

**TOWN OF ELSMERE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 12, 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 – Absent at the time of roll call

Town Manager, Steven Martin – Present

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

Chief Laura Giles arrived and joined the meeting and discussion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the September 14, 2023, Council Meeting.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman DiBiaso to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023, Council Meeting with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilman McKewen.

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

Old Business: NONE

New Business:

Consideration of awarding a contract in response to RFP 23-03 Senior Center Bathroom Project.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that the Ferris bid was \$42,864 and KMP bid was \$58,492 and his recommendation is Ferris.

Town Solicitor James McMackin suggested that Mayor and Council vote on awarding Ferris RFP and for it to be sent over to him to review.

Councilwoman Steppi asked what the scope of the RFP covers.

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the RFP scopes.

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Eric Thompson to authorize Ferris Home Improvement subject to review and comments by Town Solicitor and Town Manger. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

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

Discussion regarding trash services at the 4 apartment complexes within the Town.

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the meeting he had with the Apartments and stated that he wants to impose a cost sharing and gave Council a sheet to show the different scenarios for cost sharing and that it was well received by the Apartments. He also stated that there is a second meeting scheduled for October 28, 2023. He stated that we should start at 33% cost sharing and move up 50%, 75% and 100% and went over the different scenarios.

There was a brief discussion regarding the percentages and scenarios between the Mayor, Council and Town Manager. Councilwoman Steppi questioned being stuck with our contract if the apartments decided to go elsewhere. Town Manager Steven Martin stated he spoke with Dominic at Republic and did pose to Republic if the apartments decided to back out of our scenarios, would Republic redue or amend the contact, so it is on the table. Councilwoman Personti stated that she would approve any of the scenarios and gave a brief over of why the Town started paying for Apartment trash service in the past. Councilwoman DiBiaso stated that she would agree to the 50% scenario and 33% is to low.

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Eric Thompson to leave negotiations to the discretion of the Town Manager as he sees fit and able to best accomplish. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Steppi.

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

Discussion and consideration of approving an increase in the amount of \$1,323 for the CivicsPlus contract, otherwise known as the SeeClickFix program.

The Town Manager stated that we received a letter of an increase from CivicsPlus of \$1,323 and that it's a useful tool that the Town, Council and residents use.

The Mayor and Council left it up to the discretion of the Town Manager Steven Martin since the total amount is under \$10,000.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that we will have to make a budget amendment.

Discussion regarding extending the Food Bank Mobile Distribution Events through December 2024.

There was a brief discussion on how to extend the Food Bank Mobile Distribution, Town Manager Steven Martin reached out to see if the Food Bank would do it for free but wouldn't be the same amount of frequency. Mayor Thompson asked about the Town doing 50%.

Councilwoman Steppi stated that her concern is that if the Town does it for free and a scheduled an event on the Food Bank's website means that its open to the County, which the Town cannot accommodate the traffic and doesn't agree with the Town suppling volunteers. Town Manager Steven Martin stated that there are questions on the table and for him to go back to the Food Bank before we make a motion on extending the Food Bank or not.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to not extend the Food Bank Mobile Distribution Events through December 2024. There was no seconded motion made and the motion does not move forward.

Consideration of a request by Stellar Tutoring to waive the special event permit fee for their annual literacy walk to be held on November 5, 2023.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to waive the special event permit fee for Stellar Tutoring annual literacy walk to be held on November 5, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

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

Consideration of reallocating ARPA Funds to the Vilone Park and Dogwood Hollow Stormwater Project.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that we received a \$470,000 award from DNREC which will be applied to Vilone Park and Dogwood Hollow would like to reallocate \$212,988.16 of ARPA funds to complete the project.

Mayor Eric Thompson questioned the previous motion that we allocated all ARPA funds.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that we have additional ARPA funds from the original allocation.

Councilwoman Personti stated that it was to cover any cost over runs with the current projects.

Town Manger Steven Martin stated that KCI's analysis had a 35% contingency and the 35% should cover any over runs.

Councilwoman Jensen questioned that reallocating does not take away from Dover Ave or the Taylor Tract.

Town Manager Steven Martin stated that it does not take away from them and he has a hard time line for completion of the bid date for Vilone Park, Dogwood Hollow, Belvins Walkway and Taylor Track of May 2024.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman DiBiaso to authorize reallocating \$212,988.16 ARPA funds to the Vilone Park and Dogwood Hollow Stormwater Project. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Skipski.

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Code Enforcement

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

- The department issued 87 violations during the month, of those, 43 were corrected without fines being issued, 28 received fines and 16 remained pending at the end of the month.
- Issued 5 Repeat Public Nuisance Violations, 4 of which were for 2nd or Subsequent Occurrences.
- Currently have 11 vacant properties on file.
- Requested Public Works to perform 1 abatement as the result of a violation.
- Performed 14 Pre-Rental Inspections.
- Processed 30 permits.
- Issued 0 new "In Town" business licenses.
- Issued 11 new "Out of Town" business licenses.
- Issued 1 new Rental License.
- Tagged 1 vehicles for Tow, all were removed without being towed.
- Mayor Eric Thompson asked how many new business licenses Code has processed this year.
- Code Enforcement Officer Scott Allen stated that he would have to get a tally.

Finance Department

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

- Started Collection of taxes for the month and we took in \$1,881,075 and provided assistance to over 150 residents who paid in person.
- Collected \$29,083.43 in transfer taxes.
- Completed inventory reports for EPD's Surveillance Camera – Technology Upgrade grant and submitted and was awarded DOJ Opioid Grant for \$363,000.
- Begun Audit preparation.
- Received the payment for legal fees for 108 Forrest in the amount of \$17,502.87.
- Received \$6,828.39 from the property at 2106 Cypress Road for Delinquent taxes and attorney fees.
- All the work done over the past 8 months; we reduced our major delinquent properties that were sent to sheriff sales from 16 properties down to 4 properties.
- We moved delinquent taxes to the Special Tax Routine for the month.
- Performed cleanup of our Archived records.
- Received the check in the amount of \$130,000 from the Reinvestment for Maple Park parking lot and add lights to the Patty Blevin's Walkway.
- Councilwoman Steppi asked if we recouped 920 Dover regarding transfer tax return since it was sold to and LLC.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated we will look into 920 Dover.

Public Safety

Chief Laura Giles gave a brief overview of Public Safety.

- Chief Giles stated that Impact life should be up and running November 1st, 2023.
- Chief Giles will be hiring another clinician to ride along with officers and signing the contract starting October 30th, 2023, and the new clinician is bilingual.
- Chief Giles stated that Paoli should be finishing the parking lot and Guardian has installed part of the fence.
- Chief Giles stated that they have their Fall Qualifications on October 13, 2023 which is a day and night shooting from 2 PM to 9 PM and 2AM to 5AM off of Route 9 and NCC will be covering for any in progress complaints.
- Councilwoman Steppi asked about handicap parking and Chief Giles stated that she has received new applications and will have to get a total number of spots taken down from Linda.
- Councilman McKewen questioned about a hit and run on Sycamore Avenue on a handicap parking spot.
- Chief Giles stated that she will investigate it.
- Councilwoman Personti questioned if Chief was aware of the parents parking on Olga and Sanders.

- Chief Giles stated that they are aware of it and that if the tag cars available, they do go down there.

Public Works

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

- New Hire Brice Bolen is working out well.
- Attended Public Works Safety meeting for Delaware.
- Working on cleaning up leaves and trash around Town.
- Councilwoman Personti asked who does the maintenance of the median in the 5th district and if there was a schedule.
- The Town Manager stated that the maintenance of median is stated in the contract for Delaware Lawn and the contract is enforced.
- The Public Works Supervisor Anthony Gaines stated that they did come out last week and that Public Works does do weekly reports to give to Town Manager Steven Martin.
- Councilwoman Steppi stated she got a tour of the old Senior Center, and that Public Works did a great job.
- Councilwoman Jensen questioned if there are any more issues with the ADA swings since they were replaced.
- Public Works Supervisor Anthony Gaines stated there has not been any issues with ADA swings.
- Councilwoman Jensen asked if he has seen an increase in graffiti again or is it worse than before?
- Public Works Supervisor Anthony Gaines stated that graffiti is worse and they have painted over. He also stated that it's in three parks.
- Councilwoman Jensen asked about getting cameras for the parks.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated they he would like to use grant funds for cameras and that EECBG grant should cover them, and the grant must be submitted by December.
- Mayor Eric Thompson questioned what we can do if we catch someone doing a crime.
- Chief Laura Giles stated that Elsmere was the first ever to start the Police Diversion for Juveniles and the State took it over.
- Councilwoman Personti thanked everyone for the beautiful job they did over the past weekend for the Fall Festival.

Town Manager

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview:

- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that KCI is continuing to work on the design phase and construction documents for Vilone Village and Vilone Park. We should receive the report any day.
- Town Manager Steven Martin adjusted the ARPA Stormwater funding chart. KCI confirmed we should be able to start the work by mid-2024.

- Town Manager Steven Martin met with Conservation District representative Kevin Donnelly regarding funding for our stormwater project. He sent a draft of the award agreement for our review. The Town Solicitor reviewed the document and approved it in the amount of \$470,000.00.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that the Town received a \$130,000 grant from the Reinvestment Fund for Maple Walk parking lot and Solar Lighting for a portion of the Patty Blevin walkway.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated the Town received the award agreement from Del Dot in the amount of \$42,535.00 for the Fire Company's new sign. The Town is the pass through for this funding. This was sent to the Council back in July and once we know when and what the sign will look like the Council will be notified.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated Public Works is continuing to work on the former Senior Center utilizing the grant we received for the Reinvestment Fund in 2022. Most of the repairs have been completed except for the ADA Bathroom and the new stove installation. Our Public Works Department did a good job on most of the cosmetic work.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that the Town received an update from the County's Chief Engineer that we received \$270,000 and they are in the process of creating plans for the field coordination of the project. He asked if we could assist with notifying the resident regarding parking. As soon as the Purchase Order is secured, I will obtain a start date from the County.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that he will have a timeline for each district and what streets are to be done.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated we are working on the Town of Elsmere's Five-year Street repair project. He requested a quote from Vandermark and Lynch for engineering of 6 streets that will be repaired during the first year. This will include existing conditions, inquired repairs and estimate of the cost and then we can apply for grants and funding.
- Councilwoman DiBiaso expressed her concerns regarding getting more than 6 streets repaired.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that are some extra ARPA funds that could possibly be used for Street projects.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that Vandermark & Lynch have finalized construction documents for Rosemont and Road re-engineering. We have a sample Maintenance Agreement and Easement in hand and have reached out to the homeowner to see if he is willing to agree to have the easement on his property.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated he met with Councilwomen Jensen and Steppi regarding some commercial properties that exhibit potential code issues. It was a good meeting and resulted in Code including a letter with the Business License renewal form about paying more attention to the areas around their business.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated he attended the Holiday Parade meeting at the Fire Station and ordered the Show-Mobile for the parade and we were able to get the Show-Mobile for free this year.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that the Town's staff worked all month on the Fall

Festival event. Rachel and Scott did a wonderful job organizing the event. As well as the Spooktacular event.

- Town Manager Steven Martin stated Senior Staff sat in on a new website presentation. Our current website utilizes Wordpress which is outdated and further, there is no technical assistance available. The new trend is Word driven format with drop-in-place pictures and videos. The presentation was very interesting, and we are scheduling a second meeting with the developer.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that you can drop photos and videos; that the Mayor will need to do an interview for CGI.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated we are ready to make an offer to one of the applicants for the Administration position.
- Town Manager Steven Martin stated that we started interviewing for the Finance Director position.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

STATEMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

Mayor Eric Thompson stated that we made \$400.00 for the event for the Needy Family Fund.

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: A motion was made by Mayor Eric Thompson to adjourn Pursuant to 29 Del. C. Section 10004 (b)(9) the Mayor and Council will adjourn into an executive session regarding pending litigation. The Mayor and Council will not return to public session. 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