

MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2009

Mayor Joyce A. Spratt and the Council of Hurlock met in regular session at the Town Hall on Monday, December 14, 2009. In attendance were Council Members Chris Adams, Charles Cephas, Michael Henry, Michael Nordstrom, Clerk/Treasurer Kathleen Clough, Acting Police Chief Daniel Nelson, Town Attorney Hugh Carter Vinson, and Public Works Director Steve Willey.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORTS

Hurlock Police Department

LT Daniel Nelson, Acting Hurlock Police Chief, gave a comprehensive report and Power Point Presentation on the condition of the Hurlock Police Department; both the physical condition with before and after pictures, and an explanation of policies and procedures. He reported the changes he has made in procedures, specifically that the Officers will be walking on Main Street so that the people can talk with them and partner with them to keep the Town secure.

LT Nelson stated that when he arrived, Mayor Spratt told him to “clean up the Town” and asked for transparency. His first order of business was to invite the Dorchester County Sheriff and Maryland State Police back to Hurlock as partners. As a result of this allied assistance, on December 11, 2009 the Dorchester County Task Force served two warrants on Pine Street, leading to the discovery of crack cocaine and many guns.

LT Nelson reported that he could not believe the condition of the Hurlock Police Department property room when he arrived. He stated that the evidence was not inventoried or organized, had no reports attached, there was no “destroy” box or area, and that evidence was mixed in with police department equipment. LT Nelson explained that he will start a property log, a computer tracking system, and institute quarterly inventories.

Regarding policy, LT Nelson stated that he will start compiling statistics on patrols, and made recommendations to the Mayor and Council that the incoming Chief consider a formal promotion process, which Hurlock has not had, and consider adjusting the average officer’s salary and hire an additional officer, using the funds that will be saved from eliminating the waste.

LT Nelson said that the officers, firearms, and K-9 are in compliance with State Training Standards, with no internal investigations. Acting Chief Nelson stated that the Hurlock Police are good officers in need of organization and leadership.

Mayor Spratt stated that she is pleased with LT Nelson’s progress and the Officers’ decision to stay, saying “they are shaping up, not shipping out”.

The Mayor announced that Acting Chief Nelson and the soon to be hired Police Chief will continue to give reports to the Council at Town meetings. LT Nelson added that he and the Mayor hope that citizens call the police, since the residents are the eyes on the Town.

Councilman Michael Nordstrom stated that LT Nelson wants to hear from citizens and encouraged the public to call him when they have helpful information.

MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2009

Councilman Charles Cephas addressed the public, saying they have a shared responsibility for the safety of the Town.

Public Works

Director of Public Works, Steve Willey, submitted his written report covering the period November 24, 2009 through December 14, 2009.

Mr. Willey noted that a second exit door is being installed in the Town Hall Office Meeting Room. The Fire Marshal has approved the room for a capacity of 110 people, rather than only 49, with this additional exit.

In response to a question from Councilman Michael Henry, Mr. Willey stated that the pump for Well Three is still out of service, but the Town still has enough capacity as people are not watering their lawns during the winter months.

In addressing the Mayor and Council, Mr. Willey stated that the Christmas Parade was one of the better ones, traffic went smoothly, there were no safety issues, and the weather was cooperative.

Mayor Spratt commended everyone on the success of the parade and expressed her appreciation for the Town support and all of the citizens that came out. She said it was nice to see the folks out together. Mayor Spratt said that all we need now are more food vendors.

The Parade Committee awarded a Plaque in Appreciation to the Hurlock Police Department for their assistance; to the Hurlock Department of Public Works for their help in planning and executing the parade events, and plaques for Sponsorship to the American Legion Hurlock Post 243 and to the Town of Hurlock.

Paul Cooper also thanked the members of the Parade Committee, Mr. Collins, Councilman Mike Nordstrom, Hurlock Code Enforcement Officer John Avery, Town of Hurlock Executives and Staff, and Dorchester County Councilman Rick Price who was also a sponsor of the parade. He stated that it was very nice to have their help.

Mayor Spratt thanked Mr. Cooper for the wonderful work of the Hurlock Christmas Parade Committee.

The Mayor announced that the new exit door to the meeting room will be completed in two weeks and then the capacity will be more than doubled to 110 people.

OLD BUSINESS

Board of Appeals

Mayor Spratt announced that Jack Lewis has been appointed to the Board of Appeals.

Council Seat Vacancy

Mayor Spratt noted that the new council seat appointee for District Three will be announced at the next Council meeting. Mayor Spratt stated that the Council had just met with four candidates and had hoped to make a decision at that time, however, all of the candidates were awesome and it was just impossible to

MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2009

choose without another meeting. Councilman Charles Cephas stated that it was like trying to pick the largest fish out of a barrel and finding that they are all the same size as each one of the candidates is exceptionally well qualified. All council members concurred that the choice will be very difficult as the candidates are equally impressive.

NEW BUSINESS

I. North Dorchester Scenic Railroad

A representative from the North Dorchester Scenic Railroad addressed the Mayor, Council, and Townspeople on the progress of the Hurlock to Preston Railroad. He stated that they are doing the feasibility study to obtain grants in the future. He explained that they expect this project to be an economic boon to the towns and establishments and it will lead to new businesses being established.

Mayor Spratt thanked him for an informative update.

II. Affordable Housing

Mr. Amos Jones asked about the Council's position on an affordable housing project that has come before the previous Mayor and Council. Town Attorney Hugh Carter Vinson explained that the Mayor and Council are in the first stages of organizing and the first step is to fill the District Three Council Seat. Mr. Jones agreed to bring his proposal to the January 11, 2010 meeting for presentation to Mayor Spratt and the newly elected council who have not been privy to prior discussions.

Councilman Charles Cephas addressed Mr. Jones and advised that it would be unfair to plunge this new council into the issue at this time. He expressed that the council should be able to convene and will treat Mr. Jones fairly and will not be put on the back burner as the previous administration had done.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Spratt recognized County Commissioner Rick Price and thanked him for his participation in the meeting. Commissioner Price commended the Hurlock Christmas Parade Committee, saying it was well organized and had good placement. He announced upcoming County meetings, including a public hearing on December 15, 2009 regarding a proposal to ban Salvia and related paraphernalia, the snow removal plan for this winter, and animal control issues.

Commissioner Rick Price wished the new Mayor and Council all the best.

Mayor Spratt announced that Town Hall will be closed on December 24th and 25th to save energy and give staff time with their families. The closing will be posted.

Mayor Spratt announced that the public will be welcome to speak at the end of the Town meetings. There was an open dialogue among the citizens and Council, and in particular with LT Nelson, Acting Chief of the Hurlock Police Department. LT Nelson stated that the Officers need to be walking on Main Street so people can talk to them and encouraged all citizens to get to know their Officers.

MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2009

Councilman Cephas stated that citizens have a responsibility to work with and help the Police.

In response to a citizen's inquiry, the Mayor said that she and the Council will be looking at whether the current members of the Planning and Zoning Commission will stay as they are now.

A gentleman rose and asked his fellow citizens to understand that while the Council plans to move forward, it will take time, as projects require feasibility studies and there are always priorities. He asked the people to pray for the new Mayor and Council.

Mayor Spratt thanked everyone who came to the swearing in ceremony last Monday evening, stating that it was a beautiful event with the Color Guard, the swearing-in of the new Council Members, and that it was great that so many of the 150 people in attendance stayed afterward just to have friendly conversation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Clough
Clerk /Treasurer

ATTEST:

Joyce A. Spratt, Mayor

Date