

**March 1, 2012**

**Regular Meeting**

Mayor Porter called the regular meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 7:00 PM on this date leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Porter asked that the record reflect that all Council members were present.

Mayor Porter asked to have a sentence amended on page 3182 to say “the sirens are not used as much as they used to be”. Councilman Clendaniel made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2012 regular meeting as amended and to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2012 working session as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Case, passing unanimously.

**Public Hearing**

There were none

**Petitions, Remonstrance's and Communication**

**Proclamation – Dr. Lester Branson's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

Mayor Porter read aloud a proclamation celebrating and recognizing Dr. Branson's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday to occur on March 15, 2012. Mayor Porter will present the proclamation to Dr. Branson.

**DHCD- CDBG Application Workshop**

Mayor Porter announced that the State of Maryland Community Development Block Grant Program Opening and Application Workshop will be held on March 28, 2012.

**Denton Community Demonstration Garden**

Mayor Porter shared the Denton Community Demonstration Garden Brochure.

**Maryland Public Schools**

Mayor Porter announced and complimented the Maryland Public Education for recently ranking #1 in the Nation for the fourth straight year in a row.

**Ordinances and Resolutions**

There were none

**Reports of Officers, Board and Committees**

There were none

**Unfinished Business**

**Agenda #1 - Solar Panels**

Previously the Council held discussion and supported staff researching solar panels for the Police Dept. Mr. Mulrine provided an overview of the Energy Grant and asked the Council if they would support including the Public Works facility in the RFQ for solar panels. Mr. Mulrine recommended\* seeking two separate proposals\*, one for each department.

Councilman Gregory made a motion to accept the proposal for RFQ as presented by the Town Administrator, seconded by Councilman Danielson. The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda #2 - Ethics Commission Hearing Representation**

During the February 16, 2012 Council Working Session discussion was held about the Town sending a representative to the upcoming Ethics Commission Hearing to be held on March 15, 2012, to review the Town's request for a waiver from the new regulations.

*Mr. Kehoe, the Town Attorney, announced that new legislation is being proposed and the Maryland Municipal League will be testifying for Municipalities on March 2, and March 6<sup>th</sup>.*

*Councilman Gregory recommended sending a council person, but to have the Town Attorney provide some key bullet points about the waiver the Town is seeking.*

*Councilman Danielson made a motion to elect to send Councilman Gregory to represent the Town at the hearing, seconded by Councilman Clendaniel, passing unanimously.*

**Agenda #3 - Grant Clarification**

*The Mayor stated that he had asked Councilwoman Case to submit her questions about the Town's grants in writing so they could be addressed.*

*Staff provided a written response to the Council addressing the concerns and provided clarification on how the Town currently maintains grant records and reports.*

*The Mayor announced that Staff had contacted Mrs. Merrill Oliver, of the Governor's Grants Office, and invited her to visit with Town Staff to go over the technical management of the grants. Mrs. Oliver came to Town on February 27, 2012 and seemed to be pretty happy with how the Town was managing their grants.*

*Mr. Mulrine, stated that Mrs. Merrill Oliver, the Deputy Director, from the Maryland Governor's Grants Office came for a visit to Denton on February 27, 2012 to talk with staff about how the Town is handling grant management. Mrs. Oliver conducted a review of some of the grant files and issued a written statement that she had found everything to be in compliance with the grant award agreements.*

*The Mayor asked Councilwoman Case if, after reviewing the response from staff, \*she had any questions.*

*Councilwoman Case stated that she was "ok" with what the Town Staff is doing in terms of how the accounting is done. But that she still has a couple of questions.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned the united Town/DDC Partnership, and asked if the DDC was part of the Town.*

*Mr. Mulrine responded that the DDC is the sub-recipients to the Town for some of the grants and clarified that the DDC is a separate 501.C4 Entity.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned that if the DDC is not a part of the Town, should they be handling the grants that are in the Town's name, as it appears that the Town has no control over these grants.*

*Mr. Mulrine, the Town Administrator, explained that the Town does still have control over the projects. The Town Council approves applying for all grant projects and approves all bid awards. Then the Town Administrator oversees these projects and the work being done. The Town Administrator provides the approval for any payments to the contractor and for any grant draw request to be submitted to the State. Nothing gets paid without the Town Administrators approval and the State does not release any funding directly to the DDC.*

*Councilwoman Case said that she should be able to see the files on the grants.*

*Mr. Mulrine said the audits on the previous Crouse Park Grants were completed several years ago, and that there has not been any recent activity.*

*Councilwoman Case said she still wants to see the files on Crouse Park. She questioned what the Auditor looks at when reviewing the grants.*

*Mrs. Monteith, Clerk-Treasurer, responded that the Town's grant files are made available to the Auditor. The Finance Dept. keeps a file of the expenditures and grant draws, while the Town Administrator/Project Manager keeps other files that are required by the granting agency. The Auditor looks at the grant agreement, verifies that the grant received approval from the Council, and makes sure that the expenditures and revenues fall within the guidelines of the grant agreement. Most of the files the Town Administrator keeps on the grant projects would be the same as the files the DDC would keep. If the Auditor needed additional information after reviewing the town's files, then staff would ask the DDC to supply the information. Mrs. Monteith could not recall ever having to request the DDC files for the Auditor. Mrs. Monteith also explained that those who handled the former Crouse Park Project activity and kept the files are no longer here, and that she does not have access to a project spreadsheet. Mrs. Monteith added that in working with the new DDC Project Manager, we have improved the process as stated in the response provided to the Council; and now the project spreadsheets are required to be updated for each draw request.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned that if the Auditor can have the DDC files why can't she? She stated that because of her grant management experience that she believes that a pattern may have developed.*

*Councilman Gregory asked what the pattern is.*

*Councilwoman Case said that she believes that a pattern has developed to where grants can be used, or may have been used, to give work to DDC supporters.*

*Councilman Gregory asked for specifics.*

*Councilwoman Case said that she believes a pattern has developed because she has heard about the relationships and has been questioned about the way the money is being spent by the DDC. She gave an example of a painting job, in which the person that did the painting was not a painter. Now the paint is peeling, and that the painter was a DDC supporter and that they had a family member on the DDC Board.*

*Mr. Mulrine said that staff had already addressed this example in the written response. That the painting he believed she was referring to was on the Caroline County Council of Arts Project. That project was not a DDC Project. Nor did the painter, that did the job, have any family members on the DDC Board.*

*Mayor Porter referred to staff's written response in where it explains that the Town hires the General Contractor. That General Contractor has the authority of hiring sub-contractors to help with the work to be done. Mayor Porter stated that as long as the General Contractor has the necessary paperwork and is in compliance with the agreement between him and the Town, the Contractor is liable for the subs he hires, not the Town.*

*Councilman Gregory acknowledged that the granting agencies reviewed the grants and did not find any conflict of interest when the grant was monitored. Therefore, he did not see any problems.*

*Councilwoman Case said that she expects that the people from the other side of the bay, or even from another state, may not have the cognizant, as we may have, of a potential conflict of interest. Councilwoman Case said that she wants to look at the grant information.*

*The Mayor asked about being specific as to what she wanted to look at.*

*Councilwoman Case said that she started out wanting the files on Crouse Park, but now that some people have brought other possible conflicts to her attention, she thinks she should expand to include the other grants the DDC manages.*

*The Mayor stated that the Town could ask the DDC to look at the files.*

*Mrs. Monteith added that when Mr. Collins took over as the new DDC Project Manager, that he inherited boxes of files, and that the Finance Staff has been trying to find the time to help organize the DDC files of the previous grants. The Town files are in order and, as stated earlier, they should include the same information as the DDC files.*

*Councilman Clendaniel made a motion, that as a Board, to respectfully request that the files left in the charge of the Finance Office be made available for members of the Town Council to view.*

*Councilman Danielson questions the files that the Finance Office has?*

*Mrs. Monteith stated that the boxes of files, that Mr. Collins inherited, do not belong to the Town. The Council could ask the DDC for approval to look at the files.*

*Councilman Clendaniel asked where the files were.*

*Mr. Mulrine asked which files.*

*Councilwoman Case said that she would start with the Crouse Park files and that she was not interested in looking at the Town's files. She wants to see the DDC files.*

*Mr. Mulrine asked if she was talking about the previous grant activity for Crouse Park, which was for the DNR and USDA portion for the bulkhead work. This portion of the project was completed a couple years ago. There has not been any work done recently.*

*Councilwoman Case said yes.*

*Councilman Gregory recommended having Councilwoman Case provide a written list of the files she would like to see.*

*Mayor Porter stated that we have a convoluted motion on the floor and asked Councilman Clendaniel if he wanted to amend his motion.*

*Councilman Clendaniel amended his motion to request Councilwoman Case to put in writing the grants files she wants to review, and for the Council to respectfully request the DDC to make any documents, relating to those grants files, available to any Councilmember. Councilman Danielson seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1 with Councilwoman Case abstaining.*

*The Mayor asked Mr. Mulrine to read in its entirety the response received from Mrs. Merril Oliver of the Governor's office.*

*Mr. Mulrine read the response from the state.*

*Councilman Gregory asked to have a copy of the response from Mrs. Oliver entered into the minutes – the response received February 27, 2012 is as follows:*

*“Good afternoon Don,*

*Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide grants management technical assistance for the Town of Denton. I appreciate you making your grant files, financial files, A-133 Single Audit, and fiscal staff available to me so that I could complete a technical review of your grants management program and process. As I mentioned in our meeting, the purpose of my visit was not to conduct an audit nor to conduct a formal monitoring visit of any one federal grant program in*

particular but rather provide you an overview of your federal grants management process.

After review of your OMB Circular A-133 Single audit for year ended June 30, 2011, completed by an independent audit firm, Cherry Bekaert & Holland, in which "the Town complied, in all material respects, with the requirements referred to above [OMB Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement; Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and OMB Circular A-133 Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations] that are applicable to its major federal program for the year ended June 30, 2011; ...and did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that [we] consider to be material weaknesses, as defined above;" review of your grant files, review of your general ledger, review of your appropriations process, and technical interview with the Town Clerk and Town Administrator, I have come to the conclusion that the Town of Denton is in full compliance with, and does an admirable job of managing the federal full lifecycle grants management process.

The CDBG grant that appears to be in question by a Town Council Member has not yet been fully executed, in other words, no grant agreement has been fully executed between the State and the Town, has not yet been appropriated to the Town budget, and no expenditures have been incurred by the Town at this point in time, therefore, I was unable to complete a thorough review of the grant as it does not yet exist in the Town's legal book of record (financial management system). However, records indicate that this grant was presented for public review and comment, and was accepted by a majority vote of the full Town Council and that the Town is committed to accept the grant program upon receipt of full spending authority from the State. Planned expenditures do fall within the program parameters of the grant and have been approved in advance by Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

Again, based on my review of the full federal grants lifecycle process, the Town of Denton is compliant with its grant award agreements, OMB Circular Compliance Requirements, and its own legislated policy and procedure. The Town of Denton can be offered up to other municipalities in the State of Maryland as a best practice in federal grants management.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,  
Merril Oliver, CGMS  
Deputy Director, Maryland Governor's Grants Office

President, National Grants Management Association”

Councilman Gregory remarked that the letter speaks very highly of the competency of our Town Staff and the management of our grants.

Councilman Clendaniel agreed with Councilman Gregory about the favorable review from the State. He added that he did not think that Councilwoman Case was questioning staff's ability to do the job; that she just wants to get more information. Councilman Clendaniel stated that when it comes to audits and the mortgage going on's in the previous decades, they were fully audited and that did not stop the financial world from blowing up, referencing Enron. He stated that the audits don't always mean anything. He acknowledged that the Town has a very competent auditing firm, but he went on to say that there are things beyond the purveyance of a technical audit.

Councilman Gregory said that once again, we have heard nothing but innuendos this evening backed up by no substance what so ever, and questioned how much longer this witch hunt is going to continue.

**Agenda #4 - Community Gardens Grant Award – MOA Agreement**

Mrs. Marina Dowdall announced that the Caroline Human Services Council has awarded a \$10,100.00 Grant to the Town for the Community Garden Project. She stated that they plan to do demonstration gardens. Hopefully, if they are successful with this type of garden, it will provide an opportunity to go further and expand to allotment gardens. Mrs. Dowdall provided an overview of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Caroline Human Services Council and the Town of Denton, and asked for approval to sign the agreement.

Councilwoman Case made a motion to accept the MOA Agreement as presented, seconded by Councilman Clendaniel, passing unanimously.

**New Business**

**Agenda #1 - Utility Commission Appointment**

Councilwoman Case made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Andy Mackel to serve another 5-year term on the Utility Commission, seconded by Councilman Danielson, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #2 - Town Mascot**

Mr. Mike Owens, owner of Color N Clay, asked the Town Council to consider having the black squirrel as the Denton Town Mascot.

Councilwoman Case made a motion to have the black squirrel as the Town's Mascot, seconded by Councilman Clendaniel, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #3 – Standard Solar**

As a follow up to the Standard Solar presentation given to the Council at the February 16, 2012 working session, Mr. Mulrine asked the Council if they wanted to move forward on having a Solar PV Facility in Denton. Mr. Mulrine suggested placing the project out to bid and to include the Water/Sewer Treatment Plant as a location, as previously discussed. To place the Solar Facility on property owned by the Town at the corner of Legion and Engerman, This provides an opportunity as a way to save on electric cost for Town operations.

Councilman Danielson made a motion to move forward with the Solar PV Project for Denton, seconded by Councilman Gregory, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #4 - Vehicle Fuel Program Application**

Chief Cox came before the Council seeking approval from the Board to sign a contract with Fuelman Network to be the Town's primary fuel supplier to save the Town money on fuel cost.

Councilman Danielson made a motion to accept the contract as presented, seconded by Councilman Gregory, passing unanimously.

Councilman Danielson commended Chief Cox on coming up with ways to save in his department.

**Agenda #5 -LGIT – Benecon Life/STD/LTD**

Staff advised that LGIT recently partnered with The Benecon Group to do an analysis of the Life and Disability Insurance programs for its members.

The Town, a member of LGIT, received a proposal that would continue to provide the same benefits that are currently being provided, while allowing the Town to reduce the cost of these benefits by approximately \$5,500 a year. The rates were scheduled to expire March 1, 2012. However, staff negotiated with Benecon and they agreed to extend the enrollment period and guarantee these rates through April 1, 2012. The proposal was provided to the Council for consideration.

Staff asked for the Council's authorization for the Town Administrator to sign a 2-year contract with Benecon to begin April 1, 2012 and to cancel the Town's current policies through Excess Risk – (Symetra Financial and American Heritage Life).

Councilman Gregory made a motion to accept the proposal, seconded by Councilman Clendaniel, passing unanimously.

Councilman Danielson thanked the Finance Staff for finding ways to save on cost.

**Agenda #6 - Pathway's Project Bid Award**

Two bid proposals were received by the Town for the Pathway Project. The bids were reviewed by Mr. Tom Batchelor, Senior Code Enforcement Officer, and Mr. Glenn Collins, DDC Project Manager. Mr. Batchelor provided a bid analysis and both bid submissions were provided to the Council for review. Mr. Batchelor and Mr. Collins both recommended awarding the bid to Contractor B.

Mayor Porter explained why he had asked that the bids be labeled A&B so that the Council could analyze the bids objectively. The Mayor announced that Bid A is for \$47,906 and Bid B is for \$43,589 and that the recommendation before the Council is to award the bid to Contractor B.

Councilwoman Case said that she was struck by the fact that there are two very dispirited materials and she questioned why the type of materials was not listed in the bid specifications.

Mr. Collins stated this was a design built bid. He explained that they felt it was best to put this out to bid as a design built project, where you provide the scope of the project, but you leave it up to the contractor, who has the knowledge and expertise to design the project utilizing the materials the contractor feels are best for the scope of work being requested. Mr. Collins said that as a result of this, the contractors came up with two different but similar proposals and explained the difference in the materials.

Councilwoman Case questioned if anyone went back to Bidder A and ask him to consider paver's instead of asphalt.

Mr. Collins said that they had not done that.

*Councilman Gregory said that you can not do that with a bid. Each contractor designed their bid using the same summary of the scope of work and that they each gave their best estimate.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned that the analysis review showed that Bidder B did not submit everything, specifically mentioning a Certificate of Insurance.*

*Mr. Batchelor clarified that he noted in his review that a Certificate of Insurance was not included. But he was not sure if it was required at that time and wanted to make sure that, if the contractor was selected, the Town would make sure to obtain those items before signing off on the project.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned the bid asking for money up front to accept the proposal and wanted to know if that can be done.*

*Mr. Mulrine said that the Town had originally asked for more funds than were awarded and that they had to cut back on the scope of the project.*

*Councilman Gregory responded that it was not unusual for an advance of funds to be made up front as part of the proposal. He also stated that the bid can be awarded contingent upon receiving a Certificate of Insurance.*

*Mayor Porter questioned above ground rain barrels and issues with vandalism.*

*Mr. Batchelor explained the difference in the types of barrels and emphasized that the drawback on above ground is security. However, he mentioned that underground is harder to maintain and more expense to repair.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned how this will affect the maintenance of the grounds.*

*Mr. Mulrine explained that the maintenance will be done just as it is now, but may actually require less Town Staff time due to the space the gardens will take up.*

*Mrs. Flo Doherty mentioned that an above ground rain barrel can be tipped over and could be dangerous, but that underground rain barrels tend to lose gravity feed which can interfere with using the hose to water the garden. She suggested that the Town may want to do some additional research to make sure the barrels are secure.*

*Mayor Porter confirmed that the barrels in the bid proposal include child proof lockable lids.*

*Mayor Porter asked Mr. Collins to share with Council who the Bidders are so they can award the bid.*

*Mr. Collins advised that Bidder A was Harper & Sons; Bidder B was The Linchester Trading Co. LLC.*

*Mayor Porter acknowledged that The Linchester Trading Co., LLC is Mr. Mickey McCrea.*

*Councilman Danielson suggested taking Mr. Batchelor's recommendation to accept Contractor B.*

*Mr. Batchelor expressed, that based on the cost and options available, that he felt that Bid B was better for the Town.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned who was funding the grant.*

*Mr. Collins said that the work will be paid for using grant funds awarded by the State of Maryland Housing and Community Development – Community Legacy Program.*

*Councilwoman Case questioned if this was another DDC project.*

*Mr. Mulrine stated that the DDC applied for this grant last year on behalf of the Town. The grant is through the Town with the DDC assistance.*

*Mr. Collins mentioned that the State Grant guidelines clearly advise that when you put something out to bid that you cannot favor one body, neither can they discriminate against anybody.*

*Councilman Danielson made a motion to award to Contractor B – The Linchester Trading Co., LLC. for \$43,589; seconded by Councilman Gregory.*

*In further discussion, Mr. Mulrine added that originally the Town had only received one bid and that it was from Bidder B. In working with the State, they asked that the Town extend the bid due date to seek another bid and recommended that the Town reach out to the other interested bidder. Mr. Mulrine extended the request for bids by three weeks and contacted Bidder A, whom had previously expressed interest but had not submitted a bid on time. Mr. Mulrine gave them an opportunity to submit a bid and they did. Mr. Mulrine confirmed that this was acceptable with the State.*

*Mr. Mickey McCrea, owner of The Linchester Trading Co., LLC, took the opportunity to explain his bid and that he has given 4 to 5 variations, which gives a lot of flexibility. Mr. McCrea stated that he and his subs may make changes to enhance the beauty of the Town. Mr. McCrea recommended, that for future reference, the Town should watch the grant schedule and the timing when they are putting things out to bid. If the town had put this out to bid in the fall, the supplies may have cost less than they will in the spring.*

*Mayor Porter asked for a vote on the motion on the floor to award the bid to The Linchester Trading Co., LLC.*

*The motion passed 3-2 with Councilwoman Case voting no due to potential conflict of interest. Councilman Clendaniel also voted no.*

*Councilman Danielson asked what the potential conflict of interest may be.*

*Councilwoman Case stated that she voted no because of the close relationship between the bid publisher and the bidder.*

*Councilman Danielson said that is penalizing the contractor because he happens to know people.*

*Councilwoman Case said no that she was just trying to do everything as ethical as possible, for what could be perceived as a conflict.*

*The Mayor said that he does like conflicts to be out in the open.*

**Agenda #7 - Denton Police Dept. Parking Meter Fees & Fines**

*As a follow up to the February 16<sup>th</sup> working session, Chief Cox provided a history of the parking fines and meter fees. Chief Cox said, based on what he found in other communities, that he recommended doubling the fine and meter fees. Chief Cox said that the Town receives about \$14,000 a year in meter money and approximately \$2,800 in parking fines.*

*Councilman Danielson asked Chief about the cost to maintain the meters.*

*Chief Cox said that the meter electronics cost about \$200 each and the town already owns the housing. Other cost associated with the meters would be for the officer's time in collection and meter repairs and replacement batteries. Chief Cox stated that he looked into kiosk type of meters, but they were very expensive.*

*Councilman Clendaniel questioned having longer term meters. Most of what he hears from the Court House is that they get jammed up in court and can not make it back to pay the meter in time.*

Chief said that they can look into adding some more long term meters like they have on N. Second St. But he recommended keeping some short term meters in front of the Court House. He said that the meters on N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. are 8-10 hour meters.

Mayor Porter said the short term meters help to rotate vehicles for the downtown businesses and wondered if the parking fines should be increased to \$20.00.

Councilwoman Case and Councilman Danielson both said that they had no problem increasing the fine to \$20.00.

Councilman Danielson would like to see if they can restrict allowing crew cab trucks from parking near the 2<sup>nd</sup> St. intersection, blocking the view of traffic coming up Market.

Chief said he can look into it and possibly put up signs for compact car parking only.

Mrs. Ann Jacobs, Denton Downtown Main Street Manager, said that she has businesses asking frequently to have another business to have their employees move their cars from the parking for long times in the meter spaces so that their clients can park near.

Mr. Mike Owens said that his customers are often in his business for 2 to 3 hours and if possible, the meters hours could be extended to 3 hours, it would help his clients.

Chief Cox explained that to adjust the 2 hour time limit would need to be done separately.

Councilman Gregory said he had no problem increasing the fine from \$5 to \$10 or even \$20. But that everyone should keep in mind that this could be a discouragement to shop downtown.

Councilman Clendaniel suggested that they only increase to \$10.

Mrs. Ann Jacobs, the Denton Downtown Mainstreet Manager, said that they are working on "way finding signs" that should be up in a week or so. These signs will provide directions to where free parking is located.

Mayor Porter confirmed that it was the consensus of the Council to support Chief Cox drafting legislation to increase the meter fees from \$.25 an hour to \$.50 an hour and to increase the over parked parking fines from \$5.00 to \$10.00; to consider reinstating free parking on Saturday, and to change the hours of free parking to be from 5PM to 8AM. Chief said he would draft the legislation for the next meeting.

Councilman Danielson questioned about the free parking on the former Dollar General pad, and how those parking there use it for all day parking.

Chief Cox questioned whether to add parking meters there to encourage short term parking or to make it a 30 minute zone like it is on the other side of N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Chief did add that it is hard enough to enforce parking downtown, because of staffing, but that it is even harder to enforce the 30 minute parking zones, than it is parking meters.

The Mayor asked the Chief to research what it would cost to add parking meters to the Dollar General parking spaces.

Mr. Mulrine said that he was thinking of recommending closing this parking area because of the amount of trash that it accumulates and the staff time cleaning it up.

Councilman Clendaniel questioned if it was wise to eliminate parking spaces.

Mrs. Sue Cruickshank asked if the Town had ever looked into hiring a part-time meter officer.

Chief Cox stated that the Town had a position for this many years ago, but that the Town does not have the staffing or the funding to hire someone now.

**Agenda #8 - Brekford School Zone Cameras Contract Award**

Chief Cox received proposals from three vendors about supplying the Town with speed enforcement cameras and asked the Council for approval to sign a contract with Brekford Corporation. Chief Cox explained why he has selected Brekford to be the Town's vendor for this equipment after evaluating other vendors.

Councilman Danielson made a motion to accept the recommendation from Chief Cox to go with the Brekford Corporation, seconded by Councilwoman Case, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #9 - Our Town Grant**

Mrs. Marina Dowdall asked the Council for approval for the Town, in partnership with the Caroline County Arts Council, to apply for the "Our Town Grant". The grant is through the National Endowment of the Arts and provides grants for creative place-making projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into beautiful, and sustainable places, with the arts at their core. Mrs. Dowdall said that, if awarded the grant, they would like to use the funds to add to public and functional art within the Pathway's Project, and provide indoor/outdoor entertainment programs. Mrs. Dowdall said that there is \$100,000 match and that they can use the existing volunteer hours, the Town's support, cost for property maintenance and Marina's time, as the match to the grant.

Mrs. Cruickshank questioned that the Smith house is an eyesore and could be a problem with the Pathways and asked the status of this property.

Mr. Mulrine stated that the lessee has just gone through a six-month waiting period and that USDA has approved the funds and the tenant is now working on finding other funds.

Councilman Clendaniel made a motion to approve the application submission of the grant, seconded by Councilman Danielson, passing unanimously.

**Miscellaneous**

**Town Administrator Evaluation**

Councilman Gregory said that, if the other Council members were comfortable with the evaluation form, he would like for them to go ahead and fill out their evaluations and get them back to him within the next week, so that they can continue discussion at the March 15, 2012 working session.

**May Working Session Date**

Councilman Gregory asked to reschedule the May 17, 2012 working session, since it is being held on the same night as the County budget hearing to set the property tax rate. He did not want to conflict with the County meeting, so that the Council and citizens can attend both.

The Council agreed to reschedule and hold the May working session on May 10, 2012.

**Tax Differential**

The Mayor announced that the Council attended the County Tax Differential Meeting and that the County is moving forward with introducing the tax differential, reducing Denton's tax differential by \$.01, which will result in increasing taxes to Denton property owners. The Mayor said that he does not support raising taxes just to

*Denton that they need to raise taxes to everybody to be fair. The way the County formula works out Federalsburg property owners will receive a \$.07 tax differential, while Denton will only received a \$.06.*

*Councilman Gregory questioned why the County did not take into account Denton's hit in assessment values dropping so significantly last year. But they take Federalsburg into account this year. He said that we need to get the citizens involved.*

*Councilman Danielson said that Denton will need to hire another police officer for Wal-Mart, but based on the County formula, Denton property owners will loose more differential, once the assessment of Wal-Mart is added to the tax roll.*

*Chief Cox added that the County is basing the tax differential on Public Safety provided at the County level and that it is not fair, because Public Safety at a Municipal level does not compare.*

*With no further discussion, Mayor Porter adjourned the meeting at 9:17 PM.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen L. Monteith,  
Clerk – Treasurer*

\_\_\_ \* indicated amendments for typographic errors approved during adoption at the April 5, 2012 meeting.