

MINUTES

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

TELECONFERENCE

March 1, 2021

The regular meeting of the Board of Town Commissioners was called to order on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. via teleconference.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Amy G. Chmielewski, Chair
Kevin M. Bianca
Erin S. Hughes
Donna L. Kahoe
Patrick T. Richards

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
Patti Parker, Community & Public Relations Manager
Kevin Small, Director of Planning
Charles Keenan, Town Counsel
Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Chmielewski advised the objective of the teleconference is to conduct normal business of the Town of Bel Air during the COVID-19 pandemic we all are experiencing. A teleconference allows us to comply with social distancing, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Meeting Etiquette/Protocol

Chair Chmielewski reviewed the protocol for the meeting and reminded all participants to identify themselves before speaking.

Roll Call

Chair Chmielewski conducted the roll call. Those present are listed above. Tony Coliano, Bel Air Volunteer Fire Department, joined the teleconference. Also joining the meeting was Matt Gullion, resident of the Town of Bel Air and a member of the Bel Air Police Department.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chair Chmielewski called for approval of the Agenda.

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

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

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 February 16, 2021 and February 23, 2021 be approved as submitted.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Charter Resolution 134-21 Amending Article VIII. TAXATION Section 806. Tax Credit for Firemen Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. Members of the Town Charter of the Town of Bel Air

Mr. Krantz, Director of Administration advised this piece of legislation is a Charter Resolution being recommended to remove the old Tax Credit for Firemen of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company.

The Board of Town Commissioners and Town Staff wish to extend their gratitude to all the emergency responders and supporting members and staff of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company for everything that they do for the citizens and businesses of the Town of Bel Air.

The Board of Town Commissioners and Town Staff wish to provide an incentive or reward to the members of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, for their service in a manner to be determined in the upcoming Ordinance, and to be decided upon separate from, and outside of, the Charter of the Town of Bel Air, in order to facilitate future administration and modification of such incentive or reward.

- a. Section 806. Tax Credit for Firemen Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. Members, was implemented in 2001 and is outdated. The current Tax Credit is \$25.00 per person and the new Tax Credit is \$500.00 per year per person or \$1,000 maximum.
- b. The current Maryland Code, Tax - Property, § 9-260 Dwellings owned by a public safety officer - legislation within the State of Maryland that allows local governments to issue these property tax credits.
- c. Staff recommends removing under the Town Charter, Section 806 the old language of the Tax Credit for Firemen Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company and pass an Ordinance to update this legislation and enter it into the Town Code for ease of administration and future amendments as necessary.

Chair Chmielewski called for public comments. There were none. Chair Chmielewski called for Commissioners' comments. As there were none, Chair Chmielewski closed the public hearing.

Ordinance 797-21 Amending Bel Air Town Code Chapter 50 Finance and Taxation to include Article VII Property Tax Credit for Active Duty Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company Volunteer Members.

The Director of Administration informed this Ordinance will replace the Charter Resolution.

The Board of Town Commissioners and Town Staff desire to express gratitude to the members of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company for the many hours of training and service dedicated to the prevention and suppression of fire and the protection of life and property of the citizens and businesses in the Town of Bel Air.

The Board of Town Commissioners and Town Staff desire to provide an incentive to the volunteer members of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company in the form of a property tax credit, to encourage citizens to continue to serve, for many years to come, in the outstanding tradition of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company.

The Charter Resolution will remove the outdated language from the Town Charter and the Ordinance will be implementing the new language.

- Tax Credit - \$500.00 per year and \$1,000 maximum per year.
- About 35 people will be impacted. Old tax credit \$870.00 budgeted and potential new tax credit to be budgeted in the amount of \$17,500.
- Ordinance is not applicable for landlords.
- Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company member must own and occupy the Town property for which he or she is credited.

Mr. Krantz reviewed the new language:

Article VII

Property Tax Credit for Active Duty Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company Volunteer Members § 50-18 Definitions

Active Duty Volunteer Member

As defined in Title 9. Property Tax Credits and Property Tax Relief, of the Tax-Property portion of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 9-260(a) (3) (ii) and described as a volunteer firefighter or a volunteer emergency medical technician.

Dwelling

As defined in Title. Property Tax Credits and Property Tax Relief, of the Tax-Property portion of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 9-105(a) (5) (i); and as further defined in Chapter 165: Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Article XIV: Definitions of the Bel Air Town Code.

Fiscal Year

July 1 thru June 30.

§50-19 Authority; Property Tax Credit Established

In accordance with the provision of the Tax-Property Article, Title 9, Section 9-260 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, there is hereby established the following property tax credit:

- A. Each active duty volunteer member of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company shall be eligible for an annual property tax credit in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) on the active duty volunteer member's dwelling, with a maximum tax credit per household of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00).

- i. Effective beginning with the July 1, 2021 fiscal year.

§50-20 Certification

To receive a credit under this article, each qualifying active duty volunteer member of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company shall be annually certified to the Director of Finance by the Secretary of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company as an active duty volunteer member.

§50-21 Tax Credit Conditions

Once the Director of Finance has verified an active duty volunteer member's eligibility, the Town of Bel Air shall issue an annual tax credit to each eligible active duty volunteer member, provided that the following conditions are met:

- A. The dwelling has been owned and occupied by and was the principal residence of the active duty volunteer member for at least the twelve (12) months preceding the fiscal year in which the tax credit is applicable.
- B. The eligible active duty volunteer member has no delinquent financial debt obligations owed to the Town of Bel Air.
- C. Town of Bel Air employees, who are also active duty volunteer members of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, are only eligible for one tax credit benefit, whichever is greater.

Chair Chmielewski called for public comments.

Matt Gullion, 42 W. Gordon Street, Bel Air Md. was a volunteer firefighter for the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company for ten years. Mr. Gullion advised recruitment and retention has always been a problem and this tax credit will help and be positive for the Town of Bel Air. The tax credit may also be an incentive to move into Town. Mr. Gullion stated without the Volunteer Fire Company our taxes would be through the roof to pay for the services. Mr. Gullion is thankful for the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company and supports the tax credit.

Tony Coliano, Vice President of the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, appreciates the tax credit from the Town. Mr. Coliano also commented the recruitment and retention is extremely difficult as we face these economic times. Mr. Coliano advised as a rule, our Annual Audit estimates what the Volunteer Fire Company saves taxpayers of Harford County which is \$10 million in salaries. Mr. Coliano advised recognizing the members is extremely important to them and appreciates the effort the Town has put forward.

Chair Chmielewski called for Commissioners' comments.

Chair Chmielewski has been talking about the tax credit since becoming a Commissioner and is glad this has come to fruition. Chair Chmielewski pointed out these volunteers are saving lives.

As there were no further comments, Chair Chmielewski closed the public hearing.

Ordinance 798-21 - Chapter 145 Building Construction

Mr. Kline, Director of Public Works notified the International Building Code (IBC), the International Residential Code (IRC) and International Mechanical Code (IMC) are published by the International Code Council, Inc (ICC), the nationally recognized authority for building design, construction and maintenance. Harford County adopted the 2018 International Building Code, 2018 International Residential Code and 2018 International Mechanical Code with certain amendments. By mutual agreement, Harford County Department of Inspections, Licenses, Permits is the building code review and inspection agent for the Town. The Town of Bel Air should adopt the 2018 IBC, 2018 IRC and 2018 IMC in order to continue to be consistent with the applicable building codes in effect in the County.

Chair Chmielewski called for public comments. There were none. Chair Chmielewski called for Commissioners' comments. As there were none, Chair Chmielewski closed the public hearing.

Ordinance 799-21 - Plumbing and Gas Fitting Standards Background

Mr. Kline, Director of Public Works advised the 2018 International Plumbing Code, the International 2018 Fuel Gas Code and the 2018 International Residential Code Chapters 20, 21, 22, 24, Part VI Fuel Gas and Part VII pertaining to residential plumbing, published by the International Code Council and the American Gas Association is the nationally recognized authority for plumbing and gas fitting design and installation. By mutual agreement, Harford County Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits is the plumbing code review and inspection agent for the Town. The Town of Bel Air should adopt those codes referenced above in order to continue to be consistent with the applicable building codes in effect in the County.

Chair Chmielewski called for public comments. There were none. Chair Chmielewski called for Commissioners' comments. As there were none, Chair Chmielewski closed the public hearing.

Ordinance 800-21 - Electrical Standards Background

Mr. Kline, Director of Public Works informed the National Electrical Code (NEC) is published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and is the nationally recognized authority for electrical design and installation. Harford County adopted the National Electrical Code, 2020 edition with certain amendments. By mutual agreement, Harford County Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits are the electrical code review and inspection agent for the Town. The Town of Bel Air should adopt the NEC 2020 edition in order to continue to be consistent with the applicable building codes in effect in the County.

Chair Chmielewski called for public comments. There were none. Chair Chmielewski called for Commissioners' comments. As there were none, Chair Chmielewski closed the public hearing.

Ordinance 801-21 - Fire Prevention Code

Mr. Kline, Director of Public Works reported the Uniform Fire Code, 2018 edition and Life Safety Code, 2021 edition are published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and is the nationally recognized authority for fire prevention and life safety design and construction. By mutual agreement, Harford County Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits along with the Maryland State Fire Marshall are the code review and inspection agents for the Town. The Town of Bel Air should adopt the Uniform Fire Code, 2018 edition and Life Safety Code, 2021 edition in order to continue to be consistent with the applicable codes in effect in the County.

Chair Chmielewski called for public comments. There were none. Chair Chmielewski called for Commissioners' comments. As there were none, Chair Chmielewski closed the public hearing.

BUSINESS:

Charter Resolution 134-21 - Amending Article VIII. TAXATION Section 806. Tax Credit for Firemen Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. Members of the Town Charter of the Town of Bel Air

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Charter Resolution 134-21, amending Article VIII. TAXATION Section 806. Tax Credit for Firemen Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. Members of the Town Charter of the Town of Bel Air, be approved by the Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

797-21- Amending Bel Air Town Code Chapter 50 Finance and Taxation to include Article VII Property Tax Credit for Active Duty Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company Volunteer Members

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Ordinance 797-21, amending Bel Air Town Code Chapter 50 Finance and Taxation to include Article VII Property Tax Credit for Active Duty Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company Volunteer Members, be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Ordinance 798-21 Chapter 145 Building Construction

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Ordinance 798-21, rescinding and reenacting Chapter 145, Building Construction, of the Bel Air Town Code be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Ordinance 799-21 - Plumbing and Gas Fittings Standards

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Ordinance 799-21, rescinding and reenacting Chapter 353, Plumbing and Gas Fitting Standards, of the Bel Air Town Code be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Ordinance 800-21 - Electrical Standards

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Ordinance 800-21, rescinding and reenacting Chapter 180 Electrical Standards to the Bel Air Town Code, be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Ordinance 801-21 - Fire Prevention Code

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Ordinance 801-21, rescinding and reenacting Chapter 204 Fire Prevention of the Bel Air Town Code, be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 1161-21 - Acceptance of the 2019 Amended Harford County Annual Growth Report

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Resolution No. 1161-21 outlining the 2019 Amended Harford County Annual Growth Report be accepted by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Audit for Year Ending June 30, 2020

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that the audit for FY2020, ending June 30, 2020, completed by SB & Company, LLC, be accepted by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Resolution No. 1160-21 - Arts & Entertainment District Redesignation

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that Resolution No. 1160-21 to redesignate 100 acres of land in the Town of Bel Air as a State of Maryland Arts & Entertainment District be received by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

A public hearing is scheduled for March 15, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

Reappointment Cultural Arts Commission

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that the reappointment of Carole Milan and Kristien Foss to the Bel Air Cultural Arts Commission, for a term of three (3) years, effective immediately, be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Commissioner Kahoe advised Ms. Milan and Ms. Foss have been on the Cultural Arts Commission for a long time and are invaluable members. Commissioner Kahoe stated their continuing is good news for the Commission.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

The motion carried.

Reappointment Economic & Community Development Commission

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that the reappointment of William S. Kelly to the Bel Air Economic & Community Development Commission for a term of three (3) years, effective immediately, be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Commissioner Richards thanked Mr. Kelly for his continued support and invaluable contributions. Mr. Kelly is a longtime member and a tremendous asset to ECDC.

Ayes: Commissioners Bianca, Hughes, Kahoe, Richards and Chmielewski

Nays: None

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Chmielewski reported:

- Community Clean-up - March 7th, 10:00 a.m. - meet at the Armory. Those attending please wear masks and bring gloves. The Town of Bel Air will provide bags and the Department of Public Works will designate areas to place the trash.
- Chocolate, Brew & Wine Tour - sponsored by the Bel Air Downtown Alliance - March 6 - 13th. Tickets are available on the Downtown Alliance website and can be used the entire week to support local businesses.
- Family Fun at the Bel Air Armory - during March and space is limited because of the pandemic. More information can be found on the Town's website.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Coliano looks forward to the Town's budget meeting and invited the Commissioners to the firehouse.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Chair Chmielewski thanked the Department Heads for their outstanding teamwork in putting the items together for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Approved: March 15, 2021

Signature on file
Amy G. Chmielewski, Chair
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk