

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2023

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Searcy, Councilmember Fulcher, Councilmember Dyballa, Councilmember Gibson, Councilmember Seamens, Councilmember Honzak (participating on Zoom), Councilmember Small

Also Present: City Manager Fox, Acting Deputy City Managers Gregory Clark and Rosalind Grigsby, Finance Director Susan Cheung, City Clerk Carpenter

Mayor Searcy called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Auditorium of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Ms. Searcy provided an update on future agendas.

FOR THE RECORD

Ms. Searcy read a proclamation recognizing Black History Month. (Proclamation attached.)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The City Council was updated by Legislative Advocate Ann Ciekot on Maryland General Assembly legislative matters.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Small stated that he was happy to have been elected, happy to be to present at the meeting and to have testified for the first time. He said he was also happy to have been the first person on the record to say Ms. Searcy was the first black Mayor but disappointed that it never came up. He said that it was awesome to have an integrated group of people trying to better their community and society.

Mr. Seamens commented on the death of Tyree Nichols and the Memphis police involved. He commented on his 23 years of experience as a councilmember. He said that over the years, he learned that the use of excessive force was an issue that went beyond the officers involved. He spoke about the positive changes made by the Council and Chief of Police in recent years. He reassured the community that all the hard work done over the years moved the Police Department in the right direction, minimizing the chances of something like what happened in Memphis happening in Takoma Park.

Mr. Gibson said he is proud to be on this Council with this Mayor. He is proud to work in partnership with all.

Ms. Searcy asked for all to take a moment of silence for Tyree Nichols. She said that she was excited for Black History Month and to be the first elected Black mayor in Takoma Park. Ms. Searcy commented on events she attended and announced some upcoming events.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

No City Manager comments.

WORK SESSION

1. FY 2023 Budget Amendment No. 5

Mr. Fox briefed the Council on the proposed budget amendment. Since the last amendment, either new operational needs have arisen with unforeseen costs, or delayed expenditures need to be addressed which require changes to the approved Fiscal 2023 budget. In addition, the salary savings due to position vacancies are significant. With the availability of Federal Aid, a number of community projects are moved from current year and repurposed in Fiscal Year 2024 due to staff capacity. In the Housing and Community Development Department and Public Works Department, several new grant receipts are accounted for in this budget amendment.

Mr. Fox said he is trying to bring expenditures more in line with revenue. He feels that it makes sense to reduce the budget to account for projects not completed and positions not filled.

Ms. Cheung explained how the reserves are accounted for and how ARPA funding is treated.

Councilmembers questioned the proposed budget amendment:

- Regarding vacancy savings from unfilled positions, why are there so many vacancies, what is not getting done due to lack of staffing, and is this resulting in program savings as well?
- These are not savings, they are unspent dollars.
- The City has provided less services than intended because there were not people to do the work?
- How are the two deputy city manager salaries being accounted for?

- A budget amendment should be clearer about where the unspent money goes.
- More information is needed to explain the budget amendment.

Councilmembers also questioned the racial equity and environmental considerations provided on the agenda cover memo.

2. Overview of City Boards and Committees

Ms. Dyballa updated the City Council on the City committees and the recruitment and appointment process. (Presentation attached.)

Ms. Searcy asked if there was agreement in forming a subcommittee to review committee applications and make recommendations to the Council on committee member appointments.

The Council agreed. Ms. Dyballa, Ms. Honzak, and Ms. Fulcher volunteered to form the committee application review subcommittee.

Council discussed how to connect committees more with the Council and options for committees to report to Council. There were questions and suggestions for future consideration.

How often do committees report? Should Council have committees all report on one night (not on a Wednesday)?

Have we considered expanding committees beyond Takoma Park?

Should there be Council liaisons to committees?

Review the charge of some committees (i. e. why is the Sustainable Maryland Committee so narrowly focused?).

Must Council always follow committee recommendations? What is the impetus to follow up on a committee's recommendations?

Should there be a limit on the number of people from one ward serving on a committee? How do we address situations where we can't fill positions?

ADJOURNMENT

The City Council adjourned for the evening at 10:56 p.m.

Minutes adopted May 24, 2023.