

# TOWN OF BLADES

*Office of the Mayor and Council*  
20 West Fourth Street  
Blades, Delaware 19973

Council Minutes  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Mayor David Ruff opened the Public Hearing from the State of Delaware Housing Authority on the Community Development Block Grant at 7:04pm with the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill Lecates presented the public with the information on the CDBG Fiscal Year 2009. Mr. Lecates explained the amount of funds available and the list of applicants on the waiting list. Also, Mr. Lecates stated that the Town will be applying for funds for the storm water drainage project.

Motion to adjourn the public hearing made at 7:17pm by Councilman Joseph, seconded by Councilman Smith; motion carried.

Present: Mayor David Ruff, Councilman Russell Joseph, Councilman BJ Hardin, Councilman Earl Chaffinch, Councilman Mike Smith, Councilman Charles Green, and Vikki Prettyman, Town Administrator

Also present was Chief Cooke.

Mayor Ruff called the council meeting to order at 7:17pm.

Approval of the November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 minutes, motioned to accept by Councilman Joseph, seconded by Councilman Greene, motion carried.

Police Report: Chief Cooke read the Police Report.

Chief Cooke presented Council and Citizens with a list of accomplishments since he was hired. He stated the following: He recruited qualified officers into the department who successfully graduated from the police academy. He completed an internal affairs investigation for an officer that was with the department when the Chief was hired. Seaford dispatch concluded and now the dispatch is all handled by Sussex County Emergency Operation Management. Blades Police Department did not have their own communications channel and now have a private channel in which to communicate effectively. Two fully equipped state of the art police cars and are very attractive. Blades Police Department has met all accreditations. The department is able to write E-Tickets and generate electronic version of accident reports. All guns and shot guns have been upgraded and have night sights. Blades meets the state requirements for accreditation and is one of only 17 cities and towns in the state for national guard certification. The department was given a financial award for meeting all accreditations. The Chief was asked to go after all the grants available to the town from the state. The Chief has received over \$50,000.00 in grants not counting the Sussex County grants. The town has had three successful Blades Night Outs; giving out t-shirts and hats with no expense to the town. The drug problems in the town that were

difficult to bust was completed after training the officers and for the first time in town's history able to send money to SLEAF.

The Mayor asked the Chief what SALT meant. The Chief responded Seniors and Law Enforcement Together. A combination of area law enforcement to ensure that the area seniors were taken care of and had heat and utilities on for their safety and security. The attendance had dropped over the years but the chiefs in Delaware wanted to bring this back.

Councilman Chaffinch motioned to accept the police report, seconded by Councilman Hardin, motion carried.

BEDCO: Councilman Hardin read the minutes for the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meeting.

Planning & Zoning: Councilman Hardin stated that the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 was cancelled due to no activity for the commission to discuss.

Unfinished Business:

- 1) Code Officer Report, No report submitted. Councilman Hardin commented on issues he was aware of. The code officer went to the Fire Company to obtain several smoke detectors and was told that the Company no longer offered them for rental units. The Mayor stated that this was incorrect and the Company has smoke detectors and Bill will be able to obtain them. Brief description of a property in town that the code officer and Town Administrator are currently working on getting cleaned up.
- 2) Housing Report, Submitted and read by Councilman Hardin
- 3) Water Report, Submitted by Brandon Slater, read by Councilman Greene
- 4) Streets Report, Submitted and read by Councilman Joseph
  - i. Councilman Mike Smith congratulated Councilman Joseph on good negotiating on the 2008 GMC pick-up.
- 5) Parks/Cemetery, Submitted and read by Michael Smith
  - i. Councilman Smith stated to Council that SCAT wishes for him to be the second vice president for SCAT. Council has no objections. The Mayor asked for a letter to SCAT to be drafted to state such.
- 6) Police Report, Submitted by Chief Cooke, read by Chief Cooke
  - i. Chief Cooke stated that the Town will be giving an offer of conditional employment to an officer and will have more information by the next council meeting.
- 7) Mayor Report, Read by David Ruff
  - i. The council has been very productive with the budget and public works agreements and several personnel workshops.
  - ii. Attended the dinner for the outgoing Sussex County Councilman. Presented Dale Dukes with a plaque stating the town's appreciation for his help and concern with the town.
  - iii. The town would like to thank Joe McCabe for the Christmas Party for the Kids. He did a great job and 70 children enjoyed the party. The town feels very fortunate to have received the donations from the local companies and businesses to have the party.

- iv. The town needs volunteers to judge the Christmas Lights throughout the town.
- v. The Mayor thanked Council for attending all the meetings.

Chief Cooke stated that Officer Benson, if successful with all testing, will be given an offer of conditional employment by the Town of Delmar.

Councilman Joseph wishes to thank the Town Administrator for the Town Administrators report and encourages all Councilmen to read it. It is very informative.

All reports were approved and are on file at the Blades Town Hall.

#### New Business:

The Mayor entertains a motion to accept the CDBG resolution endorsing project to be submitted to the Delaware State Housing Authority for funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development authorizing David B Baker, Sussex County Administrator, to submit application. Councilman Hardin motioned to accept, seconded by Councilman Greene; motion carried.

Councilman Hardin motioned to accept the resolution recognizing the importance of fair housing for the citizens of Blades, seconded by Councilman Smith; motion carried.

Mayor Ruff read the budget per department. Mayor Ruff stated that the budget doesn't reflect any property tax increases, but does include an increase in the fees for the business licenses and rental licenses. The budget reflects income from grants for the park and the police. Also, increase in salaries for paid employees and back taxes owed to the town.

Councilman Joseph motioned to accept the 2009 Budget, seconded by Councilman Smith; motion carried.

The third and final reading of Ordinance 427; the purpose is to require the clear display of the proper assigned house or building numbers. It is to assist emergency services and the general public identifying any property in the case of an emergency and will support the enhanced 911 systems. Councilman Hardin motioned to accept the ordinance as written, seconded by Councilman Greene. Ordinance passed and adopted on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Mayor Ruff stated that Merrill Lynch was bought by Bank of America. The representatives for Merrill Lynch are no longer with them and have moved to Morgan Stanley. The council met with the representatives and Morgan Stanley has offered, if the town so moves to transfer the accounts to them, to waive all first year and transfer fees. The Mayor advises Council to transfer the funds to Morgan Stanley. Motion to move the funds from Merrill Lynch to Morgan Stanley made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Hardin; motion carried.

Councilman Smith presented council with a change in the language for section 21.0 of the personnel policy. Councilman Smith believes this will clarify the amendment procedures. Motion to accept the amendment changing the language and the way amendments are made to the personnel policy, Councilman Chaffinch seconded the motion; the amendment will be effective 14 days from today's date, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, and Council will sign the amendment at the January meeting; motion carried.

Council discussed the possibility of changing the police schedule from 8 hour shifts to 12 hour shifts. It was stated that if the manpower is there then the 12 hour shifts wouldn't be an issue. Councilman Hardin asked the Chief about Officer Benson. Council was under that understanding that Officer Benson was staying due to the promotion. Chief stated that Officer Benson has continued the process with Delmar and if given the conditional offer of employment he will be leaving the Town. Councilman Smith stated that no overtime should be built in and that the 12 hour shifts is a good recruitment benefit. Council will hear and consider the change at the January meeting.

Councilman Joseph brought to council a quote to line the truck bed with Linex. Council wishes to have more quotes. Councilman Joseph will present to Council at the January meeting. Donald Trice suggested Diamond State Auto and that the owner will be available for quoting the job after the first of the year.

The Town Administrator brought to Council requesting the Town Hall be closed on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Motion made by Councilman Joseph to give the employees the day after Christmas off, seconded by Councilman Greene; motion carried. This is a regular day off and no holiday pay will be given if this day is worked.

Good of the Community:

Donald Trice congratulated council in considering the 12 hour shifts for the police department.

Chief Cooke asked council when will they sit down with him and discuss his contract. That he was unable to make arrangements if Council wishes not to renew. Chief stated that if Council wishes not to renew that they would have to give him 60 days notice, not that the town needs to wait till then to talk. The Mayor stated that in January the town will set up workshops to discuss and will get back with him.

With no further comments, Councilman Hardin motions to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm, seconded by Councilman Smith; motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vikki Prettyman  
Secretary and Town Administrator