

**MINUTES OF THE MILLVILLE
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
June 23, 2020 (7:00 p.m.)**

In attendance were Mayor Steve Maneri, Deputy Mayor Ronald Belinko, Treasurer Sharon Brienza, Secretary Barbara Ryer, Council Member Peter Michel, Town Manager Debbie Botchie, and Town Clerk Matt Amerling.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Steve Maneri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

All Council members were present.

4. PRESENTATION: ROBIN CAPORALETTI RETIRING JUNE 30, 2020 – MAYOR MANERI, TOWN MANAGER DEBBIE BOTCHIE, CODE & BUILDING OFFICIAL ERIC EVANS

Mayor Maneri stated the Town is losing a very good employee as Town Code Enforcement and Building Administrator Robin Caporaletti is retiring. Mayor Maneri presented Ms. Caporaletti with a gift from Town Council and staff. Town Manager Debbie Botchie stated Ms. Caporaletti has been so dependable, supportive, encouraging and honest during her time here and thanked Ms. Caporaletti for all of her good will she has shown Ms. Botchie over the years and she wishes Ms. Caporaletti a great retirement. Ms. Caporaletti stated she wanted to thank everyone in attendance tonight. Ms. Caporaletti stated she has worked in Millville since 2004 and seen a lot of changes, have met a lot of really nice people and will miss everyone except for those who complain about the dumpsters. Ms. Caporaletti stated she loves her job and will miss it but she knows her replacement will do a wonderful job, bringing even more to Ms. Caporaletti's position. Ms. Pat Moulder, chairwoman of the Millville Volunteers, stated when she first moved to Millville by the Sea (MBTS), Ms. Caporaletti was working there, so they've been friends for a long time, and she has helped the Millville volunteers a lot – helping with Stockings for Soldiers and the foster child program. Ms. Moulder stated all of the volunteers want to thank Ms. Caporaletti for all she has done and want to wish her a happy retirement. Ms. Moulder presented Ms. Caporaletti with a gift from the volunteers. Treasurer Sharon Brienza stated she moved to Millville in 2016 and one of the first people Ms. Brienza met was Ms. Caporaletti, and from the first day, she has been a wonderful addition to the staff, and wants to thank Ms. Caporaletti for the great work she does and making people feel welcome.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and possible vote on Resolution 21-04. *Synopsis:* If approved, Resolution 21-04 will allow the Town Manager to hire the qualified individual that applied for the Code Enforcement & Building Administrator position.

Council all stated they are comfortable with the interview process which was held by the Code & Building office, with Ms. Botchie's inclusion, and they have no issue with the individual chosen for the position.

Ms. Brienza motioned to approve Resolution 21-04. Secretary Barbara Ryer seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

B. Discuss and possible vote on a proposal from Leonard Matarese of the Center for Public Safety Management in the amount of \$14,800.00 to conduct a review of law enforcement options for the Town of Millville. – Town Manager Debbie Botchie

Ms. Botchie stated she wants to give the public a little background with this firm as it is partners with the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA), of which Ms. Botchie is a member, and the firm comes highly recommended from some of the surrounding towns, and they are very thorough in what they do. Ms. Botchie stated the firm has chosen a professor Paul O'Connor, who would come in for a couple of days, talk to the stakeholders; speak with the Delaware State Police (DSP) on activity within our Town and surrounding areas; and he would identify options for the Town and make recommendations to Council in a final review.

Deputy Mayor Ronald Belinko stated there isn't any question that public safety is a paramount concern to all Town residents; however, Mr. Belinko stated he thinks the agreement the Town has with the DSP for police coverage, which has been increased, has been outstanding. Mr. Belinko stated if you take a look at the Town's monthly crimemapping report, there is an average of about three (3) petty crimes per month, which includes burglary, break-ins to job sites, and a couple of disorderly conducts at the (Giant Food) Town center. Mr. Belinko stated the Town can always increase the hours of police coverage as the DSP has a great relationship with the Town; and on August 3, 2020, residents will be hearing about an outreach program the DSP will have for the residents to talk about preventing garage break-ins, etc. Mr. Belinko stated at this time, the Town has not gotten the census back yet to know how much the Town is growing. Mr. Belinko stated he personally doesn't think spending close to fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) on a study on whether the Town needs a police department is worth the taxpayers' dollars at this time.

Ms. Ryer stated she thinks the DSP are doing a stellar job, they make their presence known riding around all of the neighborhoods and businesses; the few crimes in the Town are just petty, small crimes; and the Town can increase coverage if Council sees a problem. Ms. Ryer stated she knows the Town's ten (10)-year comprehensive plan suggests the Town get or look into a police department, but that is a ten-year plan and the Town is not growing enough yet. Ms. Ryer stated the census numbers could change things but Ms. Ryer thinks the Town should wait and maybe revisit this seven (7) or eight (8) years "down the road" when the Town sees how much they're built out. Ms. Ryer stated this sum for the study is a lot of money which could be put to better use on something more needed at this time. Ms. Ryer stated to have a police department has exponential costs with training, firearms, ammunition, uniforms, vehicles, and the list just goes on. Ms. Ryer stated safety is important but she does not think the cost to have a police department at this time validates fourteen-thousand-eight-hundred dollars (\$14,800.00) just to tell us the Town doesn't need a police department.

Council Member Peter Michel stated as he gets his meeting agenda packet every month, and sees the DSP crimemapping report, he notices the Town doesn't have enough major crime in Millville. Mr. Michel stated he thinks the Town should focus its monies on getting the park done and awaiting the census to see how much crime the Town may have at that point; but right now, Mr. Michel thinks the Town could use the fourteen-thousand-eight-hundred dollars (\$14,800.00) somewhere else.

Ms. Brienza stated she echoes everything her colleagues have said and she simply doesn't feel a study is warranted at this time, but maybe in eight (8) or nine (9) years it might be. Ms. Brienza stated she also knows what the cost of a police department is and if anyone wants to see their taxes go up majorly, the first way to do it is to get a police department as you're talking one-million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) plus and that's just to start. Ms. Brienza stated at this time she is not in favor of spending this almost fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) on a study, and even though it may cost more in those future years, Ms. Brienza doesn't think it is justified to do at this moment.

Mayor Maneri stated he thinks the Town should go for the study because, first, it is not going to get any cheaper, we're always going to pay more; and second, nothing is saying the Town needs a police force – the Town can still use the DSP. Mayor Maneri stated right now, the Town pays one-hundred-ninety-five-thousand dollars (\$195,000.00) for the DSP and the gets fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) back, and we have to pay for everything extra such as DSP coverage for events. Mayor Maneri stated he wanted to put this issue out there because it's not going to get any cheaper so if we pay fourteen-thousand dollars (\$14,000.00) now, down the road we'll be paying twenty-something thousand dollars.

Mayor Maneri motioned to approve the proposal from Leonard Matarese of the Center for Public Safety Management in the amount of \$14,800.00 to conduct a review of law enforcement options for the Town of Millville. Ms. Brienza seconded the motion for a formal vote. Mr. Belinko voted no. Ms. Ryer voted no. Mr. Michel voted no. Ms. Breinza voted no. Mayor Maneri voted yes for public safety and the fact there is a hospital in Town now as well an apartment complex coming and maybe senior citizen assisted living; and having a fire department which doesn't have a ladder truck. Motion denied 4-1.

Ms. Georgia Murtaugh, of White Clay Drive, stated she has the unique experience of living in a place in New York which did not have a police department but voted to get a police department. Ms. Murtaugh stated they started out with two (2) full-time officers and one (1) part-time. Ms. Murtaugh stated her taxes went from five-hundred-sixty-three dollars (\$563.00) to about sixteen-hundred dollars (\$1,600.00), and the town ended up with a full-time police chief, who started as part-time, and five (5) full-time officers, including training, equipment, insurance, and a canine. Ms. Murtaugh stated the government is great for giving you stuff but you have to keep up with the paying for it. Ms. Murtaugh stated the experience "opened up a whole big can of worms" which once you open, you can't close. Ms. Murtaugh stated she's not against law enforcement in any way but if you have a crime of someone actively breaking into your house and the DSP cannot make it in time, they will get mutual aid from Ocean View and Bethany Beach. Ms. Murtaugh stated she sees the DSP come through her community here all the time, she likes them a lot and thinks they do a great job. Ms. Murtaugh stated the costs don't end with

the initial cost and everything keeps going up and up. Ms. Murtaugh stated in regards to the fire truck, that is not a police matter and the fire company can raise money if they need such a vehicle. Ms. Murtaugh stated the Town having a police department may be needed in the future but it's not now. Ms. Murtaugh stated when it comes to taxes, you could try to freeze taxes for senior citizens, which she did in New York, but had to go up against a lot of people and laws; and Ms. Murtaugh thought the taxes should be frozen for anyone who was retired so they wouldn't have to be forced to move. Ms. Murtaugh stated it couldn't be done because a majority of the people at the time. Ms. Murtaugh stated in regards to paying for police coverage for events, the Town will have to pay extra for coverage of those events whether it's the DSP or a Town police department. Ms. Murtaugh stated taxes will only go higher and higher. Mr. Frank Vigna, of Blue Heron Drive, stated about eighty percent (80%) of taxes go toward a police department. Mayor Maneri stated this vote was simply for whether to have a study done on whether the Town may need a police department. Ms. Murtaugh stated she loves the police but doesn't think the Town needs a study done on having a police department at this time.

Ms. Maggie King, of Cedar Drive, stated she has been a resident of Town for twenty (20) years and when she moved here the population was two-hundred-ninety-two (292). Ms. King stated she thinks the Town needs someone to come in and maybe the Town doesn't need a police department right now but someone should come in to let residents know how to protect ourselves. Mr. Belinko stated yes, on August 3, 2020, the DSP will be in to educate people on how to protect themselves and Mr. Belinko is confident that if the Town needed its own police force, the DSP would let Council know, and, at this time, to spend nearly fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) to get some company to tell us we don't need a police department just doesn't make sense.

Ms. Karl Beers, of White Clay Drive, stated he has spent nearly his whole life in public service as he was a Baltimore City police officer, and he is glad to see Council has voted this down. Mr. Beers stated he knows the cost of the study is only fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) now and it may cost more later, but the data collected now would be invalid after so many years. Mr. Beers stated they would have to come in again and update all the information, so if the Town paid the fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) now but waited years to have a police department come to Town, the high cost Mayor Maneri mentioned would still have to be paid too, and it would be "money spent for no good reason." Mr. Beers stated the term "public safety" is a little deceiving for those of us who are concerned about the crime problem we have in Millville as there are tons of studies which have been done, and – as an insider – Mr. Beers can say the police don't protect you against crime; the police record crime and they investigate crime. Mr. Beers stated he can count on one hand and have fingers left over when he was able to intervene and save someone from a crime being committed, so it just doesn't happen. Mr. Beers stated we all need to be our own first responders when it comes to crime prevention. Mr. Beers stated he agrees with everything said from Ms. Murtaugh, and "once you open that Pandora's Box," it's going to be an increase of salaries, they will try to unionize, try to get binding arbitration, all kinds of stuff for little, old Millville, and we don't need it.

4. CITIZENS' PRIVILEGE

Ms. Rita Reinhart, of Whiteclay Drive, asked how many DSP officers the Town has. Ms. Botchie stated the Town contracts the DSP forty (40) hours per week and they come and patrol

all different hours of the day and night.

5. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING – TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2020

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Belinko motioned to adjourn at 7:27 p.m. Ms. Brienza seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Amerling, Town Clerk