

WORK SESSION – November 6, 2023

The Mayor and City Council met with the Washington County Delegation at Hagerstown Community College, 11400 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland on Tuesday, November 6, 2023. The meeting started at 1:30 p.m.

The following people were present: Mayor Tekesha A. Martinez, Councilmember Kristin B. Aleshire, Councilmember Shelley McIntire, Councilmember Matthew J. Schindler, Scott Nicewarner, City Administrator, Wes Decker, Communications Manager, Eric Deike, Director of Public Works, Police Chief Joey Kifer, Ashley Roush, Community Programs Manager, Paul Fulk, Neighborhood Services Manager, Janet Lung, Executive Assistant, Brittany Arizmendi, Community Engagement Officer, Kathleen Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration, Fire Chief Steven Lohr, Nancy Hausrath, Director of Utilities, Don Francis, Director of Human Resources, Jill Thompson, Director of Community and Economic Development, Senator Michael McKay, Senator Paul Corderman, Delegate William Wivell, Delegate Brooke Grossman, Delegate Terry Baker, Delegate William Valentine, and City Clerk Donna K. Spickler.

Mayor Martinez thanked the Delegation for their work and for scheduling this meeting. She stated the City is requesting the Delegation's support on the following items:

1. Continued support of the Hagerstown Field House. An additional \$ 3 million to \$ 4 million in State funding would be beneficial. The City is also seeking other funding.
2. Tax Abatement
3. Water management
4. Sober House certification
5. Regulation of property management companies
6. Rent stabilization – to protect renters from misused deposits and fees and drastic increases in rent

Councilmember Aleshire pointed out there are thousands of people on the Hagerstown Housing Authority's (HHA) housing waiting lists. This is significantly more than other municipalities in Washington County. Many residents are living in hotels on a long term basis, with no lease or any agreement. They can be evicted at any time. People should not be living in some of the existing conditions at some hotels. The majority of rental property owners do not live in Hagerstown and use property management companies. A potential renter should be able to be confident the management company is reputable.

Delegate Grossman is aware at least two companies charge an application fee for every apartment someone wants to see. If rents are doubled or tripled, it will be impossible for some people to afford housing.

Councilmember Schindler noted there is no benefit for a sober house to apply for certification. Brooke's House is a great organization but it is not certified. There are no checks and balances for these facilities, which is causing recidivism issues.

Senator Corderman stated being certified doesn't address substandard conditions. He asked who provides oversight of the facilities. Councilmember McIntire stated one of the biggest problems is that an unreputable sober house hinders someone who is actively seeking treatment.

Councilmember Aleshire has been saying since 2001 the water resource is limited. It was eye opening at the joint meeting with the County Commissioners at the water plant in April for some to learn that water is taken from the Potomac Rivier and treated in real time and there is no reserve.

Senator Corderman asked about the status of the Smithsburg reservoir. Councilmember Aleshire stated the City has been working with the Maryland Department of the Environment to discuss needed repairs to the reservoir. At best, the reservoir would supply 800,000 to 1 million gallons per day. There is no storage capacity. He is concerned that storage capacity is limited.

Mayor Martinez stated additional funding is needed for the Hagerstown Field House. Based on a citizen survey at the beginning of this administration, it was determined the field house would be a priority project.

Delegate Wivell thought the field house was a private development. Councilmember Aleshire clarified it will be privately owned and operated, while the City maintains ownership of the land and constructs the building. Eastern Sports Management (ESM) (the operating company) estimates income of \$ 879 million over the life of the facility. ESM will be paying the debt service. He believes there will be a great demand to use the facility.

Councilmember McIntire stated Hagerstown will be known for a stadium and a BMX track. The field house will complement amenities already in place.

Delegate Baker asked if any State funding has been provided. Mr. Nicewarner indicated there has been funding from the State.

Senator Corderman asked if ESM will own the field house facility. Councilmember Aleshire stated they will, and if they don't want to continue, the City has first rights to the operations.

Senator Corderman congratulated Chief Lohr for receiving the William F. Foster national award. He stated Chief Lohr is a great asset for Hagerstown.

Delegate Wivell hopes the Mayor and City Council are on board for the Greater Hagerstown water and sewer infrastructure discussions.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: December 19, 2023