

## **MINUTES**

**CITY OF WESTMINSTER  
Mayor and Common Council Meeting  
September 27, 2021 at 7 pm  
City Hall, 1838 Emerald Hill Lane, Westminster, MD 21157  
<https://www.facebook.com/westminstermd/>**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

**Elected Officials Present:** Mayor Becker (Virtual), Councilmember Chiavacci, Councilmember Dayhoff, Councilmember Gilbert, Councilmember Hoff, and President Pecoraro.

**Staff Present:** Director of Housing Services Brown, Director of Finance Colston, Director of Technology Services Davidson, Director of Community Planning and Development Depo, Director of Public Works Department Glass, City Administrator Imhulse, Chief of Police Ledwell, City Attorney Levan (Virtual), and City Clerk Visocsky.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

President Pecoraro requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Mayor and Common Council Meeting of September 13, 2021.

Councilmember Dayhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Gilbert, to approve the minutes of September 13, 2021.

### **VOTE**

**AYES:** President Pecoraro, Councilmember Chiavacci, Councilmember Dayhoff, Councilmember Gilbert, and Councilmember Hoff.

**NAYS:** None.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

President Pecoraro requested a motion to approve the Consent Calendar, which consisted of the approval for the Deed for Stormwater Management Facility located at Langdon Property.

Councilmember Chiavacci moved, seconded by Councilmember Hoff, to approve the Consent Calendar.

### **VOTE**

**AYES:** President Pecoraro, Councilmember Chiavacci, Councilmember Dayhoff, Councilmember Gilbert, and Councilmember Hoff.

**NAYS:** None.

### **REPORT FROM THE MAYOR**

Mayor Becker reported that the Westminster Fallfest was a success. She then reported that she met with the new Director of the Carroll Arts Center. In addition, Mayor Becker reported that she and Mr. Glass presented PUREwater Westminster during a luncheon at the Chamber of Commerce and it was well received. Mayor Becker concluded her report, sharing her enjoyment of working with Ms. Imhulse.

### **REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

There were no reports from the following Standing Committees: Personnel and Technology.

Councilmember Dayhoff, on behalf of the Arts Council, reported the following:

- September 15, 2021 – Councilmember Dayhoff presented Recreation and Parks Advisory Board’s mural initiative during the Council’s monthly meeting.
- September 30, 2021 – s reception would be held for the annual Members Show and would include a farewell party for outgoing Director Dr. Judy Morley, and a meet and greet for the new Executive Director, Eric Kerchner.
- October 25 – 29, 2021 – the Carroll Arts Center would show classic horror films each night.

Councilmember Hoff, on behalf of the Economic and Community Development Committee, reported that the Committee would hold a meeting on October 6, 2021 to discuss three items. He then shared that he met with Ms. Imhulse to discuss future agenda items.

President Pecoraro, on behalf of the Finance Committee, reported that the Committee would soon meet and continue discussions regarding anticipated Federal American Rescue Plan Funds.

Councilmember Chiavacci, on behalf of the Public Safety Committee, read letters of recognition that were sent by community members sharing their appreciation to the following officers: Sergeant Donovan, Corporal DeAngelis, Police Officer Chojnacki, Corporal Clagett, and Police Officer Tye.

Councilmember Chiavacci, on behalf of the Public Works Committee, complimented on a job well done by the Public Works Department for their work during the recent hurricane and resulting flooding. In addition, he thanked the Street Department for their work during the Westminster Fallfest event.

Councilmember Dayhoff, on behalf of the Recreation and Parks Committee, reported that the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met at the Diffendal Parking Lot on September 14, 2021, to review the opportunity of a mural painting on the newly built retaining wall. He thanked Mr. Glass and Ms. Imhulse for their attendance.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Councilmember Hoff shared his appreciation to City staff who worked during Westminster Fallfest and the parade. He then reported that he and his son attended the Good Game Fest hosted by MAGIC, and commented that it was enjoyed by many. Councilmember Hoff also shared his opportunity in touring Exploration Commons, located at the Carroll County Library Westminster Branch. In conclusion, Councilmember Hoff thanked Ms. Visocky for her work during her tenure at the City and wished her the best in her future endeavors. Councilmember Chiavacci echoed Councilmember Hoff’s comments.

Councilmember Gilbert shared that she also toured Exploration Commons. She then informed her colleagues that the Carroll County Veterans Independence Project would hold a fundraiser on October 16, 2021 in honor of Veterans Day called the Boots & Bluejeans Barndance. Councilmember Gilbert congratulated City staff on a successful Westminster Fallfest. Finally, she shared her attendance to the Good Game Fest, stating that it had a great turnout.

Councilmember Dayhoff echoed Councilmember Gilbert’s comments regarding Westminster Fallfest. He commended Tiombe Page, owner of Cultivated, for organizing the Westminster After Dark event on September 24, 2021. He then noted that Midnight Madness would return in 2022. Councilmember Dayhoff shared his appreciation to Officer Juan Rojas as he helped to maintain order at the ticket booth line during Fallfest. On behalf of the Westminster Volunteer Fire Department, Councilmember Dayhoff shared the excitement for the upcoming Oyster Stroll on October 9, 2021, during which the Department would also host its annual Open House.

On September 19, 2021, Councilmember Dayhoff, Mayor Becker, Chief Ledwell, and Councilmember Hoff attended a PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meeting. On September 23, 2021, Councilmember Dayhoff attended a Community Services Council meeting at the Carroll Nonprofit Center where former Councilmember Sam Greenholtz provided a presentation on the Literacy Council.

Councilmember Dayhoff stated that he looked forward to an update on the improvements to the City's parking meters, as well as the City's property maintenance code. He then thanked staff for the recent distribution of a proposed demolition permit for a property on East Main Street. Councilmember Hoff added that he and Ms. Imhulse discussed including the demolition permit and parking meter discussion on the agenda for the Economic and Community Development Committee.

Councilmember Dayhoff concluded his comments, sharing his continued concern regarding the loss of key historic properties in the community. President Pecoraro thanked Councilmember Dayhoff for mentioning that, as the Historic downtown was previously a regular discussion. He shared that he would like to see the City initiate that conversation again.

Councilmember Dayhoff asked staff to provide elected officials notice of upcoming special events occurring in the City so that information can be provided to inquiring community members. Councilmember Chiavacci and Councilmember Hoff agreed. Mayor Becker suggested that Ms. Imhulse discuss with staff. Ms. Imhulse agreed and stated that she would look into the matter.

## **BIDS**

### **ADA Sidewalk Ramp**

Mr. Glass informed the Mayor and Common Council that the FY 2022 Capital Projects Fund included funding for the continuation of the City's annual ADA Sidewalk Ramp project. The budget included \$100,000 for this project. Three bids were received, and ECM Corporation was the lowest bid in the amount of \$68,380.

Mr. Glass recommended that the Mayor and Common Council approve and authorize the Mayor's execution of the associated contract for the bid received by ECM Corporation in the budgeted, not to exceed amount of \$100,000 for the replacement and upgrade of the ADA sidewalk ramps. Additional information was provided in the agenda packet.

Councilmember Gilbert moved, seconded by Dayhoff, to approve the bid by ECM Corporation in the amount not to exceed \$100,000 for the ADA Sidewalk Ramp project.

## **VOTE**

**AYES:** President Pecoraro, Councilmember Chiavacci, Councilmember Dayhoff, Councilmember Gilbert, and Councilmember Hoff.

**NAYS:** None.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Letter to Carroll County Delegation**

Councilmember Hoff stated that the purpose of the letter to Carroll County Delegation was to request their help and support following the City's submission of a letter to the Governor requesting state funding for consideration in the Governor's 2023 capital budget for the following projects:

- Wakefield Valley Park, \$2.1 million – The City acquired the former Wakefield Valley Golf Club in February 2016. Recently, the City adopted a master plan for the Park after an extensive process that included considerable community input. This master plan repurposes the former golf course with the intention of transforming the 187-acre site into a large regional park with open space, trails, playgrounds, a fishing pier, a dog park, a disc golf course, multi-purpose fields, and pavilions that will not only benefit the citizens of Westminster, but all of Carroll County and even statewide, as this park, once completed as envisioned, will be one of the largest parks in the region. The funding request would complete phase 1 of the master plan.
- Historic Clock Tower Restoration, \$400,000 – This 1896 City landmark sits atop a 3-story retired fire engine house, which is now used for office and retail space. The tower has endured considerable damage and is in critical need of repairs. This funding request would provide the necessary safety repairs and complete its restoration. Potential partners for this funding request may include the Historical Society of Carroll County, Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, Maryland Historical Trust, and/or the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce.

Councilmember Hoff recommended approval of the letter to the Carroll County Delegates as provided in the agenda packet. Mayor Becker added that she had discussed this topic with Senator Justin Ready, who shared his support. She noted that a presentation of the projects would be provided to the delegates on October 6, 2021.

Ms. Imhulse requested approval by the Common Council to authorize Mayor Becker's execution of the letter, and for the presentation of the listed projects on October 6, 2021.

Councilmember Hoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Dayhoff, to approve the letter to the Carroll County Delegation, authorize the Mayor's signature, and the presentation on October 6, 2021.

#### **VOTE**

**AYES:** President Pecoraro, Councilmember Chiavacci, Councilmember Dayhoff, Councilmember Gilbert, and Councilmember Hoff.

**NAYS:** None.

#### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

##### **City Administrator**

Ms. Imhulse shared her appreciation to the Mayor and Common Council for their support of the letter to the Carroll County Delegates. She stated that the letter was an example of the continued effort as the City seeks funding for City projects.

Ms. Imhulse then shared her enjoyment in attending her first ever Westminster Fallfest parade and festival. In addition to the Recreation and Parks Department, as well as the Street Department, she noted that the Technology Services Department and Finance Department also played a role in making Fallfest successful. She thanked City staff, especially Ms. Gruber.

##### **Recreation & Parks Department**

Ms. Imhulse, on behalf of Director of Recreation and Parks Department Gruber, reported that the sign for the Tahoma Farm Park was completed and waiting to be delivered. She also reported that bid responses were received for the Locker Room Renovation project, and the contract award would come before the Mayor and Common Council soon.

With Westminster Fallfest being over, the Department had begun preparation for the Oyster Stroll on October 9, 2021. Ms. Imhulse concluded the report, informing the Mayor and Common Council that Ms. Gruber would provide an update on Fallfest during the meeting of October 11, 2021.

### **Public Works Department**

Mr. Glass wished Ms. Visocky well as she moves forward in her future endeavors.

### **Technology Services Department**

Mr. Davidson reported that his department received 88 applications for the position of a Helpdesk Technician. Of those applications, his Department interviewed 11 applicants on September 22 – 24, 2021. He also wished Ms. Visocky the best for her future.

### **Housing Services Department**

Mr. Brown reported that the website for the Housing Services Department was updated. He encouraged the Mayor and Common Council to look over the webpage and provide feedback.

### **Community Planning & Development Department**

Mr. Depo reported that there were no meetings for the Board of Zoning Appeals or Planning and Zoning Commission during the month of October. On October 6, 2021, the Historic District Commission was scheduled to meet and hear the following items:

- Historic Rehabilitation Property Tax Credit Application for 12 N. Church Street
- Historic Rehabilitation Property Tax Credit and Façade Improvement Program Applications for 116 E. Main Street (Covalent Spirits)
- Façade Improvement Program Application for 121 E. Main Street
- Demolition Permit for 288 E. Main Street

### **Westminster Police Department (WPD)**

Chief Ledwell reported the following:

- On September 18, 2021, WPD participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual “We Say Nope to Dope” walk and softball game.
- On September 22, 2021, WPD held its monthly Community Focus Group meeting, briefing the community members on the following: WPD initiatives, crime trends by patrol sectors, crime prevention strategies, and upcoming special events.
- Police Officers Russell, Chojnacki, Tye, and Lash were presented with Police Officer First Class designation, signifying their success in completing 18 months of the probationary period.
- WPD continues its investigation of robberies at the New Windsor State Bank and the Westminster Shopping Center parking lot.
- WPD was conducting interviews for the position of a Police Administrative Services.

Councilmember Chiavacci noted that some of the applicants were those who worked in law enforcement and applied for the position because of Chief Ledwell’s reputation. Councilmember Dayhoff shared that he had also received the same comments.

Chief Ledwell concluded, wishing Ms. Visocky well in her future endeavors.

### **Finance Department**

Ms. Colston reported the Finance Department was working on the City's audit and a report would come to the Mayor and Common Council during an upcoming meeting. She thanked the Recreation and Parks Department for meeting with her to review the financial aspects for Fallfest.

**Westminster Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD)**

Councilmember Dayhoff, on behalf WVFD, reported that the Bingo games following the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by WVFD Vice President Tim Bangerd on August 9, 2021, had been well attended and successful. He then provided a report for the months of July and August as follows:

- July 2021 there were 604 calls, of these calls: EMS 511 and Fire 93. 367 were within the City limits, and 55% were overlapping calls.
- August 2021 there were 565 calls, of these calls: EMS 472 and Fire 93. 318 were within in the City limits.

Councilmember Dayhoff concluded his report, sharing that on October 3, 2021, St. John's Catholic Church would conduct its annual Blue Mass service, honoring the fire service and police agencies across the county.

Ms. Imhulse concluded the Departmental Reports, thanking Ms. Visocsky for her eleven years of service to the City and highlighting her work during the City's Elections. President Pecoraro also thanked Ms. Visocsky for her dedicated service as the City Clerk.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Pecoraro adjourned the meeting at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shannon Visocsky, City Clerk

Full audio version is available on [www.westminstermd.gov](http://www.westminstermd.gov)