

**TOWN OF ELSMERE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2023
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:

INTRODUCTION:

At this time, Mayor Thompson announced and introduced the new Town Manager, Mr. Steven Martin.

ROLL CALL:

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the April 13, 2023, Council Meeting

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2023, Council Meeting with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant All-in-Favor Motion Carried

Minutes of the May 2, 2023, Special Council Meeting

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2023, Special Council Meeting with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Steppi.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant All-in-Favor Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration of selecting a commercial realtor to market the basement unit of the Town Hall Building.

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the proposals received for listing the space and recommended that that Town select Medori Realty to market the space to prospective tenants.

Councilwoman Personti asked how the process would work.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that we would sign a listing contract with the realtor, they would place a sign and market to tenants, then when they have a tenant who is interested, he would facilitate a credit check and any negotiations between the tenant and the Town of Elsmere. When negotiations were complete, the final lease would come before the council for approval.

Councilwoman Steppi asked if the realtor's percentage is paid lump sum up front or annually.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that the percentage is paid annually.

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to authorize the Town Manager to contract with Medori Realty to market the basement unit of the Town Hall building subject to contract approval and amendments by the Town Solicitor. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Personti.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant All-in-Favor Motion Carried

Consideration of setting a date for the annual budget hearing.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that historically the last few years Council has scheduled the hearing for the date of the June Council Meeting and moved the start time to 5:00pm and has been successful in passing the budget at this hearing.

At this time there was a consensus to schedule the budget hearing for Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 5:00pm.

Councilwoman Skipski stated that she will not be present at the June 8, 2023 Council Meeting and Budget Hearing.

Consideration of re-appointing the following members of the Planning Commission. If re-appointed, their terms would expire on June 1, 2026.

Mayor Thompson stated that he would like to consider each of these members separately.

a. Mr. John Jaremchuk

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to re-appoint Mr. John Jaremchuk to the Planning Commission with a term to expire on June 1, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jensen.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant All-in-Favor Motion Carried

b. Mr. Mark Dziegielewski

Mayor Thompson asked if Mr. Dziegielewski had attended any of the Planning Commission Meetings.

Code Enforcement Officer Scott Allen stated that he has not attended any meetings since his appointment in 2021.

Mayor Thompson stated that he will be withdrawing Mr. Dziegielewski from consideration.

Consideration of re-appointing the following members of the Board of Election. If re-appointed, their terms would expire on June 1, 2025.

a. Ms. Kathy Aiken

b. Ms. Lauren Sheldon

c. Ms. Lura Taub

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to re-appoint Ms. Kathy Aiken, Ms. Lauren Sheldon and Ms. Lura Taub to the Board of Election with a term to expire on June 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Personti.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant All-in-Favor Motion Carried

Consideration of re-appointing the following member of the Pension Committee. If re-appointed, his term would expire on June 1, 2025.

a. Chairman – Neal Strauss

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to re-appoint Mr. Neal Strauss as Chairman of the Pension Committee with a term to expire on June 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Personti.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant All-in-Favor Motion Carried

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administration

Town Clerk Diana Reed gave a brief overview of the Administration Report.

- Introduced Rachel Ritter as the new Administrative Assistant for the Town.
- The Town Wide Clean-up Day was held on April 22nd and was a success. The event was well attended by residents, and we believe that our CCIP Credits donated by Senator Mantzavinos and Representative Neal were enough to cover all of the landfill fees for the event.
- We are working to finalize the contract for the stormwater grant through KCI Technologies. Once finalized, we can begin contracting the additional projects approved during the April Council Meeting.
- The park renovation project is now complete, the lights around the flagpole are scheduled for repair on May 15th. We did keep a 10% retainage on the project until a few minor things are completed.
- The 4th District Special Election was posted and filing forms for candidates are now available. The filing deadline is Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at 7:00pm.
- The monthly mobile food pantry event is scheduled for Friday, May 26, 2023, from 9am to 11am at Town Hall. A reverse 911 will go out in advance of the event.
- Our annual stormwater report which was due on May 1 was submitted to DeIDOT and New Castle County on April 20th and took up a lot of time during the month of April.
- We are working with the Finance Department and Town Manager to prepare and submit the annual budget by the May 15th deadline.
- Working on the RFP for Window Replacements at Town Hall with the goal of publishing the first week of June.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Scott Allen gave a brief overview of the Code Enforcement Report.

- The department issued 94 violations during the month, of those 44 were corrected without fines being issued, 42 received fines and 8 remained pending at the end of the month.
- Issued 5 Repeat Public Nuisance Violations, 2 of which were for 2nd or Subsequent Occurrences.
- Requested Public Works to perform 5 abatement as the result of a violation.
- Performed 17 Pre-Rental Inspections.
- Processed 35 permits.
- Issued 13 new “Out of Town” business licenses.
- Issued 1 new Rental License.

- Tagged 14 vehicles for Tow, all were removed without being towed.
- Reminder Delmarva Power will be completing a pole replacement project along Old Dupont Road and B & O Lane from May 15th to 19th. The work is being completed to tie two circuits together for better customer reliability. No roads will be closed; however, it will be down to one lane with the use of flaggers during the project.
- Gave a brief overview of the Veterans Park Re-dedication and Park Opening Ceremony scheduled for May 22, 2023 at 5:30pm.

Finance

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the Finance Department Report.

- Transfer Taxes received for the month of April was \$10,676.00 which brings our Year-to-Date total to \$268,707.17. We believe we are on track to being close to meeting our annual budget.
- We continued processing Senior Discount/Disability and Base Tax discount applications.
- Attended weekly staff meetings to discuss Town issues.
- Attended the monthly DLLG Meeting.
- Continued preparation for the 2024 budget.
- Valarie Strzempa has been authorized by the State of Delaware to perform Notary Services.
- Completed and submitted the annual ARPA project expenditure report.
- Annual SAM registration was completed.
- Pre-Approval/Pre-Award information received for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program.
- Registered for FedConnect.net which allows the Town to receive award notifications as it relates to our EECBG Grant Application.
- Completed the quarterly DOJ grant report.
- We received the funds related to our FY 2023 Community Redevelopment Grant Application. These were for the EPD Fence and Parking Lot, Senior Center Renovations and Window Upgrades around Town Hall.
- The first of two State of Delaware contributions to the Original Police Pension Plan has been transferred to First State Trust in the amount of \$39,556.85. Our second contribution is anticipated in June 2023.
- Official closeout of the M&T Bank State Transfer Holding Account has been completed. This account is now housed at PNC.

Public Safety:

Chief Laura Giles gave a brief overview of public safety.

- Working with Town Manager Steven Martin and Ms. Valerie Tickle to apply for a possible 3-year grant in the amount of \$323,000.00 to continue the Clinician Program related to opioid addiction. This would allow us to expand our program and occasionally offer services at Town Hall over the next 3 years. Elsmere has been identified as an opioid “hot zone”. She has also begun working with Amy Keeves who organizes our current clinician program, and Dominica Personti to discuss possible programs and uses for these funds.
- She will be out of town May 28th through June 2nd, Lieutenant Shelton will be in charge while she is away.

Public Works:

Maintenance Worker Thomas Harrison gave a brief overview of the Public Works report.

- The department is continuing to address potholes throughout Town.
- Installed 2 new handicapped parking spaces.
- Continued training on the Street Sweeper.
- Removed and replaced wooden benches at Veterans park with black metal benches.
- Installed the Veterans Memorial Statue at Veterans Park.
- Worked with the Park contractor to finalize the park renovations.
- Completed 5 abatements at the request of the Code Enforcement Department.
- Continued working in the basement area preparing for a new tenant.
- Performed regular maintenance throughout Town.

Town Manager’s Report

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview:

- Met with the Mayor, Senator Mantzavinos, Kevin Donnelly from DNREC and staff regarding potential funding for our stormwater projects. At the end of the meeting, DNREC agreed to add our stormwater study and the associated recommended projects to the New Castle Conservation Districts list of New RC & D projects. In turn, the updated RC & D Project list will then be submitted to the Bond Committee when the committee meets with the DNREC and the Conservation Districts. The overall hope is to receive funding for these projects that are not loans.
- Spoke with Senator Mantzavinos regarding our proposed projects to be submitted to the Community Reinvestment Fund Grant and explained that we would be requesting significant funding for street repairs and he cautioned us that we

should apply for something different and that the committee may not be inclined to approve requests for street repair funds. In lieu of that, the Town will be researching other funding sources for street repairs as well as other possible projects to apply for community reinvestment funds.

Mayor Thompson stated that the reason behind it is that the State believes it is a municipalities responsibility to fund their infrastructure repairs.

- We met with New Castle County regarding the lengthy list of street repairs they need to make within Town. They have begun meeting with contractors on-site to explain the projects and we hope to have construction begin on those 30 locations sometime in August.
- We received additional information regarding the boring project being complete by DNREC on Northern Avenue. The boring is a closeout investigation from a 1994 complaint regarding leaking underground storage tanks of the former gas station located at 401 Kirkwood Hwy. The boring and testing has been occurring at intervals since 2003. They have agreed to keep the Town informed regarding the investigation and to provide notices to the properties along the testing area with information regarding the complaint and the investigation. They maintain that there is no public health hazard.

Councilwoman Personti asked for an update regarding the concerns she provided about the concrete deficiencies for the Jefferson Avenue/Poplar Avenue Street Improvement Program.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that he did take photos of the concrete issues and submitted them to Vandemark & Lynch who performs the inspections.

Mayor Thompson asked if we could contact Paoli Services to expedite paving the driveway entrance for the one resident on Jefferson Avenue who cannot access their driveway or garage.

Councilwoman Personti stated that there were also issues with littering and confrontational behavior from some of the workers.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that he would reach out to Domenick Paoli to make him aware of the issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Officer John Giles, [REDACTED] welcomed and congratulated Mr. Steven Martin as the new Town Manager.


STATEMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Thompson to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Personti.

VOTE: 5-0 with 1 Absent and 1 Vacant 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