Minutes of the Regular Town Council Meeting Monday, November 13, 2023

# The Regular Town Council Meeting to Order:

Bob Wood called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Council members in attendance were Joanne Plescia, Jamie Draper and Ben Monastero in person with Harry Ward attending via zoom. The meeting was held via Zoom and in person, community members in attendance are shown on the attached sheets.

# Approval of the October 9, 2023, Town Meeting Minutes:

**Motion: A Motion** was made by Jamie Draper and seconded by Joanne Plescia to approve the October 9, 2023, Town Meeting Minutes.

# The Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

1. **Approval of the November 13, 2023, Meeting Agenda:**

**Motion: A Motion** was made by Joanne Plescia and seconded by Ben Monastero to approve the November 13, 2023, Town Council Meeting Agenda.

# The Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

1. **Correspondence:**

None to report.

# Reports:

* 1. **Treasurer’s Report:**

Joanne Plescia reported on the General Ledger, Grants and Profit & Loss Budget for FY24 to-date (reports attached) as well as RTT to-date and tax collection to-date.

A **Motion** was made to approve the Treasurer’s Reports pending audit or review by Jamie Draper and seconded by Ben Monastero.

# Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

* 1. **Tax Policy Change:**

Joanne Plescia introduced a recommendation to change our current tax policy by setting up a “base fee” of $25.00 per undeveloped lot in the Town of Slaughter Beach. Tax bills for many of these properties are $3 to $11 per lot, per year. It costs the Town money to produce the bills, track the payments, send mail, make phone calls for collection, etc. Council is hoping to get feedback from residents and property owners – so please email with comments.

* 1. **Waste Collection FY25**

Bob Wood advised the Town sent out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to four companies and received submissions from three, none of which are comparable as each submitted for different days of the week which change the pricing. Bob is working with each company to get a proposal from each that can be compared for a vote by Council. Further, it is

noted that all resident’s should recognize the new contract will include use of the arms only so the trash bins you currently use will be obsolete, and you will not be able to leave the cans in the holders – all cans must be at least five feet from any building, tree or other item so the arms don’t cause damage.

* 1. **Building Inspector’s Report:**

Ben Monastero read the report submitted by Bob Clendaniel (attached).

* 1. **Report/Tony Pratt:**

Tony Pratt reported that the USACE Section 1-11 study team joined him and Bob Wood on a boat tour courtesy of Captain Dave. They chose low tide and could see ample evidence of shoaling, beach loss, and how difficult it was to navigate the launch outside of the channel of the inlet and Cedar Creek. Looking at the beach on the north side they ran aground, entering the Mispillion by the Dupont Nature Center they couldn’t go because you could easily run aground. We are waiting for follow up from the Corps since that visit. DNREC did not join the tour. However, the team did get to see the detritus first-hand and they are going to continue the study which will advise their responsibility for the detritus but will not provide an action plan.

DNREC is pursuing an initiative that Secretary Garvin set up about six years ago to look at possible partnering with beach nourishment projects between ocean and bay beaches. DNREC has hired an economic consulting company that will run a program for approximately one year. This advisory group had its initial meeting earlier today and we gleaned information about how they want to move forward. DNREC will do a valuation of the beaches, the first since 2010 which showed an unfavorable metric for the state of Delaware to pay for nourishment of the Bay beaches. The Corps followed that with the DMU (Dredged Material Utilization) study which showed benefits and high degree of return on beach nourishment of the Bay beaches by the federal government.

We can expect this report to be delivered when a new governor is in place approximately a year down the road.

# Memorial Fire Company:

There was no update from the fire company.

1. **Mayor & Town Council Updates:**
2. **CLUP – Comprehensive Land Use Plan –** Every ten years the Town submits the CLUP to the State of Delaware, which is a detailed plan including our town map, plans for growth, ideals, grants we pursue for improvement, etc. The 5th year, we are expected to send in an updated plan. This is the fifth year and we have been gathering updated information to share with the State including a review of how we are progressing with the expectations previously set. Bill McSpadden has spearheaded this and our “goal” continues to be “preserve and protect our beach and marshes, wildlife”, etc.
3. **Cybersecurity** – Jamie Draper advised more than half of our Council and employees have completed the online courses and now will be subject to “phishing” by the state to see if anyone opens malware.
4. **Safety** – Jamie Draper requested that all drivers in town pay attention in the darkness, and that all walkers, runners and cyclists use reflective vests and lights to avoid accidents on our streets.
5. **New Maintenance Help** – May to November 1 annually we need help with cleaning restrooms, maintaining the pavilion, emptying garbage cans and other miscellaneous duties. Our current help has announced retirement, so if you are interested, please contact the office or your council.

# Old Business

# Grants and on-going projects:

1. **Oyster larvae project**: Slaughter Beach has a meeting this Thursday with DNREC to see if we are approved to operate the oyster larvae project and move forward with purchasing the set up needed.
2. **SCAT** – Sussex County Association of Towns – at the last meeting we learned that the University of Delaware has a research program to evaluate water depth at different tides and issues under the water. We are meeting with him in January to see if they would consider coming up to Slaughter Beach to look at the Mispillion River jetty.
3. **CRDS (Coastal Resiliency Design Studio)** – We received a preliminary look at the work that’s been done to-date, and we expect more information at the December meeting, and we will put this information on the website as it becomes available.
4. **Fire Department Painting of Parking lots** – this was completed by the fire company.
5. **Dumpsters** – we had our final and found that the last one was overflowing but we had a gentleman in town, Tim Kitchens, that cleaned up what was left on the road with his pickup truck and extend our thanks for his and everyone’s cooperation.
   1. **Sewers** – Bob Wood advised there is no update other than they expect completion in about three years, possibly less. They have met with the fire company to discuss location of their building and we believe that has gone well.
6. **New Business:**
   1. **State Hazard Mitigation Officers** (SHMO’s) from the mid-Atlantic will be meeting in Delaware at the end of November and thanks to Danielle Swallow, they have put a stop at Slaughter Beach on their Agenda. The advantage is these are representatives from DEMA, and FEMA from Virginia, DC, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware – and we will have an opportunity to show our challenges as well as our advantages.

# Upcoming Events:

* November 29th - Bookmobile returns at 12:45pm
* December 10 – Fire company Christmas party – Santa arrives via firetruck!
* December 11 – 7pm, next Town Council Meeting

1. **Open Forum**

* Patty M walked along Bay Avenue and believes it’s time for Delmarva Power to come and cut the branches around our power lines. Bob advised he would call and ask where we are in the rotation.
* Peggy C introduced the topic of Dark Skies and would like to have an educator to town to talk about the project;

1. **Adjournment:**

A **Motion** was made by Joanne Plescia and seconded by Ben Monastero to adjourn the meeting at 8:09pm.

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