

*August 3, 2023*

**Regular Meeting**

*Mayor McNinch called the Regular Meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 6:00 PM on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.*

*Mayor McNinch held a moment of silence in memory of JOK Walsh, who recently passed.*

*Invocation was given by Pastor Meghan Knight, of the Denton Church of the Brethren.*

*Mayor McNinch thanked everyone for coming and asked that the record reflect that Councilman Lister and Councilman Branson were absent. All other Councilmembers were present.*

*Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2023 Regular Meeting as presented; seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.*

*Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2023 Working Session as presented; seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.*

*Councilman Johnson took a moment to celebrate Chief George Bacorn's Birthday, and to also acknowledge Scott Getchell's 1<sup>st</sup> year anniversary of signing the contract to be the Town Administrator.*

**Public Hearing**

**Ordinance #747 – Ethics Amendment**

*Mayor McNinch opened a public hearing at 6:07 PM to receive public comments on Ordinance #747 – An Ordinance of the Town of Denton revising and amending Chapter 14 of the Town Code Pertaining to Ethics to maintain compliance with the State Ethics Regulations.*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the State: there were none*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the County: there were none*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the Council: there were none*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the Public: there were none*

*With no further comments, Mayor McNinch closed this public hearing at 6:07 PM.*

**Ordinance #748 – Sewer Rate Amendment**

*Mayor McNinch opened a public hearing at 6:08 PM to receive public comments on Ordinance #748 – An Ordinance of the Town of Denton revising the sewer rates for users of the Municipal Sewer System.*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the State: there were none*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the County: there were none*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the Council: Councilman Johnson stated that the proposed rates will still be less than what was projected in the 2018 study, and that is due to a great effort of staff and the Utility Commission members.*

*Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the Public: there were none*

*With no further comments, Mayor McNinch closed this public hearing at 6:09 PM.*

**Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication**

**Proclamation – Caroline Summerfest 2023**

*Mayor McNinch read for the record a Proclamation in joining with the Caroline County Commissioners to recognize the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Caroline Summerfest Event that will take place August 18 & 19, 2023 in downtown Denton, and encouraged everyone to attend.*

**Eagle Scout Citations**

Mayor McNinch read for the record Town Council Citations to recognize Om Korat and Chris Ireland for earning their Eagle Scout awards. The Citations will be presented during the Eagle Scout Ceremony scheduled to take place August 12, 2023 at the Wharves of the Choptank Visitor Center.

**Proclamation – Little League Winners**

Councilman Johnson announced that Proclamations will be presented during Summerfest to recognize the All Star 8-10 Division District 6 Champions, the All Star Senior Division District 6 Champions, and the Caroline Major's All Star District 6 Champions, Coaches and Volunteers.

**Letter to the Maryland General Assembly**

Chief Bacorn provided a letter to the Council for consideration for approval to be sent to the Maryland General Assembly requesting a repeal of Senate Bill 691 pertaining to juvenile minor law infractions.

Councilman Johnson approved executing and sending the letter as presented, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

**Letter of Support for Industrial Park Expansion**

Mr. Scott Getchell, Town Administrator, provided a summary of a conversation with Caroline County Commissioner Travis Breeding in which the Caroline County Commissioners have requested a letter of support for their Industrial Park Expansion Project.

Councilman Johnson shared that following a discussion he had with Commissioner Breeding that he supports sending the letter.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to sign a letter of support as requested, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

**Ordinances and Resolutions**

**Ordinance #747 – Ethics Amendment**

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton revising and amending Chapter 14 of the Town Code pertaining to Ethics to maintain compliance with the State Ethics Laws.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to adopt Ordinance #747, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

**Ordinance #748 – Sewer Rate Amendment**

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton revising the sewer rates for users of the Municipal Sewer System. Based on the recent Utility Rate Study conducted of the Town's Water and Sewer Rates, the Denton Utility Commission hereby recommends a sewer rate increase in an effort to stabilize the Sewer Fund.

