grant Rider/Project Manager, Karen Schaeffer
- North East Economic Development Commission (EDC)
- Met with Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mark Dobbins, prior of attending the meeting
- Town staff regarding ARPA
- Several planning sessions regarding the funding with the State of Maryland. The town did receive notification that information has been received from the Governor's office regarding the cleaning of the Leslie Water Treatment pond along with the Powder Activated Carbon
- An application was submitted for Water Infrastructure Financing Administration for 2.8 million for the finish of the water pump station at the Rolling Mill Water Treatment Plant
- 2 interviews along with the Maintenance Supervisor for the Maintenance II position that is open. A second interview with one of the candidates will be Friday, February 2nd
- Bids due for the Comprehensive Plan, 3 bids have been received
- Ethic packets will be given out the first of next week to the Board and town staff, with a new look
- Language was finalized with the help of the North East Fire Company regarding the hydraulic model for the Chesapeake Club
- Meeting today with the North East Fire Company regarding long term financing with the town and possibly other alternatives for funding
- North East Chamber of Commerce 2023 Awards Reception, Thursday, January 25th

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Grant Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the January 10, 2024 Town Board Meeting:

- Cecil Day and Night in Annapolis with Mayor Kline and Vice-Mayor Benson
- North East Planning Commissioner meeting regarding the Chesapeake Club traffic impact study
- Cecil-Harford Chapter Maryland Municipal League Legislative Dinner at the Chesapeake Golf Course
- North East Chamber of Commerce 2023 Awards Reception
- Sign Installation Project will be moving forward, was paused due to weather but is now back on track. Courts of Mallory and North East Isles should be almost completed
- Rave Mobile Notification System implementation is live along with testing through text message

- Working along with committee members editing the Emergency Response Plan
- Legacy Brick Fundraiser is nearing, the last day to order, Wednesday, January 31. There has been a 160 plus bricks sold. The focus will be the next steps of the project
- Working with the Water Department along with other town staff to solicit bids and estimates on various projects and to meet spending deadlines
- Entered an agreement with KCI Engineering to assist with inspections of civil and water structures
- I-95 Water Mixer Project, the mixer will be installed on Monday, February 12th
- Thank-you to Planning and Zoning for helping Bella's Pizza, 4 West Cecil Avenue regarding the structure fire that took place a few weeks ago. The Director of Planning and her Assistant took time to explain the process of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), regulations and permits when it comes to renovating

Director of Finance

Mrs. Stemen entered in the record the list of payments issued since the last Board Meeting. In addition Mrs. Stemen reported the following:

- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending 12.1.23 to 12.31.23
- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 12.31.23

Mrs. Stemen reported she will be sending the initial budget instructions along with the budget preparations for Fiscal Year 2025 to the Town Administrator and Department Heads

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mrs. Vennell entered into the record the December 2023 Planning and Zoning Monthly report. In addition, Mrs. Vennell reported the following:

- Major Facility Fees – \$10,500.00
- Connection Fees – \$7,575.00
- Permit Fees – \$420.00
- 1 Permit Issued
- 3 New Home Construction – Ridgeley Forest
- Ridgely Forest Total Occupancies - 518

Maintenance Supervisor

Mr. Gregg entered into the record the December 2023 Monthly Report for the Town of North East Maintenance Department. In addition, Mr. Gregg reported the following:

- Ecologically Sound Landscapes has been working on the bump outs in town and the North East Community Park, prior of the start of Spring planting

Chief of Police

Chief Yates entered into the record the December 2023 Crime and Traffic Breakdown Report for the North East Police Department. In addition, Chief Yates reported the following:

Chief Yates reported he along with several officers from the North East Police Department were honored to assist with the funeral service of, Rising Sun Police Officer, Corporal Daniel Stickney on Friday, January 19, 2024

Chief Yates reported he attended a meeting at the North East Elementary School for the North East Feeder Pattern, Tuesday January 30th from 5:30 – 6:30 PM.

Chief Yates reported all officers at the North East Police Department have completed their yearly taser training and their physical agility test assessment in December.

Chief Yates reported he will be short 4 officers for 3 ½ weeks in the month of January and February. All shifts have been adjusted to cover.

Water Plant Superintendent

Mr. Carter entered into the record the December 2023 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Plants. In addition Mr. Carter reported the following.

Mayor Kline asked for an update regarding the test that was done by the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) visit, in the early part of January. Mr. Carter advised he received the results on January 23rd, the town failed the test by 2.95, and the requirement to pass is 80%. Mr. Carter stated he has 30 days to put out a notice to the water customers to advise, the next test will be taken in April 2024.

Mr. Carter reported the new snow-blower they ordered has been received and the scissor-lift should be in by the middle of February.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

Emergency Response Protocol Security Company (ERP) Camera Project

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported, Chief Yates and the Maintenance Supervisor will be picking up the remainder of the camera equipment from Emergency Response Protocol Security Company (ERP). All items have been paid in full and the town has been released from their contract. There is a meeting with Chris Bradley, Vigiles Life Safety Security, Tuesday, February 6th at 3:30 pm regarding the camera project.

Budget Amendment 2024-010

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2024-010 for SCADA Water Control System for Water Plant Control System was made by Commissioner Benson, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

SCADA Water Agreement between Allied and Town of North East

A motion to approve the SCADA Water Agreement between Allied and Town of North East was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved by all.

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-NEW BUSINESS-

Emergency Response Plan Update/Approval

Mr. Grant Handley gave the Board an overview on the updated Emergency Response Plan. This is to formulate an Emergency Response for the Town of North East that will establish standard operating procedures for all departments in the event of emergencies, natural, man-made or technological disasters. This plan will also establish procedures to mitigate, prepare for and respond to newly recognized threats from weapons of mass destruction.

A motion to approve the Updated Emergency Response Plan as presented, was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved by all.

Annexation Proposal Presentation

Grant Handley, Assistant Town Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Town Administrator gave a presentation regarding the Town of North East Annexation Proposal which would include proposed properties that are not served water. This would include the cost, revenue and the cost to the water customers. It is not a large area for annexation, some properties bordering Route 272, Route 40 and North Main Street Extended. Each lot would have to be surveyed and put on a plat and advertising the legal notice. This doesn't consider any land to the south of Town.

The benefits to the Town:

- Increased Annual Tax Revenue
- Increased Ability for Future Planning
- Cleaner Corporate Limit Map
- Increased Water Customers
- Improved Community Aesthetics
- Increased Political Participation

The annexation process:

- Annexation Consent
- Annexation Resolution
- Zoning Requirements
- Annexation Plan
- Publication, Hearing and Resolution Passage

After discussion, Mayor Kline requested for town staff to meet with Commissioner Bernard-Dutton, who is absent from tonight's meeting and get her up to speed on tonight's Annexation Proposal prior of the next session.

Commissioner Benson thanked the Assistant Town Administrator for the putting together the presentation for tonight's meeting. He also stated this project will be an investment for the community as well as the town, which was stated in the presentation.

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-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mayor Kline wanted to advise the Board, there is a House Bill 0538 and Senate Bill 484 from Governor Moore, Proposed Land Use Affordability Housing and Zoning Density & Permitting. These bills are requesting for more family units across the State of Maryland due to the state's housing shortage. The County is recommending amendments to the documents. The public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20th.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Budget Amendment 2024-009

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2024-009 was made by Commissioner Benson, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved by all.

Requisition R4-01352 – Debt Service on Maryland State Revolving Loan Fund Program \$623,706.86

A motion to approve Requisition R4-00220 to Debt Service on Maryland State Revolving Loan Fund Program in the amount of \$623,706.86 for was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Benson and approved by all.

Requisition R4-0197 – LB Water Service INC. – MXU's & Cables \$35,097.20

A motion to approve Requisition R4-0197 to LB Water INC. in the amount of \$35,097.20 for the MXU's & Cables was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

Requisition R4-01408 – Bruce P. Schneider – Escrow Refund Northwoods \$321,318.00

A motion to approve Requisition R4-01408 to Bruce P. Schneider in the amount of \$321,318.00 for the Escrow Refund Northwoods was made by Commissioner Benson, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved by all.

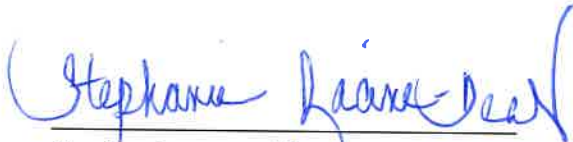
-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Russell Polo, 2 North Main Street, North East wanted information regarding the burned building, 131 South Main Street. The Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell stated she talked to the owner, Robert Crouch and he is working with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to get this resolved.


-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 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

ATTEST:


Michael Kline, Mayor