



## **WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 16, 2024**

### **PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

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

### **STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Finance Director Sandy Green, Deputy Fire Chief Chris O'Barsky, Department of Infrastructure and Development Director Nick Voitiuc, City Planner Amanda Rodriguez, City Clerk Julie English, City Attorney Ashley Bosché

### **WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The City Council convened in a Work Session on December 16, 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 called Ms. Green forward to present the General Fund 2024 Audit results.

#### **Audit Presentation** – presented by Finance Director Sandy Green

Ms. Green reported that the budgeted expenditures for the year exceeded the budgeted revenues by \$2.2 million. Additionally, there was a \$2.47 million encumbrance carried over from 2023 expenses. To balance the final 2024 budget, a total of \$5.19 million from surplus funds was allocated. However, the city experienced a favorable variance of \$2.06 million, largely due to an increase in tax revenues and interest income, resulting in an overall favorable variance of \$3.83 million and a final surplus of approximately \$700,000. Ms. Green commended her department for their work on the audit before turning the floor over to the audit manager.

The audit manager explained that one of the primary responsibilities of the city auditor was to review the city's cash flow, including cash receipts, disbursements, and payroll. He concluded that the internal controls for the City of Salisbury were operating effectively. The audit this year focused on two key cycles: expenditures and water and sewer billing. No issues were found in

their testing of either cycle. He noted that the final audit report would be submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse upon approval.

The audit manager then presented a slideshow summarizing key financial elements, the investment pool, receivables, capital assets, bonds, notes and leases payable, net position, governmental fund revenues and expenditures, and water and sewer operating results. He concluded the presentation by stating that no issues were identified during the audit process.

President Doughty asked about the \$700,000 surplus, specifically noting that it was largely attributed to savings from vacant and frozen positions. He asked how the city was planning for long-term success given those ongoing vacancies. Ms. Green and Mr. Kitzrow responded and clarified that the current unfunded positions were within the police department. Despite these challenges, they highlighted significant progress in police staffing, noting there had been two successful academy graduating classes in the past year, and the number of police vacancies had decreased from 12 to just 2 over the past two years.

President Doughty inquired about the higher revenues with the water and sewer. Ms. Green responded that the reason for the high revenue was due to the usage going up, expenditures being under budget and interest income being up. Mayor Taylor added that it was an attempt to train the budget moving forward.

After discussion, Council reached unanimous consensus to move this forward to Legislative Session.

**Ordinance** – approving a budget amendment of the FY2025 General Fund Budget to appropriate funds to the Salisbury Fire Department’s Operating Budget

Deputy Chief O’Barsky stated that the Fire Department had sold a fire boat motor and was asking for the surplus money to be allocated back into their operating account.

Having no Council comments, Council reached unanimous consensus to move this forward to Legislative Session.

**Resolution** – to amend and restate the terms of an Annexation Agreement associated with property that was the subject of the 2007 “Hobbs Road-lott Property Annexation” now known as the “Hobbs Road Annexation”

Ms. Rodriquez explained that this property was located in the commercial zoning district and would be developed within the standards of that district. She highlighted that originally the property was annexed for hotels and retail but since the market has changed, they would like to use the property differently.

Having no Council comments, Council reached unanimous consensus to move this forward to Legislative Session.

**Annexation Request** – for 2 parcels on the northeast side of Old Quantico Road

Ms. Rodriguez stated that the property was requesting annexation due to the failing septic and to improve the sites current infrastructure. The applicant was requesting it be zoned as R5A upon annexation.

Having no Council comments, Council reached unanimous consensus to proceed with the annexation.

**Ordinance** – amending Section 17.150.050A.7 of the Salisbury City Code to delete the word “townhouses” from the category of uses permitted in Parcel H of Planned Residential District No. 7 (The Villages of Aydelotte Farm), and increase density to 6.0 units per acre

Ms. Rodriguez explained that the parcels had changed identification over time due to an error of being misidentified. The first change was to strike the word “townhouses” and replace it with “residential” and the other change was to increase the density from 5.5 units per acre to 6.0 units per acre. They received a favorable recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission for these changes.

Having no Council comments, Council reached unanimous consensus to move this forward.

