

April 7, 2022

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 Councilwoman Wilson was attending virtually and all the other Councilmembers were present in person.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2022 Working Session, March 3, 2022 Regular Meeting, March 9, 2022 Southern States Community Outreach Meeting, March 28, 2022 Executive Session, and Working Session as presented; seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation – Child Abuse Prevention Month

Councilman Johnson read and presented a Proclamation to Mr. Patrick Allison, from CASA of Caroline proclaiming April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Citation – Eagle Award Jacob Hulbert

Councilman Johnson read a Citation that he had previously presented to Jacob Hulbert from Boy Scout Troup 165 for earning his Eagle Scout Award. The ceremony was held on March 26, 2022.

Citation – Best in Business Awards

The Council recognized the following Denton businesses for receiving awards at the recent Caroline Chamber Best in Business Awards Dinner:

- *Shoreline Vinyl Systems – Business of the Year, read by Councilman Branson and presented to Mr. Anthony Casey.*
- *Purple Peake CBD – Innovative Excellence, read by Councilman Branson and presented to the Ritter Family.*
- *Edwards Driving Center – Rising Stars, read by Mayor McNinch and presented to Jason & Tierra Edwards.*
- *Earth Tones Café – Rising Stars, read by Councilman Johnson and presented to Kim Wood.*
- *Lynn Keckler – Citizen of the Year, read by Mayor McNinch and presented to Mrs. Stefanie Johnson on behalf of Lynn's family.*

Donation Request – His Hope Ministries

Councilman Johnson recused himself and left the room while his spouse spoke to the Council on behalf of His Hope Ministries.

Mrs. Stefanie Johnson, from His Hope Ministries, provided an overview of the programs and services they provide to the Community helping to end homelessness. Further explaining that they operate the local homeless shelter, senior housing, and a rapid rehousing program with funding received through grant programs and community donations.

Councilman Lister expressed that he is open to the thought of providing a donation from the Town for the services provided, however he would like to see their budget to be accountable to consider the request.

Mrs. Johnson thanked the Council for their time and will discuss providing a budget with the interim director for future discussion.

Councilman Johnson returned to the room.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance #733 – Property Maintenance Code Amendment

An Ordinance to amend the Town’s 2021 Property Maintenance Code – Chapter 94.

Councilman Branson made a motion to introduce Ordinance #733, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

In discussion, Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer provided a summary of the amendments.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch called for a vote on the motion to introduce Ordinance #733.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance #734 – FY2022 General Fund Appropriations

This item was discussed under New Business Item #9.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Councilman Johnson shared that the Council is close to passing their budget and talked about the County is planning to maintain the same tax differential going into next fiscal year.

Councilman Lister shared that the Utility Commission would like to hold a joint meeting with the Town Council in the future.

Councilman Lister shared that he received a call complimenting Denton Police Officers Mitzel and Snyder for their efforts in assisting a lost gentleman and helping him to get back to his home in Talbot County.

Councilman Branson asked for Citations to be prepared to be presented to the officers.

Mr. Mulrine, Town Administrator, and Chief George Bacorn participated in reading the Maryland Municipal League 4th Grade “If I Were Mayor Essay Contest”.

Mayor McNinch shared that they will be reading the finalist essays tomorrow.

Mr. Mulrine serves on the MML Banner City Committee and provided an update.

Chief Bacon serves on the Maryland PEA Committee and provided an update.

Chief Bacon shared that the Police Dept. recently investigated at Denton Elementary School to find the Leprechaun that had been vandalizing the classrooms.

Mr. Mulrine, Chief Bacorn and Emily Spencer attended the LGIT annual meeting today and shared that they anticipate about a five percent rate increase.

Mayor McNinch serves on the LGIT Claims Board and provided a summary of what the board does.

Mayor McNinch serves on the MML Legislative Committee and was happy to share that after 10 years of cuts, the Governor announced the Highway User Revenues are going to be fully restored over the next couple of years.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- Computer Equipment Upgrade

Following last month’s discussion, Staff provided additional information on the purchasing and replacing the multi-port ethernet switch at the Town Office.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve ordering the switch as presented, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #2 – Public Works Street Sweeper

Mr. Mulrine announced that Public Works would like to modify their request from the March 3, 2022, Town Council meeting, seeking approval to use ARPA funds instead of Capital funds for the \$5,213 in repairs to the street sweeper.

Councilman Lister made a motion to change the funding source for what was approved last month and to use ARPA Funds for the repair. The motion was seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Councilman Johnson asked to have an updated ARPA Budget at a future meeting.

New Business

Mayor McNinch chose to take Agenda item #9 first.

Agenda #9 - FY2023 General Fund Budget - CYTR

A draft of the FY2023 General Fund Budget and Appropriations Ordinance #734 was presented for discussion.

Discussion on the budget was held on reducing the real property tax rate to \$0.74 per \$100 of assessed value, amending the proposed PayScale.

The Council agreed to change the time for the April 18th Working Session to start at 3:00 PM, and to add a special meeting at 8:00 PM after the April 25th, Working Session that is scheduled to be held from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. The Special Meeting will be to consider the introduction of Ordinance #734, the FY23 General Fund Appropriations Ordinance. No action was taken.

Agenda #1 – Grant Amendment – DHCD Southern States Demo Grant

Mr. Mulrine presented an Amendment to the Department of Housing and Community Development Strategic Demolition Funding Program, extending the completion date for the work at the Southern States property until December 2022. The original completion date of the grant was June 2021. The town has \$30,315.00 left to spend of this grant.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the Mayor to sign the amendment, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #2 – 4th Street Park – Phase 1 Proposal

Mr. Mulrine presented a revised pricing proposal for Phase 1 of the 4th Street Park Project and gave a synopsis of the project.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement with Sparks@Play as presented, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #3 - Planning Commission Appointment

Staff requested the appointment of Mr. Joseph Mayer, Jr., to the Planning Commission as Alternate Planning Commission Member with a term to expire December 31, 2023.

Agenda #4 - Request for Additional ERU's

Mr. David Renshaw, announced that Davis Strategic of 322 Market Street, is requesting an additional 0.5 ERU's for additional plumbing fixtures for their tenants.

Mayor McNinch recently attended the regional Mayor Meeting and shared that the Town of Denton's table of use is very comparable with other municipalities.

Mr. Mulrine shared that staff has reached out to AquaLaw for assistance in researching ERU's and to help the Town review.

Councilman Lister said the Utility Commission has been discussing establishing an ordinance to hold ERU's for non-residential in an escrow.

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

Agenda #5 - Request for Additional ERU's

Mr. David Renshaw announced that Dr. Korah Pulimood, owner of 101 North 6th Street is proposing to add (1) additional efficiency apartment on the second floor and (1) additional commercial space on the first floor.

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

Agenda #6 - Board of Appeals Appointment

Staff requested the appointment of Ms. Mary Lori Schmidt to the Board of Appeals, for through December 31, 2022.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to appoint Ms. Schmidt as requested, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Ms. Schmidt was in the audience and thanked the Town Council for their support.

Agenda #7 - Town Office Window Replacement – Capital

Mr. Mulrine requested permission to move forward with replacing the windows on the 2nd Street side of the town office in the amount of \$15,000 with Capital funds as was included in the budget.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing with 4 votes, as Councilman Branson had stepped out of the room briefly.

Agenda #8 - LEOPS

The Preliminary Actuarial Study from the Maryland State Retirement – Law Enforcement Officer Pension System was presented for discussion and consideration.

Councilman Branson returned to the room.

Chief Bacorn and Mrs. Monteith explained the results of the study to transfer nine officers of the Denton Police Department from the Maryland State Retirement EPS to the Law Enforcement Officers Pension Program. The cost to prepare the final valuation is approximately \$7,000. The State advised on April 1st that they would need to know the Town intent by tomorrow, April 8th.

It was the consensus of the Mayor, Councilman Lister, Councilman Johnson, and Councilman Branson to move forward to the next step. Councilwoman Wilson shared that she would like to hold off and work to balance the budget.

Councilman Lister made a motion to move forward and expend the funds for the final valuation to be completed. The motion was seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #10 - Public Works Well 3 Emergency Motor Replacement

Mr. Mark Chandler, Supervisor of Water and Wastewater Operations, announced that they had do an emergency replacement of the motor at Well 3 this week. The final invoice has been received and came in under the original quote of \$19,060.00 that was discussed at the March 28, 2022 Working Session.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve replacing the well motor at \$13,951, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Mr. William Behlke, owner of River Run Cruises asked the Council to be placed on the May agenda to discuss moving his business to the Crouse Park side of the river.

Mayor McNinch asked to have this placed on the April 25, 2022 Working Session and recommended Mr. Behlke send information on his proposal ahead of time so the Council can review his proposal in advance.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*