

Richard C. McCarthy Commission Chamber
Millville City Hall
Work Session
April 4, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

The Board of Commissioners met in a **WORK SESSION** with Mayor Orndorf presiding. Members present: Hewitt, Sooy, Romanik and Watson. 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 Mayor Orndorf

"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."

City Clerk To Review Changes To the Agenda

Mayor Orndorf asked the City Clerk if there were any changes to the agenda with Jeanne Parkinson, City Clerk responding no.

Presentations

Community Solar Project at 2102 2nd Street – Betsy McBride

Betsy McBride of Community Solar stated she is a senior partner with Community Solar who is here tonight to inform the City Commissioners of the third project that they are looking to execute here in Millville. She provided the Board of Commissioners with an informative packet of the review of the City of Millville Solar Project Benefits and outlined them in her presentation. She described the benefits of generating energy, fighting climate change, providing energy equity, and providing a cost savings to the residents for their electricity.

She explained the history of the program informing that it began in 2018 in New Jersey. She emphasized that this is a win-win all around and the hardest part is educating the public. She explained that it often seems too good to be true and people assume it must be a scam, so she urged that collaborating with the city to educate residents is key for everyone to be able to benefit here.

Commissioner Watson asked how the project impacts the building of the business that the panels are placed on. Ms. McBride explained that there is very little that goes on in the building since they utilize warehouses mostly, so the majority of the energy gets pushed to the residents.

Mayor Orndorf asked who the lease is with. Ms. McBride stated it is with the property owner of the building which the panels will be placed on top of. She then asked why approval is needed from the City of Millville with Ms. McBride explaining that it's just beneficial for approval by the BPU who is the authority on the matter.

Mayor Orndorf then asked Mr. Russell if there have been any issues with prior dealings with Community Solar with Mr. Russell stating that there have not been any issues that he is aware of.

Commissioner Watson asked how this impacts Atlantic City Electric with Ms. McBride responding that this is just a different method of energy and they are required to switch dirty energy for clean energy, so the process has become standard for them.

Commissioner Romanik asked about the location being at Kohl's and asked her about the large generation of power for a store that size. Ms. McBride responded that the panels are actually going on top of a warehouse in the vicinity of Kohl's and the warehouse requires minimal energy from the panels above.

With no further questions, Ms. McBride thanked the Board of Commissioners for their time this evening to share the project highlights.

Discussions

Library Lease Terms of Agreement

Vice Mayor Sooy read a letter from the Millville Public Library which was addressed to the Board of Commissioners dated March 30, 2023 and signed by Ethan Aronoff, the Board President. He explained that the letter is in response to a meeting that was held where the City of Millville was asked to pay \$48,000.00 for electric bills. He stated that he addressed the terms of the lease agreement with Mr. Aronoff which requires the library to pay for their own electricity.

He explained that the City of Millville already gives the library \$532,999.80 per year to operate. He stressed that if the library cannot afford the electricity in a much smaller building than what is being constructed, they will not be able to afford it once it's a much larger space. He stated that he is looking to have a committee formed so the library can find additional revenue streams to help them pay their bills.

Mayor Orndorf concurred with Vice Mayor's sentiments concerning the electric bills that will be much higher in the very large new building.

Commissioner Romanik felt that e-books are the way of the future and times have changed from reading paper books.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment portion open on agenda items only and asked if any person present wished to be heard.

Tamara Davis of Millville asked Ms. McBride about the specifics of the lease agreement that pertain to what happens to the old panels after the 20-year term is finished. Ms. McBride stated that it is the responsibility of Solar Landscape to either renew the lease and update the equipment or properly dispose of the old materials at their own expense should the lease not be renewed.

There being no further comments Mayor Orndorf declared the public comment portion closed.

Discussion Items

Discussion of Commissioners

Commissioner Romanik asked Vice Mayor on the progress of the old Rescue Squad demolition. Vice Mayor Sooy stated there is another delay since it has been determined that it will require a rebid with all the changes and necessary additional work from the asbestos being discovered.

Vice Mayor Sooy stated he would like to simply clarify to the public that with regard to the EMS presentation we recently had, we got "revenue" confused with "profit." He stated this was a misunderstanding as we do receive \$150,000.00, but when you take into account the "other expenses" it is not generating any profit. He explained that last year it cost the city \$746,000.00 for the EMS Department to run with this year being \$762,000.00.

Public Comment Portion

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

Mary Messick stated that Five Below offers a charitable program that if you come in with a flyer for your non-profit, a portion of the sale goes toward that charity. She stated she felt the library should consider looking into this for additional revenue.

There being no further comments, the Public Comment Portion was deemed closed.

Adjournment

There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned on a motion made by Commissioner Hewitt and seconded by Vice Mayor Sooy subject to the call of the chair. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeanne M. Parkinson, RMC
City Clerk