

City of Hyattsville

*Hyattsville Municipal Building
4310 Gallatin Street, 3rd Floor
Hyattsville, MD 20781
(301) 985-5000
www.hyattsville.org*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 16, 2023

7:00 PM

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aizUc7xoRMi0ArLjPM1wUg

Virtual

City Council

Robert S. Croslin, Mayor
Joseph Solomon, Council President, Ward 5
Joanne Waszczak, Council Vice President, Ward 1
Sam Denes, Ward 1
Danny Schaible, Ward 2
Emily Strab, Ward 2
Jimmy McClellan, Ward 3
Kareem Redmond, Ward 3
Edouard Haba, Ward 4
Michelle Lee, Ward 4
Rommel Sandino, Ward 5

ADMINISTRATION

Tracey E. Douglas, City Administrator

~~Laura Reams, City Clerk, 301-985-5009, cityclerk@hyattsville.org~~

WELCOME TO THE CITY OF HYATTSVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING!
Your participation at this public meeting is valued and appreciated.

AGENDA/PACKET: The Agenda/Packet is available for review at the Hyattsville Municipal Building and online at www.hyattsville.org prior to the scheduled meeting (generally available no later than the Friday prior to the scheduled Monday meeting). Please note, times given for agenda items are estimates only. Matters other than those indicated on the agenda may also be considered at Council discretion.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT: In compliance with the ADA, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting or other services in conjunction with this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (301) 985-5009. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

AUDIBLE DEVICES: Please ensure all audible devices are turned off or otherwise not audible when the City Council is in session. Thank you.

PUBLIC INPUT: If you wish to address the Council during the Public Comment period, please use the "Raise Hand" feature in the virtual meeting interface. Participants may also submit statements electronically using the eComment feature at www.hyattsville.org/meetings or via email to cityclerk@hyattsville.org no later than two (2) hours prior to the start of the meeting. Submitted electronic statements will be sent to Councilmembers prior to the meeting and will not be read aloud. All participants shall remain respectful in their contributions and associated functions of the virtual meeting interface are not intended for public dialogue or discussion.

WAYS TO WATCH THE MEETING LIVE: City Council meetings are broadcast live on cable television channel 71 (Comcast) and channel 12 (Verizon). You may also view meetings live online at hyattsville-md.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?camera_id=2

REPLAY SCHEDULE: The meetings will be re-broadcast on cable television, channel 71 (Comcast) and channel 12 (Verizon) daily at 7:00 a.m., 1 p.m., and 8 p.m. Meetings are also able for replay online at www.hyattsville.org/meetings.

CITY INFORMATION: Sign up to receive text and email notifications about Hyattsville events, government, police and programs at www.hyattsville.org/list.aspx

INCLEMENT WEATHER: In the event of inclement weather, please call 301-985-5000 to confirm the status of the Council meeting.

Meeting Notice:

The Hyattsville City Council will hold its meeting on Monday, October 16, 2023 remotely via video conference. The Council meeting will be conducted entirely remotely; there will be no in-person meeting attendance.

The meeting will be broadcast live on cable television channel 71 (Comcast), channel 12 (Verizon), and available via live stream at www.hyattsville.org/meetings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

If you wish to address the Council during the Public Comment period, please use the "Raise Hand" feature in the virtual meeting interface. Participants may also submit statements electronically using the eComment feature at www.hyattsville.org/meetings or via email to cityclerk@hyattsville.org no later than two (2) hours prior to the start of the meeting. Submitted electronic statements will be sent to Councilmembers prior to the meeting and included in the official meeting record. Electronically submitted statements will not be read aloud. All participants shall remain respectful in their contributions and associated functions of the virtual meeting interface are not intended for public dialogue or discussion.

Members of the public who wish to comment during the virtual Council meeting must register in advance using the link below.

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aizUc7xoRMi0ArLjPM1wUg

1. Call to Order and Council Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Also Present:

City Administrator-Tracey Douglas

Acting Director of Community and Economic Development-Holly Simmons

City Treasurer-Ron Brooks

Director of Public Works-Lesley Riddle

Director of Community Services-Sandra Shephard

Director of Human Resources-Jay Joyner

City Clerk-Laura Reams

Emergency Services Coordinator-Reggie Bagley

Deputy Police Chief-Laura Lanham

Present:

Mayor Robert Croslin

Council President Joseph Solomon

Council Vice-President Joanne Waszczak

Councilmember Sam Denes

Councilmember Danny Schaible

Councilmember Emily Strab

Councilmember Jimmy McClellan

Councilmember Kareem Redmond

Councilmember Michelle Lee

Councilmember Edouard Haba

Councilmember Rommel Sandino

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Approval of Agenda

Council President Solomon moved to amend the agenda with the following:

-I move to amend item 10.G to add "pending approval by the City's ARPA Compliance Consultant Thomas Himler."

-I move that we amend the consent agenda to add an item to send a letter to M-NCPPC requesting additional budgeting on trash and recycling receptacles and invasive species treatment, specifically for parklands that they manage in Hyattsville along the Northwest and Northeast Branches of the Anacostia River.

-Amend item 11.a to read: I move that the Mayor and Council approve the 2024 calendar year health insurance premium rates which have increased an average of 5% in all plans. To address the increase, the City will increase its flat rate contribution from \$439 to \$453 for individuals; from \$770 to \$794 for individual plus one (1); and from \$1001 to \$1,035 for individuals plus two (2) or more. This will result in the City absorbing more than ½ of the increase and the employees responsible for the remaining amount. Employees' contributions per pay on average, is approximately \$1.80 increase for single. \$3.63 for individual plus one (1), and \$4.60 for family. Prescription drug plans increased 9.1% on average and the City will pay 75% and the employees 25% of this cost. The increase in the Dental PPO and HMO Plans for employees per pay, is less than \$5 depending on their level of elected coverage.

There were no objections to the amendments.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Schaible, that Agenda be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino

4. Approval of the Minutes

4.a. Approval of the Minutes

[HCC-089-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve minutes of the 6 p.m. Public Hearing of February 22, 2022, 6:30 p.m. Public Hearing of February 22, 2022, 6 p.m. Public Hearing of March 7, 2022, the Council Meeting of July 17, 2023, and the Council Meeting of August 9, 2023.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [HearingMinutes Feb 22 2023 6pm](#)
[HearingMinutes Feb 22 2023 630pm](#)
[Minutes Mar 7 2022](#)
[Minutes July 17 2023](#)
[Minutes August 9 2023](#)

A motion was made by Councilmember Schaible, seconded by Councilmember McClellan, that this agenda item be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino

5. Public Comment (7:10 p.m. – 7:20 p.m.) Complete Speaker Card, Limit 2 minutes per speaker

Matt Gembecki thanked the City for its support of the Zombie Run and stated that it raised \$43,000 for local schools.

6. City Administrator Update (7:20 p.m - 7:40 p.m.)

City Administrator Tracey Douglas provide updates on City-related news and events.

7. Presentations (7:40 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.)

7.a. Study of City of Hyattsville Property Tax Relief Programs: PFM Group Consulting[HCC-105-FY24](#)

For presentation and Council discussion.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Treasurer Brooks provided background information on the Property Tax Relief Study and introduced Deanna Kimball, Senior Managing Consultant from PFM Group Consulting to present the study. Ms. Kimball provided an overview of project scope, existing available tax credit programs, and alternative programs which could be considered for use by the City in the future.

Ms. Kimball summarized the study recommendations to reduce the homestead tax credit assessment cap from 10% to 5-7%, increase the assessed value limitation and net worth limitation, and income limitation for the local supplement of the homestead tax credit. Ms. Kimball said that the study was not recommending the adoption of any alternative programs at this time.

Treasurer Brooks requested that Council review the study information and recommendations and submit any follow up questions to his office. He said there would be future follow up to adopt the study recommendations.

Councilmember Denes asked about the fiscal impact of the proposed recommendation, citing the fiscal impact in the agenda cover page. Treasurer Brooks said that the fiscal impact was an estimated amount and would depend on the number of individuals who participated in the program and that the fiscal impact could be spread over a period of years.

Councilmember Schaible thanked Treasurer Brooks and Ms. Kimball for their work on the study. He asked if the City knew what revenues were currently lost due to the existing property tax credit programs. Treasurer Brooks said the City did not have that information available and the data was difficult to obtain, even at the state level. Councilmember Schaible said he was in favor of eliminating the requirement to obtain the individual's net worth in order to qualify for the property tax credit and noted that the removal of that requirement may make it easier for individuals to apply. He asked if individuals would still be required to calculate net worth if they applied due to state credit requirements. Ms. Kimball said she believed that someone could apply for the City credit only.

Councilmember Schaible requested a copy of the property tax credit study presentation and Treasurer Brooks replied that a copy would be made available. Treasurer Brooks continued that additional research on aspects of the credit that may be a deterrents to applicants due to an undue burden on the applicant to provide data.

Council Vice President Waszczak asked if any cities set percentages of Area Median Income (AMI) rather than dollar amounts. Ms. Kimball said she did not know but would look into it.

Councilmember Haba asked about the mechanics of property tax credit deferrals. Ms. Kimball said that deferrals were effective techniques but not often utilized in Maryland. Treasurer Brooks said that staff and the consultant intended to do more research on the usage of property tax credit deferrals.

Councilmember Denes asked if home value and income was included in the net worth calculation and noted net worth was validated on the application via an affidavit as opposed to an itemized document. He asked how an individual could apply for only the City credit. Ms. Kimball said that the program administration was handled at the state level and the City would need to seek clarity from the state on ensuring the

local requirements were listed and processed correctly.

Council President Solomon recalled that during ARPA discussions the Council provided additional parameters and questions for the study and when those items would be addressed. Administrator Douglas asked what items were missing and Council President Solomon said he would follow up.

7.b. Hyattsville GARE Learning Cohort Presentation

[HCC-104-FY24](#)

For presentation only.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Equity Officer Shakira Louimarre provided an overview of the City's Learning Cohort with the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) and the cohort project in process to address concerns with quality of life issues related to reports of unhoused individuals in the City.

Council Vice President Waszczak thanked Shakira for her work as the City's Equity Officer and appreciated how the role has grown from a recommendation from the City's Race and Equity Task Force. She applauded the group for taking the project on and noted that metro riders were also stakeholders. Council Vice President Waszczak also acknowledged that this issue is not going to be a quick term fix. She asked if the GARE Cohort had any preliminary observations or data to share. Equity Officer Louimarre said that the evidence of seemingly unhoused individuals was anecdotal at this point. She also shared that a recent symposium in the DC area cited an 18% increase in homelessness. She added that should The h3 Project be approved that the City would gain valuable data from the study.

Councilmember Lee thanked Equity Officer Louimarre for the presentation. She asked if there were success stories from h3 that could be shared with the Council. Equity Officer Louimarre said that one of the complicated issues of this work is how deeply rooted the issues are, and shared that h3 felt that they had done meaningful work at Union Station. Councilmember Lee asked how the h3 Project gained trust in order to do the survey. Equity Officer Louimarre said they would be working in small groups and had training on trauma informed care and be able to provide gift cards to participants for their time. She also noted that the GARE learning cohort was also working with local faith based organizations to conduct outreach as well. Emergency Operations Manager Bagley noted how valuable the data from h3 would be to future outreach efforts.

Council President Solomon thanked staff members for their work on the cohort learning project and said the work was very important to the community. He also appreciated the cohort's multipronged approach.

8. Proclamations

All proclamations were adopted in a single vote.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Council Vice-President Waszczak, that the Proclamations be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino

8.a. Proclamation Recognizing Economic Development Week in the City of Hyattsville [HCC-087-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council adopt a proclamation recognizing the week of October 23 - 27, 2023, as Economic Development Week in the City of Hyattsville.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [CM 1016 Economic Development Week Draft \(1\)](#)

8.b. Proclamation Celebrating October as LGBTQIA+ History Month in the City of Hyattsville [HCC-088-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council adopt a proclamation celebrating the month of October as LGBTQIA+ History Month in the City of Hyattsville.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [CM 1016 LGBTQIA+ History Month 2023](#)

8.c. Proclamation Honoring the 25th Anniversary of Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation [HCC-109-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council adopt a proclamation in honor of the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation and its 25 years of supporting local musicians and events.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [CM 1016 Archie Edwards Blues 25 Year Anniversary](#)

9. Appointments

All appointments were approved in a single vote.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Council Vice-President Waszczak, that the Appointments be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino

9.a. Appointment to the Code Compliance Advisory Committee [HCC-095-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the reappointment of Jamie Bean to the Code Compliance Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years to expire on October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: McClellan and Redmond

Attachments: [Jamie Bean Oct 2023 reappointment redac](#)

9.b. Appointment to the Education Advisory Committee[HCC-096-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the reappointment of Nicholas Misukanis (Ward 2) to the Education Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years ending on October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: Strab

Attachments: [Nicholas Misukanis Oct 2023 re-appointment redac](#)

9.c. Appointment to the Health, Wellness, and Recreation Advisory Committee[HCC-097-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the reappointment of Marylyn Presutti (Ward 4) and Erica Thomas (Ward 1) to the Health, Wellness, and Recreation Advisory Committee for a term of two (2) years to expire on October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: Denes

Attachments: [Marylyn Presutti reappointment Oct 2023 redac](#)
[Erica Thompson reappointment Oct 2023 redac](#)

9.d. Appointment to the Hyattsville Environment Committee[HCC-098-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the appointments of Ian Fay (Ward 1) and Malgorzata Bereziwicz (Ward 1) and the reappointments of Thaddeus Waterman (Ward 4) and James Ball (Ward 3) to the Hyattsville Environment Committee for a term of two (2) years to expire October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: Haba and Schaible

Attachments: [Malgorzata Bereziwicz W1 redac](#)
[Ian Fay W1 redac](#)
[James Ball Oct 23 redac](#)
[Thaddeus Waterman W4 redac](#)

9.e. Appointment to the Race and Equity Task Force[HCC-100-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the reappointment of Alicia Freemyn (Ward 2) to the Race and Equity Task Force for a term of two (2) years to expire on October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: Haba

