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4 **TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND**
5 **Easton Town Hall**
6 **14 S. Harrison Street**

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April 21, 2014

PRESENT AT CONVENING

11 Mayor Robert C. Willey
12 Council President John Ford
13 Councilmember Megan M. Cook
14 Councilmember Kelley K. Malone
15 Councilmember Pete Leshner
16 Councilmember Leonard E. Wendowski, Sr.

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Robert F. Karge, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Town Planner Mr. Thomas and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy Ruf.

OPENING REMARKS BY MS. MALONE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Ms. Malone gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 7, 2014 MEETING.

Upon motion by Mr. Leshner seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 7, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

ITEMS BY MAYOR WILLEY.

Mayor Willey asked permission for the Easton Volunteer Fire Department to take the new tower truck to Harrisburg, PA for a fire expo.

Upon motion by Mr. Leshner seconded by Mr. Wendowski and carried unanimously, permission was granted for EVFD to take the new truck to Harrisburg.

ITEMS BY THE TOWN MANAGER:

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY EVENT INAUGURAL HASLUP HUSTLE.

Mr. Karge stated that the Public Assembly Event as present has been recommended by Easton Police Department after extensive collaboration.

Mr. Leshner asked if there is a way to gauge the economic impact of the event.

Ms. Malone stated that she is not able to support the request and feels the town is setting a precedent with this public assembly event.

President Ford stated that this is a town function as well as the 1st Annual Inaugural Haslup Hustle. He stated that this is a local run and the town should support the efforts.

Mr. Wendowski asked for an estimate of costs to the town for the run.

Mr. Karge stated that he will forward an estimate of the costs.

ORDINANCE NO. 640, AUTHORIZING EXEMPTION OF ALL REMAINING PERSONAL PROPERTY USED IN MANUFACTURING FROM TAXATION WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF EASTON IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THE ATTRACTION, RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF MANUFACTURERS WITHIN THE TOWN LIMITS.

President Ford discussed the procedure for Emergency Legislation. He asked if the Ordinance had to be declared Emergency Legislation by a motion.

The Town Attorney stated that this is correct and discussed procedural rules for emergency voting.

Mr. Wendowski moved to suspend the rules, seconded by Mr. Leshner and carried unanimously.

70 President Ford introduced Ordinance No. 640 for a first reading.

71
72 Upon motion by Mr. Leshar seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 640 was passed
73 unanimously following a roll call vote.

74
75 **ITEMS BY THE TOWN ATTORNEY.**

76
77 Ms. VanEmburch stated that the Financial Ethics forms are due next week to the Ethics Commission.

78
79 **PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT TOWN OF EASTON COMPREHENSIVE FORESTRY**
80 **PROGRAM.**

81
82 Mr. Zach Smith, Future Planner discussed the Town of Easton Comprehensive Forestry Program and urban tree
83 canopy.

84
85 Mr. Smith stated that the Town Tree Board and staff respectfully request adoption of Comprehensive Forestry
86 Program. He discussed the objectives to move the town forward. Mr. Smith discussed the benefits provided by
87 urban tree canopy.

88
89 Mr. Smith stated that they need approx. \$8000 to finish tree mapping exercise. Mr. Smith discussed factoring in
90 a loss and the necessity for trees to be planted on public property and private property

91
92 Mr. Smith asked the Town Council to adopt the Draft Comprehensive Forestry Program as an official program
93 for the Town of Easton.

94
95 The council's consensus was to support the Tree Board's recommendations.

96
97 **EASTON POINT PARK UPDATE.**

98
99 Ms. Amy Owsley Deputy Director and Mr. Doug Davies Community Design Specialist discussed steps toward
100 a park and gave a quick overview of the future for Easton Point.

101
102 The next steps for approval of a park were discussed.

103
104 **PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 BUDGET.**

105
106 President Ford opened the public hearing at 8:16 p.m.

107
108 Mayor Willey discussed the FY2014-2015 Proposed Budget. He stated that it is currently balanced and any
109 changes will require funding sources.

110
111 Mayor Willey stated that the budget totals \$17,109,661 which is a decrease of 8.4% from the 2013/14 budget.
112 He stated that there is no change in the current tax rate as well as no cuts in safety items or training requests.
113 Mayor Willey stated that there are no planned furloughs or layoffs of employees.

114
115 Mr. Wendowski discussed \$.03 increase in taxes.

116
117 Mayor Willey stated that salary and benefits are 60% of the budget.

118
119 Discussion occurred whether borrowing money would affect the bond rating which has just been upgraded.

120
121 Mayor Willey explained that borrowing to replace capital equipment should be ok and not affect the bond
122 rating.

123
124 President Ford scheduled a meeting Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. to discuss raising the tax cap. He stated that
125 the final vote on the budget will occur May 19.

126
127 At 8:27 p.m., President Ford opened the floor for public comments.

128
129 Mr. Al Bond was present on behalf of the Avalon Theater. He introduced Avalon Theater Board members.

130
131 Mr. Bond discussed the Avalon Foundation and their level of service to the community.

132
133 Mr. Wendowski asked Mr. Bond to provide their IRS Form 990 to council members.

134
135 The lack of maintenance at the Avalon Theater was discussed.

136

137 At 9:04 President Ford closed the public hearing.

138
139 **ORD. 638, BUDGET FY 2014/15.**

140 President Ford brought Ordinance No. 638 to the floor a first reading.

141
142
143 **ORD. 639, "AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE RAISING BY TAXATION THE AMOUNT**
144 **NECESSARY TO PAY THE ORDINARY EXPENSES OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO**
145 **PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF INTEREST ON THE VARIOUS BOND ISSUES AND THE**
146 **REDUCTION OF CERTAIN BONDS AND NOTES FOR THE PERIOD OF TWELVE MONTHS AND**
147 **SETTING THE INTEREST AND PENALTY FOR DELINQUENT BILLS, COMMENCING ON JULY**
148 **1, 2014 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2015."**

149
150 President Ford brought Ordinance No. 639 to the floor for a first reading.

151
152 **DISCUSSION OF SIDEWALK REPAIRS NEEDED AT THE WOODS.**

153
154 Mayor Willey discussed private sidewalks throughout the town. He stated that the sidewalks had always been
155 the property owner's responsibility but some are not financially able to do the repairs. Mayor Willey asked that
156 the town look into ways to have repairs made.

157
158 President Ford stated that the repairs should be approached incrementally and the town should not force repairs
159 on the homeowners. He stated that the council needs an idea of the costs for repairs.

160
161 Mayor Willey suggested picking five notorious spots to be repaired each year then including the costs for
162 incremental repairs.

163
164 President Ford also asked for recommendations from the staff for a policy.

165
166 **APPROVAL OF INVOICES TOTALING \$1,169,286.14.**

167
168 Upon motion by Mr. Leshar seconded by Ms. Malone invoices for payment were approved.

169
170 **ITEMS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.**

171
172 Mrs. Cook reminded everyone that Easton Utilities will be holding their Centennial Celebration May 10, from
173 10:00 to 2:00 p.m.

174
175 **AUDIENCE COMMENTS.**

176
177 Ms. Christy Morrell, 110 Hughlett St. was present to introduce the program Imagination Library of Talbot
178 County. She stated that it is an Early Literacy Program. Ms. Morrell discussed Dolly Parton's Imagination
179 Library. She stated that it is pivotal that children are learning to read by third grade. Ms. Morrell stated that the
180 program requires a \$25 investment per child in Talbot County. She discussed summer slide to keep children
181 engaged with literacy. Ms. Morrell stated that you could also contact the Mid Shore Community Foundation to
182 make a donation. Graduation out of the program occurs when they turn the child turns five.

183
184 Mr. Leshar stated that he can attest to the program.

185
186 **ADJOURN.**

187
188 Upon motion by Mr. Leshar seconded by Mrs. Cook and carried unanimously, President Ford adjourned the
189 regularly scheduled meeting at 9:39 p.m.

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192 _____
193 Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk
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