

**TOWN OF ELSMERE  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 14, 2022  
6:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Eric Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

**ROLL CALL:**

MAYOR	ERIC SCOTT THOMPSON	PRESENT
1 <sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT	MARIANNE SKIPSKI	PRESENT
2 <sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT	SALLY JENSEN	PRESENT
3 <sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT	MARY STEPPI	PRESENT
4 <sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT	CHARLES MCKEWEN	PRESENT
5 <sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT	JOANN I. PERSONTI	ABSENT/EXCUSED
6 <sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT	DAWN DIBIASO	PRESENT

Town Solicitor, James McMackin – Present  
Town Manager, John Giles – Present  
Chief of Police, Laura Giles – Present  
Finance Director, Steven Martin – Present

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Minutes of the June 9, 2022, Council Meeting.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2022, Council Meeting with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

At this time Mayor Thompson asked to amend the order of the agenda to move to New Business for the appointment of Board of Election Members so that they were not required to sit through the meeting if they desired to leave.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to move New Business Item #10 to the front of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jensen.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Consideration of appointing Ms. Lura Taub and Ms. Lauren Sheldon to the Town of Elsmere Board of Elections. If appointed, their terms will expire on June 1, 2023.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Councilwoman Skipski to appoint Ms. Lura Taub and Ms. Lauren Sheldon to the Board of Election with terms to expire on June 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilman McKewen.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Consideration of awarding a contract in response to RFP 22-02 for Playground Revitalization and Park Renovations. Any contract awarded would be funded using the Town's ARPA Funds.

Town Clerk Diana Reed gave a brief overview of the differences between the bid using Liberty Playgrounds under State Contract and Delaware Lawn and Landscape, as well as, the bid received from Global Playground.

Councilwoman DiBiaso expressed concerns with utilizing multiple companies to complete portions of each project and stated that she would prefer to use the bid from Global Playgrounds because they are going to do the entire portion of the projects from tear-out to install, making the projects easier to monitor and coordinate.

Councilwoman Jensen stated she had been asked to convey a concern for one of the Park Group Members, Michelle Anderson who couldn't be present. Ms. Anderson's concern is that she believes in the Staff Recommendations, only Vilone and Walling Parks should have the Rhythm Sets with the chimes and that they should not be installed in Maple Avenue Park.

Councilwoman Steppi echoed the concerns of Councilwoman DiBiaso and added that she felt that the fact that the structures proposed by Global Playground were larger and more in line with what the Park Group was hoping to achieve.

At this time there was a lengthy discussion regarding the two proposals and it was determined that the Council would like to see a few changes before making a final decision.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Councilwoman DiBiaso to table this decision until the August Council Meeting pending final changes to the quote from Global Playgrounds. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

Town Manager John Giles requested to meet with Councilwomen Jensen, Steppi and DiBiaso as soon as possible to discuss specific changes they would like to see made to the proposals so that the information can be provided in advance of the August meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Consideration of a request by the Town Manager to purchase a 2-year supply of HaloMist disinfecting solution in the amount of \$9,120.00 to be funded using the Town's ARPA Funds.

Town Manager John Giles stated that the Town originally purchased a 2-year supply when the pandemic began, but we have used most of the solution purchased. This would allow the Town to continue the disinfecting of Town Hall for an additional 2 years.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to approve the purchase of a 2-year supply of HaloMist solution in the amount of \$9,120.00 to be funded using the Town's ARPA Funds. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman DiBiaso.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

Consideration of approving Resolution 22-05, a resolution establishing a "no parking" zone of Taylor Road at Rosemont Drive.

Town Manager John Giles gave a brief overview of the resolution.

Councilwoman Skipski asked if the permanent repairs would be paid for using the Town's regular funds offered by the State Representatives or a separate batch of funding? She is hoping this won't take place of our regular annual street program projects.

Town Manager John Giles stated that he believes that it will be separate funding and is not part of Municipal Street Aid.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Councilwoman Skipski to approve Resolution 22-05 establishing a "No Parking" zone on Taylor Road at Rosemont Drive. The motion was seconded by Mayor Thompson.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

Introduction for First and Second Reading of Ordinance 665, an ordinance amending Chapter 76 of the Code of the Town of Elsmere to adopt the 2021 International Code Council Building Codes.

