

# **The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton**

## **MINUTES**

May 8, 2013

A public meeting (workshop) of the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton (“the Board”) was held on this date at 4:00 p.m. with the following persons present: Mayor Joseph Fisona, Commissioners Charles H. Givens, Sr.; Charles E. Hicks, V (arriving at 4:10); Mary Jo Jablonski (leaving at 4:45) and Earl M. Piner, Sr.; Town Administrator Lewis H. George, Jr.; Finance Director Steven H. Repole; Assistant Finance Director Beth Moran; Administration Office Secretary L. Michelle Henson; and Town Attorney H. Norman Wilson, Jr.

Mayor Fisona called the workshop to order at 4:00 p.m.

### **Discussion – Severn Trent Proposal – Big Elk Sanitary Sewer Pump Station Influent Screen**

Messrs. Carl Kline, Senior Area Manager, and Ken Benner, Area Manager, Severn Trent Environmental Services (ST) introduced themselves to the Board.

Mr. Kline stated the purpose of their appearance was to discuss a proposal for installation and financing options regarding an influent screen at the Big Elk Sanitary Sewer Pump Station (SSPS). He stated debris such as rags, trash, etc. continually entered the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), which resulted in significant damage to WWTP grinder pumps and other infrastructure. Noting that the Town paid almost \$65,000 in repairs over the last couple years, he stated installation of an influent screen would lower equipment maintenance and repair costs.

Mr. Kline said removal of accumulated debris required a team of 3 ST employees and 3 Department of Public Works (DPW) employees working 3 nights, saying the team worked at night due to lower flow rates at the WWTP. He said the biggest issue with debris removal was that the team had to work in confined spaces to accomplish the task.

Mr. Benner stated he reviewed several influent screen designs, and recommended a Franklin Miller Spiral Lift. Discussion ensued regarding the process of debris removal. Mr. Kline estimated the total cost of the influent screen installation at approximately \$330,000, including engineering and construction costs. Mr. Kline stated if the Board wanted to move forward with the installation, ST was offering to finance the project at 0% interest until November 30, 2018, which was the expiration date of the Operation and Maintenance agreement between the Town and ST. Mr. Kline added ST would pay ½ of the total project costs if the Board extended the contract to 2023. Commissioner Piner asked if there was a cap to the amount ST would pay. Mr. Kline answered in the negative.

Commissioner Givens questioned the pros and cons of the installation. Mr. Kline stated if the Board chose not to install an influent screen, staff would continue to spend

several evenings in confined space to remove debris, and added the Town would continue to incur equipment damage expenses.

Mayor Fisona questioned if the influent screen would solve the issue. Mr. Kline stated no screen would completely eliminate all debris, adding it would have a significant impact. Mr. Benner described the influent screen as a 3-foot long, basket-shaped apparatus, with ½ inch holes to capture debris. He said debris would then be lifted by auger to a compressor, which removed liquid, then pressed and bagged the material for disposal.

Discussion ensued regarding previous incidents in which debris such as prison uniforms was flushed into the system from the Cecil County Correctional Facility. Mr. Benner stated the Correctional Facility placed a filter in the manhole to capture material. Mr. Kline stated while the material from the Correctional Facility was indeed an issue, the Town had a large, aging infrastructure through which stones and other materials entered during rain events, and residents often flushed items other than sewage into the system.

Discussion continued regarding public education pertaining to materials that should not be flushed into the sewer system. Mr. Kline stated ST would provide educational materials. He said ST provided WWTP tours to elementary students that included information regarding wastewater treatment and water conservation. He said the object of the tours was to encourage young people to discuss environmental issues with their families.

Mayor Fisona, noting the cost associated with the influent screen project, stated the Board should initiate a public education mailing program and revisit the proposal. Commissioner Jablonski expressed concerns regarding additional equipment damages, and questioned the length of time ST would hold the financing proposals. Mr. Kline stated he did not know the length of time ST would keep the financing proposals on the table.

Commissioner Hicks questioned Mayor Fisona regarding the length of time the Board would wait prior to revisiting the proposal. Mayor Fisona stated the Board should wait to see if a public education program had positive results prior to revisiting the proposal.

Commissioner Piner questioned if the project could be funded by the Sewer Fund. Mr. Repole answered in the positive. Commissioner Hicks asked Mr. Repole to determine if the Town could afford the project. Commissioner Piner concurred with Commissioner Hicks.

Mr. Kline asked the Board for direction regarding an answer to the proposal. Mayor Fisona, after discussion with the Board, advised Mr. Kline that the Town would provide an answer after the June 19, 2013 meeting.

Commissioner Jablonski, stating her presence was required at another event, left the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

**Discussion – Resolution R5-2013 – Rescinding Resolution R1-2011 and committing \$500,000 to the Elkton Recreation and Community Center Project**

Mr. George presented Resolution R5-2013 – Rescinding Resolution R1-2011 and committing \$500,000 to the Elkton Recreation and Community Center Project for discussion. He stated Resolution R5-2013 allocated \$500,000 to complete engineering and architectural design for the project, and would be presented for the Board's approval at the May 15, 2013 meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding anticipated operating costs associated with the proposed facility vs. revenue sources. Commissioner Hicks expressed concerns regarding future costs associated with operation of the facility. Discussion continued regarding the type of building for the proposed facility.

Discussion ensued regarding increasing revenue.

**Discussion – FY 2014 Budget – Real Property Tax Rate – Use of Unassigned Fund Balance**

Mayor Fisona stated Chief of Police Ryan, in response to the Fiscal Year 2014 deficit, cut several items from the Police Department Budget. He stated all departments would need to pay attention to costs.

Mayor Fisona noted that Microsoft XP would no longer be supported via upgrades in 2014, and stated 17 computers would have to be replaced. He stated the costs had been added to the Fiscal Year 2014 budget.

Mr. Repole stated the Fiscal Year 2014 budget deficit would be addressed by using the \$1.5 million from the proposed Recreational Center project, an additional \$225,000 from the General Fund balance, and an increase of \$.06 over the Constant Yield Tax Rate (CYTR), resulting in a new Real Property Tax Rate of \$.5856 per \$100 of assessed value, an increase of \$.1224. Commissioner Hicks compared the new rate to the originally proposed increase of \$.17. Mr. Repole stated Commissioner Hicks was correct.

Mr. Repole advised the Board that without additional revenue funding the Board would be having the same conversation regarding the Fiscal Year 2015 budget.

Mr. Repole, noting discussions regarding parking meter fees and hotel tax increases, stated building permits and fees were an important revenue source.

Mr. Repole advised the Board that health care costs rose 58% in the past 5 years.

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Mr. George queried the Board for a consensus regarding the Real Property Tax Rate, stating the Town was on a timeline to publish the rate. He noted that Commissioner Jablonski, prior to her departure from the meeting, indicated she was not happy increasing taxes but supported the new rate. Commissioner Hicks stated he would vote for the new rate. Commissioners Givens and Piner stated they wished to remain neutral regarding a vote at this time. Mayor Fisona expressed support for the new rate, stating it was his proposal.

Hearing no additional business to come before the Board, Mayor Fisona adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

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L. Michelle Henson  
Administration Office Secretary

A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING RETAINED  
AT THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE