

**TOWN OF ELSMERE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
July 13, 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:

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	CHARLES MCKEWEN	PRESENT
5 TH DISTRICT	JOANN I. PERSONTI	PRESENT
6 TH DISTRICT	DAWN DIBIASO	PRESENT

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 June 8, 2023, Council Meeting.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2023, Council Meeting with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman DiBiaso.

VOTE: 7-0 All-in-Favor Motion Carried

Consideration of amending May 11, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to approve the amended minutes of the May 11, 2023, Special Council Meeting with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Steppi.

VOTE: 7-0 All-in-Favor Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration of approving a contract amendment with KCI Technologies for engineering stormwater projects in Vilone Village, Vilone Park and Dogwood Hollow.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated KCI agreed to the changes of the contractual agreement. The Town Manager also asked KCI for a formal proposal for Contractual Management.

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Thompson authorizing the Town Manager to sign the contract amendment KCI Technologies for engineering stormwater projects in Vilone Village, Vilone Park and Dogwood Hollow. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

VOTE: 7-0 All-in-Favor Motion Carried

Consideration of expending \$2,340.10 in ARPA funds to replace the ADA Accessible Swings in Vilone Park and Joseph Walling Park.

Town Manager Steven Martin and Council had a discussion regarding ordering new ADA swings as the previously purchased ADA Accessible Swings that snapped in 5 different places did not hold up to their usage from residents. Global Playgrounds Installation has recommended a new ADA Accessible swing with a molded plastic harness that snaps in one place. Town Manager Steven Martin mentioned there is no proof of how the previous swings were damaged from everyday usage or vandalism.

Councilwoman Jensen stated that if they approve this request and they are damaged again to not replace them.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman DiBiaso authorizing the \$2,340.10 in ARPA funds to replace the ADA Accessible Swings in Vilone Park, Joseph Walling Park and Maple Park. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jensen.

VOTE: 7-0 All-in-Favor Motion Carried

Discussion and Consideration of increasing the accumulation and carryover of sick leave and vacation leave.

Chief Laura Giles and Council discussed that police can currently carry over 160 hours of vacation and 480 in sick time. She currently has several officers that are already at the maximum 160 hours and therefore, is asking to increase the vacation carryover amount to 240 hours, which is 2 additional weeks of carryover.

At this time, there was a lengthy discussion between Chief Laura Giles and Council on the importance of taking time off to cover schedules and being shorthanded for 24-hour shifts, mental health, summertime schedules and police safety. Scheduling vacation while being

shorthanded makes it difficult to cover shifts. In addition, there are concerns regarding the liability of vacation time accumulation and payrates.

Town Solicitor James McMackin mentioned discussing increasing hours with our auditors before deciding on the amount of vacation and sick time to carryover.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Code Enforcement

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

- The department issued 74 violations during the month, of those, 31 were corrected without fines being issued, 26 received fines and 17 remained pending at the end of the month.
- Issued 4 Repeat Public Nuisance Violations, 3 of which were for 2nd or Subsequent Occurrences.
- Requested Public Works to perform 3 abatements, as the result of a violation.
- Performed 12 Pre-Rental Inspections.
- Processed 23 permits.
- Issued 12 new “Out of Town” business licenses.
- Issued 3 new Rental License.
- Tagged 13 vehicles for Tow, all were removed without being towed.
- Reminder that Serpe’s has made improvements to the liquors store and asked for an additional 3 week extension due to rain. Town Manager Steven Martin approved the extension.
- Parklynn Apartments mold remediation should be done later this week and he will give updates as available.
- Councilwoman Steppi questioned 16 Tamarack Ave and there was a discussion regarding the property which was redeemed at sheriff sale and finding a contact for the property has been an ongoing issue.

Finance

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

- We received \$14, 679.00 during the month of June for Transfer Tax. The YTD balance is \$310,161.17 with a short fall of \$39,838.83 budget projections.

- Valarie Stzempa performed year-end accounts payable clean up and soft close and entered 2023 fiscal budget, updated two forms for Code in Edmunds.
- Jackie worked with sheriffs' sales, 7 properties in que, 108 Forrest was due to go to sheriff sale on 7/11/23 but then filed bankruptcy Chapter 13.
- Continued to process Senior Discount/Disability tax applications.
- Started filing end of invoice in preparation for audit.
- Archiving FY 21 invoices and payments
- Worked with Empower, our Pension Custodian cleaning up some historical record and trying to remedy a problem with entering bi-weekly payroll information.
- Enter new calculations for the Tax increases.
- Move outstanding violations to special tax liens.
- Contacted the County about the assessment Tax Roll for 2023 tax year.
- Taxes will go out tomorrow, July 14, 2023, and there is notice on the tax bill stating there is an increase.

Public Safety:

Chief Laura Giles gave a brief overview of public safety.

- Ptlm. Thomas Maddam graduated from the New Castle County Police Academy and received the Academic Excellence Award.
- Chief Giles stated Officer Singleton is leaving and going to the VA police and Officer Linde is leaving and going to the Delaware State Police.
- Hiring application is online with no applications received but has had 34 hits.
- Chief Giles gave an overview of House Bill 205 & 206. Stating that 205 is now named Police Officers Due Process Accountability and Transparency and 206 is called Police Officers Standards and Training Commissions. Elsmere is a accredited municipality.

Public Works:

Public Works Supervisor Anthony Gaines gave a brief overview of Public Works.

- They have hired someone for the vacant maintenance worker position, and he will start at the end of the month.
- The department is continuing to address potholes throughout Town.
- The department is working on the 7 main drains that the Town is responsible for.

- Removing branches and trees that have fallen around Town.
- Assisting with upgrades to the Fire Alarm system.
- Mayor Thompson asked what equipment the Town has that required you to have a CDL. Anthony Gaines explained the street sweeper because of its weight and there is class that needs to be taken to receive your CDL.
- Councilwomen Steppi and Jensen inquired about the street sweeper being used on Kirkwood highway at Linden. Anthony Gaines explained that DelDOT is responsible for that area.
- Councilwoman DiBiaso inquired about the grass growing in the street and along the curbs in Vilone Village. Town Manager Steven Martin explained that if its at the curb and the street then it's the Town's responsibility.
- Completed 2 abatements at the request of the Code Enforcement Department.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview:

- Received the proposal from KCI for Phase One of our Stormwater Improvement and he requested bid documents to be prepared.
- Stormwater Plan was included in the Conservation District's list that was approved by the Bond Committee. There is an e-mail out to Kevin Donnelly from the Conservation District to find out the next steps.
- There have been several calls from residents complaining about flooding and Public Works was called in during one storm to clean drains and remove a tree.
- A grant application was submitted to Delmarva Power Sustainable Communities Grant Program for \$9,600.00 for solar lights in Maple Park parking lot and the beginning of Patty Blevins Walking Path.
- The EECBG Program Pre-Award information sheet was submitted last month, and work has started on the application with submission by the end of July.
- The Community Reinvestment Fund was funded for the entire amount requested. The request included renovations to Maple Park Trailhead parking lot, resurfacing the basketball court and new lights for the Town Hall parking lot.
- USDOT grant is to improve roadway safety and provides funding to develop the tools to help strengthen a community's approach to roadway safety and save lives.
- We are still waiting to hear back from the County regarding street repairs.
- Enrolled as a participant of the Safe Street for All NCC Advisory Committee.
- Jefferson Street Project is about 90% completed and there was a cost saving from the original budget per Neil from Vandemark & Lynch.

- Rosemont & Taylor Road bid documents should be ready by the end of July. We were awarded \$150,000 in street funds from DelDot for this project.
- Town Manager Steven Martin and Chief Laura Giles discussed with Council and Mayor that EPD receive a \$363,000.00 grant from the DOJ to help with the opioid crisis and to provide services in the Senior Center, as well as working with Domenica Personti to provide these services. Also discussed that the Town has the grant to upgrade the Senior Center for their portion.
- Pension payment was not made by the State, but we found out that the State did not send any agency pension payments.
- Updated that we have 6 vendors confirmed for the Fall Festival.

Councilwoman Steppi mentioned the trash cans at the DART bus stops are overflowing with trash and that she contacted Town Manager Steven Martin to get this taken care of.

Town Manager Steven Martin mentioned that trash cans are only picked up once month.

Councilwoman Steppi mentioned that this month for the monthly cleanup they were behind McDonald's and Mulrooney's and are continuing to make a huge impact.

Mayor Thompson stated that he attended the State of the County Meeting which was a time to advertise the town and that the Old Chestnut Run Campus has several businesses that are moving into that area.

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: 7-0 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