

April 25, 2022

Working Session

At 6:00 PM Mayor McNinch called the Working Session of the Denton Town Council to order on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and thanked everyone for coming.

Attendance:

Mayor McNinch asked for the record to reflect that all Councilmembers were present in person.

Staff in attendance included Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, Chief of Police George Bacorn, Phil Clark, Mark Chandler, David Renshaw, and Karen Monteith.

Discussion was held on the following:

Fiber Arts Center Board – 9 N 4th Street Property Renovations/Property Acquisition

Mrs. Victoria McConnell, President of the Fiber Arts Center, and Mrs. Catherine Spence spoke with the Council about the programs they offer, membership and events planned, and shared they would like to acquire the Hardee House at 7 N. 4th Street and take over the two business loans that the Caroline County Council of Arts currently has with the Town.

They shared that they need additional space to continue to have enough room to provide the classes and events they have planned and to grow their membership. As part of their vision, they discussed with the Council also taking over ownership of the Potter House at 9 N. 4th St., that is currently owned by the Town. The dwelling needs major renovations, and they would like to apply for grants and work to annex the Potter House and attach it to the Hardee House.

Mr. Mulrine mentioned the need to share their ideas with the Maryland Historic Trust to seek support and submit a Business Loan Application to go to the Business Loan Review Committee for consideration.

The Council supported the FACES ideas and asked them to bring a formal plan back for consideration.

YMCA

Mr. Mulrine shared a letter from the YMCA seeking donations of \$500 to be used to help provide quality outreach and assistance to their members and the community.

River Run Cruises

Mr. Bill Behlke, Owner of River Run Cruises spoke with the Council about his proposal to move his business across the river to the Crouse Park side. Discussion included needing to dredge the old basin, possibly putting in boat slips that could be rented out, gas tanks, working with the State to see about granting opportunities and having someone privately facilitate the boat slips.

The Council supported the idea and asked Mr. Behlke to come back with a formal plan and work with the Town Administrator and Downtown Main Street.

North Carolina High School – Donation Request

Mr. Mulrine shared a request from the North Carolina High School Class of 2023 seeking donations to help with the 2022 Grand March and Prom.

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His Hope Ministries – Donation Request

Mr. Loge Knight, Interim Director of His Hope Ministries, spoke with the Council about their donation request and shared some statistics. He estimated that 85-90% of the guest they serve through the Homeless Shelter Program are from Caroline County, and they are looking for ways to keep each of the municipalities in partnership with the services and needs of the community.

Mayor McNinch and Councilman Lister shared that the Town is working on creating a community grant program that would allow His Hope Ministries and other agencies providing a public service to apply for funding. For transparency, the application process will require submitting a balance sheet or budget and disclosure on what the funds will be used for, with the goal of supporting programs that are serving Denton residents.

Maryland Department of Transportation – Harmony Road Bridge Rehab Letter

Mr. Mulrine shared a letter received from MDOT regarding the Harmony Road Bridge Rehab Project, it is not located in Town and should not have any affect.

Denton Volunteer Fire Department – Budget Request

Denton Volunteer Fire Department Members - Dennis Porter, Trustee, and Ron Wieber, Treasurer provided an overview of their 2021 income and expenditures, operating status, and ongoing initiatives.

Mr. Wieber will pull together a draw request for the remaining \$28,288 contribution the Town has designated for DVFD to use for capital renovations and equipment. The Town's proposed FY2023 budget currently includes maintains the same level of contribution to DVFD for next year.

LEOPS – Resolution #885 & #886

Discussion was held on the proposal to transfer nine members of the Denton Police Department from the Maryland State Retirement Employees Pension System to LEOPS and the Resolutions that will be before the Council later this evening for consideration.

FY2023 General Fund Budget – Appropriation Ordinance #734

The third draft of the FY23 General Fund Budget was presented with the changes discussed at the prior working session. Discussion was held pertaining to reducing the real property tax rate from \$.76 to \$.74 per \$100 of assessment, new PayScale, Appropriations Ordinance, and the Constant Yield Tax Rate Public Hearing.

Ordinance #733 - Property Maintenance Code Amendment

Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer provided a summary of Ordinance #733.

Permitting Software for Planning & Codes

Mr. Renshaw presented three bids for purchasing a Permitting Software Program for the P&C Department. Discussion was held on the different companies, interfacing with the Finance Software.

Councilman Lister mentioned another company to contact for a bid as well.

ARPA Report

Mr. Mulrine provided an updated American Recovery Plan Act Budget and advised that the first report is being prepared to be submitted by Mann Consulting.

Discussion was held regarding the marketing, working with Mrs. Clemens from DDMS and looking at plans from other Municipalities.

The Grit Machine and one blower have been ordered.

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Waiting for the engineering report for the water line portion of the budget.

Public Works Bucket Truck

Mr. Mulrine mentioned that Choptank Electric has offered to sell the Town a bucket truck that can be purchased using the ARPA Funding.

Mr. Phil Clark, Superintendent of Public Works, added that this would be an upgrade from what the Town currently has.

Waste Pump Replacement

Discussion was held with Mr. Mark Chandler, Superintendent of Utilities, and Mr. Mulrine pertaining to a waste pump that needs to be replaced and reallocating the funds that were designated for the grit machine that was purchased using ARPA funds.

Mr. Chandler also shared that they are having issues with the Well Pump on #6, he has a specialist coming to test it, but feels that it will need to be replaced soon.

WWTP Sludge Process RFP Bids

Discussion was held on making some upgrades to the sludge removal process and the RFP for preliminary engineering will be put out soon.

Miscellaneous

Councilman Lister recommended the Council send the RFP and Job Description for administrative changes to Staff for review.

Mrs. Audrey Clemens and Mrs. Paula Wright of the Downtown Denton Mainstreet announced that they just received notice that DDMS was awarded \$99,500 through the Community Safety Works Business District Improvement Grant.

With no further comments, Mayor McNinch adjourned the Working Session at 8:00 PM to move on to the Special Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk-Treasurer*