

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

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

January 22, 2025

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:00 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis, Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton and Hilary Crothers-Moore. Also present were Police Chief Stephen Yates, Maintenance Supervisor Richard Gregg, 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.

A moment of silence was observed to give thanks to all the men and women that serve and protect us.

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2024 Executive Session meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all. Mayor Benson abstained due to his absence from the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2024 meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, and seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. Mayor Benson abstained due to his absence from the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2024 meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, and seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all. Commissioner Crothers-Moore abstained due to her absence from the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, and seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. Commissioner Bernard-Dutton abstained due to her absence from the meeting.

-APPOINTMENTS & OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-GUESTS-

None

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-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the January 8, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 1.15.25 Attended the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways Conference in Annapolis
- 1.17.25 Welcomed the Community to the annual, "Winter Lights-Cecil Lights" Wagon Rides at 15 North Main Street, North East
- 1.22.25 Several meetings with the town's Administration, regarding various topics and the 2025 and beyond goal setting

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the January 8, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Replaced the Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley on the Scholarship Committee for the Maryland Municipal League Harford/Cecil County Chapter
- 1.17.25 & 1.18.25 Attended a training class for 12 hours to teach individuals how to speak English as a second language. This class was offered at the United Redeemed Church in Elkton

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

None

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

None

Town Administrator

Thanked the Department Heads for their help and understanding for the last minute changes to their schedule, so she could have a last minute medical procedure done.

Mrs. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the January 8, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Met with the town's engineer and town staff regarding an application to the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) for an additional water project. This will have

to be completed by the end of January. The project would be, replacing the filters at the Leslie Water Treatment Plant

- Thanked the Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley for substituting her attendance at the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways Conference in Annapolis
- Met with Mayor Benson and town staff, regarding all projects that have been started through the ARPA process and the non-construction projects for 2025
- Sent a letter to the North East Chamber of Commerce President, Kathy Jamison, to accept the Town Clerk to serve as notice, to appoint Stephanie Racine-Dean as the Town representative. This is pursuant to the North East Chamber of Commerce By-Laws Article V – Board of Directors Section 1
- Virtual meeting with Cecil County Municipalities and the Cecil County Partners

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Grant Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the January 8, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Attended the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways Conference in Annapolis for three days. Gained insights on promoting ecotourism in our community. Also, advocated for the North East Preserve and explored various financial grant opportunities
- Participated in the North East Elementary School (NEES) Steering Committee. Also, currently working on the opportunity to be, Master of Ceremonies on an upcoming talent show.
- Collaborated with our Grant Writer to coordinate the next batch of grant applications, including funding for further improvements to the water plant
- North East Police Department (NEPD) administrative building construction remains ongoing
- Continuing to work with the Maryland Historical Trust on the Old Town Lock-Up restoration
- Camera system improvements have been made at Town Hall, along with the Water, Maintenance and the North East Police Department. The North East Community Park will be the next goal

Director of Finance

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

- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 12.31.24
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 12.1.24 to 12.31.24

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mrs. Betsy Vennell entered into the record the December 2024 Planning and Zoning Monthly report. In addition, Mrs. Vennell reported the following, Planning Office Project Status:

- Virtual meeting regarding, Route 272 Steering Committee
- Webinar with FEMA regarding, Tools for Disaster Relief

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- Met with Department of Emergency Services (DES) and town staff regarding the Riverwood's Project
- Comprehensive Plan Workshop to discuss the Transportation Chapter
- Major Facility Fees Collected - \$12,300.00
- Connection Fees - \$2,825.00
- Permit Fees - \$185.00
- Application Fees - \$250.00

Maintenance Supervisor

Mr. Gregg entered into the record the December 2024 Monthly Report for the Town of North East Maintenance Department. In addition, Mr. Gregg reported the following:

- Snow removal has kept the Maintenance Department busy the last couple of storms with plowing along with salting
- Working on the lights at the North East Community Park for the annual, Winter Lights-Cecil Lights"

Police Chief Yates entered into the record the December 2024 Crime and Traffic Breakdown Report for the North East Police Department. In addition, Chief Yates reported the following:

- All Officers have completed their Taser training which had to be completed by the end of December 2024. These Tasers were bought with the ARPA funds, all are fully deployed and in full use by the officers
- The five year contract with Axon Body-Camera has been refreshed with new bodycams for the officers
- Renovation at the North East Police Administration Building is moving forward and looking great

Water Plant Superintendent

Mr. Ron Carter entered into the record the December 2024 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Plants. In addition Mr. Carter reported the following:

- Westover Place Development Water Main Replacement Project has been completed
- The new generator has been received, this is for the electric back-up for the pumping stations. This is being stored at the Water Treatment Plant until the electrician can thoroughly inspect

Mr. Carter updated the Board regarding the yellow water. This is due to a slug of water with Magnesium that is coming down from the North East Creek, which will be tested to see where this origin is coming from or it could be natural. Mr. Carter also advised the Board he received a letter from Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) regarding a TOC technique violation, this means the water has failed to adequately remove a sufficient amount of Total Organic Carbon from the water during treatment during the period of October 2024 to December 2024. This notice will have to go out to the water customers within the next 30 days. Mayor Benson asked for Mr. Carter to keep the Board posted once he receives additional information from MDE.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

Landscape Agreement Extension Request – Klein Enterprises, North East Station Lot 4: (Starbucks) and Lot 1: (Chipotle)

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board a Landscape Agreement Extension Request, Klein Enterprises, North East Station Lot 4 and Lot 1.

A motion to approve the Landscape Agreement Extension Request for Klein Enterprise, North East Station Lot 4 and Lot 1, with the recommendation of the Planning Office was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

North East Town Charter Proposed Amendments

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board the North East Town Charter Proposed Amendments. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie is requesting for the Board to review the document and present any questions, preferably by email by the next town board meeting which will be held, Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Requisition R5-01381 Cecil County Government \$44,223.00 Annual Billing for Public Safety Communications

A motion to approve Requisition R5-01381 to Cecil County Government for Public Safety Communications in the amount of \$44,223.00 was made from Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

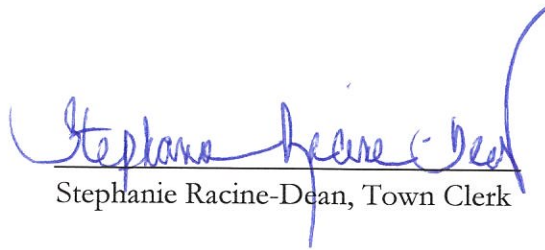
-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

None


-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

ATTEST:


Kelly A. Benson, Mayor