## Minutes of the Regular Town Council Meeting

**Monday, March 14, 2022**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Mayor Kathleen Lock. Council members in attendance were Bob Wood, Joanne Plescia and Larry Meinert. Due to the Covid-19 virus the meeting was held via Zoom link and in-person. Community members in attendance are shown on the attached sign in sheets.

Mayor Lock thanked everyone for attending and requested everyone remain on mute unless asked for input from the public. Further, the Mayor stated the order of Town meetings was being changed, per the memorandum sent a week prior, to better enable Council members to finish their work in a timely manner while listening to citizen input prior to addressing same. For record keeping, residents must give their name and street address prior to addressing everyone in attendance.

1. **Approval of the February 14, 2022 Town Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Larry Meinert and seconded by Bob Wood to approve the February 14, 2022 Town Council Meeting Minutes. **The motion carried unanimously, 4-0.**

1. **Approval of the March 14, 2022 Meeting Agenda**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Larry Meinert and seconded by Bob Wood to approve the March 14, 2022 Town Council Meeting Agenda. **The motion carried unanimously 4-0.**

1. **Correspondence:**

Mayor Lock read the resignation letter of Town Secretary, Ivan Lanier and asked residents to recognize his contribution to the Town Council and know he will be missed. In addition, a letter from Sussex County was read advising the Town that the County will provide a grant up to $100,000 from RTT funds in addition to offering a match to funds requested above this base level, attached.

Julia Geha, Town Manager read a letter from Senator Carper to the Mayor – attached.

1. **Public Comment:**

Jackson Gingrichmade a presentation showing the work that was done by DNREC including the scarp heights at each access road south of the firehouse and asking that the Town consider purchasing sand to do the job DNREC was not able to complete properly.

1. A **Motion** was made by Joanne Plescia and seconded by Bob Wood to nominate Harry Ward to take the position left open by Ivan Lanier’s resignation. Harry Ward accepted the nomination and Town Council voted. **The motion carried unanimously 4-0.**
2. **Reports:**
3. **Treasurer’s Report**

Joanne Plescia, reviewed the Reports, attached.

A **Motion** was made by Bob Wood to accept the Treasurer’s Reports pending audit and seconded by Harry Ward.

**The Motion passed 5-0**

1. **Streets Report**

Jimmy Dalton reported that all is in good order at this time.

1. **Building Inspector’s Report:**

Bob Wood reviewed the report, attached.

1. **Tax Collector’s Report**

Joanne Plescia advised we don’t have a report for this month as our tax collector has changed and she is allowing some time for the transition.

1. **Memorial Fire Company**

Bill Tobin – we had six fires, 19 ambulance calls with 10 transports, one public assist on the beach and two cancellations.

1. **Mayoral and Council updates**

Resilient and Sustainable Communities League (RASCL) – no update

Association of Coastal Towns – no update

Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT) – Senator Sarah McBride explained a family paid-leave act she is sponsoring which will provide 12 weeks of paid leave. Passage will make DE competitive with neighboring states. The act will cover maternity, paternity, and leave to care for family members.

Delaware League of Local Governments (DLLG) – no update.

1. **Sewer District**

Mayor Lock advised our Application and Notice of Intent was submitted to the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council (WIAC) and we hope they can take it up at their next meeting on June 1, 2022.

1. **Grants and on-going projects**
2. **University of Delaware Hydrology Study** – Mayor Lock – The report was due (again) yesterday and there is movement so it is expected to come through very soon.
3. **Sea Grant** – Mayor Lock – the Mayor has a meeting tomorrow at 4:30pm and will update next month.
4. **Anchor Engineering** – Mayor Lock - The detritus has been covered over by sand which leaves us unable to go after a Grant because the habitat is now viable.
5. **WIIN Project/PEW Charitable Trust** – The Mayor and Vice Mayor will attend a meeting in two weeks and have an update at the next meeting.
6. **Beach Nourishment/SHORRE Act**

**Kathy Lock**  - this act is sponsored by Senator Carper and Representative Blunt Rochester and has been presented to both houses of Congress. This is a bi-partisan bill. The acronym stands for Shoreline Health Oversight Restoration Resilience and Enhancement. This bill will modify the Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials (BDM) and allow the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to find alternative sand borrow sources, make Delaware’s bayshore a priority, and allow the Corps to make emergency repairs without an accompanying Act of Congress.

1. **Updating the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)** – Joanne Plescia advised this is ongoing, there has been one meeting with the fire department and there will be more**.** Town Council will consider having block captains for managing information reference residents needs in an emergency.
2. **DelDot** – repaired the culvert and put a skim coat but weather prevented proper road repair. DelDOT will return in the Spring to put a final coat on the road. At the same time DelDOT has assured the Town that they will raise the west side of Cedar Creek Road at the curve beyond the bridge, but no timeline has been set.
3. **New Business**
	1. **Joanne Plescia** advised the Town has opened a bank account at Community Bank which will house all of Slaughter Beach tax monies and we will close the M&T Bank Account. Also, Jennifer Cornell will be handling all property tax billings from today forward.

**A Motion** was made to approve Kathleen Lock and Joanne Plescia as bank signatories for the new bank account at Community Bank. Motion was made by Joanne Plescia and seconded by Bob Wood.

**The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.**

* 1. A **Motion** was made by Harry Ward to sign a Resolution making Memorial Fire Company the official fire and emergency service provider for Slaughter Beach and was seconded by Bob Wood.

**The Motion passed unanimously by a vote of 5-0**

* 1. Discussion of Sussex County Council approval of Realty Transfer Tax (RTT) distribution to Municipalities. Council has until May 28th to apply for $100,000 grant for beach infrastructure. Requests over that amount must have a 50% town match. Question: did DNREC advise what they spent on beach replenishment? Answer, DNREC will not say what they spent but we spent $75,000 over a year ago. County Council doesn’t believe beach replenishment is a public safety issue. The RTT money is authorized by the State Legislature. Ideas discussed included paving the access roads, working with the fire company on an emergency notification system, burying the electric lines on Bay Avenue, improving telecommunications systems, building a drainage ditch in the 500 block (this is DelDOT) and purchasing reflective signs for each home address to enable the fire department to more easily locate addresses.
	2. Discussion on the Possibility of hiring a **Grant Proposal Writer -** Larry Meinert advised that grant writing is a profession that can potentially bring extra monies to the Town and manage the monies we are finding. Larry Meinert will put together an RFP.
	3. Discussion on the possibility of hiring a **Police Officer** Joanne Plescia advised that this came up as a result of a conversation about Jobs4Blue (the Town contract with the State Police) and that the State Police doesn’t seem to do much beyond park at the fire house during hours when there is little known threat. Joanne will follow up with the State Police to see if we can work out better hours of coverage.
	4. Discussion on the possibility of hiring a firm to assist in the purchase and installation of **telecommunications equipment** – Council is still in the early stages.
	5. **Discussion and update on Sussex County property tax assessments** – Bob Wood advised the State of Delaware is going to reassess every home in Delaware and the County hired the firm of Tyler Technologies to undertake the effort. All properties were last reappraised in 1974 so they do not accurately reflect today’s property values. Council will be notified when Tyler Technologies will be in Town and will notify residents in advance of their visit. Since the town relys on County appraisals for property tax billings, Harry Ward suggested the Council should (in advance) consider how to lower the town tax rate to off-set the potential hit homeowners will suffer after the appraisals are completed.
	6. **Discussion and update on DNREC permit for stairs to the beach** – Kathy Lock advised that DNREC agreed on one permit as long as the onus was placed on the Town Council for regulatory enforcement. This is unacceptable so all residents that want stairs should complete individual permits online. Please copy Bob Clendaniel-Zoning/Code Official.
	7. **Discussion on Turtle Crossing sign** – Julia, Town Manager, advised the signs previously used were donated and fell apart. She located a firm able to make the signs for $35 each and asked if the fire company could add wording on their electronic sign notifying the public to slow down and watch for turtles. Bill Tobin, Fire Dept., agreed immediately. Joanne Plescia made a **Motion** to buy six turtle crossing signs at $35 each and was seconded by Larry Meinert.

**The Motion passed unanimously by a vote of 5-0.**

* 1. **Discussion of drainage issues in the 590 block of Bay Avenue** – The Mayor recommended we discuss what DelDOT needs to move forward and possibly suggest the Town make sure all affected parties are in agreement BEFORE asking DelDOT to do engineering work to correct the problem.
1. **Upcoming Events:**
* March 19th Saturday, DNREC will be here for beach grass planting – meet at the Pavilion at 9am. There is a beach grass planting sign-up on DNREC’s website and the bathrooms will be opened from this date. The Town will also have 100 bundles of beach grass available to residents later in the week.
* April 2nd, Ed St. Jean from Adopt a Highway is looking for volunteers to clean Cedar Beach Road. Meet at 9am at the St. Jean residence on the corner of Cohee for coffee and donuts. The Fire Company has offered to assist with flashing lights to protect workers.
* Town Council Meeting April 11, 2022 at 7:00pm – depending on how Covid-19 and the flu is spreading in our area, we may move to Zoom only for this meeting.
* Memorial Fire Company is hosting a Fathers Day breakfast June 19th - $10 per person
* Memorial Fire Company Craft Fair hosted by the ladies Auxiliary to be held on July 2nd.
* Town Election is July 2nd at the Memorial Fire Company, details are on the website.
* 5K Greenhead race – September 18, 2022 – we are looking for volunteers!
1. Joanne Plescia made a **Motion** to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters in accordance with 29 Del. C @ 10004 (b)(9) and it was seconded by Harry Ward at 8:36pm.

**The Motion was passed unanimously, 5-0**

1. **Adjournment:**

**Motion**: A Motion was made by Joanne Plescia to adjourn the Meeting and was seconded by Bob Wood at 9:15 pm.

**The Motion passed unanimously, 5-0**