

**TOWN OF BLADENSBURG  
COMBINED WORK SESSION & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
May 11, 2020 @ 5:30PM**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER-** Mayor James called the meeting to order at 5:31PM.
- II. **OPENING PRAYER-** The opening prayer was recited by Council Member Lundy.
- III. **APPROVAL OF APRIL 2020 MEETING MINUTES-** Mayor James asked for a motion to approve the April 2020 meeting minutes. Council Member Route moved to approve the minutes; it was seconded by Council Member Mendoza and passed unanimously.
- IV. Mayor James asked for a motion to go into recess and open the meeting for the Constant Yield Hearing. The motion was approved by Council Member Route; it was seconded by Council Member Lundy and passed unanimously.
- V. **CONSTANT YIELD PUBLIC HEARING-** Town Treasurer Tinelli facilitated a brief presentation on the constant yield process. Following the presentation, Mayor James stated the Town had called for residents to submit testimonies regarding the subject matter and asked Interim Clerk Cunningham to read through those received. Mrs. Cunningham stated no testimonies were received from residents, and Mayor James encouraged residents to submit testimonies, concerns and questions to the Mayor and Council. Additionally, Mr. Tinelli stated due to the virtual meeting platform, the State asked the Town to incorporate in its advertisement that written testimonies would be accepted until May 18, 2020.

Mayor James asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Council Member Mendoza moved to approve the motion; it was seconded by Council Member Blount and passed unanimously.

- VI. **NOISE ORDINANCE- (Attorney Suellen Ferguson and Code Supervisor Roger Rinehart)** Mayor James asked for a motion to amend the agenda and move the noise ordinance to up on the agenda, as the Town attorney had a meeting conflict and could not remain on the call past 6:15PM. The motion was made by Council Member Mendoza; it was seconded by Council Member Blount and passed unanimously.

Attorney Suellen Ferguson stated the noise ordinance is a large piece of legislation allowing the Town to enforce the noise limits in several ways, specifically with the use of noise meters. She stated while the code allows for other ways of enforcing such as an officer standing more than 50 feet away, the meter provides an objective measurement and the standards used by the Town are stricter or as strict as those adopted at the state level. She stated the document incorporates all the state codes so that residents are aware.

Officer Rinehart stated the code will be easier to enforce moving forward with the noise meter. Additionally, he stated the meters will assist the noise issues regarding residential and commercial properties. Mayor James asked if members of the police department will be trained on the noise meter. Mr. Rinehart stated the Town is scheduled for a training with the University of Rutgers for 10 participants, including code and police officers.

Mayor James opened the discussion for comments from Council Members. The Council Members did not have questions. Chief Collington stated in addition to the device and the ordinance, the Police Department will incorporate a general order regarding the enforcement and use of the noise meter, to further demonstrate that officers have been trained on the equipment.

Council Member Route asked Chief Collington to share information on the process of educating residents on the noise meter. Chief Collington stated officers will be charged with educating the public before issuing citations regarding noise. Mayor James recommended all media and communications platforms be used to introduce the equipment to the residents. Officer Rinehart stated businesses will receive new noise ordinance with legislation along with license renewals.

**VII. FINANCIAL BUSINESS- (Treasurer, Vito Tinelli)** - Treasurer Tinelli provided a financial update and summary of the FY21 budget. Mr. Tinelli conducted a first reading of the budget ordinance. Mayor James asked for a motion to approve the first reading of the budget ordinance. Council Member Route moved to approve the motion; it was seconded by Council Member Blount and passed unanimously.

- First Reading of FY21 Budget Ordinance
- Proposed FY21 Budget Summary
- Year-to-date Financial Report

**VIII. TOWN ADMINISTRATION- (Mayor James)**  
Mayor James announced the Town Administrator Debi Sandlin will retire effective, May 29, 2020. The Mayor opened the floor for Council Members and staff to share best wishes with Ms. Sandlin.

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Update on COVID-19 Resource Distribution Efforts **(Council Member Route, Council Member Blount & Mayor James)**

Mayor James asked Council Members Blount and Route to provide an update regarding COVID-19 services to Bladensburg residents. Ms. Route stated the Town was engaged in partnerships with Victory Church and Capital Area food Bank, where it successfully donated perishable and non-perishable items to more than 1200 Bladensburg residents. Additionally, the Town partnered with the City of Hyattsville, Colmar Manor, Cottage

City, Edmonston, North Brentwood and New Carrollton to serve approximately 4000 residents/families respectively through registration links. Council Member Route also stated the Town had secured a partnership with World Central Kitchen, a relationship that was leveraged through Council Member Blount to provide 600 families hot meals three days per week.

Mayor James stated the Town was working with Capital Area Food Bank to secure additional donations, as there was a decrease in items donated. A representative from the Capital Area Food Bank submitted a proposal on behalf of the Town to secure approximately 500 boxes of fresh produce that will be distributed to residents, if successfully approved. Mayor James said she will provide an update in the coming week regarding this effort.

Council Member Route also reported that Mayor James had secured a financial donation from a local business in the amount of \$2300 to help offset the decrease in donations to the Town. The financial contribution will enable the Town to continue meeting the needs of residents during the pandemic.

Mayor James also stated local restaurants had donated masks and food to First Responders. She thanked those businesses, Council Members, and staff for working to meet the needs of Bladensburg residents impacted by COVID-19.

#### **X. NEW BUSINESS**

- Prince George's County Coronavirus Relief Fund **(Mayor James)**

Mayor James announced the Town received a formal notification from the County Executive Office stating the Town was eligible to receive \$575,000 through the C.A.R.E.S. Act for COVID-19 Relief Funding. The funds will help to offset significant overtime and other expenses accrued during the unexpected pandemic. Town Treasurer Tinelli will process the Town's proposal and submit to the County per the deadline of May 29<sup>th</sup>.

- Census Update **(Mayor James)**

Mayor James provided a census update stating the Town was at a 48.7% and is working to reach a goal of 50% as part of the Be Counted Competition. She stated the Town was not able to fulfil its planned activities around the census campaign due to the pandemic but is engaging residents in a monetary giveaway to encourage census participation towards the overall goal of 80%.

Additionally, Mayor James stated the Town purchased several door hangers as part of the census 2020 campaign and will be working with volunteers to safely distribute these throughout the community.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:12PM. Mayor James asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Blount moved to approve the motion; it was seconded by Council Member Route and passed unanimously.

- XII.** The Mayor and Council reconvened to briefly discuss the interim transition considering Ms. Sandlin's exit as Town Administrator. Mayor James stated considering the upcoming transition of Ms. Sandlin, the Town will need to have someone in place in an interim capacity to move Town business forward, as the Town work to advertise and fill the position.

Mayor James asked for a motion to appoint Town Treasurer, Vito Tinelli as the Acting Town Administrator effective, May 30, 2020. Council Member Route moved to approve the motion; it was seconded by Council Member Mendoza and passed unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Cecile K. Cunningham

Interim Town Clerk