



Town of Wyoming
Council Meeting Minutes
Wyoming Municipal Building

October 23, 2019, 5:30 P.M.

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Rife called the Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mayor Rife

MOMENT OF SILENCE – Mayor Rife

ROLL CALL

Council attending: Mayor, Frankie Dale Rife; Vice-Mayor, Doug Denison; Treasurer, Kyle Dixon; and Council Person Carlen Kenley.

Council absent: None

Staff attending: Chief Martin Willey and Laura Connor, Office Manager

Audience attending: Jeff Gravatt, Elaine Bilow, Tracy Johovic, Randy Richardson, Donna Mason, Seth Greenberg, Erin Greenberg, Mike Marasco, Cheryl Kenley

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Mr. Marasco stated that he likes the interest in the open position and wished everyone Good Luck

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Denison moved with a second by Mr. Dixon to adopt the agenda as published. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Kenley, Aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- Council Opening Nominations

- Steven Bilbrough
- Tracy Johovic

Note: Letters of interest, Affidavits, and nominations from Council members from both candidates were presented to all members of Council.

Tracy Johovic addressed the Council and read her letter of interest that described her background and her desire to be appointed.

Laura Connor received a letter provided from Steven Bilbrough earlier in the day. She read the letter to Council and audience that addressed his absence and desire to be appointed.

Laura Connor read Chapter 11 of the Wyoming Town Charter that references Filling Vacancies.

Mr. Denison moved and was seconded by Mr. Kenley to accept the nominations of Steven Bilbrough and Tracy Johovic as presented. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Kenley, Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

A vote by raised hand was taken for each nomination.

Mr. Denison and Mr. Dixon voted for Steven Bilbrough

Mayor Rife and Mr. Kenley voted for Tracy Johovic

According to the Town Charter, “in the event of a tie vote, the tie shall be decided by the toss of a coin.” Laura Connor provided a coin (quarter) and verified heads and tails with all members of Council. Mr. Denison suggested that heads represents Steven and tails represents Tracy. All were in agreement.

Laura Connor flipped the coin which landed on the floor in front of Council. She asked Mr. Marasco to verify the result prior to picking it up. Mr. Marasco stated that the result was tails.

Mr. Denison stated that it was great to have two (2) qualified candidates interested in filling the vacancy. Mayor Rife stated that either candidate was a good choice.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Kenley addressed Erin Greenberg and stated that he appreciates being “tagged” on an article printed in April 2010 titled “Frustrated mayor resigns over decision regarding town police chief. Erin stated that this was very bizarre behavior to be documented in an open meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Tracy Johovic thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on Council.

Mr. Denison moved and was seconded by Mr. Kenley to adjourned meeting at 5:54 p.m. Mayor Rife, Mr. Denison, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Kenley, Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned.

Laura Connor
Office Manager

DOVER POST

Frustrated mayor resigns over decision regarding town police chief

By Doug Denison, Staff Writer

Posted Apr 7, 2010 at 12:01 AM

Updated Apr 7, 2010 at 7:01 AM

Town of Wyoming Mayor Mike Marasco resigned April 5 in the wake of a scandal involving the town's police chief.

Town of Wyoming Mayor Mike Marasco resigned April 5 in the wake of a scandal involving the town's police chief.

In a statement read to the town council and the public at council's regular monthly meeting, Marasco said he was fed up with what he characterized as a pattern of improper and underhanded decision making on the part of town officials.

"I've had a difficult and frustrating time dealing with some of the decisions of our police department and some members of council," he said.

Marasco said he and his family soon would be moving out of town.

Although he indicated his grievances with other council members go back some time, Marasco said the incident that tipped him toward resignation occurred recently.

In March, the council voted not to fire police Chief Charles Manuszak after it was determined in a due-process legal proceeding that he lied to town officials and other police agencies about investigating a citizen's complaint.

In June 2009, Wyoming resident Paula King filed an official complaint regarding a town police officer after she witnessed a domestic violence arrest in her neighborhood.

Manuszak allegedly assured her that her complaint had been referred, as proper procedure dictates, to an outside law enforcement agency for investigation, namely the Camden Police Department.

However, after suspicion arose as to whether Manuszak ever contacted Camden authorities, the town council called on the internal investigation unit of the Dover Police Department to investigate the chief's handling of the complaint.

After the Dover investigation, council scheduled a due-process hearing to determine if Manuszak should be terminated, as required by Delaware law.

10
YEARS

In that hearing, evidence was presented proving Manuszak never took King's complaint to Camden Police, and that the chief lied about it when interviewed by Dover's investigator.

Despite the seriousness of the findings, the council voted 3-1 to place Manuszak on probation for one year, with the option to dismiss him immediately if he did anything during that period the council deemed improper.

Town Treasurer Georgette Williams, Vice Mayor Harold "Butch" Arnold and Councilman William Spruill voted for probation. Councilman Terry Witt voted against it.

Marasco testified as a witness and therefore could not vote on Manuszak's punishment with the rest of the council.

In a letter to Marasco after the hearing, town solicitor J. Terence Jaywork said the chief's conduct more than justified his termination.

"I must tell you that all of the individuals involved in the field of law enforcement that I spoke to in connection with this case felt that this was a very serious offense and that dismissal or removal from office was the most appropriate sanction," he wrote.

At the April 5 meeting, before Marasco announced his resignation, he read into the record the council's official ruling on Manuszak's punishment as well as Jaywork's letter.

Immediately after, Williams moved that Marasco's reading be stricken from the record, a move approved by all but Witt.

The issue was dead, Williams said, and the records are available to anyone who wants to review them.

But some in the audience had never heard all the details of the hearing and apparently were appalled at the council's decision to keep the chief.

"Why just a slap on the wrist? His integrity has been called into question," said resident Elaine Bilow.

After the meeting, Manuszak would not comment on why he lied about his handling of the complaint and had little to say about how this affair might affect the public's trust in his department.

"It's as serious as people want to perceive it to be," he said. "Nobody knows every little thing about this."

Marasco said this was just one episode in a series of bitter disagreements between him and other members of council, including fights over election rules, a scathing 2008 state audit of the town, and recent allegations that Williams hand-delivered absentee ballots to voters on election day even though she was a candidate.

"It's the totally unethical and immoral decisions that were made," Marasco said after the meeting. "I can't live my life and deal with those people on a professional basis."

To fill Marasco's seat, the council will accept applications from interested parties and appoint someone to the vacant position.

Then, the council will vote to designate a new mayor until the next town election, scheduled for February 2011.

For the time being, Arnold will serve as the town's executive.

Email Doug Denison at doug.denison@doverpost.com.