



Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman James L. Furstenberg
Councilwoman Laurie P. Marchini

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

MINUTES

M&CC Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers, 57 N. Liberty Street, Cumberland

DATE: February 7, 2023

I. OPEN SESSION 6:15 P.M.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

PRESENT:

Council Member Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Council Member Eugene T. Frazier
Council Member James L. Furstenberg
Council Member Laurie P. Marchini
President Raymond M. Morriss

Also Present: Jeffery Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Ken Tressler
Director of Administrative Services

IV. Statement of Closed Meeting

1. The Mayor announced that a closed meeting had been held on February 7, 2023 at 4:30 P.M. and read into the record a summary of that meeting which is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes as required by Section 3-306 (c) (2) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

V. Directors Reports

Motion to approve the reports was made by Council Member Cioni, seconded by Council Member Marchini, and was passed on a vote of 5-0

(A) Engineering

1. Engineering Division Monthly Report for January 2023

VI. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Council Member Furstenberg, seconded by Council Member Frazier, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

1. Approval of the Work and Regular Session Minutes of October 4, 2022.

VII. Public Hearings

1. Public hearing to consider an Ordinance (Number 3938) authorizing the issuance and sale of general obligation debt in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$4,250,000 to be issued under the State of Maryland's Local Government Infrastructure Financing Program.

Convened 6:18 PM

No public comments

Adjourned 6:19 PM

2. Public hearing for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2023 Annual Action Plan

Convened 6:19 PM

Lee Borrer, Senior Community Development Specialist, Block Grant undergoes a yearly application process, but HUD requires a plan be submitted every five years, that creates a strategic plan. Currently are in the fourth year of the five-year plan created in 2020. Priority needs: Annual action plan created based upon applications from organizations in the City. Applications due Feb. 17, checklist available for anyone interested in applying for the funds. Must be located within municipal city limits.

Estimated allocation: \$800,000 until we receive notice from HUD later this year of exact amount. Review committee looks at each applicant's capacity/experience, amount of funds requested, completeness of application. Comments received in writing through April 17, 2023. Presented at a second hearing, upcoming. After being sent to HUD in May, approval is received in August. Awardees granted funds sometime in October. to get their projects underway. Question from Council Member Cioni: This amount has been consistent since I've been around. Lee: Yes, it has been around that amount for the last several years. Has only varied within a couple hundred dollars

Mark Bittinger, Executive director of Friends Aware. Friends Aware founded in 1954, nonprofit in Cumberland. Employs 175 people; operates on a 24/7 basis. Mission to provide people with diverse abilities with support to live their best lives as members of the community. Life Enrichment Center: provides meaningful day services – 50 ppl - life skills, auditory, artistic, computer skills are given a daily opportunity to participate in local activities: bowling, day trips, library visits, etc. Residential services: 40 ppl – support individuals' social behavior, communication, household chores, performing self-care, and offer personal support services. Tax exempt 501 (c)(3) organization. Vast majority of funding based on billing for services they provide. Seeking consideration to continue services by assisting with three improvement projects:

1. Water tank which supplies sprinkler system to Holland Street facility – multiple repairs/upgrades are needed to comply. 2 are critical, 6 are necessary to meet OSHA standards. \$71,600

2. Installation of backup generator with propane fuel tank supply – to be maintained at Holland Street address. Vital to services at main campus and group homes. Standby generator to be installed by certified contractor and propane tank. \$19,000 cost

3. Replacement of asphalt shingle roof – 600 Furnace St. going to require new roof at cost of \$18,000

Rhonda Pick – Executive Director of Family Crisis Resource Center. FCRC has been in the community since 1978 providing services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, etc. Application is for abuse intervention program. Program holds offenders accountable for their actions. Teaches them non-violent relationship skills to increase the safety of victims of abuse. Abuse intervention challenges abusers to view their actions and take responsibility for their actions. Each perpetrator attends 22 group sessions to help them think critically about their relationships. Program is certified by the Governors' Office. Works with law enforcement, probation and parole officers, and prosecutors. 94% of those who complete the program, do not re-offend. City of Cumberland is not immune from the problems of domestic violence It . affects the physical and mental health of adults and the children in violent homes as well. Project addresses City's goal to provide supportive services. Services are provided on a sliding fee scale, offenders pay based on their income, but fees do not cover all of the program's costs. Program is about \$95,000 per year to run. Asking for the project to continue.

Susan Malone – HRDC – Community Action Agency for Allegany County since 1965. HRDC runs over 35 programs helping low-income adults, senior citizens, and children. Operate Head Start and Senior Centers throughout Allegany County. Provide food delivery services, mobility transportation service to take people to appointments, provide free tax preparation services; administer weatherization program, provide financial education, and affordable housing. Serve the homeless population. Applying for affordable housing funds to update existing property, a duplex on Pulaski Street in Cumberland. Only funding for this project is the rent they receive from tenants; however, it has not been occupied for 5 years, due to damage to the property from former tenants and age. Recently replaced the roof. Structure needs heating system replacement, plus work to repair damages from former tenant and some water damage, etc. Applying for funds for only for one side for heat system and renovations to bring it up to City Code. Rents increased significantly to COVID, increased cost for everything. Really impacting low-income citizens. Current fair market rent for a three -bedroom dwelling is \$1,073. At the time of last tenant, rent was \$565 for each three-bedroom unit. May have to up rent a little bit to maintain unit, but will be below current fair market rate. Rehab will help get the unit able to be utilized. Waiting on contractor for amount-does not have it now. \$20-30K estimate for repairs and heat system.

David Hill – Free Indeed Ministries – just been granted three houses from another non-profit. We need this assistance because so many complain about people released from prison with nothing to do but sell drugs. Hill stated he is an example of someone who came through and succeeded after prison. Wants to return the favor to some upcoming released prisoners coming into the community who are willing to work and be successfully mentored. Working with WCI Chaplain to identify good candidates to participate successfully in program. He believes he's the right man for the job, as he's been down that road after 20 years in prison. All three houses need work, including roofs on all, heating systems, insulation, water damage repairs, etc. Wants to fix the houses/neighborhood up and let Cumberland see that there are people coming out of prison willing to make a change for the better. Activities for the guys – coming into a different society, need to help them to adapt. Let them see they do not have to do the same things that got them in

prison. Opportunity is available. Trying to make a difference – all you need to reach is one person. Working on getting a SAM number to be able bid and request funding from available government sources. Thank you.

Adjourned 6:46 PM

VIII. Public Comment for Agenda Items Only

No public comments

IX. Unfinished Business

(A) Ordinances

1. **Ordinance No. 3938** (*2nd and 3rd readings*) – providing for the issuance and sale of an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$4,250,000 of general obligation bonds of the Mayor and City Council of Cumberland.

SECOND READING: The Ordinance was submitted in title only for its second reading. **Motion** to accept the second reading and move to the third, after comment, was made by council Member Frazier, seconded by council Member Marchini, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

Mayor Morriss opened the floor for questions and comments. Being none, the ordinance moved to its third reading.

THIRD READING: The Ordinance was submitted in title only for its third reading and was passed on vote of 5-0.

X. New Business

(A) Orders (Consent Agenda)

Mr. Tressler reviewed each item on the Consent Agenda, and Mayor Morriss called for questions or comments. **Motion** to accept all items on the Consent Agenda was made by Council Member Frazier, seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

1. **Order 27,169** - accepting the Round V Surplus Property bid from Richard Pravlik in the amount of \$7,500 for the purchase of 13 W. Clement Street
2. **Order 27,170** - declaring 421 Arch St. to be surplus property to offer for sale
3. **Order 27,171** - declaring vehicles and equipment to be surplus and authorizing them for sale or trade in
4. **Order 27,172** - authorizing the Comptroller to abate City real estate taxes owed for the Memorial Avenue lots owned by the Cumberland Economic Development Corporation in the amount not to exceed \$38,095.20
5. **Order 27,173** - authorizing the Acting Chief of Police to accept the FY23 Police Accountability, Community and Transparency (PACT) Grant in the amount of \$179,790 for the purchase of Body Worn Cameras

6. Order 27,174 - authorizing a Residential exemption from the Special Taxing District Levy for the 2022-2023 tax year for 55 Baltimore Street in the amount not to exceed \$1,042.76

7. Order 27,175 - authorizing Substantial Amendment #3 (12152022) to the Community Development Block Grant Program reducing the AHEC Emergency Dental Access (UU22.019) project by \$2,000 and increasing the 2022 YMCA Food Program (UU22.063) by \$2,000

8. Order 27,176 - authorizing Minor Amendment #4 (01032023) to the Community Development Block Grant Program involving a change in funding allocation to one identified activity (2020 Constitution Park Guard Station Rehabilitation (SS20.056) project) and 2021 Program Income

9. Order 27,177 - accepting the proposal from The Lakota Group in the amount not to exceed \$49,665 to develop a preservation plan for the City of Cumberland utilizing grant funds awarded in the amount of \$23,000

10. Order 27,178 - accepting the proposal from Farrell Forestry LLC for professional consulting forestry services for the Evitts Creek Watershed (City Project 2022-41-SRVC) in the amount not to exceed \$30,000

11. Order 27,179 - accepting the proposal from East Hills Engineering Design Services LLC to provide mechanical and electrical engineering design services for the City Hall HVAC Replacement Project (City Project 2022-11-PBLD)

12. Order 27,180 - accepting the proposal from Atlantic Lining Co., Inc., to design and install a new liner and floating cover for the Fort Hill Reservoir (City Project 2022-34-WTR) in the amount not to exceed \$728,100

13. Order 27,181 - accepting the proposal from MultiVista to install cameras for the Baltimore Street Access Project (in association with City Project 12-16-M) in the amount not to exceed \$41,786.10

XI. Public Comments

Chuck Schwab spoke about having chickens in Cumberland, and thinks they should be allowed.

Gail Devore also spoke on the chicken topic, saying she enjoyed caring for chickens as pets for all her life. She said that as an adult, chickens have been a part of local educational programs, and said she has spoken to John Kirby, former Frostburg Administrator to understand what their experience has been. She added that in 2016 when they adopted the chicken ordinance.

Carlene Dowell also added her thoughts on the backyard chickens topic. She said she wanted to review some of the rules about citizens speaking at council meetings. She stated that the culture is different here than in Wyoming. She added that time is running short and it's getting closed to spring, regarding giving folks enough time to build coops. Time is running close for Spring – people need time to build coops.

Joshua Tabora thanked others who have spoken out about this topic, and said he wants to reiterate his support for the keeping of backyard chickens. He stated that in the spirit of being solution-oriented, forming a backyard chicken keepers board or guild would be a good idea.

Jose Taylor – spoke about support for a youth football tournament, the 2nd Annual Queen City Tournament on March 24-26 in Allegany County. He said he’s reaching out to ask for half of the \$2,000 for the cost of utilizing Greenway Avenue Stadium, and said he’s also needing help with other expenses – insurance, coaches, referees. He explained that this tournament will bring revenue to the City – regarding hotels, restaurants, etc. He stated that last year there were 20 teams, this year they are expecting at least 45. He also advised that he has reserved rooms at many area hotels, and is also reaching out to TWR to help with radio communication in exchange for an advertising banner. He added that his goal is to highlight the City of Cumberland and the Canal and the Downtown, informing parents of these kids about local restaurants and stores.

Mayor Morriss thanked Mr. Taylor for the information, and advised him to continue to seek support.

In answer to questions from Council, Mr. Taylor advised that teams have been established for several years, and they desire to have a nice complex to play in. He said that because of word of mouth, numbers are increasing tremendously. He added that this will provide great event for the weekend and highlight the local area

Norman Spencer spoke about the football tournament, and said travel football started in this area 10 years ago. He said the kids love it, and said he is the VP of the local league, and said they go July through November. He suggested starting a tourney here in Cumberland to bring people to our area

Mayor Morriss stated that the sport is growing fast, which is great.

Dana Tinnen stated that the youth of Cumberland are overlooked, and said there is a need to spotlight student athletes. He asked M&CC to consider putting support behind youth programs. There was also discussion about starting up the Neighborhood Advisory Commission again.

The Mayor said that M&CC will work with you on Neighborhood Advisory Commission, and advised that it’s a matter of organizing and takes participation of the community. He said it has to be a two-way street – there needs to be community participation to make it work.

XII. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 P. M.

Minutes approved on March 21, 2023

Raymond M. Morriss, Mayor

ATTEST: Allison K. Layton, City Clerk