

MINUTES

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

January 18, 2022

The regular meeting of the Board of Town Commissioners was called to order on Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. by way of a teleconference.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Mary F. Chance
Paula S. Etting
Erin S. Hughes
Donna L. Kahoe

STAFF PRESENT: L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator
Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Kevin Small, Director of Planning
Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Patti Parker, Community & Public Relations Manager
Charles Keenan, Town Counsel
*Charles Keenan, joined the meeting later

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting Etiquette/Protocol

Chair Bianca advised the objective of the teleconference is to conduct normal business of the Town of Bel Air during the COVID pandemic and to allow for social distancing.

Chair Bianca reviewed the protocol for the meeting and reminded to identify yourself before speaking.

Roll Call

Chair Bianca conducted the roll call. Those present are listed above. Joining the teleconference was Alex Maro, Kevin Kadolph, and Matt Gullion.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion to approve the Agenda as written.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, Kahoe and Bianca

Nays: None

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Kahoe moved, and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that the minutes of the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners' meetings held on December 20, 2021 and January 11, 2022, be approved as submitted.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, Kahoe and Bianca

Nays: None

Abstained: Commissioner Bianca - January 11, 2022 meeting

The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 1178-22 Acceptance of the Amended 2020 Harford County Growth Report

Commissioner Hughes moved and Commissioner Kahoe seconded the motion that Resolution 1178-22 outlining the amended 2020 Harford County Amended Harford County Growth Report be accepted by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, Kahoe and Bianca

Nays: None

The motion carried.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Bianca reported January 21st to 30th is Harford County Restaurant Week and encouraged everyone to come into Town and enjoy our restaurants that are running great specials.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Alex Maro, 39 N. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Md. is the President of the Bel Air Police Department Association, the Union that represents the Bel Air Police Officers. Mr. Maro congratulated Commissioner Chance and Commissioner Etting on their election to the Board of Town Commissioners and knows the new Commissioners will find the Board has the ability to do good things for the people of the Town and the Town employees. Mr. Maro stated our membership will continue to work with the Board to make the Town better.

Mr. Maro informed his comment tonight is in regard to the search of a new Deputy Chief of the Police Department. Mr. Maro stated it is discouraging and disappointing to the Town's Police Officers to see this position posted for an external applicant.

The Police Officers know the Deputy Chief position has a great deal of responsibility for running the day-to-day operations of the Police Department. To be effective in this position, you need years of experience policing in Bel Air and have ties to the community to truly understand the public safety issues that are unique to the Town. The external

applicant has not worked their way through the ranks and do not have the experience needed. Mr. Maro stated there will be an extended period of time for him or her to understand the operation administratively and how the Police Department runs operationally.

Mr. Maro notified the Police Department is currently facing too many challenges to break in a new member of the command staff. The Patrol Division has been understaffed for months and the department is behind on promotional exams to fill vacancies. The Police Department is transitioning into a new building, police are adapting to new police reform laws and a new policy manual that will require retraining. These challenges require a Deputy Chief who knows the operation from within and be effective from day one.

Mr. Maro stated the Deputy Chief has always been filled within the Department, unfortunately some of our Sergeants were not qualified because of the requirement for a college degree.

The Town of Bel Air must realize the lack of commitment to their own Police Officers will result in higher turnover. Mr. Maro encouraged the Town to reopen the internal posting for Deputy Chief and select from the five Sergeants.

Chair Bianca thanked Mr. Maro for the comments.

There were no other comments.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Etting thanked the DPW staff for another outstanding job in snow removal.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

APPROVED: February 7, 2022

Signature on file
Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk