

June 4, 2020

This meeting was held online using Microsoft Teams Meeting Format – access to the meeting was made available on the Town website.

Mayor McNinch called the Regular Meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 7:00 PM on this date, welcoming everyone for joining in on the meeting.

Mayor McNinch lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor McNinch read a quote from Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Monk and Peace Activist on the importance of hope. Mayor McNinch asked for a moment of reflection of hope, hope for the health and strength for our community and for our country, may we find a healing positive path forward.

A moment of reflection was held.

Roll Call

Mayor McNinch conducted roll call and asked that the record reflect that all Councilmembers were attending this online meeting.

Staff attending the meeting included: Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, Karen Monteith, Clerk-Treasurer, Chief Rodney Cox, Lt. George Bacorn, David Renshaw, Phil Clark, and Mark Chandler.

Mr. Chris Drummond, Town Attorney, joined in on the meeting around 7:15PM.

Minutes

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2020 Regular Meeting as presented; seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Councilman Branson made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2020 Special Meeting and Working Session, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearings.

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation – Denton Senior Class of 2020

Mayor McNinch announced that the Denton Town Council wishes to congratulate all Denton students for working hard to finish out the school year. The class of 2020 completed their senior year under unusual circumstances due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Councilman Johnson read a Proclamation congratulating and recognizing the High School Graduates of the Class of 2020, that will be provided to each of the graduates residing within the Town limits.

Councilmembers Wilson, Lister and Branson took turns reading the names of the North Caroline High School Class of 2020 students residing in Town.

Mayor McNinch also congratulated Margaret Hannah Quick who is a 2020 Graduate of Mercersburg Academy.

Caroline County States Attorney's Office Monthly Report

The States Attorney's Monthly Activity Report for May was not available.

National Park Service - Easton-Clayton Rail Line Opportunities

Mayor McNinch shared a letter received from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources announcing the new project of the Maryland Park Service, seeking the Town's interest in participating in the planning for the Frederick Douglass Rail Trail.

The Council asked to discuss this item further during a future Working Session.

Ordinances and Resolutions

None

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Councilman Johnson provide some updated the COVID-19 and the impacts to the area, restaurant's, and businesses.

Discussion included the District 36 upcoming petition to the Governor being held at the Fisherman's Inn, and Congressman Andy Harris's visit to Harry's recently.

Discussion was held pertaining to Freedom of Speech, protest in Town and making sure the Town is transparent.

Chief Cox shared that he has received an inquiry about holding a peaceful protest on Monday and is awaiting a permit application.

Mayor McNinch announced that the YMCA will be hosting a Parade to celebrate the Class of 2020 Graduating Seniors, the parade is scheduled to ride through the Town of Denton tomorrow around 11:00 AM.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- Water and Sewer Allocation Approval

The Town Attorney provided additional comments regarding the water and sewer allocation approval last month with a twelve-month sunset provision for Denton RT 404, LLC. Wanting to make the Council aware of a statutory requirement listed in the Town Code, stating that as long as the project continues moving forward as is projected there should not be any need for the Council to amend the action taken last month.

Mr. Mulrine shared that the Utility Commission is working on hiring a consultant to review the Code and recommend updates.

This item was on for discussion and no action was taken to change the Council's previous approval.

Agenda #2 –Caroline Summerfest 2020

Mrs. Karen Monteith, Clerk-Treasurer, announced that the Caroline Summerfest Production Committee, which consist of the Caroline County Recreation and Parks Department and the Town of Denton have made a final decision to cancel this year's annual Summerfest Event. The decision is due to the COVID-19 restrictions and for the safety of the staff, volunteers, vendors, and the community, the Committee Members felt this was necessary and looks forward to next year.

Mayor McNinch and several Council members expressed their support of the Committee's decision.

New Business

Agenda #1 – Choptank Electric Cooperative Member Regulation Vote

Mr. Mulrine, Town Administrator, shared a request from Choptank Electric Cooperative ballot asking members if they approve operating Choptank Electric as a Member-Regulated Cooperative.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to allow Mayor McNinch to cast a vote for the Town, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #2 – Corporation Tax Abatement – Cappella Corporation

Finance Staff asked for consideration to write off uncollectible 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Corporation Taxes and late fees for Cappella Corporation in the amount of \$2,469.40. The business has been closed for a couple years and the State of Maryland

shows that the business entity was forfeited by the Comptroller in October 2018. Staff will flag the account, should the business be reestablished or an opportunity to collect becomes available.

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

Agenda #3 - Corporation Tax Abatement – Caroline Performance

Finance Staff asked for consideration to abate the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Corporation Taxes and Late Fees assessed for Caroline Performance LLC \$658.92, due to this business being located outside the Town jurisdiction.

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

Agenda #4 - Corporation Tax Abatement – Choptank Design & Custom Furnishings, LLC.

Finance Staff asked for consideration to write-off uncollectible 2017-2018 Corporation Taxes and Late Fees for Choptank Design & Custom Furnishings LLC \$124.74. The owner has vacated the area, and the State records indicates the business was forfeited in 2017.

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

Back to NB #1 -Choptank Electric Cooperative Member Regulation Vote

Councilman Johnson added to his previous motion to authorize the Mayor to vote Yes to approved, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Agenda #5 - Police Holiday Hours – Carryover

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and scheduling changes some Officers of the Denton Police Department have been unable to use all their allotted holiday hours that will be expiring June 30, 2020. Finance Staff discussed policy with the Council and asked for consideration to allow a one-time exception, approving for any unused holiday hours to be carried forward into the next fiscal year, with the understanding they will schedule to use the hours within the next couple of months.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to allow the carryover as requested, seconded by Councilman Lister.

Discussion was held in which the Council instructed Department Supervisors to promote the use of excess accumulated leave for all employees before the end of the year.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch called for a vote on the motion to approve the carryover of holiday hours for the Police Officers.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #6 - Online Bill Pay - Fees

Mrs. Monteith provided an update on the new Online Bill Pay features that have been implemented for Utility Bill Payments and discuss establishing a fee policy to offset cost associated with this new service being provided and merchant fees so as to not burden those residents that may not use the service. Presently the fee assessed at the counter for credit/debit card payments is 1.75%.

Councilman Lister made a motion to establish a fee of 1.75% to match the counter rate, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Staff will monitor the cost associated with providing the online feature to ensure the fee covers the expenses.

Agenda #7 - Water and Sewer Allocation

Mid-Atlantic Real Estate Investments, Inc., submitted a request seeking an extension for the previously approved allocation for (5.5) ERU's for the proposed new retail building to be located on the existing pad site at the Denton Plaza. Commercial building plans are currently under review, and the existing approved allocation expires on 6/6/2020.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the request for Mid-Atlantic Real Estate Investments, Inc., seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Discussion was held about the project and adding a sunset clause.

Councilman Lister amended his motion to add a 1-year sunset clause. Councilman Johnson seconded the amended motion, which passed unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer provided an update on the proposed permitting software, seeking another month to review, before making a final recommendation to acquire.

Mr. Mulrine, Chief Cox, and Lt. Bacorn provided an update on the proposed downtown parking changes, meters, etc. The Police Dept. is working on finalizing an Ordinance to be presented to the Council soon.

Discussion was held on the Downtown Business, Farmers Market, Third Thursday Events, and ideas on how to promote and plan for the recovery of the downtown.

Discussion on accommodating the COVID-19 restrictions and getting the Council back to meeting in the Town Hall for the June 22 Working Session.

Garbage collection efforts and concerns were discussed. Discussion will continue at the June 22 Working Session.

Mr. Mulrine provided an update on the Caroline County Health Department Officer resignation and interim replacement.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 8:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*