The Board of Commissioners met in a WORK SESSION MEETING with Mayor Orndorf presiding. Members present: Hewitt, Sooy, Romanik. Absent: McQuade. City Solicitor, Brock Russell was also present.

Salute to the Flag

The Salute to the Flag was led by Mayor Orndorf.

Open Public Meeting Statement by City Clerk

"This meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975 and was advertised, posted and made available to the public as required by Statute. The Municipal Clerk is directed to include a statement in the minutes of this meeting."

Presentations

Courtenay Reece, Director of the Millville Public Library, addressed the Board of Commissioners and stated the Millville Public Library provides the governing body with an Annual Report each year in order to keep them informed of how they spend the monies the Board of Commissioners allocates to the Millville Public Library each year and advised them that the library is very grateful for their support.

Ms. Reece reported that the Millville Public Library’s mission is to improve the quality of life through the 5 Literacies, which is the traditional reading and writing literacy, technology literacy that includes computer classes, provide computers for residents and Wi-Fi, which is available 24/7. In addition, the Millville Public Library provides Civics Literacy and advised that in 2021 the Millville Public Library became a polling location for the City of Millville.

Ms. Reece further advised the Millville Public Library also provides Health Literacy and indicated that last year they distributed nutrition kits to families which consist of snacks and information of why they are nutritious and also advised the library also provides Financial Literacy for example today they received information from the Federal Government regarding the many scams targeted towards seniors and will ensure that information is provided to the Millville Public Library’s patrons.

Ms. Reece stated that as the Millville Public Library gets closer to completing the renovations and expansion of the library and explained that is the change that the residents of Millville wanted as referenced in the Strategic Plan, she provided to each of the members of the governing body.

Ms. Reece reported that the library is waiting for the completion of the Dedicated Teen Center where the teens can socialize and she also is waiting for the completion of the Millville Public Library’s Gant Room, which will be the library’s main autonomous meeting room to accommodate organizations who need a meeting room after the library’s hours and they will be able to access the room by entering a code.

Ethan Aronoff, President of the Millville Public Library, addressed the Board of Commissioners and expressed his appreciation for the City of Millville’s continued financial and maintenance support to the Millville Public Library over the years, especially the past 10 years in helping in modernizing and expanding the library building.

Ethan Aronoff reported that the library received matching funds from the State of NJ in the amount of $3.2 million dollars, which was a part of the 2017 referendum that supported a library construction referendum bill.

Ethan Aronoff stated that he is grateful for the Millville Public Library Trustee members, who are all volunteers and great individuals and also expressed his sincere appreciation to Library Director Courtenay Reece, who believes she is the best library director that he has worked with since 1958.

Ethan Aronoff concluded that he is grateful for the newly elected governing body and extended his sincere congratulations to them all and anticipates working together with them the next four years, if not more.
Commissioner Sooy thanked Mr. Aronoff and stated that it is great to be working with him again and is sure he will have the governing body's continued support.

Mayor Orndorf thanked Courtenay Reece and Ethan Aronoff for their comments and Commissioner Romanik advised them that he and the rest of the governing body will always be available to the library and to invest in the City's resources noting the Millville Public Library is a great resource for the City of Millville.

Commissioner Romanik made a motion to receive and file the Millville Public Library's 2021 Annual Report, which was seconded by Vice-Mayor Sooy. The motion was carried, by the following vote: Yeas: Hewitt, Sooy, Romanik and Orndorf.

Public Comment

Chairperson Orndorf declared the public comment portion open and asked if any person present wished to be heard.

Angeline Broomhall addressed the Board of Commissioners and questioned the Ordinance on first reading amending the salary ordinance to add the Municipal Attorney title and stated the Municipal Attorney was awarded a professional service contract for the year, noting that all past Municipal Attorney's have been hired via professional service contract and does not understand why a new title is being created for Municipal Attorney.

Angeline Broomhall inquired if the Municipal Attorney title includes pension or other benefits noting that there is no minimum salary and assumes the maximum salary is the same that is indicated in the professional service contract that was awarded.

Angeline Broomhall asked what happens to the title when a new commission is elected and inquired what happens with the existing professional service contract for the Municipal Attorney when the in-house position is created and questioned if the other fees included in the professional service contract such as postage, paralegal and other things that are included in the professional service contract are included in the salary of the in-house position.

Vice-Mayor Sooy responded that the salary of the Municipal Attorney title is the same as the professional service contract, which is the minimum and maximum and it does not include pension and explained that under the Municipal Attorney's professional service contract he is presently being paid $125.00 an hour for extra litigation, which can result in tens of thousands of dollars, but as an in-house attorney the city would no longer have to pay those attorney fees. The Municipal Attorney will also be dedicated to the city full-time and he will have no outside clients, which is a huge advantage.

Vice-Mayor Sooy advised that the city will be hiring a part-time paralegal temporarily and will modify one of the clerk titles in the near future to include the paralegal work, therefore it won't be an additional position.

A debate took place between Vice-Mayor Sooy and Angeline Broomhall on whether the modified clerk position is considered an additional position.

Angeline Broomhall concluded that she is opposed to the Municipal Attorney being an in-house position and does not agree with creating two brand new position, indicating the paralegal is a brand-new position regardless of if they are adding the responsibility to a clerk title and is going to cost the city more money.

Angeline Broomhall clarified that she absolutely understands the need for the temporary paralegal position and is not opposed to Mr. Russell serving as the City Solicitor and believes he is a fabulous choice, but her opposition is taking a professional service contract position and create an in-house title, because she believes it will cost the city more in the future.

Timothy Carty stated that he does not oppose the temporary paralegal position, but he is against adding paralegal responsibilities to a current clerk employee.
Vice-Mayor Sooy stated that currently there are vacancies created by employees leaving due to retirements, etc. and anticipates an employee transferring to another department and when that happens that position will be replaced with an employee with paralegal experience.

Timothy Carty expressed his concern with an employee taking on paralegal responsibilities that are not certified or have experience.

Vice-Mayor Sooy assured Mr. Carty that he would not hire someone that does not have paralegal experience.

Mr. Carty asked if the city will be hiring an individual that has a certification with Vice-Mayor Sooy confirming that is correct.

Further discussion took place between Mr. Carty and Vice-Mayor Sooy regarding the job description set by the Civil Service Commission, salary for the paralegal and pros and cons of hiring an in-house Municipal Attorney and long-term costs.

Mr. Carty asked the governing body to table the ordinance until the public is provided a cost analysis of hiring an in-house Municipal Attorney and reminded the governing body of their promise to be transparent.

Vice-Mayor Sooy stated he will provide Mr. Carty with the cost analysis but is going to move forward with approving the ordinance this evening.

There being no further comments Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment portion closed and asked for comments by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Hewitt extended his sincere condolences on behalf of himself and the governing body to Commissioner McQuade for the recent passing of his mother and father.

Vice-Mayor Sooy stated he has met with ACUA regarding complaints about delays in trash pickup over the past two weeks and stated that ACUA indicated it is due to staffing issues and the snowstorm. They discussed a possible solution where Millville employees would use city trash vehicles before and after work and Saturdays when feasible, so it does not interfere with the city’s normal day-to-day operations and pay the employees a rate agreed upon in negotiations and deduct that cost that the city pays the ACUA.

Vice-Mayor Sooy concluded by referring to an email he received today concerning invocations at the Commission Meetings and stated that he personally feels they can use all the help they can get and would not be for abandoning invocations at the Commission Meetings.

Mayor Orndorf extended her sincere condolences to Commissioner McQuade and his family and stated that her heart breaks for them and cannot fathom losing both of her parents within a week.

Mayor Orndorf also addressed the email received regarding invocations being held at the Commission Meeting and concurred with Mr. Sooy that they need all the help they can get, and cited the Supreme Court Ruling on May 5, 2014 that they have the right to have a prayer delivered before open public meetings.

Mayor Orndorf thanked everyone for attending the Work Session this evening and addressed Mr. Carty’s comment regarding transparency, reminding him that herself, Commissioner Romanik and Commissioner Hewitt are new, and they want to be transparent, which is why they are having work sessions. She encouraged everyone to continue to attend the meetings and express their concerns.

Adjournment

There being no further comments the meeting was adjourned subject to the call of the chair. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne M. Parkinson, RMC
City Clerk