Councilman Taylor made a motion to adopt Ordinance #748, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

In discussion, Mr. Getchell provided some background, stating that upon a review of the Rate Study, the Utility Commission has recommended increasing the Sewer Base Fee from \$41 to \$50 per quarter, and to increase the usage fee from \$7 per 1,000 gallons of usage to \$8 per 1,000 gallons of usage. Mr. Getchell explained the need to adjust the rates to keep the Sewer Fund sustainable. The Water Fund is doing good.

Councilman Johnson added that the 2018 Study recommended for the Sewer Base Fee to go to \$71 per quarter by now, and the 2023 Study shows that \$50 is needed to sustain and cover the cost of the sewer operations.

Councilman Johnson requested the Town send out a letter or publish the Study, so the Public knows why there is going to be an increase.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion on the floor to adopt Ordinance #748.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Unfinished Business**

None

**New Business**

**Agenda #1 – FY24 Highway Fund Budget**

The FY2024 Highway Fund Budget was presented for discussion and consideration of adoption.

Mr. Getchell provided an overview of the Budget.

Councilman Taylor made a motion to adopt the FY24 Highway Fund Budget as presented, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #2 – FY24 Enterprise Fund Budgets – Water & Sewer**

Based on the recommendation of the Denton Utility Commission, the FY2024 Water Fund and Sewer Fund Budgets were presented for discussion and consideration of adoption.

Mr. Getchell provided an overview of the Water Fund and Sewer Fund Budgets; sharing the 5-year capital plan, mentioning that the Water Fund has a healthy reserve, and the rate increase will help make the Sewer Fund sustainable.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to adopt both the FY24 Water Fund Budget and the FY24 Sewer Fund Budget, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #3 - DHCD Amended Agreement**

Mr. Getchell provided an Amended Agreement outlining the use of left over funds from DHCD for the Southern States Project that will be used for demolition for the 9 N 4<sup>th</sup> Street Project. This was approved by the Council during the January 5, 2023 meeting; however, the revised agreement was just recently received for the Mayor to sign.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the Mayor signing the agreement, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

**Agenda #4 – Downtown Denton Main Street Office Lease Agreement, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

The Downtown Denton Main Street Office is currently located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 323 Market Street. The Main Street Director would like to move to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor office space located at the back of the building. This will be on a month-to-month basis, with the lease amount remaining the same as the previous lease. This proposal was presented for discussion and consideration.

The Council took no action on this item, requesting to schedule a time to hold a conversation with the DDMS Board Members before making any changes.

**Agenda #5 - HotDesk Lease Renewal**

The Downtown Denton Main Street Organization continues to manage the HotDesk Program at 323 Market Street in Denton. Their lease expires this month, and they would like to renew the lease to continue the program. The lease presented has been modified to a month-to-month lease and the same rent amount as the previous lease.

The Council took no action on this item, pending scheduling a conversation with the DDMS Board Members.

**Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees**

*Mayor McNinch announced that Mr. Getchell and Chief Bacorn will be joining her to attend the Maryland Municipal League Summer Symposium on Cannabis on Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>.*

*Mayor McNinch announced that the MML Legislative Committee will be meeting soon to discuss the 2024 Legislative Priorities, right now they are looking at Tax Differential, Police Reform and Accountability Board.*

**Miscellaneous**

*Angel Perez, CEO of the Caroline Pride Organization, approached the Council to ask about some concerns he heard about the Pride Festival being held on Memorial Day Weekend.*

*Mayor McNinch shared that the Council had held a conversation regarding Memorial Day, being about memorializing Veterans and being considerate of not taking away from the reason for Memorial Day Weekend.*

*Mr. Perez explained why they chose that weekend. He also shared that the Festival brings economic development to the business downtown and talked about security and emergency planning for events.*

*Mayor McNinch thanked Mr. Perez for his comments.*

*With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 7:18 PM.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen L. Monteith,  
Clerk - Treasurer*