

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
February 17, 2009, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor Roy G. Hale, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Robert W. Oliphant, Town Treasurer; Robert F. Stahl, Jr., Director of Operations; William F. Eckman, Chairman, Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Minutes:

Mayor Hale called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Mission system

Description: Information will be presented regarding the MISSION system, a computer monitoring system for Town wells and water towers.

Steve Whelley, of Whel-Tech, Inc., presented information to explain the MISSION system, a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, installed to monitor the Town's wells and water towers. Mr. Stahl advised that Maryland Environmental Service is responsible for using and monitoring this system and for operating the Town's wells and water towers.

Convenience fees for credit card and ACH utility bill payments

Description: Discussion about assessing a per transaction convenience fee on all payments made by credit card or ACH debit, regardless of whether they are made on-line or in person, to partially offset the costs incurred by the Town in offering these services, and setting the amount of the fee. [Information included in Mr. Oliphant's memorandum to the Town Council, dated February 5, 2009.]

Mr. Oliphant presented information to address one of the Town Council's FY09 Service Priorities to provide for on-line services, including on-line bill paying. He advised that Town staff researched options and believes that acquisition and implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)/Integrated Business Management system would address most of the on-line services. He further advised Town staff reviewed services provided by multiple vendors and that PNC Bank offers most of the services that the Town Council is interested in for on-line and credit card payments.

Mr. Oliphant advised the Council that several issues would need to be discussed and decided before these services are offered, including (1) which services will be offered; (2) if the Town wants to pass any of the costs of the services to the customers; (3) if a portion of the costs are passed to the customers, how much? It was noted that Town staff recommends assessing a convenience fee for all ACH payments and for credit card payments.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that further discussion is needed after the budget is adopted regarding instituting the ACH/credit card payments system now vs. waiting for implementation of the ERP system in the near future. Regarding the issue of whether the Town should absorb all of the costs or if the customer should pay, the Council agreed the user should pay a convenience fee for the service but the Town should pay the cost of set-up.

Recommendation from Mr. Stahl – declare miscellaneous Public Works equipment surplus

Description: Discussion of miscellaneous items of Public Works equipment that Mr. Stahl recommends be declared surplus and sold. If the Town Council agrees with the recommendation, action to declare the equipment surplus and to authorize Town Staff to sell them could be taken at the February 24 regular meeting.

Mr. Mears read the list of items and asked the Town Council to declare them surplus and to include them on the Resolution declaring four police vehicles surplus, to be acted on at the February 24 business meeting. The items are salt spreaders, riding lawn mowers, and a dump truck bed.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to include the items in the Resolution scheduled for consideration of adoption at the February 24 business meeting.

Matters of Information

- Southern Maryland Municipal Association meeting on February 18 – Councilman Newman will attend.
- Nicholas Tryfon will be leaving the Green Building Committee. Mr. Mears asked the Town Council to approve appointment of Steve Murray, GP Homes, to replace him. (February 24 agenda.)

Future Work Session Topics

- Residency and occupancy restrictions in senior living communities – Councilmen Goldsmith and Lucas will bring results of meetings with homeowners' associations/boards of directors of Hawthorne Greene and of Washington Square.
- John Hayden, of Chemical People of Charles County, to discuss Project Graduation and request grant/donation from the Town (March 10; Councilwoman Mudd)
- Walnut Hill sewer connections (March 10; Councilwoman Mudd)
- Commercial vehicles in residential neighborhoods (March 10; Councilman Newman)

There being no other business, Councilman Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 PM. Councilwoman Mudd seconded the motion and it carried. Following a short break, the Council moved into closed session.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk