

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 11, 2024
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Dondero called the October 11, 2024, Town Council meeting to order at 9:04 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance and Absences

In attendance were Mayor Edie Dondero and Councilmembers Randy Bartholomew, Bob Biciocchi, Chris Keefe, Tim Shaw, Bob Shields, and Cindy Van Horn; Town Manager Maureen Hartman, SBPD Chief Jason Lovins, and Town Clerk Matt Amerling. Public attendees: 3. Virtual attendees: 3.

Chief Lovins introduced Chase Morris, a new hire to the South Bethany Police Department (SBPD). He will be starting the Dover Municipal Police Academy on October 20. Council welcomed Mr. Morris.

Public Comment

There were no comments.

Adoption of Minutes

Councilwoman Chris Keefe motioned to approve the September 13, 2024, Town Council meeting minutes, seconded by Councilman Bob Biciocchi. Motion carried 5-0-2 with abstentions from Councilman Bartholomew and Councilman Shaw.

Presentation and discussion of FY24 Audit – Ashley Stern, CPA, MBA, CGMF, Partner, and Lindsey Keen, Supervisor, PKS & Co.

Ms. Keen reported that based on evaluation of the basic financial statements, her company rates the Town of South Bethany with the highest level of opinion Certified Public Accountants can give. They did not identify any material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting. Ms. Keen stated the Town remains financially stable from 2023 to 2024 and that they did not identify any instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported as per *Government Auditing Standards*. The Town's breakdown of expenses is consistent with and comparable to other similar sized municipalities with 39% of expenses spent on public safety (police and beach patrol); 33% spent on public works; and 28% spent on general government and administration. General fund revenues were over budget by \$312,000, mostly due to intergovernmental grants received as well as license and permit revenue, and expenses were under budget by \$107,000. Councilman Bartholomew thanked Ms. Stern, Ms. Keen, Town Manager Maureen Hartman, and Town Finance Director Renee McDorman for their hard work on this audit.

Discussion and possible action to amend the Operating Reserve Policy (Bartholomew)

Councilman Randy Bartholomew brought forth the Budget and Finance Committee's recommended change to the Operating Reserve Policy which would define the annual operating budget, for the purpose of determining operational reserves, as total annual expenses excluding grants. Councilman Bartholomew motioned to approve the Operating Reserve Policy amendment as presented, seconded by Councilman Shields. Motion carried 7-0.

Budget Amendment in the amount of \$16,100.00 for the purchase of a new HVAC unit at Town Hall (Bartholomew)

Councilman Bartholomew reported that this past summer the HVAC system in Town Hall failed and unbudgeted funds were spent for an immediate replacement. Today's vote formally approves the budget amendment and authorizes the expenditure from the asset replacement and maintenance (ARM) fund. Councilman Bartholomew motioned to approve the budget amendment of \$16,100 to purchase a new HVAC unit for Town Hall, seconded by Councilman Shaw. Motion carried 7-0.

Discussion and possible action to approve reallocation of reserve (Bartholomew)

Councilman Bartholomew motioned to approve the reallocation of reserve funds as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Keefe. Motion carried 7-0.

Discussion and possible action to approve the Town's contribution to the state-mandated Delaware Paid Leave Insurance Program (Hartman)

Town Manager Maureen Hartman reported there is a new State-mandated program under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) slated to take effect January 1, 2025, that will require municipalities with more than nine employees to offer parental leave to eligible employees. Parental leave is defined as caring for a new child through birth, adoption or fostering. Since the Town has 16 employees, we are required to participate in the program and must fund at least 50% or as much as 100% of the cost of the program. Councilman Shaw motioned to approve that the Town pay 100% of the cost contribution to the state-mandated Delaware Paid Leave Insurance Program, seconded by Councilman Biciocchi. Motion carried 7-0.

Leadership Reports

Mayor's Report – Report submitted.
Town Manager Report – Report submitted.
Police Chief Report – Report submitted.
Treasurer Report – Report submitted.

Committee and Commission Reports

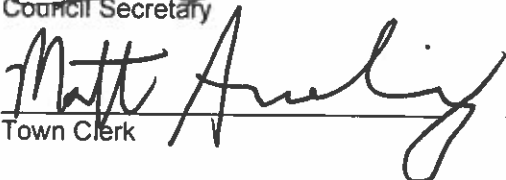
Budget and Finance Committee – Report submitted.
Canal Water Quality Committee – Report submitted. Next meeting is Monday, October 21, at 10 a.m.
Charter and Code Committee – Report submitted.
Community Relations Committee – Report submitted. Next meeting is Wednesday, November 13, at 10 a.m.
Planning Commission – Report submitted.
Resiliency Committee – Report submitted.

Adjournment

Motion by Councilman Shields, seconded by Councilman Biciocchi, to adjourn the October 11, 2024, Town Council Regular Meeting at 10:06 a.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,


Council Secretary


Town Clerk


Date of Approval