



## **WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 4, 2024**

### **PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Council President D'Shawn M. Doughty, Council Vice President Angela M. Blake, Councilwoman April R. Jackson, Councilwoman Michele R. Gregory, Councilwoman Sharon C. Dashiell

### **PUBLIC OFFICIALS ABSENT**

Mayor Randy Taylor

### **STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Fire Chief Rob Frampton, Deputy Chief Chris O'Barsky, Assistant Chief of Logistics Chris Twilley, City Clerk Julie English, City Attorney Ashley Bosché

### **WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The City Council convened in a Work Session on November 4, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. in the Government Office Building Council Chambers, Room 301, located at 125 N. Division Street. After reviewing the emergency exit instructions, President Doughty invited Assistant Chief Chris Twilley to present an ordinance.

**Ordinance** to approve a budget amendment of the FY2025 General Fund Budget to appropriate funds to the Salisbury Fire Department's Operating Budget

Assistant Chief Twilley explained that funds from the turnout gear account were used to pay for the water leak and asked for those funds to be returned to that account.

Having no council or public comments, Council reached unanimous consensus to move the ordinance forward to Legislative Session.

### **Comprehensive Plan Discussion**

Mr. Kitzrow explained that the city had hired Mead and Hunt to assist with the comprehensive plan, but there have been concerns about their work. The city was considering handling the plan internally, though council members expressed concerns about this decision. A discussion

followed regarding the city's commitment to completing the plan on time and ensuring it reflected public input. Some council members suggested additional public meetings and requested access to the draft version of the document. Mr. Kitzrow stated that the city aimed to: complete a nearly-final draft by December, hold focus group discussions in January, and potentially schedule a public hearing in February or March. President Doughty expressed concern about the process, noting that \$160,000 had been allocated for the comprehensive plan and zoning update, with \$60,000 already spent. He added that cities typically do not undertake such tasks internally and that the State would likely prefer external guidance. He believed a firm should be leading the process. Mr. Kitzrow clarified that the agreement with Mead and Hunt had not been terminated, but his team needed to align on expectations. President Doughty recommended that the council be involved in the internal conversations, and Ms. Jackson agreed, emphasizing the importance of providing accurate information to their constituents. Mr. Kitzrow reiterated that he wanted his team to be aligned before making the document available for public input.

### **Lots 1, 11, 15 Discussion**

President Doughty requested an update from Mr. Kitzrow regarding the potential closure of Lots 1, 11, and 15. Mr. Kitzrow informed the Council that a message had been sent to the permitholders outlining the Mayor's Office stance on the closures. He also stated that the declaratory relief statement had been finalized and would be filed either today or tomorrow. He assured the Council that the city had not lost access to these lots and would pursue legal action if necessary. While there had been no positive movement, he hoped to have clarity on who controlled the parking lots by next week. President Doughty emphasized the importance of continued conversation and urged the council to remain involved in the discussions.

### **October Planning and Zoning Discussion**

President Doughty expressed concerns about the last Planning and Zoning meeting, particularly the density amendment and staff report. Mr. Kitzrow explained that the Department of Infrastructure and Development had met with the Mayor to discuss staff reports and tactics, though Mr. Kitzrow was not part of that meeting. He added that Deputy City Administrator Tom Stevenson attended on his behalf. President Doughty inquired why Mr. Kitzrow was not involved, emphasizing that the City Administrator should lead these discussions. He stressed that the Mayor should not be directly engaging with staff on these matters. Ms. Gregory also agreed that the City Administrator should be at the forefront of these discussions. Mr. Kitzrow believed the Department of Infrastructure and Development should be involved when dealing with zoning and amendments, adding that meetings were taking place to evaluate the text amendment and ensure a strong staff report. Ms. Dashiell expressed interest in receiving a copy of the comprehensive plan. She believed her comments were not relevant when legal issues were involved, though she strongly felt that density should not be a one-size-fits-all approach and changes to the zoning code should be reviewed and implemented.

### **Employment Position Discussion**

President Doughty brought up concerns regarding a position that the council had voted to retain within the city, only to later learn that the position, along with the person filling it, no

longer existed. Mr. Kitzrow explained that the Department of Infrastructure and Development had experienced significant staff transitions and vacancies for an extended period of time. He mentioned that the department had been restructured and the new director was still adjusting. He noted that several positions remained vacant, and the department was working through the challenges of being understaffed. President Doughty pointed out that while positions may exist, the Mayor's office had the authority to choose not to fill them. Mr. Kitzrow confirmed that some positions were actively being recruited for, while others were intentionally left vacant at that time. Ms. Jackson expressed concern about hiring practices, particularly the firing of people of color, noting the city's diverse population but lack of diversity among city employees. She emphasized the need for action to prevent potential lawsuits. President Doughty reiterated that the council wanted to be part of these discussions and help facilitate the conversation. He expressed frustration with lack of communication and closed-door meetings. He urged the administration to get a handle on them and expressed disappointment in the way things had been handled over the past year, demanding improvements moving forward. Ms. Jackson stressed the importance of being well-prepared as a city council member.

#### **ADMINISTRATION UPDATES/COMMENTS**

Mr. Kitzrow announced that the Wild Vibes Festival was scheduled for this upcoming Saturday, with tickets still available for purchase. He expressed disappointment in the council during the meeting, stating he felt blindsided by a late email and the lack of prior discussion before the meeting took place. Mr. Kitzrow emphasized that without mutual respect, he and the Mayor would need to reassess their roles and participation in future meetings if it continued.

#### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Ms. Dashiell apologized to Mr. Kitzrow for the lack of decorum and respect displayed, stating that such behavior was unacceptable. She agreed with Ms. Jackson regarding the importance of hiring practices and reviewing percentages, but she believed people were let go for valid reasons and did not consider it a race issue. Ms. Dashiell expressed confidence in the individuals currently in place and apologized for Mr. Kitzrow feeling attacked. She extended thanks to those who spoke at the Eastern Shore Delegation lunch. She acknowledged Chief Meienschein for discussing the legislative considerations the city was facing and thanked Derrick Jarmon for his presentation on the Maryland Folk Festival – noting the event raised \$12,000 through the bucket brigade. Lastly, she encouraged everyone to visit the Community Foundation's website to learn more about their 40 years of service to the community.

Ms. Gregory mentioned that tickets were still available for the Wild Vibes Festival. She expressed her understanding of the administrations frustration but pointed out that the council shared in the frustration. She highlighted the significant investment of time and resources that had already been put into the Comprehensive Plan. She felt blindsided by the decision to possibly scrap those investments. Ms. Gregory noted that members of the community likely felt the same way and that the frustration was mutual. She clarified that she did not believe anything said during the meeting was intended maliciously.

As always, Ms. Blake encouraged everyone that was healthy enough to donate blood and plasma and to become organ donors.

Ms. Jackson addressed Mr. Kitzrow, assuring him that no one was targeting him and that there was no personal vendetta. She expressed her intention to speak her mind, emphasizing that she wanted what was right to prevail. Ms. Jackson stated that she did not wish to create enemies but rather fight for the employees and her constituents. She thanked Mayor Taylor and Chief Meienschein for attending the Trunk or Treat event in her district. Additionally, Ms. Jackson advertised for the upcoming 8th Annual Senior Citizen Christmas Dinner and Gift Giveaway.

President Doughty encouraged everyone to exercise their right to vote, emphasizing the importance of participation. He shared that he felt blessed to be held accountable and to hold others accountable. President Doughty expressed his belief in having a voice and the ability to use it, stating that everything he spoke was for the benefit of the people. He assured the group that he would continue to fight for what was right.

Ms. English clarified that the meeting next week would be held on Tuesday at Headquarters.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the Work Session adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

  
City Clerk

  
Council President