Town Manager John Giles gave a brief overview of the proposed ordinance.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to approve Ordinance 665 for First and Second Reading. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

**VOTE:** 6-0 with 1 absent All-in-Favor Motion carried

Discussion concerning the Town's current regulations regarding the parking of commercial vehicles in residential districts.

At this time there was a brief discussion regarding the current regulations within the Town and there was a consensus among Council to have the Police Department enforce the current regulations and not to make any amendments at this time.

Discussion and Consideration of identifying certain Town Owned property as eligible locations for possible stormwater projects.

Town Manager John Giles gave a brief overview stating that identifying these locations does not mean that a stormwater project will be constructed, it is just notifying KCI Technologies that they can consider the location when proposing projects for the Stormwater Study.

The locations identified were:

- Tennis Courts at Joseph Walling Park
- Parking Lot/Basketball Court at Maple Avenue Park
- End of Western Avenue at Cul-de-sac
- End of Ohio Avenue at dead end
- End of Olga Road at dead end
- Wooded picnic area at Vilone Park

At this time there were no objections from Council to identify these as areas for potential projects.

Discussion concerning the Elevator upgrade project.

Town Manager John Giles stated that we have finally received the permit from the Fire Marshal's office and the contractors have estimated beginning the project in late September due to supply chain issues.

Consideration of approving a quote from Delcollo Electric for electrical upgrades in the Police Department.

Chief Laura Giles stated that she has submitted a grant application for this project and therefore, no longer needs consideration by Council and requested to withdraw this item from the agenda.

Discussion concerning the Status of the Town's FY 2022/2023 Bond Bill Application.

Town Manager John Giles stated that the Town has received notice that our bond bill application has been approved and that the Town will receive \$418,000.00 to fund the following projects:

- Upgrade Security around the Elsmere Bureau of Police (John Jaremchuk Public Safety Building) by installing fencing around the parking lot and building, as well as, repaving of the parking area - \$150,000.00

- Complete any necessary repairs to the former Senior Center portion of our Town Hall building to bring it up to current building codes - \$100,000.00
- Replace windows throughout the Town Hall building which are old and failing, 42 windows in total - \$168,000.00

Discussion concerning the lack of responses received to RFP 22-03 for Security Door for Town Hall Front Hallway.

Town Manager John Giles gave a brief overview stating that the Town received an estimate from Paoli Services prior to placing the project out for RFP and received no responses to the RFP. He has discussed the issue with Town Solicitor McMackin who has advised that the Town can accept the proposal from Paoli Services since no other bids were received. He further stated that this project is funded using a homeland security grant.

Town Solicitor James McMackin confirmed that this is accurate.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Scott Allen gave a brief overview of the Code Enforcement Report. He asked if there were any questions.

- a. The department issued 71 violations during the month, 48 were corrected without a fine, 22 were issued fines and 1 remained pending at the end of the month. He further commented that a citation is a warning, every resident has 48 hours to correct a violation without a fine.
- b. Issued 8 repeat public nuisance fines, 2 of which were subsequent offenses.
- c. Requested the Public Works Department to complete 4 abatements, however, 3 were unable to be completed before the end of the month, so there is a discrepancy between the two departmental reports.
- d. Completed 15 Pre-Rental Inspections.
- e. Processed 26 Permit Applications.
- f. Issued 6 new business licenses and 6 new rental licenses.
- g. Tagged 5 vehicles for Tow, 4 were removed and 1 was towed.

Councilman McKewen discussed an issue in the alley between Bungalow Avenue and Oak Avenue regarding trash and high grass.

Code Enforcement Officer Allen stated that the residents in the area have received citations for the problems and it seems to be a reoccurring problem. He further stated that some of the residents have reported that part of the issue is the trash collection company. He stated that he will go out to this location again to see what more can be done.

Councilman McKewen mentioned another property at the end of this alley has junk and debris in the rear yard that looks deplorable and he believes they may be running a business at the property.

Code Enforcement Officer Allen stated that he is aware of the property being referenced. The property has received numerous violations, abatements have been performed, and they have been cited for an illegal business. He continues to issue violations, however, it is his understanding that they are in the process of no longer being residents at that location and hopefully that will offer long term relief to this issue.

## Finance

Finance Director Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the Finance Department Report. He asked if there were any questions.

- a. Property Tax Revenue through 06/30/22 was \$2,370,193.69 this is 98.67% of the annual billing which is a really great average.
- b. Transfer Taxes received \$54,216.00 for June which is a continued upward trend in Transfer Tax. Year-to-date for that account was \$564,007.67.
- c. Started year end close of Fiscal Year 2022.
- d. Entered the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget into the financial system.
- e. Began analyzing accounts for year end.
- f. Participated in a stormwater management meeting with the Administration Department and KCI.
- g. Held year end staff evaluations and made a recommendation for a title change for a staff member from Accounting Clerk III to Accountant.
- h. Processed insurance claims for Public Works to EPD.
- i. Disseminate the open invoice report to staff in an effort to reduce the year end of receivables.
- j. Attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter pension committee meeting.
- k. Processed a wire transfer from DELRIP Pension Account to the Original Police Pension Plan which is completed every 6 months.
- l. Further cross trained staff members in the VAC Department to cover now that Melissa has left.
- m. Continued work on the Playground RFP.
- n. The Town has officially received its second payment of ARPA Funds. We have now received \$2,927,377.50 and have allotted \$802,425.83 to certain projects, leaving \$2,124,951.67 left to allocate.

Councilwoman Jensen asked if Finance Director Steve Martin had determined why she was being contacted by M & T Bank on her email and cell phone.

Finance Director Martin stated that she was contacted because she is an authorized signer on the accounts, however, he is not sure how they received her cell phone number. The mayor has handled the issue that they were reaching out about.

### Public Safety

Chief Laura Giles gave a brief overview of the written report and stated that there were incidents which couldn't be released in the report due to pending investigations. As of June we had over \$277,975.00 in VAC revenue and she believes this is the first time in a long time the department has made its projected revenue. The department has been contacted by the State during the most recent legislative session about implementing body cameras and the State will be providing the cameras and the storage of the video to the department.

No questions were received.

### Public Works

Public Works Supervisor Anthony Gaines gave a brief overview of the Public Works Department Report. He asked if there were any questions.

- a. The department filled potholes throughout the Town. Monitoring a sink hole at Forrest Avenue and Second Avenue where Artesian Water completed some work.
- b. No Dumping Signs are being installed to try to combat the continuous dumping in the Town.
- c. Street sweeper was out in early June and has been used to suck out some drains on Colonial Ave.
- d. They have been working to trim weeds along the curbs to help with the street sweeper as the weeds cause the brooms to wear out sooner.
- e. Completed numerous building maintenance projects.
- f. Asked permission to remove the playground structure at Fairgrounds while Council is waiting to decide the other park projects. *\*Council consented to immediate removal*
- g. Completed 2 abatements.

No questions were received.

### Town Manager

Town Manager John Giles stated there was no Town Managers report and he has nothing to report.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**STATEMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:**

Councilwoman Steppi commented that there is a significant funding source available to the Town that she believes is being underused. The Bond Bill has been renamed to the Community Reinvestment Fund and can be used for more than just upgrades to the Town Hall complex, small towns down state like Laurel have received as much as 1.8 million dollars over a two-year period. The deadline for annual applications is May 15<sup>th</sup> and while the Town did get funds the last 2 years, she would like to see council and staff begin talking about projects now for application for next year. It can be used for streets, parks, buildings, security cameras, stormwater, and basically any governmental service the Town provides. The Town needs work and this is a revenue source that we have neglected for a long time. She commended the Chief for always finding grants to help pay for things needed by the department. The playground project is huge and lets not reduce, lets shoot big and find additional funding to make our Town great.

Mayor Thompson stated that there is a lot of things going on in and around Town as a result of ARPA and other funding and what employees and members of different committees have been doing. Talk to the residents around town, the more people that are involved, the more ideas come to light and the more the town can do, we are always looking for volunteers and committee members.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION** A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Steppi.

**VOTE:**            6-0 with 1 Absent                    All-in-Favor                    Motion carried

These minutes summarize the agenda and other issues discussed at this Council Meeting. Votes are recorded accurately. The audio recording of this meeting will be available at Town Hall for a period of two years from the date these minutes are approved. The audio recording may be reviewed at Town Hall by appointment and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.



**ERIC THOMPSON  
MAYOR**



**SALLY JENSEN  
SECRETARY**