

**TOWN OF ELSMERE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020
TOWN HALL
6:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Eric Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

ROLL CALL:

MAYOR	ERIC SCOTT THOMPSON	PRESENT
1 ST DISTRICT	MARIANNE SKIPSKI	PRESENT
2 ND DISTRICT	SALLY JENSEN	PRESENT
3 RD DISTRICT	ROBERT KACPERSKI	PRESENT
4 TH DISTRICT	CHARLES MCKEWEN	PRESENT
5 TH DISTRICT	JOANN I. PERSONTI	PRESENT
6 TH DISTRICT	BRIAN HURST	PRESENT

Town Solicitor, James McMackin – Present
Town Manager, John Giles – Present
Chief of Police, Laura Giles – Present

OPENING STATEMENT: Mayor Eric Thompson read an opening statement.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lou Summa, 1010 Dover Avenue, has concerns about limited parking on H Street. Each property is allocated 1 space in the alley, yet there are homes which are parking in multiple spaces. He is hoping that the Town can mark the spaces out so that the residents can better know where their spaces are to help avoid any confrontations over a parking space.

Town Manager John Giles stated that unfortunately the project he is hoping the Town would complete is very costly. However, because the spaces are deeded, each homeowner is permitted to maintain and mark their space and once that is complete, the police will assist in enforcing any parking issues.

Chief Laura Giles stated that she is also willing to assist Mr. Summa if he contact the Police Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the August 13, 2020 Council Meeting.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilman Hurst to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2020 Council Minutes with no corrections. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jensen.

VOTE: 7-0 All-in-Favor Motion carried

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration of purchasing a program concerning Social Media Archiving.

Town Manager John Giles stated that after speaking with Town Solicitor McMackin, it has been determined that the Town does not need this type of program and Mr. McMackin recommends against the purchase. Therefore, the request is being withdrawn.

Discussion and Consideration of a possible increase in the costs of the recent sanitation contract.

Town Manager John Giles stated that the contractor has come back during billing and are billing us separately for the dumpsters which is increasing what was discussed in the bid process. After speaking with Mr. McMackin he has assured us that he believes that we are correct. We are waiting for a response from the contractor regarding this matter.

Councilman McKewen asked if the contract has been signed yet.

Town Manager John Giles stated that the Town has executed our side of the contract and we are just waiting for their signatures, however, they have begun the services as of July 1, 2020 therefore, we should not have any issues with the official document.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Code Enforcement

Town Manager John Giles presented the following items from the written report and asked if there were any questions:

- a. The department issued 97 violations during the month of August. 63 were corrected with a warning, 32 received fines and 2 remained pending at the end of the month.
- b. Issued 10 repeat public nuisance violations and fines. Of those 10, 3 were for a second offense repeat public nuisance.
- c. Requested that the Public Works Department complete 6 abatements as a result of violations which were issued.

- d. Conducted 11 Pre-Rental Inspections.
- e. Processed 2 petitions which were heard by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Adjustment.
- f. Processed and issued 31 permits.
- g. Processed and issued 11 Business Licenses. 1 In-Town and 10 Out-of-Town.
- h. Tagged 14 vehicles for tow, however, only 3 were towed.

Mayor Thompson stated that based on a conversation with Town Manager Giles it appears that confrontation against the Code Enforcement Department has been increasing.

Town Manager John Giles stated that is correct, these are mainly in the form of threats. He has worked with the Police Department to issue each of the officers a bullet proof vest which is not uncommon among other agencies with Code Enforcement Officers and hopefully this will help the officers feel safer.

Finance

Town Manager John Giles reported the following items from the written report and asked if there were any questions:

- a. The department received \$410,034.00 in property taxes as of August 31, 2020.
- b. Transfer taxes received for August were \$27,433.50.
- c. 17 properties were sent for Sheriff Sale in January 2020, of those 17, only 10 remain on the Sheriff Sale list as of August 31, 2020. However, the Sheriff Sales continue to be postponed due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.
- d. The department spent a significant amount of time preparing for the upcoming Audit during the month of August.

Mayor Thompson asked if there were a significant number of hardship requests.

Town Manager John Giles stated that there were not, if anything, we are currently below our average number of requests for payment assistance. Our biggest issue currently lies in the suspension of the Sheriff Sale proceedings due to the Governors Executive Order.

Public Safety

Chief Laura Giles stated that next month the Public Safety Department will not be represented at the meeting. The department must complete their qualifying day and night shoots and New Castle County will be covering the Town from 1pm to 5am the next day. Next month she intends to submit for First and Second reading

of an ordinance updating some additional traffic and safety penalties. The death investigation from the 1300 Block of Cypress Avenue has turned into a Homicide Investigation, Detective Sowden is handling the investigation and the current suspect is incarcerated on unrelated charges. Ptlm. Linde and his wife welcomed twin daughters on September 1st and they are all healthy and are recovering at home. Received approval for Combat Violent Crimes Funds in the amount of \$29,894.33.

Councilwoman Jensen stated that she would be very happy to sponsor the ordinance updating the fine structure.

Public Works

Town Manager John Giles presented the following information from the written report and asked if there were any questions:

- a. The department patched 2 potholes during the month, as well as, placed a large 10' x 20' patch on Linden Avenue.
- b. Currently monitoring 2 sinkholes in the Town. 512 Red Bud Ct and Forrest Ave at Second Ave.
- c. The street sweeper was run in District 1.
- d. The entire department was training on the new Sanitizer Fogging Machines that were purchased.
- e. The department handled issues which arose from the Tropical Storm on August 4th. These issues included a large tree which fell across Junction Street and a vehicle, as well as, a large tree and debris which fell across the roadway and a vehicle on Beech Avenue at First Ave.
- f. Completed 6 abatements at the request of the Code Enforcement Department.
- g. Repaired vandalism at Fairgrounds Park and Vilone Park where the gates and dugouts were damaged.

Mayor Thompson thanked the department for their efforts cleaning up from the Tropical Storm.

Town Manager

Town Manager John Giles presented the following information from the written report and asked if there were any questions:

- a. We received all of the equipment from we applied for funding for through the CARES Act COVID Funding. We will be submitting for additional reimbursements as well as additional PPE and Cleaning Supplies.

STATEMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

Councilwoman Personti stated that as the fall begins, she would like to see the Town and the Council begin their planning and see what they can do to make the Town-Wide Clean-up Day occur in Spring 2020 even if the COVID precautions are still in place.

Councilman Hurst stated that he noticed that the Junction Street Park was not getting unlocked in a timely manner, one day it was still locked at 11am. He would like to see the park remain unlocked at all times.

Mayor Thompson stated that he has concerns regarding the completion of the 2020 Census and the current low response rate. He believes the Town will see a population decrease which can lead to a number of issues including lower funding levels for grants and things which are population based. In addition, Wilmapco has construction everywhere, but there are currently no projects slated for completion in Elsmere.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Personti to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hurst.

VOTE: 7-0 All-in-favor Motion carried

These minutes summarize the agenda and other issues discussed at this Council Meeting. Votes are recorded accurately. The audio recording of this meeting will be available at Town Hall for a period of two years from the date these minutes are approved. The audio recording may be reviewed at Town Hall by appointment and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.



**ERIC THOMPSON
MAYOR**



**BRIAN HURST
SECRETARY**