

1 **TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND**
2 **Easton Town Hall**
3 **14 S. Harrison Street**

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May 3, 2011

PRESENT AT CONVENING

8 Mayor Robert C. Willey
9 Council President John Ford
10 Councilmember Kelley K. Malone
12 Councilmember Pete Leshner
13 Councilmember Leonard E. Wendowski, Sr.
14 Councilmember Megan M. Cook

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance were the Town Manager Mr. Robert F. Karge, Sr., the Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch and Ms. Lorraine Gould for Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy Ruf.

CONVENING

At 7:00 p.m., President Ford called the meeting to order.

Mr. Wendowski opened the meeting with prayer and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 18, 2011 MEETING.

Upon motion by Mr. Leshner seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 18, 2011 meetings were approved as prepared.

ITEMS BY MAYOR WILLEY.

Mayor Willey advised that MML has three finalists from Easton Elementary for District 2 in the competition "If I Were Mayor Contest." Mayor Willey asked for Council permission to recognize them at the upcoming Council meeting.

Mayor Willey stated that MD Department of Natural Resources has approved the Town of Easton for the \$283,000 grant for the RTC property.

Mayor Willey stated that the Easton Police Department has received an \$18,000 grant for license plate readers.

ITEMS BY THE TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Karge asked for approval for the property maintenance bid award. Mr. Richardson suggested that the bid award be split in to the three apparent lowest bidders.

- o Skippy Harrison for items which consist primarily of lawn mowing
- o Bridges Land Management for bush hogging
- o A Living Eco System Company for hedge and tree trimming, debris and brush removal

Upon motion by Ms. Malone seconded by Mrs. Cook, bids as presented by Mr. Karge were approved for award.

Mr. Karge stated that he has the summation for the impact on business relative to the noise ordinance. He stated that he will e-mail those this week.

Mr. Karge stated that the Frederick Douglass statue base has been placed by the Public Works Department. He stated that the Frederick Douglass Honor Society is moving rapidly toward the four day event which will begin June 16 thru June 19.

Mr. Karge stated that he has received a request to close a portion of Harrison Street and Dover to the Academy of the Arts on Saturday night from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. He stated he has been advised that Chief Spencer has denied this request. Mr. Karge stated that he would like permission to work with Chief to move the people from the Avalon Theatre to the Academy Art Museum.

It was the Council consensus for Mr. Karge to work with Chief Spencer to get this accomplished.

ITEMS BY THE TOWN ATTORNEY

68 Mrs. VanEmburch discussed the recent General Assembly Session and a bill that was passed that allows public
69 bodies to forego minutes if the meetings are taped by video or audio. She stated that the video tapes would have to
70 be made available for a year.

71
72 **ANNEXATION PETITION FOR HYDE PARK**

73
74 President Ford introduced the annexation petition for Hyde Park. He discussed the parameters.

75
76 **RESOLUTION NO. 5978, "A RESOLUTION TO ANNEX CERTAIN LANDS OWNED BY JENSEN'S
77 INC., INTO THE TOWN OF EASTON LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF US ROUTE 50 AND
78 CONSISTING OF 117.994 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS
79 AND CONDITIONS OF THE ANNEXATION."**

80
81 President Ford introduced Resolution No. 5978.

82
83 Upon motion by Mr. Leshar seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 5978 President
84 Ford referred the annexation petition to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and recommendation and
85 set the Public Hearing for June 20, 2011 at 7:15 p.m.

86
87 **RESOLUTION NO. 5979, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO CHANGE THE NAME
88 OF THE PUBLIC STREET ASHBY DRIVE TO ASHBY COMMONS DRIVE."**

89
90 Upon motion by Mr. Wendowski seconded by Mr. Leshar and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 5979 was
91 approved.

92
93 **CONGRATULATIONS TO CANDIDATES FROM MAY 2 ELECTION**

94
95 Mrs. Cook congratulated Mayor Willey, Ms. Malone and Mr. Wendowski for their recent re-election.

96
97 President Ford echoed congratulations and stated he appreciated Mr. Medura's efforts.

98
99 **PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE FISCAL YEAR 2011 – 2012 BUDGET.**

00
01 At 7:15 p.m., President Ford opened the public hearing to consider the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget,

02
03 **RESOLUTION NO. 5977, THE BUDGET FOR THE TWELVE MONTH PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 2011
04 AND THE CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE.**

05
06 President Ford introduced Resolution No. 5977.

07
08 **ORDINANCE NO. 587, "AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE RAISING BY TAXATION THE
09 AMOUNT NECESSARY TO PAY THE ORDINARY EXPENSES OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO
10 PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF INTEREST ON THE VARIOUS BOND ISSUES AND THE
11 REDUCTION OF CERTAIN BONDS AND NOTES FOR THE PERIOD OF TWELVE MONTHS AND
12 SETTING THE INTEREST AND PENALTY FOR DELINQUENT BILLS, COMMENCING ON JULY 1,
13 2011 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2012."**

14
15 President Ford brought Ordinance No. 587 to the floor for a first reading.

16
17 Mayor Willey discussed the proposed balanced budget in the amount of \$18,940,758 for the general fund with an
18 increase of \$2,172,720 from last year's (12.96% more of the current fiscal year). He stated that no additional debt
19 is proposed. Mayor Willey stated that he is proposing a tax rate of \$.52/100 of assessed valuation which complies
20 with the tax limitations proposed by the town's Charter and is the same rate as the current fiscal year. He stated
21 that no furloughs or layoffs have been proposed and a staff salary increase is proposed where warranted. A 2% tax
22 discount is proposed if paid by July 31 and 1% if paid by August 31. Mayor Willey stated that he is still working
23 on situations and may modify the budget if warranted. He stated that salaries and benefits are 52% of the
24 expenditures. He discussed the constant yield tax rate. Mayor Willey stated that Fitch classified the town's rating
25 as an AA- and Moody's has the town as an AA3. He stated that the Town is fully funding the obligation for the
26 OPEB benefits.

27
28 Ms. Malone commended the Mayor and staff for the budget. She asked for clarification regarding the town's
29 investment in the Economic Development budget.

30
31 President Ford asked for audience comments.

32
33 Mr. Charlie Bohn, 7881 Fort Stokes Lane, Easton; Vice President of the Talbot County Taxpayers Association
34 congratulated the Mayor on the budget and credit rating. He stated that he is perplexed by Easton Utilities' amount

35 of cash and capital structure. Mr. Bohn asked if some of their funds could be released back to the taxpayers in the
36 town.

37
38 Mr. Wendowski asked for documented information.

39
40 Mr. Hugh E. Grunden, Easton Utilities President and CEO, 201 N Washington Street discussed Easton Utilities'
41 standing and capital structure. Mr. Grunden discussed the buildup of cash on the balance sheet and the measures
42 initiated to achieve this. He discussed necessary capital projects to take place in the near future which will cost
43 approximately 7.5 million dollars.

44
45 President Ford stated that the record for comments for the FY2011/2012 budget will remain open until the end of
46 business on Friday.

47
48 Mrs. Libby Dawkins, 11 N. Thorogood Lane, stated that she would like a rate reduction. Mrs. Dawkins stated that
49 everyone has done a good job to put Easton in a better position. She discussed the town's surplus and monthly
50 review of departments.

51
52 Mr. Karge discussed the detail report received by the council on a monthly basis. He stated that the surplus was
53 due mostly to the way the auditors treated the OPEB liability compared to what was expected. Mr. Karge discussed
54 the stewardship of the department heads, council and staff.

55
56 Mrs. Dawkins recommended that the town consider reinstating the full time position of town engineer.

57
58 At 8:06 p.m., President Ford closed the Public Hearing.

59
60 **ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

61
62 Ms. Malone congratulated Mayor Willey on his recent re-election and stated that she looks forward to the next four
63 years. She thanked the staff and Mayor Willey for their collaboration with the RTC Task Force for submission of
64 the grant.

65
66 Mr. Wendowski thanked the voters from Ward 3 who supported him.

67
68 Mayor Willey discussed a recent meeting with the County Council regarding the transfer station. He suggested
69 contacting contractors to consider implementing recycling.

70
71 **ADJOURN**

72
73 At 8:10 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Leshar seconded by Mrs. Cook and carried unanimously; President Ford
74 adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

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76 _____
77 Lorraine Gould for Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk