

The Mayor and Council of Hurlock

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COUNCIL MEMBERS
CHARLES T. CEPHAS, SR.
CHARLES A. CUMMINGS
BONNIE FRANZ
EARL H. MURPHY
AMBER N. TRUXON

MINUTES OPEN SESSION MEETING February 8, 2021

This meeting was closed to the public due to COVID-19. The meeting was programed to be live streamed through Town Hall Streams. Notice of the meeting and streaming was posted on the town message board and the town website. The agenda for the meeting was posted on the town website by Friday February 5, 2021.

6:00 PM Call to Order by Mayor Henry

Roll Call - Councilmembers present; Franz, Truxon, and Murphy, Mayor Henry, Attorney Merriken and Manager Avery

Approval of Agenda: Motion Murphy, second Franz, vote 3/0. Cummings and Cephas absent

Approval of Minutes – Open Session January 11, 2021 Motion Murphy/Franz, approved 3/0.
Work Session January 25, 2021 Motion Murphy/Franz, Truxon abstained (absent)

Mr. Roy Geiser from TGM Group presented the Annual Audit for Fiscal Year 2020. Mr. Geiser explained that COVID-19 has impacted everything this past year including Hurlock's Audit. It has caused many delays and difficulties. Hurlock has earned the highest level of assurance that they can give. Some of the assets are lower due to an increase in the Town's OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) liability. The Town's OPEB liability went up \$600,000 over last year, that was in part due to having 4 more employees. OPEB is a long-term liability. Municipalities should have a reserve fund of at least 2 months operating costs. Hurlock is way over that. The Town's reserve is over a year, the Town financially is very healthy.

Mr. Geiser said that he and Avery have talked about starting a dedicated trust fund for OPEB costs. He said there is no requirement to fund it. The Town could continue to pay as we go. Setting up a trust fund would be a great idea. Avery said that the Town could open a fund this year with \$250,000 and fund it at the rate of \$100,000 a year. The institution that would administer the fund would advise what the actual donations would need to be.

Mayor Henry asked Mr. Geiser were there any areas the Town needed to improve on? Mr. Geiser stated that the Town is in pretty good shape. Overall, it was a very clean audit.

Ms. Sharon Wilson spoke to the Council on the need for affordable housing in Dorchester County. She is a native of Dorchester County and has been an entrepreneur for 39 years. Visions America Community Development Corporation is looking to build affordable housing in the County. Economic Development drives a county or town. Their program can help a lot of families who cannot afford home ownership otherwise. Rent now can be more than the cost of ownership. They can build a 1400 to 1700 square foot home for \$140,000 if the property is donated. They are looking for property that can be donated to them. Question from Mayor Henry how many homes have you built so far, she answered none so far.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Henry declared a moment of silence for respect to Councilmember Franz daughter, Crissy, who recently passed away. Mayor Henry and Chief Jones presented two officers with awards recognizing them for outstanding service. Officer Richard Bayliss was recognized for saving the life of an individual after responding to a call for a potential suicide. Corporal Mathew Mitton was recognized by MADD for his work to limit drunk driving.

Police Report – Chief Jones read the monthly report which is attached and presented the Council with his annual report.

Public Works Report – Avery reported that he spoke with Habitat for Humanity who said they will give 106 Maryland Ave. back to the town. They will be unable to build anything on the property in the foreseeable future. The paving of the Gay and Mill Street area has been done. A couple of people from the state are to visit and see how nice the job has turned out. The display cabinets have been installed in the train station. Work is progressing nicely at the Triangle Park.

New Business: Attorney Merriken described the need for clerical changes in the Ethics Ordinance. The State has approved the changes. Ordinance 2021-1 is to change any reference to Clerk Treasurer to Town Manager. Murphy said there should be a way to make any of those changes inclusively.

Avery said that he received an application for a Mobil Food Vendor License from Shanita Parker. It is the same as last year. Murphy motion to approve, second Truxon, passed 3 in favor 0 opposed.

Mayor Henry said there is current state legislation being considered for removal of all police officers from schools in Maryland. Murphy motion to send a letter in opposition to that legislation, second Truxon, passed 3/0.


Mayor Henry stated that Councilmember Cephas has said he will run for Mayor in the next elections. The Mayor asked that no politicking take place during town meetings.

Comments – Murphy said “we a doing a great job”.

6:55 Motion to Adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted:


John Avery
Town Manager

Mayor Henry:

Councilmembers:
