

The Mayor and Council of Hurlock

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JOHN H. AVERY
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ROBERT MERRIKEN
ATTORNEY

COUNCIL MEMBERS
CHARLES T. CEPHAS, SR.
BONNIE FRANZ
EARL H. MURPHY
RUSSELL C. MURPHY, JR.
JERRY L. RHUE, SR.

MINUTES OPEN SESSION MEETING FEBRUARY 27, 2017 6:00 P.M.

Mayor Spratt called the Open Session Meeting of February 27, 2017 to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Hurlock Town Office on Charles Street in Hurlock, MD. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Hurlock Chief of Police, Les Hutton gave the opening prayer. The roll call was taken, and those in attendance were: Councilmembers Russell Murphy, Earl Murphy, Jerry Rhue, Bonnie Franz, Charles Cephas, Mayor Spratt, Town Attorney Robert Merriken and Town Administrator/Clerk John Avery.

Councilman Jerry Rhue made a Motion to approve the Agenda. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Earl Murphy. With all in favor and no one opposed the Motion to approve the Agenda was passed and carried with a vote of 5-0.

The minutes for the February 13, 2017 meeting were presented. Councilman Charles Cephas made a Motion to approve the minutes. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Bonnie Franz. With all in favor and no one opposed the Motion to approve the minutes of February 13, 2017 was passed and carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Spratt turned the meeting over to Chief Hutton. Chief Hutton introduced Officer Brandon Bradley and presented him with the Officer of the Year Award. Officer Bradley was congratulated and given a standing ovation. Chief Hutton introduced Michael Henry, former Police Chief of Hurlock and recognized his service to the Town.

The Ethics Commission is filled as is the Hurlock Planning & Zoning and Board of Appeals. Mr. Bill Plank accepted the vacant position on the Ethics Commission. Councilman Cephas informed Mr. Monroe Quailles of information available on the State's Attorney General web site.

Mayor Spratt stated Spring Clean-Up Days will be held in April. The flushing of the hydrants will be done on March 11th.

Dorchester Chamber of Commerce will host a breakfast at the Hurlock Legion on March 14th.

The Mayor asked for volunteers for the 125th celebration of the Town of Hurlock.

Police Department Report - Chief of Police Les Hutton presented his report. There were 5 reportable thefts, 2 drug cases. (See attached report) There were a total of 9972 calls last year. 81% of 911 calls were made by cell phones last year. Chief Hutton spoke on the comparison of the local crime rate vs the State crime rate. The Town of Hurlock crime rate is 78% lower than the State average. That is well below the State average. Most jurisdictions are above this rate.

Hurlock Fire Department Report – R.J. Helmer, assistant Chief of the Hurlock Fire Department spoke on a fire on the previous Friday at the Fooks Concrete building. There were nine companies involved. 60-65 fire fighters were there for approximately five hours. Councilman Cephas expressed his thanks to R.J. for his service.

Old Business 20 Min. into meeting – Councilman Jerry Rhue stated there have been numerous meetings with the Downtown Committee. Their ideas need to be brought to the Town Council. He does not think they should be using tax payer's money. He felt the Town Council is paid to work on these issues. Councilman Rhue also thinks it should be brought to a vote tonight. A Motion was made by Councilman Jerry Rhue to not give the Downtown Committee any funding. Councilwoman Franz seconded the Motion. Under discussion Councilman Cephas stated he disagreed with the Motion and felt the Town should assist this committee. He further stated that he felt it is necessary for people to make a commitment to be supportive to the Town & Council. Councilman Cephas spoke more regarding his feelings of the need to look at a new dimension and give a little. He felt it is a good thing and believes it is the right thing to do. The Ministers and Citizens will donate \$250.00 to help start this group.

27 Minutes - Councilman Earl Murphy stated he attended the work session last week and saw the DTC budget originally at \$6,000.00 come down to \$2,000.00. There were questions from the residents in attendance and he also had questions. He thought the idea was of value. He saw monies from the Town go to the Fall Festival and the Christmas Parade. Councilman Murphy's thoughts were if there were expenses they would be brought before the Council to approve the expense or disapprove if they felt it was a financial benefit and would or would not work in the Town's favor. He would be disappointed if it was outright denied. Councilman Murphy said the Town is sound and there are unassigned dollars. He stated he was disappointed that the Town would not look at this particular endeavor, he felt the idea was of value. He did not however, feel the Town had monies available to be allocated to the Committee as a lump sum. He gave an example if the Town was buying water pitchers because the Town was putting hanging flower baskets on Main Street and there was a group that watered those flowers every Tuesday and Friday on their own as volunteers who then presented receipts to the Town for ten of those water pitchers he wouldn't have a problem approving that request. We need to support the volunteers in the Town and was disappointed to learn the Town would not consider the idea that volunteers were presenting. He would be disappointed to know that the Council would not at least hear them if they wanted to purchase something or invest in something.

31:00 Minutes - Mayor Spratt recapped what Councilman Murphy said. There was no decision made that night because only two councilmembers were in attendance and one statement was read. She asked if he was against giving them \$2000 outright, to which Councilman E. Murphy

said was correct. She asked if he is implying that the Council should be open to reimburse volunteers up to \$2,000.00. He stated that the Council would have to approve the expense first before any expenditure.

33:40 Minutes - The Mayor asked Attorney Merriken if they have a 501 (C)3 and if they are not incorporated? A correction was made by C. Turner that they are incorporated and waiting for a 501(C)3 certification. Mayor Spratt asked them if the Town would be responsible for anything they do as they are operating under the Town's name. Attorney Merriken said the volunteers would be responsible for their own actions. Administrator Avery asked for a clarification as it was stated at the Work Session that they were 501(C)3 and not incorporated. The Mayor agreed with what was said at the meeting, that there was a 501(C)3, no incorporation. Mr. Turner stated again that they were incorporated and waiting on the 501(C)3 status.

41:10 Minutes - Mayor Spratt called for a vote on the Motion not to give money to the Downtown Committee (DTC). With a Motion and a Second on the table to Approve the Motion for no funding be granted to the Downtown Committee, Councilmember Russell Murphy voted no. Councilman E. Murphy asked for a clarification, what was the Motion? Mayor said that the motion is for no money to be given to the DTC. E. Murphy stated that the vote would be a yea vote to approve the motion. R. Murphy then stated he is voting for the committee to not receive any money. Rhue stated his vote is to not give the DTC any money. Bonnie Franz voted to not give them any money either. Earl Murphy stated that the way the motion is read he votes yes to vote no. Then stated that he votes no. Avery asked for a clarification of the vote. R. Murphy stated he is voting to approve the motion for no funding. Rhue stated voting to approve the motion for no funding to the DTC. Franz vote is for no funding. E. Murphy votes no to give them a set amount of money. Councilman Cephas voted yes to granting funding to the Downtown Committee. Mayor Spratt stated that the vote was 4 to 1 so the motion passes.

Councilman Earl Murphy made a Motion to allow the DTC to present receipts for expenditures that had prior authorization from the Town Council. Councilman Cephas asked to poll the Council and asked if they intended to give the Committee nothing.

There was much dissention. Councilman Rhue stated the Motion was voted on so the question regarding the funding is moot.

New Business –

Regarding the consideration of Fiscal Year 2017 recommended constant yield tax rate of .8270, Administrator Avery called for a vote. Councilman Cephas made a Motion to accept the constant yield tax rate of .8270. Councilman Rhue seconded the Motion. A roll call was made and Councilmembers voted as follows: Jerry Rue, Aye; Earl Murphy, Aye; Bonnie Franz, Aye; Russell Murphy, Aye; and Charles Cephas, Aye. With all councilmembers in favor and none opposed, the Motion to accept the constant yield tax rate of .8270 was passed and carried with a vote of 5-0.

Considering retaining the same business property tax rate of \$1.40 per \$100.00, a Motion was made by Councilman Cephas to accept the business tax rate of \$1.40 per \$100.00. Council

woman Bonnie Franz seconded the Motion. A roll call was taken and Councilmembers voted as follows: Jerry Rue, Aye; Earl Murphy, Aye; Bonnie Franz, Aye; Russell Murphy, Aye; and Charles Cephas, Aye. With all councilmembers in favor and none opposed, the Motion to accept the business tax rate of \$1.40 per \$100.00 was passed and carried with a vote of 5-0.

Administrator Avery explained the proposal of the solar company to enter into discussion for an easement agreement along Ennals Road. Councilman Cephas made a Motion to enter into a discussion regarding the granting of an easement agreement along Ennals Road. Councilman Russell Murphy seconded the Motion. Councilman Cephas stated that this will be the new wave of the future. A roll call was taken and Councilmembers voted as follows; Jerry Rue, Aye; Earl Murphy, Aye; Bonnie Franz, Aye; Russell Murphy, Aye; and Charles Cephas, Aye. With all councilmembers in favor and none opposed, the Motion to enter into a discussion regarding the granting of an easement agreement along Ennals Road was passed and carried with a vote of 5-0.

Councilmembers Comments –

Councilman Cephas said he wants to look into a curfew again. He has asked the Mayor to schedule a time for discussion. The Mayor asked Chief of Police Hutton if the Town had a crime rate that warranted a curfew. The Chief agreed that the juvenile crime rate is not high enough. Mayor Spratt stated that a public workshop will be held on March 13th at 5:30 p.m.

Councilman Cephas stated he wanted to look into a couple of items in the Charter that are erogenous and wants to clean them up; 306, 802, and 803 were a few he wanted to look at. Councilman Cephas also wants to discuss with the Council putting more money in the budget to be sustainable and he wants to plan for the future. He said for the first time in his life he feels comfortable in this Town. Councilman Cephas spoke about Black History Month and feels it should be changed to American History.

Councilman Earl Murphy reminded everyone of the play, Les Miserable, being held at North Dorchester High School this week-end.

Councilman Murphy also said he felt that the way the vote regarding the Downtown Committee that was presented earlier in the meeting was wrong. He stated he would not allow issues to be presented that are unclear.

Mayor Spratt announced that the Grand Opening of C & J Market will be held on Saturday at 2:00 p.m.

Public Comments –

Mr. Frank Bittner spoke that it had been over a year ago, that Councilman Cephas brought a Downtown Committee together. In 2000-2003 the Main Street idea was implemented in Cambridge. Initially the Cambridge helped fund it. It took time to develop and the people took

pride in the Town. You can look back at how it happened in Cambridge. Mr. Bittner said we need to work on the Town's Charter.

Mr. Monroe Quailes said he is the President of the Ethics Committee. He is not completely ignorant on being on a board. He was involved at one time with a rural development group.

Ms. Blanche Powell asked a question regarding the Industrial Park. Has, or is, East Coast closing? Mayor Spratt replied yes. The business has been sold, but not the property. There are new businesses coming.

Ms. Powell had questions about the wood working business. Mayor Spratt and Administrator Avery replied that they did not know anything negative regarding that business.

Mr. Jack Lewis asked Councilman Cephas if he got his memo. The answer was yes, he did.

Mr. Cederick Turner announced that the Hurlock Downtown Committee will hold a meeting on March 1st at the Pizza Palace. He thanked the Council for their consideration.


Reverend Dickerson said the HDTC was started years ago, with Councilman Cephas and Mike Henry.

Mayor Spratt announced that this is the 125th Year Anniversary of the Town of Hurlock. She stressed that people should get involved.

Ms. Pat Finley clarified that it was suggested that they do things project by project. Mayor Spratt said it was just a discussion.

With no further business or discussion, the Open Session meeting of February 13, 2016 was adjourned at 7:35p.m.

Respectively submitted,


John Avery
Administrator
Clerk/Treasurer

Approved: Mayor Spratt:


Councilmembers:
