

CAN's Unofficial Notes on the July 11, 2022 Cambridge City Council Meeting

The meeting started at 6:00pm with all Commissioners physically present.

- Presentation from the public- a presentation by Amy Craig from the West End Property Owners was postponed due to Covid.
- The Consent Agenda was approved 5/0
 - o Chesapeake College requested use of the parking lot for New Student Orientation Day
- Ordinance 1202 was read for the first time requesting that a Dry Cleaning plant be permitted in the industrial area.

Old Business – Mayoral Election

The Council approved the timing for the Mayoral Election to replace Andrew Bradshaw. The Election will be held August 23rd, 2022 at Chesapeake College on Race St. Candidates have 15 days to apply starting July 12 and closing July 27th 2022.

New Business-

- Discussion to approve a loan for \$1.7 million for a new Rescue Fire Truck was postponed again. This discussion began in October, 2021 but the Council still has questions. The cost of the fire truck has risen \$200,000 doing that time. The money was approved in the FY23 budget adopted last meeting.
- The Council approved a contract to bring Melvin Russell, who recently retired from the Baltimore Police to help with Community Policing. Mr. Russell will act as a consultant for \$65,000 in FY2023. Police Capt Lewis stated that most of the Officers have less than 3 years experience and Mr. Russell would be a big help in enacting Community Policing.
- Groove City Culture Group requested \$5,000 from the City to support their street festival on Pine St. this August. Discussion centered on having a non-profit come in directly to the Council while other non-profits had to go through a rigorous process of ARPA review. Currently, 30 organizations are requesting \$3.5 million from the City which is being reviewed by a City

approved Commission. It was noted that the City had funded this project for the past 3 years so it was a regular occurrence rather than a onetime request. The Council postponed any decision until the next meeting and asked the City Manager where the money would come from in the budget.

Public Comment:

- Ms. Churchill spoke about the delaying the fire truck contract which has costs the City \$200,000. She said that it was a fundamental cost to run the City and the Council should act to update all equipment.
- She also noted that she knew Melvin Russell from Baltimore and he was a great asset to that City and could really help Cambridge establish Community Policing.
- Another Citizen expressed frustration on the slowness of the decision making on the fire trucks

Department Comments:

DPW head Ms. Holder just wanted to remind citizens not to put cut grass in the street. The grass washes down the street and clogs the sewers.

Chief Lewis announced a community counseling meeting on July 14th at Macy Lane School. (CAN will send out a separate notice with details later)

- The City Manager had the following comments and handouts:
 - o The Trenton St. Pumping station has received \$3 million in funding of the approximate \$4 million in costs. Trying to get grants to cover the difference.
 - o Captain Nichols of the police department was reassigned to the new community policing program. Captain Todd will absorb his duties.
 - o There was a request from the Hyatt Regency Home Owners association that requested \$1.3 million to repair 3 bridges on the private road leading to the hotel. The HOA did not have enough funds set aside for this project and is requesting City assistance. The City has a complicated agreement with the Hyatt, which employs over 300 people. The City Manager asked for more time to sort out the issues.
 - o There will be a meeting with the store owners on Poplar St. this Wednesday, July 13th at 9 am to get input on the proposed pilot of a one way street and expanded sidewalk.

- City Hall is now open to the public.

Council Comments:

Brian Roche, Ward 1 had two comments'

- A short narrative about discussing an alternative approach to City Management by eliminating the Mayor position. After lots of negative feedback, he is dropping the idea but contents it is healthy to have discussions.
- He also discussed the Poplar St. one way pilot that was approved by Council with drawings. He stated that this action was only to get the idea funded in the FY23 budget and that the drawings may have may it look like the idea was complete without talking to the store owners or the public and for that he was sorry.

Commissioner Harrington stated he was glad to be recovered and back physically at the Council table with his colleges.

Commissioner L. Cephas expanded on Commissioners Roche's comments about the duties of the Mayor. She stated that while the Mayor had limited power there were a lot of duties to be carried out. She gave herself an A- for her performance.

No comments from Commissioners S. Cephas or Malkus.

Meeting ended at 7:15 and the Council went into close session to discuss personnel issues.