Attachments: [Alicia Freemyn W2 reappoint Oct 2023 redac](#)

9.f. Appointment to the Shade Tree Board[HCC-101-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor, with Council approval, the appointment of Deb Taylor (Ward 1) and reappointments of Zachary Dorner (Ward 2) and Taylor Johnson (Ward 1) to the Shade Tree Board for a term of 2 years to expire on October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: Croslin

Attachments: [Taylor Johnson Oct 23 redac](#)
[Zachary Dorner Oct 23 redac](#)
[Deb Taylor Oct 23 redac](#)

9.g. Appointment to the Planning Committee[HCC-110-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the reappointments of Maureen Foster and Todd Dengel to the Planning Committee for a term of two (2) years to end on October 31, 2025.

Sponsors: Redmond and Denes

Attachments: [M. Foster re-appoint Oct 10 redac](#)
[T. Dengel re-appoint Oct 11 redac](#)

10. Consent Items (8:30 p.m. - 8:35 p.m.)

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine in nature, and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless the Mayor/Council request specific items be removed from the Consent agenda for separate action.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Denes, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino

10.a. Decommissioning and Surplus of Public Works Vehicles[HCC-090-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the decommissioning and disposal of the two vehicles noted in the attached memo dated October 5, 2023.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [231005 - memo - surplus items](#)

10.b. Purchase of Road Salt[HCC-092-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to enter into an agreement with Morton Salt for an expenditure not to exceed \$35,000, pending legal review. This procurement will utilize the State of Maryland Contract CTR015072 issued August 31, 2023.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [221025 - Sate of Maryland - Road Salt PO 001B3600124](#)

10.c. Leaf Collection Services[HCC-093-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize an expenditure not to exceed \$35,000 to Professional Lawn Maintenance Service (PLMS) to provide up to 25 days of on-call leaf collection services under their existing contract with the City.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [Estimate 1445 from Professional Lawn Maintenance Services](#)

10.d. Closed Captioning Services for City Council Meetings[HCC-099-FY24](#)

I move the Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to enter into an agreement with Granicus for the renewal of closed captioning services of City Council Meetings through October 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$11,217 from the PEG Fund.

Sponsors: City Administrator

10.e. ARPA - General Fund Reimbursement for PD Sworn Officer Retention Bonuses[HCC-102-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the Treasurer to reimburse the General Fund in the amount of \$268,000 for Hyattsville Police Department Sworn Officer Retention Bonuses using ARPA funds.

Sponsors: City Administrator

10.f. ARPA - Reimbursement to General Fund for Staff Salary Adjustments[HCC-103-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the Treasurer to reimburse the General Fund in the amount of \$759,000 for FY23 Staff Salary Adjustments using ARPA funds.

Sponsors: City Administrator

10.g. ARPA - Award of Contract for Community Engagement and Outreach Services for Unhoused Populations[HCC-106-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to enter into a contract with The h3 Project for a data-based analysis of homelessness in the City. An expenditure not to exceed \$15,000 for this contract is authorized to be funded with ARPA funds, and the Treasurer is authorized to make the required budget amendments to facilitate this expenditure. The contract is subject to approval by the City Attorney for legal sufficiency.

Sponsors: City Administrator

Attachments: [Homelessness Engagement RFP 09152023 Solicitation FINAL Draft](#)

11. Action Items (8:35 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.)

11.a. Health Care, Prescription Drug, and Dental Care Rates for CY24[HCC-107-FY24](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the 2024 calendar year health insurance premium rates which have increased an average of 5% in all plans.

Sponsors: City Administrator

City Administrator Douglas introduced the item and noted that the City would benchmark health benefits against other municipalities to ensure that employees received the best benefits. Treasurer Brooks provided additional context on the City's approach to cover a flat rate for each employees and said that the City covered approximately 73-78% of expenditures for employees.

Human Resources Director Jay Joyner provided comparison information for neighboring municipalities. He said the average increase was 5.4% across the board and that he believed the state plan offered the City the most benefits at a reasonable cost.

Councilmember Denes asked if any other changes to compensation including reduction of benefits or bonuses were anticipated that would diminish take home pay for staff. Administrator Douglas said that each year the City budgets a 3% placeholder for health insurance in the budget. She said the City did not expect any other adjustments and will not do another compensation study until 2025 or 2026. Director Joyner and Treasurer Brooks concurred that he did not believe that there were any other upcoming items that would impact take home pay for employees.

A motion was made by Council President Solomon, seconded by Councilmember Denes, that this agenda item be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino

12. Council Dialogue (9:00 p.m. - 9:10 p.m.)**13. Motion to Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilmember Redmond, seconded by Councilmember Sandino, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Croslin, Solomon, Waszczak, Denes, Schaible, Strab, McClellan, Redmond, Lee, Haba, and Sandino