

MINUTES

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

May 15, 2023

The regular meeting of the Board of Town Commissioners was called to order on Monday, May 15, 2023, 5:30 p.m. at McFaul Activities Center, Bel Air, Maryland.

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Donna L. Kahoe

STAFF PRESENT: Edward Hopkins, Town Administrator
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Angela Robertson, Director of Economic Development
Kevin Small, Director of Planning
David Anderson, Media & Public Relations Specialist
Elizabeth Thompson, Town Attorney
Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Etting moved and Commissioner Chance seconded the motion to approve the Agenda as written.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Etting moved and Commissioner Chance seconded the motion that the minutes of the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners' meetings held on April 19, 2023, April 25, 2023, May 1, 2023 and May 4, 2023, be approved as submitted.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS:

Proclamation for Historic Preservation Month

Historic preservation is an effective tool for managing growth, revitalizing neighborhoods, fostering local pride and maintaining community character while enhancing livability.

Commissioner Hughes notified it is important to celebrate the role of history in our lives and contributions made by dedicated individuals in helping to preserve the tangible aspects of the heritage that has shaped us as a people.

On behalf of the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners, Commissioner Hughes proclaimed the month of May, 2023 be designated Preservation Month in the Town of Bel Air and called upon the citizens of Bel Air to recognize and participate in this special observance.

Historic Preservation Commission Poster Contest Results

Commissioner Hughes recognized the HPC Poster Contest winners. Laura Bianca-Pruett, Planner and Jeffrey Campbell, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission presented the awards.

Overall Winners

- 1st Place - Brooke Turek, Harford Day School (Liriodendron Mansion)
- 2nd Place - Finley Hennon, St. Margaret School (First Presbyterian Church)
- 3rd Place - Gwen Burke, St. Margaret School (Bel Air Armory)

Honorable Mention - Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School

- 1st Place - Stella Ikonomou (Bel Air Armory)
- 2nd Place - Charlotte Phillips (M&T Bank)
- 3rd Place - Ava White (Hays House)

Honorable Mention - St. Margaret School

- 1st Place - Kathryn Heller (Bel Air Armory)
- 2nd Place - Sophia Thompson (Hays House)
- 3rd Place - Andrew Giordano (Hays House)

Honorable Mention - Harford Day School

- 1st Place - Aaron Procheska (Hays House)
- 2nd Place - Soumya Thapa (Bel Air Railroad Station)
- 3rd Place - Halle Jastrab (Rockfield Manor)

The winners received certificates and gifts. A reception was held to honor the winners.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Resolution 1198-23 Fiscal Year 2024 - Tentative Budget

The FY24 budget was introduced on April 3, 2023 at a Town meeting. This evening's public hearing, as well as the one held on April 17, 2023, is to provide the public with an opportunity to provide input during the budget process. The Board can then use this input before it approves the final budget. Six public work sessions were also held during which the budget was reviewed in great detail.

The Public Hearing this evening is on the Tentative Budget, which was adopted on April 17, 2023. Even though changes were discussed and tentatively approved at the final budget work session on May 9, those changes are not reflected in the Tentative Budget.

The Director of Finance notified the General Fund was presented at the first Public Hearing and the two Enterprise Funds and the Special Revenue Fund will be reviewed this evening.

Ms. Moody, Director of Finance reviewed:

Total Sewer Fund Revenues

<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
\$3,907,470	\$3,461,330	\$446,140

- The base charge, based on the meter size, and the rate per 1,000 gallons in the Sewer Service Charges includes an 8.0% increase based on the December, 2022 consumer price index.
- The rate would increase from \$6.48 to \$7.00 (\$.52) per 1,000 gallons effective July 1, 2023.
- An estimated \$1,100,000 of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) monies will fund a portion of the sewage treatment costs to Harford County which will allow the Town to use those savings to complete the design and provide construction drawings for three pumping stations as well as the substantial repair and replacement to two of those stations.

Total Sewer Fund Expenses

<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
\$3,907,470	\$3,461,330	\$446,140

- \$621,059 will fund the routine expenses to operate/maintain the sewer systems (i.e., salaries, utilities, supplies, maintenance/repairs and outsourcing of sewer bills).
- \$1,778,938 will fund the payment to Hartford County who transports and treats the Town's sewage.
- \$391,620 will reimburse the General Fund for its pro-rata share of salaries, benefits and overhead that are attributed to the fund's operations.

- \$1,100,000 will fund the design and provide construction drawings for three pumping stations as well as the substantial repair and replacement to two of those stations
- \$7,853 will fund interest only debt service payments for existing bonds.

Total Parking Fund Revenues

<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
\$594,863	\$524,474	\$70,389

- Harford County reimburses the Town 2/3 of the operating cost (\$118,799).
- The County also reimburses the Town 2/3 of an annual contribution to the Capital Improvement Reserve account (\$10,080) as well as 2/3 of the budgeted additional capital work (\$41,664).
- There are three main sources of revenue:

Meter collections - Town's meters, parking garage vouchers, smartcards, and Parkmobile space \$125,500

Parking fines - based on history \$92,100

Lease fees - actual monthly leases for the three lots and the parking garage \$63,134

Total Parking Fund Expenses

<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
\$594,863	\$524,474	\$70,389

- Lots - \$192,521 for operations including monies owed to the General Fund for its pro-rata share of sal/ben/OH attributed to the fund's operations.
- Parking Garage - \$171,537 for operations including monies owed to the General Fund and funds to pay for interest-only debt service payments.
- Parking Garage - \$15,000 to transfer to the Capital Reserve for future capital work and \$62,000 for proposed capital work.
- Other - \$153,805 mainly for depreciation costs on capital expenses and a 19% collection fee paid to the vendor who processes the Town's parking tickets.

Special Revenue Fund

<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
\$459,639	\$346,497	\$113,142

- Purpose is to account for grants special/projects that do not lend themselves to the normal Fiscal Year budgeting.
- CDBG Project - \$136,027 represents the remaining FY21-24 allotment grant years and a COVID special allowance. Funding will be used to resurface Howard St./Rock Spring St. and replace the windows at the Armory.

- Community Legacy Grant - \$100,000 which will support Phase II of the Court House Square project (new paving, sidewalks, landscape, lighting, curbs, and graphics).
- Community Parks and Playground Grant - \$115,000 which will provide new recreational activities, provision off-street parking and handicapped access to Homestead Park. A \$35,000 required match is included in the General Fund budget.
- Safe Streets for All - \$46,667 which is a grant from the US Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway administration. It was made in partnership with Aberdeen and Have de Grace to study traffic impacts, safety data, and conflicts with pedestrians. A total of \$140,000 was awarded to the three jurisdictions with each providing a monetary match of \$8,167 which is included in the General Fund budget.

Ms. Moody thanked the Board of Town Commissioners and the Town staff for their time and effort to make this budget season a very productive one.

Chair Bianca called for public comments. There were none. Chair Bianca called for Commissioner comments. As there were none, the Public Hearing was closed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

Fran Johnson, 124 Archer Street, Bel Air, Md. inquired about Ordinance 812-23, sign regulation. Ms. Johnson wanted clarification on time limits for signs. Mr. Small, Director of Planning, notified research was done by the staff and Town Attorney on court cases. Signs that have duration limits are in violation of free speech and the number of signs is also problematic.

The Director of Planning advised the Town can control the size of the sign and reviewed:

- Residential - allows 6' square signs, can stay out indefinitely with no limit on the number. There is no restriction on content but in the past, the Town has regulated profanity.
- Commercial - allows 8' square signs without permit and no duration.

Ms. Johnson asked if this Ordinance goes to Referendum, could the regulation be changed. Ms. Thompson, Town Attorney, notified this is a Federal and State law that protects the rights of citizens.

Chair Bianca advised more information on this Ordinance will be reviewed under New Business.

There were no further comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 1202-23 Fiscal Year 2024 Final Budget

Commissioner Hughes moved and Commissioner Etting seconded the motion that proposed Resolution No. 1202-23, providing for the adoption of a Final Budget for the Town of Bel Air for Fiscal Year 2024, be adopted by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners with the following amendments:

GENERAL FUND

1. Decreased "Real Property Taxes" by \$4,000 to balance the budget.
2. Increased "Salaries/Benefits" in the various departments for monies "stored" in the "Other" account within the Miscellaneous Department for the 5% COLA for a total of \$463,959.
3. Increased "Expenses" in the Planning Department by \$8,000 for street tree plantings.
4. Decreased "Capital Projects" in the Planning Department by \$20,000 for the M&T parking lot project.
5. Decreased "Miscellaneous Expenses" in the Miscellaneous Department by \$1,000. The \$1,000 contribution to the NAACP Harford County Branch was removed.
6. Decreased "Other" in the Miscellaneous Department by \$463,959 to transfer the monies for the 5% COLA to the applicable salary and benefit accounts in the various departments.
7. Increased "Salaries/Benefits" in the Police Department by \$4,000 for additional monies needed in the shift differential account.
8. Increased "Parks & Recreation" in the Committees Department by \$5,000 to increase their contribution.
9. It is the intention of the Board to utilize ARPA monies to pay for Town General Fund operational expenses (salaries/benefits) in the amount shown in the budget, \$2,315,000, which will then enable the Town to use those monies to pay for the various projects as outlined on page 17 in the FY2024 budget.

SEWER FUND

1. Increased "Salaries/Benefits" for the monies "stored" in the "Other" account for the 5% COLA for a total of \$11,521.
2. Decreased "Town Operation Expenses" for the monies "stored in the "Other" account by \$11,521 to transfer the monies for the 5% COLA to the applicable salary and benefits accounts.
3. It is the intention of the Board to utilize ARPA monies to pay for Town Sewer Fund operational expenses (Harford County charges for sewage treatment) in the amount shown in the budget, \$1,100,000, which will then enable the Town to use

those monies to pay for the various projects as outlined on page 17 in the FY2024 budget.

The amendments to the tentative budget were previously discussed at the May 9, 2023 budget session and are reflected in the seven-page Final Budget.

Chair Bianca thanked Ms. Moody, Department Heads and the Town Administrator for their excellent work.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

Annexation Charter Resolution No. 137-23, 221 North Tollgate Road

Commissioner Etting moved and Commissioner Chance seconded the motion that the annexation Resolution No. 137-23 incorporating parcels totaling 1.462-acres of land located on North Tollgate Road to be designated as B3, General Business zoning be received by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

The Public Hearing for Resolution No. 137-23 is scheduled on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, 5:30 p.m. at the McFaul Activities Center.

Ordinance 812-23 Amending Chapter 165. Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations, Part 3. Signs, Article XV. Sign Regulations and Part 4. Subdivision of Land, Article XVI. Subdivision and Site Development

Commissioner Hughes moved and Commissioner Etting seconded the motion that Ordinance No. 812-23, amending Article XV (Signs) and Article XVI (Subdivision of Land) be received by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

The Public Hearing for Ordinance 812-23 is scheduled on June 5, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the McFaul Activities Center.

Audit for Year Ending June 30, 2022

Commissioner Chance moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that the audit for FY 2022, ending June 30, 2022, completed by SB & Company, LLC, be accepted by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

Appointment of Town Attorney

Commissioner Etting moved and Commissioner Chance seconded the motion that pursuant to the Charter of the Town of Bel Air, Article IX, Section 902, the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners terminate Charles B. Keenan, Jr. as Town Attorney and appoint Elizabeth H. Thompson, a member of the bar of the Maryland Court of Appeals and an associate with the firm of Stark and Keenan, a Professional Association, to serve as Town Attorney, and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the retainer agreement with Stark and Keenan, a Professional Association.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

Appointment of Economic Development Director

Commissioner Chance moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion that the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Angela Robertson to the position of Director of Economic Development, pursuant to the Charter of the Town of Bel Air, Article VI, Section 602b Duties and Responsibilities of the Town Administrator, effectively immediately, be approved by the Bel Air Board of Town Commissioners.

Commissioner Chance is honored to be assigned to the Economic Community and Development Commission and advised Ms. Robertson brings to the committee what is economically happening in the Town with enthusiasm and dedication. Commissioner Chance stated, I cannot think of anyone better suited for the job.

Commissioner Etting advised we all share Commissioner Chance's comments and congratulated Ms. Robertson.

Ayes: Commissioners Chance, Etting, Hughes, and Bianca

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Kahoe

The motion carried.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Bianca notified:

- Garden Mart, Friday, May 19th, 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the Bel Air Armory.
- Your Mind Matters - Family Wellness Night, Friday, May 19th, 5:00 - 9:00 p.m., Ripken Stadium.
- Memorial Day - Monday, May 29th, Town offices will be closed.
- Memorial Day Ceremony, May 29th, at Shamrock Park, 11:00 a.m.

Commissioner Hughes advised the Harford County Historical Society will celebrate their grand reopening on Saturday, May 20th, 2:00-6:00 p.m. There will be previews of new exhibits, food trucks, and music.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Gary Williams, 2905 Ruskin Court, Abingdon, Md., CEO of TUO Records Entertainment, distributed the minutes of the March 9th Economic and Community Development Commission. Mr. Williams is researching an outdoor sports complex on Williams Street next to the Mann House. The center would be a skate bowl with spaces for pickleball, basketball, tennis and rock climbing. The surface would be hard rubber to reduce noise, the covering with solar panels to provide power, and the facility would have Bluetooth capability. The prospective name is Planet Rock.

Mr. Williams is also researching a free arcade at Harford Mall that would be incentive-based with Harford County Public School teachers controlling token distribution to incentivize the kids to achieve good grades and behave. A corporate sponsor could be solicited.

Mr. Williams contacted Ms. Robertson and reached out to Paul Thompson who is excited about the project. Mr. Thompson advised to first find the owner of the property on Williams Street.

Mr. Williams spoke with the General Manager of the Harford Mall who advised financially it would be several million dollars, a need for security, and the square footage is 4,055.

Chair Bianca thanked Mr. Williams for the update.

Fran Johnson advised the Bel Air Community Yard Sale is May 28th at the Mary Risteau Building and at several resident homes in Town.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Chance asked Ms. Robertson to report some of the upcoming activities coming to the Town.

Ms. Robertson, Director of Economic Development, notified:

- Bike to Work Week Event - Friday, May 19th, 7:00 - 8:30 a.m., 220 S. Main Street.
- Susquehanna Symphony Orchestra - performs at Bel Air High School, May 20th, 7:30 p.m.
- Music in the Park - sponsored by Bel Air Rec Council on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday's, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., Shamrock Park or Schlehr Pavilion at Rockfield. The May 24th concert will be at Shamrock Park.
- Summer Concert Series - on June 4th, Susquehanna Symphony Orchestra will perform at Shamrock Park, 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Chance stated great things are happening in Town.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

APPROVED: June 5, 2023

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

Signature on file
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk