

The Mayor and Council of Hurlock

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REV. CHARLES T. CEPHAS, SR.
MAYOR
JOHN H. AVERY
TOWN MANAGER
ROBERT MERRIKEN
TOWN ATTORNEY

MINUTES OPEN SESSION MEETING March 28, 2022

COUNCIL MEMBERS
CHARLES CUMMINGS, PRESIDENT
BONNIE FRANZ
EARL H. MURPHY
RUSSELL MURPHY
JOCK ORR

6:00 PM Call to Order by Mayor Cephas

Opening Prayer – Cederick Turner

Roll Call - Councilmembers present; E. Murphy, R. Murphy, Franz, Orr, Mayor Cephas, Attorney Merriken and Manager Avery

Approval of Agenda - Motion E. Murphy, second Franz, vote 4/0.

Approval of Minutes – Open Session March 14, 2022 Motion E. Murphy, second Franz, vote 4/0.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Cephas introduced Mr. Dave Dietrick from Chesapeake Utilities.

Mr. Dietrick gave a power point presentation describing his company as a natural gas provider. They are a rapidly growing company that supplies the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas. Natural gas is the safest and has the lowest carbon content of fossil fuels as well as the least expensive per btu's of other fuels.

They mailed 805 letters to town residents and home owners; they have only had 75+/- responses so far. Of those responses 65% have indicated that they would convert to natural gas. There would need to be more of a positive response to warrant installation of natural gas infrastructure. E. Murphy said they should have had more positive responses; all the businesses on Main St. said they wanted gas during the survey that was done a number of years ago. Dietrick said they are not giving up. This survey was the first effort. Deitrick said they can do a ground effort; they would need to organize help for that. Deitrick said the letter and survey that was sent out was not the last effort it is the beginning. He said they would be available to come to a Council work session. Cephas asked what the conversion costs would be? Deitrick said they have quite a lot of data on the costs and would share that with the town.

Fire Department – Chief Helmer said they have responded to 28 calls so far in March. Ward Higgins is set to come home tomorrow. Their awards banquet will be April 30 at the American Legion. April 15th will be their annual fish fry. It is a real struggle to get new members. Their next purchase will be a new or refurbished engine/tanker.

Police Report – No report

Town Manager Report – Avery advised that the pump station renovation project is out for bid. There will be a pre-bid meeting at the town office April 5th. The bid due date is May 17th. Spring Cleanup is April 9th, dumpsters will be by the recycling bins. The pump station wet well is due for its annual cleaning. This will be done very early Monday morning. One of the public works trucks is in the body shop to have a rear fender replaced. The part is on national back order and they have no idea when it will come. Many of the trucks are old and need to be replaced. Currently there are no trucks available of any manufacturer. Avery was able to locate 2 that are ordered thru Sheehy in Richmond. Avery had those put-on order for the town. They will be under government contract at \$34,000 each. They may be 2022's or 2023's. Avery asked to have a budget work session April 4th at 6pm, the Council agreed.

County Councilman Pfeffer – Pfeffer said that HVFD is upgrading the EMS area. Unit P600 is stationed temporarily at Eldorado. He has tried to get property tax credits for first responders, so far that has been unsuccessful. Cephas hopes that some day some of the department members could be paid. Pfeffer said that Dorchester County has 5 ALS units that are manned 24/7 by paid members, Wicomico does not. Cephas said Pfeffer has been wonderful since he has been on the County Council.

Old Business – Attorney Merriken described Ordinance 2022-2 that is up for vote. The ordinance is to authorize the Town to invest in the MACo OPEB Trust for funding retiree health care plans in the future. **Ordinance 2022-2 was introduced by E. Murphy at the last meeting. Motion to approve E. Murphy, second Franz, vote 4 in favor 0 opposed.**

Comments – E. Murphy said he hopes the natural gas project will work. The next LESMA meeting will be in Ocean City. Franz said she has worked at the chicken plant in Hurlock for 47 years.

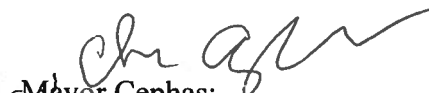
Cederic Turner asked about funding for the Downtown Committee? He has asked for operational funding and has submitted a budget request for the last 4 or 5 years. Avery said the amount approved by the council (\$2000) has been in the budget every year since then. Mayor Cephas said Turner should get his things together and present it to the council.

Jack Lewis thanked the mayor for arranging for the Ethics Commission members to be able to attend Ethics Training at the MML Conference. He said that the hour and half course is not enough. He would like to see an 8-hour seminar and have quarterly meetings with other towns commissions.

7:30 Motion to Adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted:


John Avery
Town Manager


Mayor Cephas:

Councilmembers:



