

October 3, 2019

Regular Meeting

Mayor McNinch 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 McNinch thanked everyone for coming and asked that the record reflect that all Councilmembers were present.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2019 Regular Meeting as presented; seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Councilman Branson made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2019 Working Session as presented; seconded by Councilwoman Wilson, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

K9 Tide Introduction

Chief Rodney Cox and Corporal Bradley Korisher introduce K9 Tide as the newest member of the Denton Police Department. Chief Cox thanked Chesapeake K9 for providing the funding to acquire K9 Tide.

Legion Road Update

Delegate Ghrist and Mr. Jim DiDonato provided an update on the proposed Legion Road and the road to nowhere traffic improvements.

The Council thanked Delegate Ghrist and Mr. DiDonato for their support and assistance with this project.

Delegate Ghrist recommended for the Town Council to attend the October 15th State Highway Legislative request meeting seeking support for the project, and for the Town to send a letter to the State requesting funding.

Mayor McNinch shared a letter has been drafted to be sent to Secretary Vaughn and asked for a motion to send the letter to the State requesting funding from the State to help with the cost of the project.

Councilman Branson made a motion to send the letter to the State seeking funding support, seconded by Councilwoman Wilson, passing unanimously.

Caroline County States Attorney's Office Monthly Report

The States Attorney's September Monthly Activity Report was reviewed.

LGIT Anniversary Letter

Mayor McNinch announced a letter had been received from the Local Government Insurance Trust thanking the Town for having been a member for 32 years. The Mayor provide a brief summary of the benefits of being a member of LGIT.

Food for Learning

Mayor McNinch shared a letter outlining information about the Food for Learning Program sponsored by the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. MSCF accepts donations to help feed the students at local schools.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance #703 – 2018 International Building Codes

An Ordinance amending the Town of Denton's Building Code, Residential Code, and Mechanical Code contained in Chapter 38 of the Denton Town Code with respect to Building construction.

Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, and Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer, explained the State requirements for adopting the 2018 Building Codes. A summary of the Ordinance and Amendments specific to the Town was provided.

Councilman Branson made a motion to introduce Ordinance #703, and the Town's Amendments. The motion was seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Ordinance #704 – 2018 International Property Maintenance Code

An Ordinance amending the Town of Denton's Property Maintenance Code contained in Chapter 94 of the Denton Town Code.

Mr. David Renshaw provided an overview of the Ordinance.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to introduce Ordinance #704, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Councilman Lister gave an overview of the September Utility Commission meeting. Sharing that several items were discussed including the Franklin Street Water Project, the Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Project upgrades and Cambio WIFI, contract for use of the fiber. A tour of Easton Utilities has been scheduled for October 23rd for the Council Members, to help better understand Easton's process as the Town explores options and utilities. The Cambio WIFI was also discussed, Town needs to work on finalizing a contract for the use of the Town's fiber lines.

Mr. Mark Chandler, Supervisor of Water and Wastewater, provided additional information on the Water and Wastewater Ultra-Violet and Liner Project, sharing that the new basin is online and the UV is online, making final adjustments and indicated the project is anticipated to be completed by October 31, 2019.

Mayor McNinch congratulated Councilwoman Wilson on making the front cover of the African American Pride of Delmarva Magazine, and thanked her for all that she does for the community.

Mayor McNinch, Councilman Johnson and Councilwoman Wilson will be attending the Maryland Municipal Leagues Fall Conference. Town Staff will be presenting for the discussion on Small Cells.

Mayor McNinch and Staff will be attending LGIT's annual meeting on October 31st, will be offering Cyber Security Training.

Councilman Johnson attended a meeting on Cyber Security and spoke about federal funding programs coming available.

Mayor McNinch announced the State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation annual road show meeting is scheduled for October 15th to discuss road needs for the area for consideration in 2020. Councilman Branson is planning on attending. Mayor McNinch encouraged the public to attend and speak in support of the Town/County road needs. The meeting will be held at 9AM at the Caroline County Board of Education building on Franklin Street.

Mayor McNinch encouraged everyone to attend the Caroline County Association of Municipalities Dinner that is scheduled for October 16th, 5:30 PM at the Visitor Center to discuss needs and legislative requests.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- Recycling Program

Staff was recently made aware of some changes in the market for recycling, additional restrictions for clean recyclables and the potential for an increase in cost for recycling due to market changes. The implementation is being deferred until December to allow more time to find the most cost-effective program for residents.

New Business

Agenda #1 – General Assembly Request Letter

The Mayor acknowledged receiving the annual request from the Caroline County Commissioners seeking the Town's to submit any State Legislation priorities to the County Commissioners for support consideration for the 2020 General Assembly.

Agenda #2 – Veterans Parade

Mr. Bruce Wakefield and Mr. Royce Ball from the Mid-Shore Veterans Group spoke came before the Council seeking support for Denton to host a Veterans Parade in April 2020 that will feature and honor local Veterans. Parade and event details were discussed.

MSVG members recently visited the Museum of Rural Life and were impressed with the displays. Mr. Ball and Mr. Wakefield presented a donation of \$500 for the Caroline County Historical Society to use for expanding displays at the Museum.

Mr. Ball also provided a \$500 check made payable to the Caroline County Public School to use to bus students to the Museum to view Veteran displays. Expressing the importance of educating students of all ages on our Veterans and history.

Mr. Ball shared they have funding set aside for 12 banners to be placed on the light poles downtown to honor and reflect 12 Hero's from the Town.

The Town will work to identify Hero's for the banners.

Councilman Lister made a motion to allow to pursue the parade and to work with the Police Department on the parade details. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wilson, passing with 4 votes, Councilman Johnson, a Veteran abstained from voting.

Agenda #3 - Caroline Hospice Project

Ms. Heather Guerieri, Executive Director of Compass Regional Hospice provided an update on hospice services and statistics in Caroline County. Sharing that the Compass Board has pledged to meet Caroline's needs with adequate housing and is working on a project to build a six-bed facility within Caroline County and is seeking the Town's support in applying for a CDBG Grant.

Additional information will be supplied to Staff to assist in pulling together a grant application.

Ms. Guerieri announced the Festival of Trees is schedule for December 6 through 8 to be held at Towers Family Historical Museum, inviting everyone to attend.

Agenda #4 - MML Challenge Reimagine Tomorrow

Mayor McNinch shared a request from MML President Ryan Spiegel outlining a challenge to all municipalities to participate in his "Reimagine Tomorrow Campaign", seeking ideas on what Municipalities are doing that is different, new and creative.

Mayor suggested thinking about how the Town is helping with the Food for Learning Programs, Farm to Table and the Veterans.

Mr. Mulrine also mentioned the School Backpack Program is now serving 500 plus a week.

The Mayor asked everyone to think of some things to highlight and share.

Agenda #5 - Hardy Boom Arm Mower

Denton Public Works submitted a request to purchase a new Hardee Boom Arm Mower to replace the one that was sold for \$15,000 that was too large for the Tractor. A quote from Taylor Messick for the equipment and installation was presented with a cost of \$14,900.

Councilman Branson made a motion to approve the purchase, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #6 - FY2021 Homestead Tax Credit Cap

The Homestead Tax Credit is available to all owner-occupied residential properties in which the Real Estate Tax on a qualifying property cannot be increased by more than the percentage set by the Council, no matter how much the assessment changes. The tax credit cap has remained at 5% since July 1, 2007 when the Council decreased the percentage from 10% to 5%. Per Maryland Law a Tax Cap can be no greater than 10%.

Mr. Keith Bobbick, Director of the Caroline County State Department of Assessments and Taxation provided additional information.

Councilman Lister made a motion to reduce the Homestead Tax Credit Percentage Cap to 3% beginning July 1, 2020. The motion was seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Staff will prepare a Resolution for the November meeting.

Agenda #7 - Retiree Health Benefits

Mr. Mulrine, Delegate Ghrist and Mrs. Karen Monteith discuss exploring legislation to allow Town Employees upon retirement to be able to continue receiving Health and Prescription Benefits through the State of Maryland as they are currently receiving while employed.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to provide support, seconded by Councilwoman Wilson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #8 - Denton Water Main Replacement

Mr. Mulrine shared 3 bids received for the engineering design services for the Franklin Street Water Replacement Project and recommended awarding to the low bidder Remington & Vernick Engineers with the price of \$81,850 for the project.

Councilman Lister asked for clarification as to why the other bids came in so much higher, and Staff advised that the other Engineering firm bids included having more inspectors than RVE.

Councilman Branson made a motion to award the bid to RVE, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

The award will be submitted to the Maryland Board of Public Works for approval for final award and to begin the design phase.

Agenda #9 - Census 2020

Mr. Mulrine shared that the Census was a priority discussion held during the Maryland Municipal League Conference. Staff is serving on the Caroline County Census Complete County Committee, working to ensure that all residents are counted during the Census coming in the spring. Residents will be encouraged to complete the Census electronically this time around.

Councilwoman Wilson spoke on the importance of every resident being counted and the benefits to the community.

Agenda #10 - 2020 Health Benefits Enrollment

Staff shared that the Open Enrollment for Employee Health Benefits for the Plan Year Beginning January 1, 2020 begins October 15, 2019 and ends on November 14, 2019. For the third year in a row the rates remain the same, with the only exception of a slight increase in Delta Dental Coverage. The FY20 Budgets included a projected 7% increase for 6 months. Since the rates did not increase, staff estimates a possible \$16K reduction in anticipated benefit costs.

No action was taken on this item, informational only.

Miscellaneous

October 19th American Legion Post 29 is hosting a PTSD awareness event.

November 8, 2019 – 1st Annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast will be held at St. Luke's Church.

Mr. Patrick Allison, resident of 303 Sydney Lane, and Founder of the Agape Project shared upcoming events and solicited participants for the Caroline Jail 'N Bail Fundraiser to benefit the Agape Project and the Caroline County Family YMCA, scheduled for December 7th.

Councilmembers and the Police Dept. will follow back up with Mr. Allison regarding the event.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*