

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

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023

MINUTES

Present: Mayor Searcy, Councilmember Fulcher, Councilmember Dyballa, Councilmember Gibson, Councilmember Seamens, Councilmember Honzak, Councilmember Small

Also present: Acting Deputy City Manager Grigsby, Acting Deputy City Manager Clark, Public Works Director Braithwaite, City Clerk Carpenter

The City Council convened at 7:36 PM in the Community Center Auditorium, 7500 Maple Avenue.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Ms. Searcy announced the resignation of City Manager Jamal Fox effective as of February 13. She said the Council is committed to this City and will be doing everything to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Ms. Searcy expressed gratitude for Rosalind Grigsby and Gregory Clark. She noted that a resolution has been added to the agenda designating them as Acting City Manager to enable them to sign documents and keep the City running. The Council will be relying on the Senior Leadership Team to continue to serve as well.

Ms. Searcy provided an update on future agendas.

REPORT OF FEBRUARY 13 AND FEBRUARY 15 ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION SESSIONS

The City Council met in administrative function session on February 13 and February 15, to discuss direct report position (City Manager). Administrative function sessions are closed to the public.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ann Ciekot, Legislative Advocate, provided the legislative update.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Arthur David Olson, Hancock Avenue, commented on City tax rates. He stated that people do not pay tax rates, they pay tax bills based on the rate and assessed values. He urged the Council to keep that in mind. He said he hoped that the Council would provide guidance to the Acting City Managers on the FY 2024 tax rate that should be proposed.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Small commented on his attire recognizing Hip Hop's 50th Anniversary. He also recognized Black History Month.

Mr. Gibson commented on a COG Farm and Agriculture Committee meeting he attended. He reported that he joined City staff at Victory Tower to sign up residents for the Direct Cash Assistance program. He commented on U.S. mail delivery issues and stated that the Council was working closely with Congressman Raskin's office to address the issue.

Ms. Dyballa commented on a recent Transportation Planning Board meeting which she attended. She stated that she drafted a letter to the Maryland Public Service Commission on behalf of the City regarding the implementation of the community choice aggregation pilot program. She noted that there will be some upcoming Environmental Protection Agency funding to combat climate change. Ms. Dyballa thanked Ms. Grigsby, Mr. Clark and the Senior Leadership Team for their patience and forbearance.

Ms. Honzak thanked the Senior Leadership Team, Ms. Grigsby, and Mr. Clark for their leadership. She commented on safety concerns in Ward 5. She thanked Chief Duvall and Deputy Chief Philipose for taking the time to address the residents' concerns by coming out to speak to them on Thursday. She announced a separate Ward 5 public safety meeting to be held on March 13. Ms. Honzak commented on a Purple Line – Maryland Transit Administration Community Advisory Team meeting that she attended.

Ms. Fulcher commented on safety concerns in Ward 1. She encouraged the residents to reach out to her and Chief DeVaul with any concerns. She said that she would be meeting with Chief DeVaul to discuss what members of the community should be doing in light of their safety concerns.

Ms. Searcy urged residents to read Chief DeVaul's statement about crime in the community. She announced that she will be attending the Maryland Mayors Association Winter Conference.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Ms. Grigsby introduced Andrew Buldoc, the new ARPA Manager. Mr. Bolduc served as a deputy city manager for the City of South Burlington, Vermont. He has also served as a city attorney.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A motion to adopt the minutes of January 9, 2023 was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Ms. Fulcher. The motion carried. Mr. Small abstained.

Resolution Designating an Acting City Manager for the City of Takoma Park

Ms. Searcy explained that the purpose of the resolution was to designate Ms. Grigsby and Mr. Clark as Acting City Manager until an interim City Manager is appointed.

Mr. Gibson moved to adopt the resolution. Ms. Fulcher seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Searcy, Fulcher, Dyballa, Gibson, Seamens, Honzak; ABSENT: Small)

Resolution 2023-2 (attached)

1. Single Reading Ordinance Authorizing Execution of a Contract for the Recreation Center Roof Replacement

Ms. Braithwaite addressed a question from Ms. Honzak. She explained that after some research and discussion with contractors, she determined that the TPO (Thermoplastic Polyolefin) option was the best product for the recreation building roof type.

Mr. Small asked if additional work would need to be done to address draining issues.

Ms. Braithwaite replied that the insulation that will be installed would direct water to the drains. She said that the current drains would be replaced with new drains as part of the roof replacement but no additional drains would be installed.

She is also starting to look at the HVAC work that will need to be completed on the center.

Mr. Gibson asked what is the status of replacing the building.

Ms. Braithwaite responded that two responses were received to the request for proposals. Mr. Kowler will be reporting back to Council on that process.

Mr. Small moved to adopt the single reading ordinance. Mr. Gibson seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Searcy, Dyballa, Fulcher, Gibson, Seamens, Honzak, Small.)

Ordinance 2023-1 (attached)

2. Board and Committee Appointment Recommendations

Ms. Dyballa briefed the council on the work done by the subcommittee and their recommendations. She explained that recommendations were not final for some committees as the subcommittee was waiting on staff feedback to make the final recommendations. Ms. Dyballa said that she would come back with those recommendations at the next Council meeting.

Mr. Small noted that the racial equity considerations were done well. He said he was curious about the self-identifying section of the applications and requested to see a matrix of that information.

Ms. Dyballa stated that not all applicants provided an answer but could provide a demographic table.

Ms. Searcy thanked the subcommittee for all their work.

3. Discussion of City Attorney Contract Amendment (fees)

City Attorney Cornbrooks gave a brief overview of the contract terms. He stated that the City and the firm agreed to meet every fall beginning in 2021 to review the firm's rates. He explained that in 2022, the firm did not seek to increase the rate as it was not in the best interest of the City due to the pandemic. Mr. Cornbrooks said that a rate increase was proposed to be retroactive to January 1, 2023, as he had discussed with former City Manager Fox. A further increase would begin on July 1, 2023.

Ms. Searcy said that she was appreciative to work with the City Attorney and that the proposed fees were fair. She said that the next step would be to vote on an amendment to the contract at the next Council meeting. The Council had no objection to moving forward with the contract amendment.

The City Council adjourned for the evening at 9:12 p.m.

Minutes adopted June 14, 2023.