



Town of Bluffton
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To: Town Council

From: Stephen Steese, Town Manager

Date: January 3, 2023

Town Operations / Community Meetings

- The Police Chief process was completed with Joseph Babkiewicz named as the next Bluffton Police Chief. Joe was introduced to the Police Department at an all hands meeting on December 15th and sworn in on December 29th. We are working to schedule a community meet and greet during January.
- Interviews were completed and a new Emergency Manager was hired. She will start January 12th and will now be under my supervision and part of the Executive Team.
- Staff met with Beaufort County, Hilton Head Island, and Hardeeville to discuss the capital project list for the Transportation Development Impact Fee. We discussed organizing the projects based on the status of each project in the research, design, or construction process. We also looked at a set of funds for access management and signalization.
- Senior Staff received training related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and how it can be addressed in the workplace. This was in preparation of the creation of our new diversity, equity, and inclusion committee. We are working with partners to try to ensure success of the committee.

Town Council/Town Attorney Related Meetings

- Weekly Mayor / Mayor Pro Tempore / Town Manager meetings.
- Mayor Sulka, Councilman Toomer, Terry Finger, and I attended the court proceedings related to the Hoagland versus Town of Bluffton case. The jury trial was held over four days with the jury ruling in favor of the Town of Bluffton on both counts. Post-trial motions have been filed by both parties and are currently scheduled for January 12th.
- Had a meeting with Councilman Wood to discuss items for the upcoming legislative session. I shared my compiled notes from this meeting with all of Council. Senator Davis also reached out to meet with Council and me prior to session starting.
- Registration and lodging have been completed by for Hometown Legislative Action Day on February 7th in Columbia. Let Kimberly know if you need to make any changes.

Updates and Miscellaneous Information

- The Town of Bluffton received an Award for Excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association. This was awarded in recognition of the fund balance policies that Council adopted during the FY 21-22 budget cycle. This speaks to the strong financial position of the Town and the priorities of Council to be excellent stewards of our funds.
 - Town Staff volunteered with Bluffton Self Help in their Christmas Shop over two days.
 - Police held their annual Shop with a Cop event and collected toys for the community. The Town received several donations to support Shop with a Cop and we will be publishing a thank you.
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