

Council of the Town of La Plata  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
Special Meeting and Work Session  
March 28, 2006, 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman R. Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer; Chief Cassin B. Gittings and Lt. Wayne Wathen, La Plata Police Department; Steve Murphy, Public Works Director; Jeff Garner, Assistant Public Works Director

Minutes:

### **Special Meeting**

Mayor Ambrogio called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

#### **Motion to conduct Closed Session**

Councilman Back moved to conduct a closed session, pursuant to *Annotated Code of Maryland* Section 10-508(a)(1)(i) – Discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mayor Ambrogio and Councilmen Winkler, Back, Mudd and Newman voted aye. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

There being no other discussion, Councilman Winkler moved to adjourn the special meeting at 6:02 PM. Councilman Back seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

### **Work Session**

#### **Matters of Council Discussion**

##### **Cheryl and Don McGuire – outcome of the testing of the early warning devices**

*Description: Cheryl and Don McGuire will present test results and answer any questions the Council may have regarding those test results.*

Mr. and Mrs. McGuire reported that all of the sirens worked, the volunteers reported they heard the tones but some said the message sounded garbled. As a result of the testing, a programming issue was identified which required the CEI technician, who was present during the testing, to disconnect the system in order to give the all-clear signal. The system is to be reprogrammed prior to the next test in June. In addition to other means of advising the public, the test date and time will be announced in the June-July 2006 edition of *Town Notes*.

The Town Council thanked Mr. and Mrs. McGuire for their dedication to this project.

### EMS update

Mr. McGuire reported that, beginning April 1, 2006, Charles County Rescue Squad/Station 51 will be staffed by paid EMS personnel 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

### Community Awareness and Safety Meeting

Lt. Wathen reported on the plans and process for the Community Awareness and Safety Meeting to be held at the Social Services building on Kent Avenue, on Wednesday, March 29, at 7:00 PM.

### Leave Donation Policy

*Description: The Council will discuss the draft Leave Donation Policy.*

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed they wish to allow this policy to be in place, with an amendment to provide that no more than half of an employee's accrued leave may be donated. This policy will also be included in the personnel code currently being rewritten.

### "Town Meeting"

*Description: Mayor Ambrogio will discuss his proposal to have a "Town Meeting" some time in May, with each Council member discussing what is going on in their wards.*

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to work out the details of Council members giving updates on Town projects conducted during the year since the election, and to be prepared to do this at the May 9 meeting.

### Matters of Information

#### Agenda topics for April 25 joint work session with County Commissioners

Ms. Miner advised she received a call today from the County, asking about topics on the April 25 agenda, and asked the Council to let her know if they have anything to add to the agenda.

In response to Councilwoman Mudd's question, Ms. Miner reported that she and Councilman Winkler will be meeting with Roy Hancock regarding infrastructure on Thursday, April 6, at 10:00 AM. Mayor Ambrogio noted he would also be attending the meeting.

### Budget

Councilman Newman reported he obtained an estimate of approximately \$20,000 for the overlay of Quince Court in Hickory Ridge, and that the residents will pay to overlay the parking areas. Councilman Newman advised he would like to include approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000 to include remedying the pavement issue on Worcester Street. He noted he would be proposing a budget amendment at the April 11 meeting. Mayor Ambrogio asked if Hemlock Court could be

included. Councilwoman Mudd noted that Charleston Terrace should also be included in the budget, that residents would pay for overlay of their parking areas, and that she also believes that the Walnut Hill Road sewer issue and the Rt. 488 annexation should be included. The Council briefly discussed provisions for a street maintenance program, inventory of streets and repairs needed, and having Town Staff inspect and advise regarding repairs needed. Ms. Miner advised she would get additional quotes and would speak to Public Works regarding an inventory for the coming budget year.

Joann Worden, resident of Worcester Street, advised Ms. Miner that the street did not need more paving overlay; the Town needs to fix the drainage problem. Ms. Miner briefly discussed the meeting to be scheduled with the engineer to review what is needed to fix the drainage problem.

#### Smoking ban ordinance and residential sprinklers ordinance

Ms. Miner reported that she forwarded the County's smoking ban ordinance to the Town Attorney, and also a request to prepare an ordinance to amend the Town Code to adopt the 2003 International Building Code, which is needed as soon as possible. Ms. Miner also reported that she advised Chief Shahan, of the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, that the residential sprinkler ordinance is on hold until the Town Council hires a Town Manager; however, she also told him that if no one was hired by July 1, she would begin working on it.

#### MML Convention

Ms. Miner provided the Town Council with convention registration forms and asked that they be completed and returned to her.

#### General Fund Budget

*Description: Joe Norris will present the budget.*

Mr. Norris explained he needed to advertise the Constant Yield Tax Rate hearing notice and asked the Council for guidance regarding what tax rate they intend to set. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Norris would advertise to have the Constant Yield Tax Rate hearing on April 11, 2006, with the tax rate at the current rate.

Mr. Norris advised that the fee in lieu of parkland dedication or reservation will increase from the current rate of \$675 to \$7500 per dwelling unit, unless the formula which determines the amount of the fee is amended.

Chief Gittings, La Plata Police Department, Steve Murphy, Public Works Director, and Jeff Garner, Assistant Public Works Director, presented their budget requests to the Town Council.

The Town Council agreed on the following items:

- Put a "place holder" on \$38,930 for the Beautification Commission, to be approved as items are brought before the Town Council.

- \$25,000 for new police vehicle.
- \$80,000 (ongoing \$55,000) for one additional police officer.
- \$40,000 to review/enhance benefits for retention and recruitment in Police Department.
- \$2,500 grants to fire department and to rescue squad.
- \$80,000 for new dump truck.
- \$55,000 for two additional employees in Public Works. (Mr. Murphy to check on possibility of hiring Pre-release Unit inmates.)
- \$2,500 for welcome packages, Community Promotion.
- \$12,000 for contracting out street sweeping service.

The next budget session will be at the April 4 work session. Mr. Norris provided copies of the FY07 Sanitation Budget and noted that the trash collection fee may need to be increased by more than 4% due to the Charles County Commissioners looking at increasing the landfill fee. Mr. Norris advised he is doing preliminary research on use of the King George County landfill.

#### Future Work Session Topics

- April 25 Joint Work Session with the County Commissioners.

There being no other discussion, Councilman Back moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM. Councilman Newman seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The Council moved into closed session.

Submitted by:

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Judith T. Frazier  
Town Clerk