



MINUTES

**Town of Smyrna
Council Meeting
Bi-Monthly Meeting
Monday, August 21, 2023, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Hybrid**

In Attendance

Dr. Corrine Upshur; Gerald Brown; Jason McNatt; Mary Bowers-Johnson;
Michael Rasmussen; Robert Johnson; Sheldon Hudson; Tabitha Gott; Torrie
James; Valerie Forbes; William Pressley

Not In Attendance

Danielle Pope

1. 7:00 PM - Call to order – regular meeting

Meeting was Called to Order by Major Robert Johnson

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Mayor Robert Johnson

3. Roll call

Mayor Johnson
Councilman Rasmussen
Councilman Pressley
Councilman Brown
Councilwoman Upshur
Councilwoman Forbes
Councilwoman Gott

Roll call taken by Mary Bowers-Johnson, Council Secretary

4. Additions/deletions to published agenda

8b. and 7c.

Move: Tabitha Gott Second: Michael Rasmussen Status: Passed

5. Consent agenda:

- a. Council minutes of 08/07/2023

Council Minutes were accepted.

Move: Tabitha Gott Second: Michael Rasmussen Status: Passed

- b. Executive session minutes of 08/07/2023

Executive Session Minutes accepted.

Consent Agenda was accepted.

Move: Tabitha Gott Second: Michael Rasmussen Status: Passed

c. Treasury Report

Treasury Report was accepted.

Move: Tabitha Gott Second: Michael Rasmussen Status: Passed

6. Non-agenda Items:

a. Mayor & Council Members

Mayor Johnson thanked everyone for all the well wishes why he was recuperating. He turned the balance of his time over to Doug Burns to speak about digitizing and the use of staff to scan documents and then send files to Public Archives.

Sheldon Hudson stated someone on council expressed some concerns about the original cost but that individual may see this as a compromise.

Mayor Johnson wanted to commend all of staff for doing such a good job. He asked Jason how the PW Department was doing as well as the Electric Department.

Councilwoman Gott shared dates of several event from now to the end of the year. School starts September 5th and 6th, Railroad Days in Clayton September 16th, Mayors Prayer Breakfast is November 4th, Homecoming September 20th, Autumn in Duck Creek starts on November 3rd with the Ghost Tours, then November 4th for car show, tractor show and family fun day, Veterans Day event in Town November 14th, Christmas Parade in Clayton will be on December 3rd and Christmas Tree Lighting December 10th in Municipal Park.

Chief James will be part of lighting ceremony.

Councilwoman Forbes spoke about the Shade Tree Commission planting trees in front of Town Hall and that should happen next year.

Councilman Rasmussen stated first Pension Review Committee on Wednesday, August 23rd in the Committee Conference Room.

Council Pressley had nothing.

Councilwoman Upshur spoke about 2 events. First and Huckabuck Farms giving out school supplies. Second, Powerhouse Ministries offering mental counseling for youths.

Councilman Brown thanked staff for all their work.

Mayor Johnson thanked Barrett for all his hard work.

b. Police Chief

Chief James spoke about the investigation at the post office stating there was a total of 100 charges. He spoke about "Cookies with Santa" and the next years schedule for First

Friday.

c. Town Manager

Sheldon Hudson spoke about Feet on the Street Recycling Program. P&I moving Sept. 14th and 15th.

7. Old business, including Discussions & Possible Action on the following items:

a. Stop signs at the intersection of Dorchester Court and Fayetteville Street in the Village of Lake Shore

Councilwoman Forbes spoke about the stop signs. Stated the Town paid a lot of money for the studies. She feels as though the Town should follow through with the study.

Major Johnson spoke about many other developments have speeding issues. He spoke about Locust Street. Stated there is not that many accidents in developments. Can not install speed bumps. To control speed in developments using electronic devises are too expensive.

Councilman Brown believes that the speeders in developments are actually residents. He spoke about future developments and public safety.

Chief James spoke about the choice to install stop signs and law enforcements position in monitoring the areas.

b. Stop signs on Bluegrass Boulevard and Pebble Creek Street

No discussion

c. Transfer of vacant property fees to Smyrna Slum and Redevelopment Authority for 2023

Sheldon Hudson stated the transfer will be \$150,000.00

Passed at 4-2

Move: Michael Rasmussen Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

d. Transfer of approved funds to the Smyrna Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Authority account

8. New Business, Including Discussion & Possible Action on the following Items:

a. Residential and Non-residential Vacant Property Fees (RDA)

Councilwoman Forbes stated she is in favor of raising the vacant property fees but respect the difference based on the size of the structure. Barrett Edwards spoke about Eminent Domaine which is not an option for privately owned structures.

Rick Horsey spoke about the RDA's position to make fee's fair based on structure. Also, there are no late fees for not paying the vacant property fees. Several staff and councilmembers would like to do a start over in 2024.

Sheldon Hudson spoke about 1 specific property with code violations and waiting to 2025 will only allow this to continue for another year and a half.

Jeremy Rothwell stated that bills go out in November and this needs to be run at least 2 times

Move: Michael Rasmussen Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

b. Street paving and bonding in Ashland Subdivision and Lake Como Woods

Removed from agenda

c. Reclassification of existing human resources position

Sheldon Hudson would like to take the existing safety position and changing it to an HR position.

Unfortunately, the Zoom was interrupted by a hacker using profanity and a video of a sexual nature. Zoom was ended by Town Manager Sheldon Hudson. Meeting continued without Zoom.

Councilwoman Upshur said that she knew people with HR experience. Councilman Rasmussen stated that the Town Manager should make the decision based on what is needed.

Sheldon Hudson stated that they are only reclassing a position, not creating a new position. Councilman Brown suggested cross training existing employees. Mayor Johnson stated that management should be allowed to make the decision.

Move: Tabitha Gott Second: Michael Rasmussen Status: Passed

9. Presentation and public comments (3 minutes)

None.

10. Other Council Business

Councilwoman Forbes would like Barrett Edwards, Sheldon Hudson and Chief James to be seated at council desk.

11. Executive session to discuss the potential sales or leases of real property. 29 Del. C. Sec. 10004(b)(2)

Councilwoman Forbes made a motion to go in to executive session.

Councilwoman Forbes made a motion to go in to executive session.

Move: Valerie Forbes Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

12. Possible action on matters discussed in executive session regarding the potential sale or lease of real property

13. Executive session to discuss the potential acquisition of real property. 29 Del. C. Sec. 10004(b)(2)

Councilwoman Forbes made a motion to go in to executive session.

Move: Valerie Forbes Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

14. Possible action on matters discussed in executive session regarding the potential acquisition of real property

15. Executive session to discuss personnel matters in which the names, competency, and abilities of individual employees will be discussed. 29 Del. C. § 10004(b)(9)

Councilwoman Forbes made a motion to go in to executive session.

Move: Valerie Forbes Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

16. Possible action on personnel matters discussed in executive session

17. Executive session to hold a strategy session with respect to collective bargaining with a labor union. 29 Del.C Sec. 10004(b)(4)

Councilwoman Forbes made a motion to go in to executive session.

Move: Valerie Forbes Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

18. Discussion and possible action on matter discussed in executive session regarding collective bargaining
19. Executive session to hold a strategy session involving legal advice or an opinion from an attorney-at-law, with respect to pending or potential litigation 29 Del. C. § 10004(b)(4)

Councilwoman Forbes made a motion to go in to executive session.

Move: Valerie Forbes Second: Tabitha Gott Status: Passed

20. Discussion and potential action on matters discussed in executive session involving pending or potential litigation
21. Adjournment

Councilman Rasmussen made a motion to adjourn.

Councilwoman Gott made a motion to come out of executive session at 8:38 PM

Councilman made a motion to adjourn at 8:39 PM

Move: Michael Rasmussen Second: Gerald Brown Status: Passed