

November 7, 2024

Regular Meeting

Mayor McNinch thanked everyone for coming and 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.

Invocation was given by Pastor Thomas Fisher, Abrams Memorial Church.

Mayor McNinch asked that the record reflect that Councilman Branson and Councilman Taylor were absent, and that everyone else was present in person.

Mayor McNinch announced the Town Election was held earlier this week in which Councilman Branson was reelected receiving the most votes. Mayor McNinch thanked both candidates for their efforts, and for all the residents that came out to vote.

Public Hearing

Mayor McNinch opened a public hearing at 6:03 PM to receive public comments on Ordinance #756 - An Ordinance of the Town of Denton amending Chapter 120 of the Town of Denton Code to authorize the Town to issue parking permits for parking in metered parking spaces pursuant to specific rules and regulations to be established by Resolution.

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 the Ordinance is striking one word "residential".

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

With no further comments, Mayor McNinch closed this public hearing at 6:04 PM.

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication**Proclamation – Municipal Government Works Month**

Mayor McNinch read a Proclamation recognizing November as Municipal Government Works Month.

Citation – Purple Peake CBD Celebrates 5 years in Business

Councilman Johnson read and presented a Town Council Citation to Robin Ritter in celebration of Purple Peake CBD's upcoming 5-year anniversary of being in business in Denton.

Ms. Ritter shared that they are very happy to be here in Denton and so glad to have the community supporting them.

LGIT Safety Grant Presentation

Mr. Matthew Peter, Executive Director of the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT), presented LGIT's Training Grant Award of \$2,500 to Mark Chandler, Superintendent of Public Works. Mr. Chandler will use the funds to attend the Train the Trainer Program to achieve a Flagger Training Certification.

Ordinances and Resolutions**Ordinance #756 – Parking Permits**

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton amending Chapter 120 of the Town of Denton Code to authorize the Town to issue parking permits for parking in metered parking spaces pursuant to specific rules and regulations.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to adopt Ordinance #756, seconded by Councilman Lister.

Mrs. Lyndsey Ryan, the Town Attorney provided a summary of the Ordinance.

Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to adopt Ordinance #756.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance #757 – Mobile Food Service Vendors

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton amending the Denton Code to add provisions to Chapter 92 regulating mobile food service vendors within the Town of Denton to promote public health, safety and welfare.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to introduce Ordinance #757, seconded by Councilman Lister.

In discussion, Mrs. Ryan provided an explanation of the Ordinance and shared the revisions added since the initial discussion on the draft was held at the October meeting.

Councilman Johnson questioned the no parking within 20 feet of an intersection, and requested to make sure the language is consistent with State Law, which he believes to be 30 feet, to avoid any conflicts. He also questioned peddling in public places, concerned that could be misinterpreted for non-government owned property.

Mrs. Ryan will make the change to state public property, instead of public places, and she will amend the distance for parking from intersections from 20' to 30' before adopted.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to introduce Ordinance #757.

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution #899 – Parking Permits

A Resolution adopting rules and regulations concerning the issuance of parking permits for a limited number of parking spaces on First and Second Street between Market and Gay Streets and on Market Street between Second and First Streets.

Mrs. Ryan provided an overview of the Resolution and changes from the previous discussion.

Discussion was held on the area for allowing permitted parking, parking enforcement, the loss of revenue, accessing a \$25 annual fee for each permit at a minimum to help offset administration costs, type of permit, and whether to try this for one year to see how it works.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the adoption of Resolution #899, with a modification of charging \$25 a year for each parking space permit. The motion was seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- Denton PD – CCSO Office Training Center and Firearms Range

Chief Bacorn re-submitted the request seeking an allocation of funds to assist with improvements to the Caroline County Sheriff's Office Training Center and Firearms Range and for the Town to enter into an agreement with the Caroline County Sheriff's Office to use the Training Center/Shooting Range.

Chief Bacorn and Mrs. Ryan shared the modification to the Agreement, that coincides with changes requested by the Council previously.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve and authorize the Chief of Police or Town Administrator to Execute the CCSO Training Center/Shooting Range Use Agreement, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

New Business

Agenda #1 – Tax Differential Letter

The annual Tax Differential request letter to be issued to the Caroline County Commissioners was presented for review and approval for the Mayor to sign.

Councilman Lister made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the letter, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Mayor McNinch stated that this is a request for the County to consider giving a tax differential to Denton property owners to offset for double taxation that occurs when property owners are paying taxes to the Town and the County for services that only the municipalities provide.

Councilman Lister stated that some may question why their taxes are constantly increasing and wanted to clarify that the Town has lowered the tax rate for several years in a row to account for rising assessments. And while the Town has lowered tax rates, the County has allowed revenues to increase, and they have not lowered their tax rate. The Town feels it is necessary to continue to provide excellent services.

With no further comments, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion authorizing the execution of the annual tax differential letter.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #2 – Public Works- Purchase of a new Utility Truck for WWTP

Mr. Chandler submitted a request seeking approval to purchase a 2024 Ram 3500 Utility Truck with an industrial crane. This truck will replace the 2007 Utility Truck that is used to remove and haul pumps, water and sewer equipment, and to plow snow. Mr. Chandler stated he requested three quotes; two responded and one did not. Fred Frederick Chrysler of Easton was the lowest bidder at \$107,885. This truck will take approximately 9 months to receive once ordered. The amount of \$130,000 was approved in the FY25 Water and Sewer Budgets.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the purchase from Fred Frederick, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Agenda #3 - Public Works Purchase of a New Street Sweeper

Mr. Getchell and Mr. Chandler submitted a request seeking approval to purchase a new street sweeper to replace the existing street sweeper. The proposed new sweeper is a Ravo brand that uses state-of-the-art vacuum technology that surpasses that of our existing sweeper. Additionally, the fuel efficiency is much higher than other sweepers we have researched. Public Works has received price quotes for 4 different models and found the Ravo unit to be the most economical and user friendly. The cost of this sweeper selected will be \$313,298 which will be paid for by remaining ARPA funds.

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

Agenda #4 - Planning Commission Appointment

Mr. James Guay submitted a letter of interest to serve on the Planning Commission. There is a vacancy on the Planning Commission for an Alternate Commission Member in which the term will expire December 31, 2028.

Councilman Lister made a motion to appoint Mr. Guay, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Mr. Guay was present and shared that he has been living in Denton for about 3 years and really likes the community and would love the opportunity to serve.

With no additional comments, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to appoint Mr. Guay to fill the alternate position on the Planning Commission.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #5 - Vendor Request to Operate on Public Property

Mr. Victor Reynolds asked the Town Council for permission to operate a hot dog and sausage food cart at Town Parks and Market Street Green on Sundays, Thursdays, and Saturdays between 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Councilman Lister questioned the timing of the Ordinance becoming effective, the Town Administrator having the authority to approve.

Mrs. Ryan mentioned that the Ordinance is for food trucks, and this falls under peddling, and this request requires the Council's approval to use Town property.

Councilman Johnson recused himself due to his serving as the President of the CASA Board in which Mr. Reynolds is employed.

Councilman Lister made a motion to provide a 90-day approval for the sites requested, provided all the necessary licenses and permits are in place. The motion was seconded by Mayor McNinch. The motion passed with 2 votes, and 1 abstention.

Mr. Reynolds invited everyone to attend the Veterans Day Breakfast at the Denton Diner tomorrow morning being hosted by CASA.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Mayor McNinch publicly acknowledged and thanked the Town's Election Judges and staff for all their dedication in managing this years Town Election.

Mayor McNinch and Mr. Getchell have been attending the Maryland Municipal League's Fall Conference in Cambridge this week. Sharing highlights of the conference and added that she and Scott met with the Comptroller today. The Comptroller really championed the Town's efforts in seeking funding for an up-to-date sludge removal process. Both are grateful for the Comptroller's support in seeking funding for the Town.

Mayor McNinch attended the State Funding Session which State Representatives shared that the Highway User Revenues should be safe for this coming year, however the State is looking at a \$2.2 billion dollar deficit at the State Level going into 2026. This could reduce the revenues the Town receives from the State.

Mayor McNinch and Mr. Getchell also attended a session on Fiber, mentioning that many agencies are earning revenues for the use of fiber. Denton is not currently earning revenues for fiber; however, the Utility Commission is looking into implementing a fee schedule for when the existing agreement times out.

Mayor McNinch shared there has also been discussion at the legislative meeting on audit requirements, and the cost for small municipalities costing almost as much as for larger cities. The State is exploring if there is a way that the cost of audits could be based on the size of the municipality.

Mr. Getchell shared that Mr. Kevin Waterman from the Planning Commission asked him thanked the Town for sending cards following the loss of his mother.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*