

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING MINUTES
September 9, 2022
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Saxton called the September 9, 2022, Town Council meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Attendance and Absences

In attendance were Mayor Tim Saxton and Councilmembers Randy Bartholomew, Bob Biciocchi, Edie Dondero, and Tim Shaw; Town Manager Maureen Hartman; Town Clerk Matt Amerling; and Chief Jason Lovins. Councilmembers Derek Abbott and Dick Oliver were absent. Public attendees: 6, remote attendees: 5.

Public Comment

Robert Shields, 39 Seaside Drive, noted, per item six on today's agenda, he would like to see the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee (B&PSC) made into a permanent committee.

Adoption of Minutes

Councilwoman Dondero had minor changes to the August 12, 2022, Town Council meeting minutes. Motion by Councilwoman Dondero, second by Councilman Bartholomew to adopt the August 12, 2022, Town Council Meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Councilman Bartholomew, second by Councilman Shaw to adopt the August 12, 2022, Town Council Executive Session meeting minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Councilwoman Dondero, second by Councilman Bartholomew to adopt the August 24, 2022, Town Council Workshop minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

Presentation of FY22 Audit by Ashley Stern, CPA, MBA, CGFM, Partner, PKS & Co.

Councilman Bartholomew introduced Ashley Stern from PKS & Company, who presented a summary of the FY 2022 audit financial statements. Ms. Stern thanked Town Manager Maureen Hartman, Finance Director Renee McDorman and staff for being so accommodating and prepared. Ms. Stern concluded the Town was given the "highest level of opinion", a highest level a CPA can award, and did not identify any material weaknesses in internal control and did not identify any instances of noncompliance. She noted an increase of over \$2,000,000 in the Town's current assets (cash and investments) with an overall net increase over \$1.1 million in total. Ms. Stern said they saw a small increase in the Town's revenues and channel revenues which does include that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or Pell grant. Building permits had also increased from year to year, and total expenses decreased from 2021, and a lot of that has to do with some of the timing, as well as depreciation on various assets. Ms. Stern presented a graph showing 11% expense for lifeguards, 30% expense for public works, 27% in general government (administration) and 32% in public safety (police). Ms. Stern noted the percentages compare across the board to other municipalities of South Bethany's size, and actual amounts were favorable in comparison to the budget by about \$132,000. The GFOA recommends that a Town's general fund has no less than two months of operating expenditures in the unassigned (unrestricted) fund balance, and it shows the Town is not over withholding money in their fund balance. Ms. Stern is not concerned about the future of the Town, the health, the continuation, or sustainability of the Town services. Ms. Stern concluded with a management letter with two recommendations; 1) all bank reconciliations to be

completed in the accounting software and 2) utilize additional training from the accounting software, since the software was not originally programmed for municipal government accounting. Ms. Stern stated all other recommendations have been implemented. Councilman Bartholomew, Mayor Saxton, and the Council thanked the Budget & Finance committee, Town staff and Finance Director McDorman for a job well done. Councilman Bartholomew moved that the Town Council approve the financial statements and auditors' communications for the year ended April 30, 2022, presented by the audit firm PKS and Company; seconded by Councilwoman Dondero. Motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and possible action to adopt the amendment for the Comprehensive Plan 5-Year Update

Town Manager Maureen Hartman stated the Town received the letter from the state's Office of State Planning Coordination stating that everything was accepted, and their attached letter allows for the incorporation of the Town's suggestion "to incorporate environmentally sustainable strategies and practices into Town operations and ordinances." Ms. Hartman recommends approval of this amendment. Councilwoman Dondero motioned to adopt the amendment for the Comprehensive Plan 5-Year update; seconded by Councilman Bartholomew. Motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and possible action for extension of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee

Councilwoman Dondero stated the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee (B&PSC) was created in June 2021, with a one-year timeframe, as are most ad hoc committees. At this year's re-organization meeting in May an extension was requested through the end of September, to allow the committee to implement the bicycle rodeo event the Town was hosting with the police department. Ms. Dondero stated there's a lot more work to do, particularly in regard to public education, related to bike and pedestrian safety in town to our residents, visitors and renters; so the committee is requesting that the council approve, them becoming a permanent standing committee. Mayor Saxton stated he would not be in favor of an extension of an ad hoc committee as 15 to 18 months is long enough, and there needs to be a decision as to whether this should be a permanent committee or not. Mayor Saxton said he doesn't want to see a separate budget for this committee and if this committee does become permanent, the budget should go through public works rather than having its own. Councilman Bartholomew said if this committee becomes permanent, it should have a budget like every other committee; however, if there are any events which can combine with other department/committee budgets, that can be done. There was a brief discussion about funding the committee from the GA Fund or its own line item.

Councilman Shaw said the reason this was an ad hoc committee was that there was a specific scope of interest, and that committees have this ability to sort of propagate and go well beyond the initial purpose, which is something of which Mr. Shaw is concerned. Councilman Shaw stated what the B&PSC has done is wonderful, but he would recommend an additional extension if they've got legitimate things that haven't been completed; but he's not so certain that it makes sense for this to be a permanent committee. Councilman Biciocchi said one of the points of the committee is to give a specific focus on how someone brings biking issues as a cyclist to the Town Council. Councilman Biciocchi said the best things and the reasons for committees to exist is that it allows the Town an access point. Mayor Saxton stated the Town committees are not necessarily designed to be the focal point for getting people to talk to the Town Council; but rather, Town Council approves what the committees are going to be doing and there are opportunities for the public to speak at all committee meetings as well as Council meetings. Councilman Bartholomew said he would be in favor as continuing this committee as an ad hoc and delay the decision to make this a standing committee. The Council commended the B&PSC for their work. Councilman Shaw said he believes this should continue with an extension as an ad hoc and, if at the end of the extension, it's clear there's still an obvious needed mission, Council will vote on this again on whether to make the committee permanent.

Motion by Councilwoman Dondero, seconded by Councilman Shaw to extend the B&PSC as an ad hoc committee for a year. Motion carried 5-0.

Leadership Reports

Mayor's Report – report submitted.

Town Manager Report – report submitted. Town Manager Hartman stated the Town has hired a person to fill the open front desk position and they will be starting on October 3.

Police Chief Report – report submitted.

Treasurer Report – report submitted.

Committee and Commission Reports

Budget and Finance Committee – report submitted.

Canal Water Quality Committee – no report submitted. Councilman Shaw stated after the meeting in September, at which they plan on reviewing financial data, the Committee hopes to provide to the Council a preliminary set of financial options going forward, to provide the annual cleaning of the canal, such as buying equipment and have the Town run it or hire third parties to run it.

Charter and Code Committee – no report submitted.

Community Relations Committee – no report submitted.

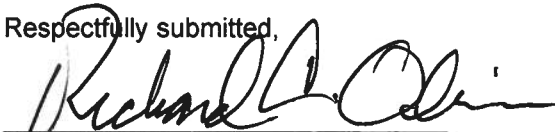
Planning Commission – no report submitted.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Ad Hoc Committee – report submitted.

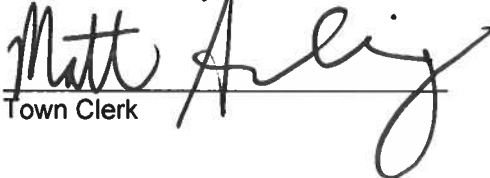
Adjournment

Motion by Councilwoman Dondero, second by Councilman Shaw to adjourn the September 9, 2022, Town Council Regular Meeting at 9:49 a.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Council Secretary



Town Clerk

10/14/22
Date of Approval