

The Town of

GLEN ECHO

Chartered 1904

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BUDGET HEARING AND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 13, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: MAYOR DIA COSTELLO, 8:00 PM

PRESENT

Mayor: Dia Costello.

Councilmembers: (CM) Mona Kishore, Dan Spealman, and Julia Wilson. Absent: Matt Stiglitz

Town Manager: (TM) Beth Stickler.

Residents: Alec Graham (Radcliffe Ln), Dawn Tanner (University Ave), Bill Vincent (Echo).

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from the residents. There were no comments.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello introduced a new opportunity for the Council to comment. CM Spealman asked if he should be recused from the Town Hall rental waiver discussion as a parent of a student in the brass band meeting weekly. Mayor Costello decided that his opinion would be important as a parent. CM Spealman was in favor of adopting the waiver so that a parent would not be required to be in attendance where there is an event hosted by a non parent and no parents are present, and the attendees are under 18.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON MARCH 13, 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the March 13, 2023 Council meeting were approved as amended.

Motion to Approve Minutes: CM Spealman; 2nd CM Kishore. Approved 3-0.

FY24 BUDGET HEARING: Costello

There was no resident input on the FY24 budget. The Council agreed to keep the tax rate at \$0.15/\$100 of assessable value (fair market value) on real property subject to taxation by the Town. This will be finalized at the May 8 council meeting, when the budget and tax rates will be adopted.

WMATA TRESTLE BRIDGE DEMOLITION UPDATE: Costello

Mayor Costello emails WMATA representative James Ashe monthly for updates on this project. The Town is a consulting party, and has the opportunity to provide input by May 10 to NPS who is considering the historical aspect of the bridge. The project may begin January 2024. The Mayor and Town Manager will meet with the Town Engineers for their input. There is concern about impact on the trees and right of way. Some of the other consulting parties are in opposition to the removal of the bridge. The Town is exploring whether a bike or walking path could be made over it.

Mayor Costello will also speak to the Trolley Museum representative in Silver Spring. It has been caged a long time and the Council is not aware of any safety incidents. The bridge has historic and cultural value.

The Walhonding bridge demolition project will impact access to the Sycamore Club.

The Town will get more information on the Town boundary, perhaps with a survey, and contact DNR, and Del. Korman, Rep. Raskin, and County Council Member Friedson. The Council can send any possible consulting parties to the Mayor and Town Manager. Resident Madeline Carter may be able to video tape the area to have a record. The Town will look into hiring an environmental lawyer. NPS will have a meeting with all of the consulting parties.

The letter from the Town will discuss why we oppose the demolition and our demands about the process and restoration. The letter will be shared with the council and Town Engineers first by April 28, then the Town residents, for input.

SAFETY OPTIONS UPDATE: Costello

At the March meeting, the Council decided to vote on whether to hire off duty County Police through EMC Security LLC to start in late May through Labor Day.

Residents in attendance at the Council Meeting provided input, that they thought this was unnecessary overreach. There have been no reported incidents since the weekend of February 20.

The Council decided that if there are future incidents of crime such as going onto someone's property and trying to break in to a home they would hold an emergency safety meeting to decide if the Town should hire police. It would be a temporary commitment and reassessed every month.

The Town is also exploring installing brighter LED streetlights through Pepco. This will be discussed at the May meeting.

Messaging from the Town will continue to go out reminding residents to turn outside lights on, lock car and home doors as a safety measure.

The motion to hire police officers through EMC Security LLC to start Memorial Day Weekend failed (3 votes against).

TOWN HALL RENTAL POLICY - WAIVER: Costello

When renting the town hall, in the existing contract, the resident must chaperone any event where minors are involved. The Council continued discussing a parental waiver. The waiver must be signed by all parents where there is an event hosted by a non parent and no parents are present, and the attendees are under 18.

Motion to Approve the Waiver as Amended: CM Spealman; 2nd CM Kishore. Approved 3-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH: TM Stickler

The month of March was an average month in terms of revenue and expenses.

TM Stickler transferred \$300,000 from the PNC money market account to MLGIP. The MLGIP Balance is now \$877,357. Last month's interest was \$2,093. The MLGIP rate of return is 4.8% as of 4/6/23. The PNC money market rate is 1.24% and balance is now \$273,917.

Revenue:

Property Tax: The Town received \$1,956 in property taxes and is now at 102% of budget.

State Income Tax: The Town received \$28 and is now at 91% of budget.

Expenses:

Bolt Legal Expense was \$527 for February: 47% for security camera guidance; 47% for guidance on police services/crime issues; 6% on Town Hall rental agreement.

Motion to Approve the Financial Report: CM Wilson; 2nd CM Spealman. Approved 3-0.

OPERATIONS REPORT: Social; Infrastructure; Administrative: TM Stickler

Social:

Volunteer Appreciation: This event occurred on March 12 at Town Hall.

Coffee with a Cop: This was rescheduled. Officer Demond Johnson will be in Town Hall April 14 9-10:30am to meet with residents.

Infrastructure:

Columbia Avenue Work: The asphalt work was completed March 31 and was paid for using ARPA funds.

Infrastructure Projects: TM Stickler got estimates for two small infrastructure projects. At the bottom of Harvard: replacing cracked & uneven curb/sidewalk and the storm drain gutter for \$4,975. At the intersection of Oxford and MacArthur: extending asphalt at the corner to prevent cars going off road over the grassy area for \$4,675. This could be paid for with funds from street repair and sidewalk repair budgets, which have not been used. The Council agreed to have the sidewalk repair and storm drain gutter replaced but wanted to have the Town engineers give input on the intersection of Oxford and MacArthur work. As the estimate for the sidewalk repair was under \$5000, the Town does not need to bid it out, and can use ARPA Funds. The Town's policy in the Code of Ordinances only requires bidding for over \$5000; the Town follows this policy in using ARPA funds.

Administrative:

Election Timeline: Nomination letters were due to Jan Shaut by April 11, Meet the Candidates night is April 14, Election is May 1, take office at Council Meeting on May 8.

Copier: A new copier was delivered on March 14.

Raingarden Installation Bids: The Town got six bids for this work after posting again. The GEEC will meet with firms and check references. The Town will find out about the grant funding from Chesapeake Bay Trust in early June and will present the vendors for the Council vote at the July Council Meeting.

ARPA Report due April 30 to Treasury: For funds spent between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. The Town has spent \$63,381 of the total funds (\$267,488.) The Town's required SAM.GOV registration was updated in March. CM Spealman noted that there is discussion about the ARPA funds being rescinded, so they should be obligated as soon as the Council can find appropriate uses. The Town has about \$200,000 left.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello announced a closing opportunity for comments by the residents. There were no comments. Mayor Costello thanked CM Kishore for her service as it is her last meeting; her term has ended and she is not seeking re-election.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn: CM Spealman; 2nd CM Wilson. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned 9:50 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Beth Stickler, Town Manager

Approved:  Date: 5-9-2023

Mayor, Dia Costello