SPECIAL
COUNCIL MEETING
March 2, 1993

A special meeting of the Elkton Town Council was held March 2, 1993 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers with the Mayor Charles E. Dean presiding. The following council members were present: F. A. Bennett, R. C. Davis, M. B. Fuller, W. E. Printz and T. R. Whitfield III. Councilman R. L. Snow was absent. Dale Davenport, Attorney, Norma Leap, Clerk, Gerald Monger, Superintendent and Warren Pence, Chief of Police were also present.

Councilman T. R. Whitfield III moved, seconded by Councilwoman M. B. Fuller and carried to approve the First Reading to appropriate $1500.00 for a fence at Stonewall Riverside Park.

Councilwoman M. B. Fuller moved, seconded by Councilman W. E. Printz to approve on Second Reading the appropriation of $4,061.48 for a maintenance contract on the NCR main frame computer. The vote was recorded as follows:

Bennett	-	yea	Printz	-	yea
Davis	-	yea	Whitfield	-	nay
Fuller	-	yea			

Councilman F. A. Bennett moved, seconded by Councilman R. C. Davis and carried to recommend to the court the reappointment of Calvin Jackson Davis to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

There was a discussion regarding the rearrangement of the council meeting agenda. Councilwoman Fuller presented the following recommendations from the Personnel Committee:

1. Clerk be notified the Friday a week before council meeting if an individual wishes to be on the agenda or regarding any item which needs to be on the agenda.
2. Each Department Head be included on the agenda for Department reports.
3. Committee reports be in alphabetical order by committee.
4. Unfinished Business and New Business be added to the agenda.
5. Reschedule council meetings to 7:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m.

Councilwoman M. B. Fuller moved, seconded by Councilman T. R. Whitfield III and carried that the regular March council meeting be held at 7:30 p.m.

Council was in agreement to add the Department Heads to the agenda, to committee reports being alphabetical and agenda information being given to the clerk the Friday a week before the council meeting.

Councilwoman M. B. Fuller moved, seconded by Councilman W. E. Printz and carried to accept the standard agenda of Robert's Rules of Order and add Unfinished Business and New Business.

Councilwoman Fuller reported that at the last town council meeting the Personnel Committee recommended the Town of Elkton employ a town manager. This recommendation was made so council members would have time to think about this. This would also give the public time to think about it and come to the meeting tonight to express their opinions. The recommendation also included that the manager be employed beginning July 1, 1993. Since then, it has been decided that when a motion is made this will be modified slightly so council will not be held to the July 1, 1993 date if the motion carries, as a manager might not be hired by that date.

Councilwoman Fuller read Section 6 of the Town Charter which gives council the authority to hire a town manager.

Councilman Bennett stated it was his understanding at the last meeting that this special meeting was to discern how council members feel regarding the appointing of a town manager. If council is in agreement to hire a manager, it was his recommendation that, at a said time, the public be invited to express their feelings before any action is taken by council.

Councilwoman Fuller pointed out that it was stated at the last meeting that it was the recommendation and intention of the Personnel Committee to make a motion to hire a town manager at the next council meeting. At that time it was suggested to hold a special meeting to do this.

Councilman Printz stated that if you have a system which could use some improvement, there is nothing wrong in taking the opportunity to try something to improve the situation. Now is a good time to get a highly qualified individual at a premium price. If the town could find an individual who would improve our efficiency, this could possibly save, not cost, the town money. This would also improve the communication skills between town government and the town employees. He pointed out this is an effort to try to help all the employees and is no reflection on present employees. He supports this manager viewpoint at this time and feels it will enhance our management program in the town.

Councilman Davis stated he has no position either way at this time but would like to remind council that town revenues may not be what they have been in the past. We have lost several revenue sources due to businesses closing.

Mr. Melvin Sampson of 402 "F" Street stated he is not in favor of a town manager. It has been tried before and wasn't successful. He feels council has not told the citizens what a manager is going to do.

Mrs. Audrey Berry of 211 Morgan Avenue asked what a town manager will do that Mr. Monger isn't doing. She also asked if the manager would take Mr. Monger's job. She feels Mr. Monger is doing a very good job. She also wanted to know how the town was going to pay for a manager. She felt we are not in a position to raise taxes.

Councilwoman Fuller stated that the Personnel Committee's recommendation has nothing to do with the ability and performance of the existing town employees. The committee is looking at it from a system point of view. The day to day administration of the town comes down through the council; this is micro-management by seven people who are not here forty hours a week. there is no overall day to day management of the town. Councilwoman Fuller stated it is the Personnel Committee's feeling that there is the financial strength in the town budget to pay for a manager.

Mr. Whit Berry of 211 Morgan Avenue stated we have not had money to do needed projects in the past, we have lost several businesses and he doesn't see how we are going to have money to hire a town manager.

Mr. Bobby Gooden of 302 Morgan Avenue stated he felt council was elected to run the town themselves, not hire a town manager. He pointed out that this was tried once before and the town is still feeling the effects. He feels Mr. Monger is doing a good job and if council is set on a manager, they should give the job to Mr. Monger and let him be over the other two department heads. He feels times are hard and now is not the time to hire a manager.

Mr. John Adams of 504 Davis Street spoke in favor of a town manager. He pointed out that Elkton is the fastest growing town in Rockingham County. There is increased demand for service, increased traffic and there will probably be more government mandates placed on the town in the future. He feels some of the advantages of a town manager would be that they would be professionally trained in municipal affairs, knowledgeable in applying and obtaining grant money, would guide all departments in town and build relationships or networks with other municipalities in the county and state. He pointed out that he was not being critical of any employee or council member but feels we need to become pro-active rather than reactive.

Mr. Joseph Correa of 108 Hillside Avenue questioned if this meeting was advertised for the purpose of comments relative to a town manager. He stated he is very concerned how this is being done. He feels this is a very important step and there needs to be an advertised public hearing and then take action at a subsequent meeting. He suggested council not make a decision until the full council is in attendance. He also suggested that there should be a Finance Committee recommendation regarding funding for this position and that at the outset of a Public Hearing a full briefing be given on the duties of a town manager.

Chief Pence asked to respond regarding grants. He pointed out that the Police Department has obtained thousands of dollars in grants in the past ten years for equipment.

Councilman Bennett stated that the town has had three failed attempts at a town manager and he is not in favor of a town manager system at this time. He feels if the town has $80,000.00 it could be used on water and sewer. He does not see the benefits of a manager at present. He said all grants are not necessarily good due to excessive engineering costs but reported the town is in the process of applying for three grants at present.

Councilman Printz stated he gets the feeling that people feel council thinks Mr. Monger and his people are not doing their job and this is not so. He thinks this will relieve some of the pressures on Mr. Monger.

Councilwoman Fuller reported that Section 6 of the Town Charter gives the council the responsibility to make this decision and she feels the public has had ample opportunity to voice their views.

Mayor Dean stated he feels council needs to decide if they want to hold a Public Hearing.

Councilman Davis said he has no problem with the concept of a town manager but feels council needs to know what the detailed duties of a town manager would be before making any decisions.

Councilman Whitfield asked what is Mr. Davenport's recommendation as to the legality of a public hearing vs. not having one. Mr. Davenport indicated that a public hearing is not required on this issue. Mayor Dean stated that if the recommendation was to go to a town manager form of government then that would require a public hearing.

Councilman Whitfield questioned if the defeated referendum mentioned by Mr. Gooden was on hiring a manager or on a town manager form of government. Mayor Dean stated it was on a town manager form of government.

Councilman Printz stated he is definitely in favor of a public hearing.

A public hearing was set for March 30, 1993 at 7:00 p.m.

A council work session was set for March 10th at 6:00 p.m. to work on some of the questions regarding the town manager.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned.

MAYOR: Charles E. Dean
Charles E. Dean, Mayor

RECORDER: Norma R. Leap
Norma R. Leap, Clerk