**Ordinance** – amending Section 17.24.040 to increase the inherent density permitted for the development and redevelopment of the property located in the central business zoning district

Mr. Voitiuc mentioned that they received a request from an applicant to change the Central Business District from 40 units per acre to 80 units per acre. He explained that his staff reviewed plans, met with the applicant and also reviewed comments from the public and gave an unfavorable recommendation to the Planning Commission. Mr. Voitiuc expressed that the Planning and Zoning Commission had their public hearing and the vote was 6-1 in favor of increasing the density.

President Doughty asked if there were any changes from the November Planning and Zoning meeting and Mr. Voitiuc said there were none.

Ms. Blake asked if the submitted document was the original or the strikethrough version and Ms. Rodriguez added that the version the council was given was the strikethrough version but the version on the planning and zoning website was the original.

Ms. Dashiell shared that she was not opposed to development but wanted to share her thoughts regarding the request of doubling the density. She was concerned with the parking options and the shortage of parking spaces, considering the existing businesses. She added that city services such as police and fire needed to be taken into consideration. She mentioned that the attainable or affordable housing component was missing from the consideration. Lastly, she

stated increasing the density would create more jobs. She concluded that each project should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should not accommodate various developers.

Mayor Taylor emphasized that the focus should not be on future development speculation but on ensuring any infill development enhanced downtown accessibility and livability. He stated that the concern was not about stopping development but about protecting the quality of life and maintaining a healthy vibrant downtown for future generations.

After further discussion, Council reached unanimous consensus to move this forward to Legislative Session.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

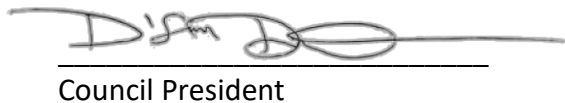
- Speaker #1 was in support of development but was not in favor of increasing the density. She stated that traffic would be an issue if they increased the density in the central business district.
- Speaker #2 asked for council to read the Department of Infrastructure and Development report so they would understand the facts of why they did not give a favorable recommendation.
- Speaker #3 was in support of the text amendment and the increase in density and encouraged the council to reach out to the downtown businesses.
- Speaker #4 strongly opposed the increase in density to accommodate the developer and the proposed luxury apartments in the central business district.
- Speaker #5 was disappointed that there was no discussion at the planning and zoning meeting and that the public and the city's recommendations were not taken into consideration.
- Speaker #6 reminded the council that the downtown residents and business owners voices mattered and thanked Councilwoman Jackson for all her support in District 1.
- Speaker #7 was in favor of growing Downtown Salisbury but stated that parking has to be taken into consideration before growth occurs.
- Speaker #8 asked that council be transparent and asked them to explain how the concerns of the Department of Infrastructure and Development would be addressed along with the parking requirements.
- Speaker #9 spoke on the studies that had been done and that both studies concluded that there needed to be "heads in beds." He noted that downtown had become a neighborhood and suggested that parking studies should be done. He, along with the Greater Salisbury Committee, was in favor of the increase in density.
- Speaker #10 was happy with the audit. He agreed with speaker #9 regarding the parking studies being done but was not in favor of increasing the density in the central business district.
- Speaker #11 complained that her offer to purchase Lot 15 was not reviewed. She was not in favor of the parking lot being taken away from her residents, clients and associates.
- Speaker #12 was in favor of the text amendment for increasing the density.

- Speaker #13 stated that density was important for city life and great for the economy if it was done properly.
- Speaker #14 mentioned that parking was an issue in all surrounding towns and cities and asked council to take that into consideration when voting on this text amendment.
- Speaker #15 explained that the vote during the planning and zoning meeting was 6-1 and thought the time and effort that had been put into researching this topic should be taken into consideration.
- Speaker #16 stated that bigger industries such as Perdue, Salisbury University and Tidal Health struggle with recruiting talent and thought to gain individuals was to make the community attractive.
- Speaker #17 explained that the only thing they have not tried in an effort to make downtown thrive was to let individuals live downtown. He was in favor of increasing the density.

#### **ADJOURNMENT/CONVENE IN SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

With no further business to discuss, the Work Session adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

  
City Clerk

  
Council President