

**City of Harrington
MINUTES
City Council Workshop
August 3, 2015**

A workshop with the Harrington City Council was held at Harrington City Hall, 106 Dorman Street, on August 3, 2015 and was attended by the following: Mayor Anthony R. Moyer; Vice Mayor Duane E. Bivans; Council Member Fonda Coleman; Council Member Eric Marquis; Council Member Charles W. Porter; Council Member Kenneth W. Stubbs; Norman Barlow, Chief of Police; William Pepper, City Solicitor; Teresa Tieman, City Manager; and Kelly Blanchies, Clerk of Council.

Also present: Barbara Bullock; Jennifer Antonik; and William Brode.

Council Member Amy Minner was absent.

Mayor Moyer called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.

Discussion of the Public Comments section of the agenda

Council Member Porter stated that most people do not know what they want to comment on until the end of the meeting, so the public comments at the beginning of the meeting should be deleted.

Council Member Marquis stated that what he has heard from the public is that Public Comments do not mean anything. Council Member Marquis stated that the Attorney General's Office wrote an opinion that open meetings and answering citizen questions is encouraged. There are more options than just stating that the Freedom of Information Act prohibits discussing the public's comments.

Council Member Coleman stated that the policy that has been in place is that questions and concerns should be addressed to the Chief of Police or City Manager, and if the person is not satisfied with the response, then they can ask to be put on the agenda for a City Council meeting. Mayor Moyer stated that issues would then have to wait for a meeting. The City Solicitor stated that agendas can be amended for issues that arise unexpectedly up to six hours prior to a meeting.

Council Member Porter stated that the public comment policy also protects the City Council from discussing or acting on issues without all the information. The City Solicitor stated that the Chief of Police or City Manager may be able to solve the problem without taking it to City Council.

Vice Mayor Bivans stated that it is confusing that some public comments are responded to and some people are told that the City Council cannot respond.

The City Solicitor stated that the City of Dover has an open forum fifteen minutes prior to the start of the meeting. Discussion occurred regarding an open forum.

The City Solicitor stated that the City of Harrington gives more opportunity for public input than any other municipality that he is aware of.

Mayor Moyer stated that he would like to try the open forum.

Council Member Marquis stated that the problem is that the City does not respond to comments. The City Manager stated that in Dover the Clerk is directed to take down the citizen's contact information and respond to them. Vice Mayor Bivans stated that the City Council should be notified that the comment was addressed as well.

Vice Mayor Bivans stated that two minutes is not enough time for someone to speak during Public Comments.

Council Member Coleman stated that often people want figures and specific information, which cannot be provided without research.

Update on railroad station

The City Manager stated that she would like to send a letter to the president of the railroad to attempt to get the buildings repaired, and if that does not work, then contact Delaware's Senators and Representative for help.

Mayor and Council term limit survey

Mayor Moyer stated that he would like to have a survey at the same time as the referendum on term limits. He would like two terms for Mayor and three terms for Council Members.

Council Member Porter asked how term limits would apply to sitting council members. Mayor Moyer stated that they would not be retroactive and would start once adopted.

Council Member Coleman stated that the voters can vote a person out of office if they are unhappy with their performance.

Council Member Stubbs stated that there can be a lack of interest in filling positions. Mayor Moyer stated that there can be a caveat that if no one else is running than the sitting council member can stay in the position.

Council Member Coleman stated that she would like to see how the survey question will be worded.

The City Solicitor stated that the wording in the Charter allows for the council members to serve until the successor is elected and installed. Vice Mayor Bivans asked how a council member that has reached their term limit could meet the filing deadline. The City Solicitor stated that person would not be running for election and would not need to file as a candidate.

Public Comments

Barbara Bullock stated that their usually is not follow up from public comments and that the open forum is a good idea.

City Council Comments

Council Member Porter stated that budget hearings are vital to know where the City's funds are allotted to. Income from water and sewer stay in those funds.

Vice Mayor Bivans asked about scheduling another town hall meeting for the referendum to refinance debt.

Vice Mayor Bivans stated that the open forum may encourage more people to attend meetings and comment.

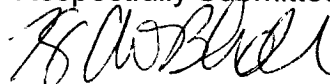
Council Member Coleman stated that she received a request to hold some meetings during the day for people that work at night. The City Solicitor suggested that a meeting can be scheduled with the City Manager for anyone seeking information.

Council Member Coleman asked if there will be any discussion on Connections. The City Solicitor stated that the zoning is appropriate; it will not be discussed at a City Council meeting.

Vice Mayor Bivans stated that he would like an update on reconfiguring the City Council chambers.

There being no further business, the City Council Workshop adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kelly Blanchies
Clerk of Council