

Mayor & Council of Federalsburg
Regular Meeting
Monday June 10, 2024
6:00PM

The Mayor & Council of Federalsburg held their regular monthly meeting on June 20, 2024 at 6:00 PM, in the Mayor & Council meeting room located at Town Hall. Those in attendance were Mayor Abner, Councilmembers Hammond, Sewell, James and Williamson, Town Manager Kristy Marshall, Town Attorney Carly Landolfi and members of the public were also present in the meeting room, as well as on Zoom.

Public Hearing-Ordinance No. 2024-03 Adopting a General Fund Budget and Enterprise Budget for FY 2024-2025

Councilmember Williamson made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Sewell and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero opening the Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 2024-03, to adopt a General Fund and Enterprise Budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025 and establishing a tax rate of \$.94 cents per \$100 of assessed real property value and a tax rate of \$1.65 per 100 on all commercial or business property and all railroad and utility property; adopting the service and administrative fee for semi-annual billings as adopted by Caroline County; establishing a quarterly waste collection fee in the amount of \$53.94 for commercial properties which receive waste collection service and for all residential properties located within the corporate town boundaries; and establishing a \$10.00 per item charge for extra waste collection items.

Public Comment

Rob Willoughby - West Central Avenue - requested the Mayor and Council find monies to cut from the proposed budget and amend the ordinance to keep the current tax rate of \$.88 per 100 of assessed real property value.

Ian Ferguson - Buena Vista Avenue - voiced his concerns that taxes are currently too high and by raising them the residents of Federalsburg would not be able to afford them. Mr. Ferguson also questioned how the increased revenue collected from raising the tax rate would be spent.

Adam Rathmeyer - North University Avenue - voiced his concerns regarding how the increased revenues from raising the taxes would be spent. He questioned how much

money is being applied to the infrastructure and roads. Mr. Rathmeyer would like to see more focus put into paving of roads and fixing the infrastructure instead of fixing parks.

Paul Crawford - Maple Avenue - is against raising the tax rate to \$.94 per 100. Mr. Crawford questioned how the tax money from the increase would be spent and would like an exact breakdown of the spent money.

Jennifer Hubbert - Maple Avenue - would like to see small shops open up in town to generate more revenue. She would like to see a coffee shop or a brewery, or a seafood restaurant open up downtown.

Councilmember James made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Sewell and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to close Public Hearing-Ordinance No. 2024-03 to adopt the General Fund and Enterprise Budget for FY 2024-2025.

Public Hearing-Ordinance No. 2024-04-Adopting Water and Sewer Rate Increases

Councilmember Sewell seconded by Councilmember Williamson and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to open the public hearing-Ordinance No. 2024-04-Adopting Water and Sewer rate increases and capital connection charges for users of the municipal water and sewer system for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025 for properties that receive town water and/or sewer services. Water and sewer billing will be based on water usage as measured by the water meter. For all vacant lots that currently do not have water and sewer connections, the property owners shall pay the water and sewer debt fees per lot based upon the zoning for such a lot. Residential rates for water usage \$3.47 per 1000 gallons and sewer rates \$5.80 per 1000 gallons. Commercial rates for water usage \$4.10 per 1000 gallons, sewer rates \$6.85 per 1000 gallons. Industrial Rates for water usage \$4.51 per 1000 gallons, sewer rates \$8.57 per 1000 gallons. Vacant lots water debt \$5.29, sewer debt \$27.47. The Water and Sewer capital connection charges shall be \$7,500 for each water connection and \$7,500 for each sewer connection whether within or without the Town limits.

Public Comment

Rob Willoughby - West Central Avenue - understands the need to increase the water and sewer rates. He would like a rate analysis to be done so the rate changes can be solvent and not need to be adjusted on a regular basis.

Councilmember James seconded by Councilmember Sewell and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to close the public hearing for Ordinance No. 2024-04-Adopting Water and Sewer rate increases and capital connection charges for users of the municipal water and sewer system.

Public Hearing-Ordinance No. 2024-05-Amending the frequency of Residential Rental Inspections

Councilmember Sewell seconded by Councilmember James and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to open Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 2024-05-Amending the frequency of Residential Rental Inspections starting July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025 to establish residential rental inspections to be conducted once every year.

Public Comment

No public comment was given.

Councilmember James seconded by Councilmember Sewell and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to close Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 2024-05-Amending the frequency of Residential Rental Inspections.

Call to Order

Mayor Abner called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. and lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Pastor Craig Gaunt gave the invocation.

Approval of the Previous Month's Minutes

Councilmember Sewell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williamson and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero, approving the minutes from the May 20, 2024 Mayor and Council Workshop Meeting.

Introduction of New Employee- Abid Khan, Water/Wastewater Superintendent

Town Manager Kristy Marshall introduced Abid Khan as our new Water/Wastewater Superintendent to the Mayor and Council and the residents of Federalsburg.

Adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-03 Adopting a General Fund Budget and Enterprise Budget for FY 2024-2025.

After some discussion, the Mayor and Council agreed to table further discussion on adoption of Ordinance 2024-03 adopting a General Fund and Enterprise Budget for FY 2024-225. The Mayor and Council will continue discussion and make a motion at the June 17th, 2024 Workshop Meeting regarding the adoption of the General Fund Budget and Enterprise Budget for FY 2024-2025.

Adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-04-Adopting Water and Sewer Rate Increases Introduction and Schedule Public Hearing-Ordinance No. 2024-03 - Adopting FY 2024-25 Operating Budget

Councilmember Sewell made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Williamson and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero for the Adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-04 to adopt Water and Sewer rate increases and capital connection charges for users of the municipal water and sewer system for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025 for properties that receive town water and/or sewer services. Water and sewer billing will be based on water usage as measured by the water meter. For all vacant lots that currently do not have water and sewer connections, the property owners shall pay the water and sewer debt fees per lot based upon the zoning for such a lot. Residential rates for water usage \$3.47 per 1000 gallons and sewer rates \$5.80 per 1000 gallons. Commercial rates for water usage \$4.10 per 1000 gallons, sewer rates \$6.85 per 1000 gallons. Industrial Rates for water usage \$4.51 per 1000 gallons, sewer rates \$8.57 per 1000 gallons. Vacant lots water debt \$5.29, sewer debt \$27.47. The Water and Sewer capital connection charges shall be \$7,500 for each water connection and \$7,500 for each sewer connection within and/or out of the Town limits.

Adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-05 Amending the frequency of Residential Rental Inspections

Councilmember Williamson made a motion, seconded by Councilmember James and unanimously passed by as vote of five to zero for the Adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-05 amending the frequency of Residential Rental Inspections starting July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025 to establish residential rental inspections to be conducted once every year.

Introduction of Resolution No. 2024-03 - Resolution for the Purpose of Creating a Town Unity Committee

Councilmember James made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Sewell and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero for the introduction of Resolution No. 2024-03 - A resolution for the Purpose of Creating a Town Unity Committee.

The Town Unity Committee must be established as a part of the settlement agreement from the lawsuit. The Unity Committee will have at least 5 members, with at least one Town official and two community members from each election district. Their focus will be on community engagement in future elections, promotion, engagement, and enhancement of the Town's diverse community, plan an annual multicultural celebration and provide annual reports to the Mayor and Council of Federalsburg regarding the activities and community engagement.

MOU Federalsburg Activity Center

There was discussion about the monies allotted in the budget for the Federalsburg Activity Center and Town Attorney Carly Landolfi suggested the Mayor and Council create a memorandum of understanding between the Town and the Federalsburg Activity Center stating the funding allocated in the budget should follow certain requirements set by Mayor and Council.

Public Comment Policy Discussion

The Mayor and Council discussed they would like to create a Public Comment Policy and include a 3 minute time limit for Public Comment. The rules will be posted in the meeting room and online starting July 1, 2024

Discussion-President Pro Tempore;

Councilmember Williamson, James, and Hammond shared their concerns about how President Pro Tempore was appointed. After a lengthy discussion, Councilmember Williamson made a motion, seconded by Councilmember James and approved by a vote of four to zero to re-vote on the President Pro Tempore position. Councilmember Sewell and abstained from the vote.

Councilmember Williamson made a motion to nominate Councilmember James as President Pro Tempore and she respectfully declined.

Councilmember Hammond made a motion to nominate Councilmember Williamson as President Pro Tempore and seconded by Councilmember James and approved by a vote of 4 to 0 to name Councilmember H. Torbert Williamson II President Pro Tempore. Councilmember Sewell abstained from the vote.

Public Comment:

Mr. Jonathan Sadler stated that he had recently reached out to Town Manager Marshall about purchasing three town lots on North University Avenue, adjacent to his property. Mr. Sadler was advised that they are aware of his interest and would do some research on the lots/pricing and get back with him.

Mayor & Council Action Items

Councilmember Williamson: Reported the following:

- The Mayor and Council received an anonymous letter addressing several concerns. Councilmember Williamson addressed the questions asked in the letter and cleared up some of the items/inaccuracies included in the letter. He also stated that he would like to have a discussion with the person who wrote the letter in person and not anonymously.
- Shared his concerns about software that the town has purchased and continues to pay on that the current town staff has never used. Would like to cancel the subscriptions to save the town money.

Councilmember James: Reported the Following:

- Shared her concerns about the Town and how business is being handled and money is being spent. After some discussion, Councilmember James made a motion seconded by Councilmember Hammond and passed by a vote of four to zero to have the State of Maryland audit the general business of the Town of Federalsburg. Councilmember Sewell abstained pending more information.

Councilmember Sewell: Reported the following:

- Asked the Town Manager Kristy Marshall about a staff member in the office that will be out on medical leave, and if she planned to hire temporary staff or overtime would be given to current staff members to help out the staff member that will be out for approximately a month. Town Manager Marshall replied no additional staff or overtime will be needed.
- Announced Move For Life 5K Run/Walk will be held Saturday June 15, 2024 and encouraged the public and Town Council members to come out and support the event.

- Asked the Town Manager Kristy Marshall if the department heads will be coming to one of the monthly Mayor and Council meetings. Town Manager Marshall replied that as stated in her weekly report to the Mayor and Council, the department heads will be coming to the regular Mayor and Council meetings beginning in July.

Council Member Hammond: Reported the following:

- Councilmember Hammond reported that she is here for the community and even though she is new, she is available and will help in any way she can.

Mayor Abner: Reported the following:

- The lights at the VFW marina are out. Town Manager Kristy Marshall said that Lywood Electric has been out a couple of times to fix the problem but she would contact them again.
- The Water/Sewer Department on the town's website needs to be updated.
- Announced the Law Enforcement Unity Ride was a huge success. She was appreciative of them coming to town and looks forward to them coming back next year.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Councilmember James made a motion seconded by Councilmember Hammond and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk