

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting
June 17, 2024

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, June 17, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Carlos Oliveras, Robin Fisher-Cornish via ZOOM, Jonathan Kellam, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Chief Robert Kracyla, Captain Tyler Bryan, Finance Manager Melissa Cassimore, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Public Works Director James Foskey, Judge Ruffin, and Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant was absent.

Mayor Shwed conducted the Swearing-In Office Ceremony of Chief Robert Kracyla. Mayor & Council congratulated Chief Kracyla.

Mayor Shwed opened the public hearing regarding the annexation request of Preston & Arlene Conaway for the Town of Laurel to annex a certain property contiguous to the easterly town limits of the Town of Laurel (Tax Parcel No #232-12.00-68.00. With no further comments, Mayor Shwed adjourned the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of May 20, 2024, were presented for review. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of May 20, 2024. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

The Mayor & Council Public Hearing Session Minutes of June 3, 2024, were presented for review, Councilman Kellam made a motion to accept the public hearing minutes of June 3, 2024. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

The May 2024 Department Head reports were presented for review.

- Mayor Shwed stated Public Works Director Foskey is not in attendance tonight, but his report was submitted for review. Town Manager Smith stated King Street Bridge should be opened in the next couple of weeks.
- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he had no additions to his report.
- Councilman Oliveras thanked Captain Bryan for the leading the department during the vacancy of the Chief. Captain Bryan thanked everyone for the opportunity to lead.
- Alderman Report had no additions to their report.
- Finance Manager Cassimore stated she had no additions to her report. Mayor Shwed inquired why septic receiving was lower. Town Manager Smith stated upgrades are occurring at the Septic Receiving Station and haulers were not allowed to haul for approximately a week.

- Town Manager Smith stated Tidewater Park should be finished with a week. She advised this years 4th of July Celebration is moving along.

Councilman Oliveras made a motion to accept the May Department Head Reports as presented. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

Town Manager Smith presented the development updates

- Sussex Highway Property: was sold unsure of future.

Mayor Shwed presented the Belle Avenue Update. Councilman Kellam stated the Street Committee has no update due to the untimely death of Councilwoman Martin.

Mayor Shwed presented the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2024-1 pertaining Preston & Arlene Conaway, 10969 County Seat Highway, Tax Map #232-12.00-68.00. Mayor Shwed stated proposing that the town annex certain territory contiguous to the present easterly limits of the Town of Laurel owned by Preston & Arlene Conaway, located 10969 County Seat Highway, Tax Map #232-12.00-68.00 and to amend the zoning map and zoning ordinance of the Town of Laurel to include said property in an commercial business use (CB) District. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2024-1. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

- **Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish:** *stated the request came from the owner and the annexation is within the comprehensive plan short term growth area.*
- **President of Council Calio:** *concurred with colleague comments.*
- **Councilman Oliveras:** *concurred with colleague comments.*
- **Councilman Kellam:** *concurred with colleague comments.*
- **Councilman Holden:** *concurred with colleague comments.*
- **Mayor Shwed:** *concurred with colleague comments.*

Mayor Shwed presented the Approval of the FY 2025 Budget. Town Manager Smith presented the FY 2025 Budget for Mayor & Council's approval. She advised a public hearing was held on Monday, June 3, 2024, and the budget was posted at town hall for resident's review. She advised she has received no comments from residents and made a recommendation for approval from Mayor & Council. Council Holden made a motion to approve the FY 2025 Budget as presented. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2024-3 FY 2025 Fees. Town Manager Smith stated the trash fee decreased from \$33.00 to \$29.00 per resident. Councilman Kellam made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-3. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

Councilman Oliveras advised he spoke with Ms. Sherita Belle and would like consideration to set-up the Mayor & Council Meetings on the west side of the town, as a way to show residents that the Mayor & Council hear their voices and cares about their concerns. A discussion was held on this request. Mayor Shwed expressed his concerns with relocating the meeting and setting a precedent. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish commented of the diversity of the Mayor and Council and thinks the Mayor Council need to share and show that. President of Council Calio mentioned the capability of ZOOM. Councilman Kellam advised he agreed with the comments from Councilman Oliveras and Mayor Shwed. Town Manager Smith advised she will speak to the attorney, due to the fact if you start moving meetings for one person and then fail to move for others, could cause issues and set a precedent.

Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish thanked the police for their presence during the block party and how they handled themselves during the situation.

Mayor Shwed stated the 4th of July is quickly approaching and Tidewater Park is almost complete, and hopes to see residents at both.

Councilman Kellam thanked the police department for how they handled the block party.

Mr. Don D'Aquilla, commented on Councilman Oliveras suggestion and offered his place of business on Central Avenue as a place to hold meetings.

With there being no further business, Councilman Oliveras made a motion to adjourn the meeting. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

Regular Session Adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary