

MINUTES
BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS
Work/Budget Session
APRIL 23, 2019, 4:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Commissioner Susan U. Burdette, Chair
Commissioner Amy Chmielewski
Commissioner Philip L. Einhorn
Commissioner Brendan Hopkins
Commissioner Patrick T. Richards
L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator
Trish Heidenreich, Director, Department of Economic Development
Michael Krantz, Director of Human Resources and Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance

OTHERS:

Kathi Santora, Recording Secretary
Maryanna Skowronski, Director, Historical Society of Harford County
George Harrison, President, Board of Trustees, Historical Society of Harford County

I. Call to order

Mr. Bane called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

II. Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Burdette asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Richards moved to accept. Mr. Einhorn seconded the motion. All in favor.

III. Budget presentation Fiscal Year 2020

a. Continued Review of General Fund Expenditures

i. Historical Society of Harford County (HSHC): Ms. Moody introduced Ms. Skowronski and Mr. Harrison. Ms. Skowronski thanked the Town for its long-time support. In the past, Town funds have supported utilities and general operations. This year, they are requesting some additional funds for program sponsorships, including the monthly Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series. They are averaging 30-40 attendees at each. Both speakers and attendees are from within and outside of Harford County. The sessions represent diverse topics.

Mr. Harrison added that many people have never previously been to Bel Air and they patronize restaurants and businesses.

Ms. Skowronski stated the HSHC is trying to make collections more accessible to the public. They open one evening a month. The new evening genealogy class has attracted about 20 per class. This fall, there will be a two-day genealogy weekend. The recent Wine and Jazz Fest was sold out.

The HSHC is also in process of fixing up the building. They have recently put in a new parking lot, repaired the cartouche, and removed the unsightly airlock on the front door. The latter was supported by the Town Façade Improvement Grant. They are now beginning work on window restoration.

They also operate the Hays House and open the HSHC during major Town events. The Society depends on volunteers, with the exception of Ms. Skowronski and her part-time assistant.

Mr. Harrison noted they get funds from dues, grants and donations. They increased energy efficiencies to reduce the electric bills by one-half. Harford Mutual sponsors the newsletter.

Mr. Krantz noted that the HSHC's social media presence has increased.

Mr. Hopkins invited Ms. Skowronski to suggest in-kind ways that the Town could support the HSHC.

Ms. Burdette asked about the possibility of placing large historical photographs in the Auto Zone windows, which are currently blank and are at a busy intersection. Ms. Skowronski noted that many businesses have copies of historical photos that they have purchased from the HSHC.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the Town's Historic Preservation Commission has stopped selling Christmas ornaments and wondered if there is another partnership project possibility. Ms. Skowronski stated that they are in the early stages of planning a passport-type program. She invited the board to visit the HSHC.

Mr. Harrison stated there are plans to create a museum in the future, that would align with state-of-the-art museum practices.

Mr. Hopkins also suggested that the HCHS look into how a partnership with Harford Tech could help with certain construction and landscaping projects.

Ms. Skowronski also added that there will be a memorial gathering for Charles Robbins at the HSHC on April 28, 2019 from 2:00 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Skowronski and Mr. Harrison left the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

ii. Economic Development Department: Ms. Heidenreich's report included the following highlights:

1. Salary savings in the current fiscal year due to a staff retirement
2. Consolidation of some accounts such as travel and training due to the Town's new accounting system
3. Added funds for a larger hard copy calendar of events and the annual business of the year event
4. Marketing and promotions include an increased use of social media. Ms. Burdette asked about ads in national publications such as Southern Living. Ms. Heidenreich noted that these ads are placed in collaboration with other local municipalities in view of the expense. Bel Air contributes as appropriate.
5. Main Street Marketing is the account used by the Bel Air Downtown Alliance and Town in partnership ads. Bel Air's Department of Economic Development encourages the Alliance to do independent marketing. There is sometimes public confusion about the role of each entity. These funds also support advertisement expenses for the BBQ Bash and Girls' Night Out.

iii. Cultural Arts: The request for funding for this group is again flat funded for marketing and events and public art. They continue to partner with various organizations to support events. Public art remains a priority. They are hoping to create more walkable areas to showcase public art.

iv. Christmas Parade: Ms. Moody stated that the Bel Air Downtown Alliance has asked for the same amount of money as last year. Mr. Richards asked if there was clarity after some past confusion over sponsorships obtained by the Town and the Alliance.

Mr. Richard suggested the possibility of giving the Alliance funds and allowing them to budget as needed and drive the event. Then if they wanted larger sponsors, they could do this and potentially make a profit. He asked Ms. Heidenreich to clarify the Town's role in the parade. The Town is the primary producer of the parade with Mr. Mike Blum. The Alliance previously helped to manage accounts and expenses. It has gone on to raise money for event expenses and has realized some profit.

Mr. Richards asked if the Alliance could take total responsibility for the event in light of the Department of Economic Development's heavy work responsibilities. Ms. Heidenreich agreed that this could be an acceptable option. Mr. Richards noted that the Alliance has successfully managed many large events, such as the BBQ Bash.

Mr. Richards and Mr. Hopkins agreed that if the Christmas parade yields large profits for

the Alliance in the future, then the Board can decide if future Town contributions are appropriate.

Ms. Burdette cautioned that the ability to manage a successful parade could be dependent on the staff of the Alliance at the time of the event. Ms. Heidenreich stated that the Christmas parade has a large number of behind-the-scenes-tasks that are currently performed by the Town.

Mr. Richard supports discussing the possibly with the Alliance. Mr. Hopkins also supports the idea. Ms. Burdette expressed concern about how the chain of command would work with support services such as the police and DPW. Mr. Einhorn believes that the Town should provide oversight.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that the bills to cover the parade (not counting staff time from either organization) is about \$8,000.

Mr. Hopkins suggests that the route should be longer to accommodate increased crowds.

b. Discussion by Commissioners on Budget Issues: Ms. Moody stated that the Bel Air Rec Committee has not requested more funding from the \$86,700 provided for many years. Ms. Burdette inquired about the Chair of the Arts Festival. Mr. Krantz stated that the current chair has agreed manage it one more year.

The Independence Day Committee has also not asked for an increase from \$15,200.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Harford County requested \$10,000; the town recommends a reduction to \$8,000. Several Commissioners asked for consideration to fully fund the request in view of the quality of work done by the organization. Mr. Hopkins suggested that some children at certain locations around town do not have easy access to the club, especially in summer, and that funds could be used to solve this problem

Other requests include \$7500 from LASOS. Mr. Hopkins stated that there are probably unknown numbers of people who are Hispanic/Latino in the community. Mr. Richards and Ms. Chmielewski asked if the funding could be decreased to \$6,000.

Mr. Richards excused himself from the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

The Harford County Education Foundation requested \$17,008 for school resource center rent and for school supplies. They are also requesting a classroom innovation grant. The Town will fund them \$2500. Ms. Chmielewski notes that the Town supplies two non-funded school resource officers to Town schools. The Town provides the funding and not Harford County Government.

The Army Alliance didn't submit a request for funding. However, the Town has opted to fund \$1,000 for sponsorship of their yearly Spring reception. Other funds go to Lunchtime Concerts, Harford Family House's Homeruns for the Homeless event, The Close Foundation, the Bel Air Chemical-Free Prom, Kite Day, Fall and Spring Flings, the Authors and Artists event at the Armory and the Greater Bel Air Foundation Golf event.

Ms. Moody provided the list of outstanding items:

- Mr. Krantz will forward all fee schedules to the commissioners for a future discussion of fees such as for food trucks and resident fines/fees.
- Vehicle resale revenue for FY18. **Supplied: \$47,094**
- Additional discussion on Office Street/Courtland Street project
- Additional discussion on exterior painting project of the DPW/PLN building
- Amount that the Town budget has increased over the last 10 years: **FY20 general fund budget is \$13,789,210; FY11 general fund budget was \$11,576,705 for a difference of \$2,212,505**
- Request for Mr. Krantz to quantify the number of "clicks" on the website newsletter link since the Town is no longer mailing the Bel Air Bond to residents.

ADJOURNMENT :

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Approved: May 23, 2019

Signature on file
Susan U. Burdette, Chair
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk