

MINUTES

COSM

Commissioners

COSM Executive Closed Session and Special Session

Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Edgar M. Bosley Jr. Municipal Admin. Building

I.. 5:00 - Call to Order for Closed Executive Session

On January 10th, the Commissioners agreed to hold a closed session at 5:00 pm prior to the open special session.

President Boos called to order a Closed Session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 5:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland. Also present were Commissioners Joyce Harrod, Jaime Windon, Michael Bibb, and Roy Myers. President Boos called for a motion to move into closed session. Commissioner Myers made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Bibb, and which then passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor. The session was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

II. 6:00 - Call to Order for Special Session - Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioners will convene into Open Session

President Boos called to order a Special Working Session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland.

Also present were Commissioners Joyce Harrod, Roy Myers, Jaime Windon, and Michael Bibb, Town Manager Jean Weisman, Police Chief Anthony Smith, Legislative Clerk Suzanna Warnick, and 12 members of the public.

III. Agenda Amendments

There were no changes to the agenda.

IV. Announcement of Prior Closed Session

The Commissioners met in closed session today at 5:00 pm pursuant to Maryland Code, under the Open Meetings Act, General Provisions Article Section 3-305 to discuss personnel matters and Town owned real estate.

V. Comments from the Public

President Boos invited public comment. Tad Du Pont of Locust Street said he was offended by public comment at beginning of meeting, and not allowing the residents and citizens to participate during the meeting, it severely limits public participation. Mr. Du Pont said he was opposed to spending more taxpayers' money on a new police station, and said he believed that the current building should be upgraded. Mr. Du Pont also said the Town's trash collection should be outsourced. Regarding the budget, Mr. DuPont urged the Commissioners to direct all departments to come forward with a 10% cut in their departmental budgets. Doug Rollow of Water Street said he supported Mr. DuPont's comments, but said he had no comment on the police station because he did not have enough information about it. Mr. Rollow said it was important to involve the public more in the conversations about issues so they could lend expertise. Mr. Rollow said his primary comment concerned the Town's outdated zoning code and urged the Commissioners to make its revision a priority. President Boos noted that the bids for the revision of the Zoning Code had all been received and are under consideration. Ann Borders of Cherry Street also expressed her opposition to public comment being just at the beginning of the meetings. She suggested that comment should also be allowed during or at the end of the meeting so residents could hear Commissioners' discussion. Ms. Borders said she opposed a new police station because it was new in 2005 and the department has received equipment and compensation regularly upon request since then. Ms. Borders also asked for an update on the hacking of the Town's web page. Mrs. Weisman said the Town's IT person would be looking into that issue tomorrow. Marion Brown of Water Street supported the comments of previous speakers regarding public comment and also said she opposed buying additional property for a new Town office, and suggested that the Town office should be moved back into a renovated 109 South Talbot Street in the center of town. Ms. Brown noted that a new police station is unnecessary since there was Central Booking in Easton now. Carol Parlette of South Talbot Street asked if there would be tax implications for full time residents if a new police station is built. President Boos said probably yes if the decision was made to go forward with the project. Walda Brandt of Mulberry Street said she supported allowing public comments at the end of the meeting to facilitate the flow of information. Mike Estrella of Chew Avenue said public comment should be allowed where it is appropriate and allowing some people to talk and not others is

not appropriate. President Boos agreed that the meeting rules should be reviewed to possibly restructure the public comment procedure.

VI. Items for Discussion

- **New Police Building**

President Boos opened the Commissioners' discussion and called upon Commissioner Bibb, who provided background on the police station issue. Commissioner Bibb suggested that the true cost of building a new building was needed to know to make an informed decision on whether to move forward. Commissioner Bibb also said that policing has changed dramatically in the last two years and equipment and safety has to be upgraded to protect citizens and officers. Commissioner Harrod supported Commissioner Bibb's comments, noting that the Town must keep up with changing times. Commissioner Myers outlined his concerns about raising taxes with some background on tax increases and employee costs for 24 people. Commissioner Myers said he felt recent safety improvements and equipment upgrades for the police department were a step forward and more could be done, but he did not support a new police building. Commissioner Myers said he supported the employees as the priority and not the buildings. Commissioner Windon said she supported all comments, especially investment in people, and was not in favor of new buildings. President Boos discussed working toward a 0 based budget, with emphasis on investment in people. President Boos said he was anti-taxes and pro-police, but did not favor building a new police station.

- **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

President Boos called for any additional public comment. Ann Borders said she was pleased that the Commissioners appeared to be putting the people ahead of buildings. Mr. Rollow praised the extraordinary job of the police department and commended the idea that the public possibly could have comment time at the beginning and at the end of the meeting. Mr. DuPont said he agreed with the 0-based budgeting concept and praised Chief Smith for his work with young people. Mrs. Parlette thanked the Commissioners for addressing the tax issue. President Boos thanked Commissioner Bibb for addressing the issue of police safety. Commissioner Bibb said there are other things to do to fix outstanding safety issues in the police station that need addressing. Commissioner Myers thanked Chief Smith for his good work and said the Town needed to set priorities. President Boos said the next steps to improve safety at the police station were moving the door, ADA compliance, and working out the separation of the juvenile and adult prisoners. Chief Smith stressed the importance of ADA compliance and that only half the arrestees are sent to central booking, and while it is helpful, it is not a panacea.

After some additional discussion, the Commissioners agreed that they wanted to move forward with ADA compliance and juvenile cells in a possible addition. Commissioner Windon said she would like to see the police station committee come back with a plan for an addition that solved those problems, plus provided meeting room space. The Commissioners then thanked everyone for their participation.

VII. Announcement of Future Meetings

February 14 2018 - 6:00 pm - Town Office - COSM Regular Working and Legislative Session

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Public Handouts:

Agenda