

**CITY COUNCIL**

CHRISTINE M. JOHNSON  
At-Large

CARL W. DEWALT  
First Ward

JAMES KOLE  
First Ward

KYLA CLARK  
Second Ward

JEFFREY W. MILLS  
Second Ward

Council meets second and fourth  
Mondays of each month.



**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL**

8103 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, Maryland 20707-2502

KEITH R. SYDNOR  
Mayor

CHRISTIAN L. PULLEY, CPM  
City Administrator

JOANNE HALL BARR  
Deputy City Administrator

STEPHANIE P. ANDERSON  
City Solicitor

SARA A. GREEN, CPM, CMC  
City Clerk

(301) 725-5300

[www.cityoflaurel.org](http://www.cityoflaurel.org)

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL  
CITY OF LAUREL AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATION  
IMPASSE HEARING  
MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024  
6:00 PM  
IN-PERSON  
MEETING MINUTES**

The meeting convened in the Council Chamber of the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center at approximately 6:00 pm with Council President James Kole presiding. The roll was called with Councilman Carl W. DeWalt, Councilwoman Christine M. Johnson, Councilman Jeffrey W. Mills, Councilwoman Kyla Clark, and Keith R. Sydnor, Mayor present.

The following staff members were also present: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator, Joanne Hall Barr, Deputy City Administrator, Sara A. Green, CPM, CMC, City Clerk, Ana R. Navarro, MMC, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, James Cornwell-Shiel, Director, Department of Information Technology, Chief Russell Hamill, LPD, S. Michele Saylor, Director, Department of Budget and Personnel Services, Melissa Klinger, Human Resources Officer, Chrissy Cornwell, Director, Department of Community Resources and Emergency Management, and Stephanie P. Anderson City Solicitor.

Also present were: Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire, and Alana Glover, Esquire, both with Jackson Lewis P.C. representing the City ("Employer"). Present representing the Employee Organization Unit were: John Barry, MCGEO, Lee Wolfe, Auto Mechanic, Department of Public Works, Michael Eichorn, Laborer III, Department of Public Works, and Misael Orozzo, Laborer I, Department of Public Works who were all a part of the Employee Organization Bargaining Unit. There were three (3) members of the public present.

Agenda Item No. 3 was Possible Adjournment to Closed Session Under the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (9) to Consider Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasses in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employer Representative, Stephen M. Silvestri,



Esquire Jackson Lewis P.C. ("Employer") involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel and Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employee Organization Representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal and County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO, involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization").

Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to adjourn to closed session and Councilman Mills seconded the motion that was carried on a roll call vote by all Councilmembers present.

President Kole read the following statement into the record regarding the closed session:

"The authority for this meeting to be closed is contained within the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (9). The Purpose of the Closed Session is to Consider Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employer Representative, Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire Jackson Lewis P.C. ("Employer") involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel and Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employee Organization Representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal & County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO, involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization")."

President Kole informed the members of the public who were in attendance that they would need to exit the building and that the building would be locked during the closed session because it would be held in the Council Chambers. President Kole noted that as soon as the closed session was adjourned, the doors would be unlocked and the public would be readmitted just before resuming the open session.

The closed session began at 6:06 pm in the Council Chambers of the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center. The purpose of the closed session was to hear presentations of disputed matters involving an impasse in collective bargaining negotiations by the Employer Representative and the Employee Organization. The following people were in attendance at the closed session:

President James Kole, Councilman Carl W. DeWalt, Councilwoman Christine M. Johnson, Councilman Jeffrey W. Mills, Councilwoman Kyla Clark, Keith R. Sydnor, Mayor, Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator, Joanne Hall Barr, Deputy City Administrator, Sara A. Green, CPM, CMC, City Clerk, Ana R. Navarro, MMC, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, James Cornwell-Shiel, Director, Department of Information Technology, S. Michele Saylor, Director, Department of Budget and Personnel Services, Melissa Klinger, Human Resources Officer, Chrissy Cornwell, Director, Department of Community Resources and Emergency Management, Stephanie P. Anderson City Solicitor. Also present were: Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire, and Alana Glover, Esquire, both with Jackson Lewis P.C. representing the City ("Employer"). Present representing the Employee Organization Unit were: John Barry, MCGEO, Lee Wolfe, Auto Mechanic, Department of Public Works, Michael Eichorn, Laborer III, Department of Public Works, and Misael Orozzo, Laborer I, Department of Public Works who were all a part of the Employee Organization Bargaining Unit. Also present who were not on the collective bargaining unit of the Employee Organization were: Raymun Lee and John Kilker who said they were there representing the President of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal and County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO.

Mr. John Barry provided the presentation of the disputed matter on behalf of the Employee Organization from approximately 6:06 pm to 7:30 pm.



A brief recess was taken at 7:30 pm and all parties resumed the closed session at approximately 7:41 pm.

Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire, Employer Representative provided the presentation of the disputed matter on behalf of the Employer including a detailed PowerPoint presentation from approximately 7:41 pm to 8:30 pm.

Mr. Barry and the Employee Organization Representatives were provided with the opportunity to rebut at the close of Mr. Silvestri's presentation, which they did from approximately 8:30 pm to 8:57 pm.

At approximately 8:58 pm, the Mayor and City Council, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Green, and Ms. Navarro left the Council Chamber and moved to Meeting Room 4 in the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center so the Mayor and City Council could begin deliberations on the matter.

The topics actually discussed during the deliberations portion of the closed session were the disputed matter in the collective bargaining negotiations of wages and legal and procedural questions the Councilmembers asked of Ms. Anderson.

The action taken during the deliberations portion of the closed session was a consensus that the Mayor and City Council believed they had enough information that they felt comfortable in making a decision once the open session was resumed. Each Councilmember and the Mayor agreed they had enough information to vote on a decision.

There were zero (0) votes taken during the deliberations portion of the closed session.

The parties in the deliberation portion of the closed session returned to the closed session in the Council Chamber at approximately 9:45 pm.

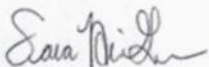
The closed session was adjourned at approximately 9:50 pm and the doors to the entrance of the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center and the Council Chamber were unlocked. Zero (0) members of the public entered the Council Chamber.

The open session was called back to order at approximately 9:53 pm. President Kole stated for the record that the Mayor and City Council heard both parties' presentations regarding the disputed matter of wages during the closed session and that the matter before the Mayor and Council was to decide if they would find in favor of the Employer at a 5% total wage increase or the Employee Organization at a 9.5% total wage increase.

Councilman Jeffrey W. Mills made a motion that the Mayor and City Council find in favor of the Employer at a 5% total wage increase and authorize the City Solicitor to prepare and issue said decision to both parties in writing. Councilwoman Christine M. Johnson seconded the motion. Councilman Carl W. DeWalt "abstained" from the vote. Councilwoman Kyla Clark cast a vote of "Yes", President James Kole cast a vote of "Yes" and Mayor Keith R. Sydnor concurred.

The impasse hearing was adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Approved:



Sara A. Green, CPM, CMC, City Clerk

Date: April 22, 2024



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**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL**

8103 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, Maryland 20707-2502

Council Chamber

**SPECIAL MEETING  
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL**

**AGENDA** *(Revised 03/29/2024)*

**MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**IN-PERSON MEETING**

***Watch the open portion of this meeting on Laurel TV streaming live in your web browser at <https://laureltv.org/watch-live> or locally Laurel TV can be found on Comcast Channel 996 (HD), 71 (SD) or Verizon FiOS Channel 12.***

***Contact the City Clerk for information pertaining to this hearing at 301-725-5300 Ext. 2121***

1. Call to Order- President James Kole
2. Roll Call- Sara A. Green, CPM, CMC, City Clerk
3. Possible Adjournment to Closed Session Under the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (9) to Consider Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employer Representative, Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire Jackson Lewis P.C. ("Employer") involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel and Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employee Organization Representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal & County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO, involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization")
4. Possible Decision of the Mayor and City Council Regarding the Presentations Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel ("Employer") and the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization") and Authorizing the City Solicitor to Prepare and Issue Said Decision to Both Parties in Writing
5. Adjournment

KEITH R. SYDNOR  
Mayor

CHRISTIAN L. PULLEY, CPM  
City Administrator

JOANNE HALL BARR  
Deputy City Administrator

STEPHANIE P. ANDERSON  
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## Mayor and City Council Voting Record

April 1, 2024 6:00 pm

### Regular Meeting

In-Person

Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center- 8103 Sandy Spring Road Laurel, Maryland 20707

Call to Order: 6:00pm

Meeting Ended: 9:55pm

Members of the Public: 3

✓ Christian L Pulley ✓ Joanne Barr ✓ Ana Navarro X Bill Bailey ✓ Chrissy Cornwell ✓ James Cornwell-  
Shiel X Tim Miller X Robert Love ✓ Chief Russell Hamill ✓ S. Michele Saylor X Danny Selby ✓ Stephanie  
Anderson ✓ Mark Plazinski

*Note: Chief Hamill and Deputy Chief Plazinski exited the chamber during the closed session and returned when the open hearing resumed.*

### Roll Call

✓ Councilman DeWalt ✓ Councilwoman Johnson ✓ Councilman Mills

✓ Councilwoman Clark ✓ President Kole ✓ Mayor Sydnor

Agenda Item No. 3- Possible adjournment to Closed Session Under the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (9) to Consider Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employer Representative, Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire Jackson Lewis P.C. ("Employer") involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel and Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective



Bargaining Negotiations by the Employee Organization Representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal & County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO, involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization") *motion to enter closed session*

yes Councilman DeWalt 1<sup>st</sup> Councilwoman Johnson 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilman Mills

yes Councilwoman Clark yes President Kole

Agenda Item No. 4-Possible Decision of the Mayor and City Council Regarding the Presentations Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel ("Employer") and the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization") and Authorizing the City Solicitor to Prepare and Issue Said Decision to Both Parties in Writing

*motion to find in favor of the employer at a \$9.60 total wage increase and authorize the City Solicitor to prepare and issue said decision to both parties in writing.*

abstain Councilman DeWalt 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilwoman Johnson 1<sup>st</sup> Councilman Mills

yes Councilwoman Clark yes President Kole concur Mayor Sydnor

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**STATEMENT REGARDING CLOSED SESSION**

**MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024 6:00 P.M.**

The following statement is made regarding the adjournment of the Mayor and City Council to Closed Session on this date:

The authority for this meeting to be closed is contained within the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (9). The Purpose of the Closed Session is to Consider Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employer Representative, Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire Jackson Lewis P.C. ("Employer") involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel and Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employee Organization Representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal & County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO, involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization").

 4/1/2024  
James Kole, Council President



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**PUBLIC NOTICE** *(Revised 03/29/2024)*

The Mayor and City Council of Laurel will Possibly Adjourn to Closed Session During their Special Meeting on April 1, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Council Chamber of the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center. The Authority for this Closed Session is Contained in the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (9). The Purpose of the Closed Session is to Consider Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employer Representative, Stephen M. Silvestri, Esquire Jackson Lewis P.C. ("Employer") involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the City of Laurel and Presentation of Disputed Matters Involving an Impasse in Collective Bargaining Negotiations by the Employee Organization Representative, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994, Municipal & County Government Employee Organization AFL-CIO, involved in Collective Bargaining Negotiations for the Bargaining Unit of the Department of Public Works ("Employee Organization").

Sara A. Green, CPM, CMC  
City Clerk





## CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

ORDINANCE 2017, Sec 13-13(c) – IMPASSE HEARING

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UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS, LOCAL 1994

And

THE CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

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### **DECISION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland are called on to decide on the disputed issues between the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1994 (the "Union or Employee Organization") and the City of Laurel, Maryland (the "City or Employer") collectively the "Parties" pursuant to the Impasse Notice dated February 22, 2024.

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 2017, Section 13-13 (c), once an impasse is declared, the Mayor and City Council are required to hold a hearing on all matters in dispute as presented by the Parties. The presentations of the Parties were submitted to the Clerk to the City of Laurel on March 25, 2024. A hearing was held on April 1, 2024, by the Mayor and City Council in closed session. At the conclusion of the presentations of the Union and the City, the Mayor and City Council conducted deliberations on the disputed items. After deliberation, the Mayor and City Council convened in open session and voted favorably to approve the City's final proposal presented to the Union on February 15, 2024.

#### **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

Prior to the declaration of impasse, there were a total of seven (7) in-person bargaining sessions held between the Parties. The bargaining sessions were held on December 14, 2023; on January 11, 18, and 25, 2024 and on February 1, 8, and 15, 2024. Final proposals of the Parties were passed on at the February 15, 2024 bargaining session. In addition to the bargaining sessions, the Union made several written requests for information related to the bargaining. The City provided the information requested by the Union.

The Parties reached tentative agreements on certain issues subject to ratification by the members of the Union and the Mayor and City Council upon agreement of the entire Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA"). By the February 1, 2024, meeting, the Parties had tentatively agreed on all non-economic language to be included in the first CBA.

The Union's first proposal on wages was submitted on February 1, 2024. The City noted that the proposal contained mistakes. The Union submitted by email a corrected proposal to the



City on February 2, 2024. The Union demanded a three-year agreement with the City paying a 6.0% pay increase on July 1, of each year of the contract and a 3.5% step increase each year up to year twenty (20) for a proposed three (3) year contract. The Union also submitted additional economic demands.

The City's Director of Budget and Personnel Services analyzed the Union's proposal and determined the Union's demand on wage increases only, would increase the City's annual cost of straight time pay from \$1,909,067.68 to \$2,844,328.40 an increase of \$935,260.72 or 48.99%.

At the February 8, 2024, bargaining session, the City passed a full economic counter proposal to the Union. The City proposed a three-year (3) agreement with 2.5% step increase, and a 2.5% annual increase in each year of the Agreement. The City further proposed a contract retaining all of the same benefits, pension, health insurance, and longevity increases the employees currently have.

The City bargaining committee also pointed to the fact that in FY 2023, the City provided an 18% increase to each employee in the bargaining unit.

To demonstrate the reasonableness of its proposal, the City provided current pay scales for the same or similar classifications as are in the bargaining unit from Greenbelt, Bowie, and Hyattsville.

On February 8, 2024, the City requested that the Union come to the scheduled bargaining session on February 15, 2024, two hours early and prepared to conclude negotiations and that the parties remain at the meeting until the Parties reached an agreement.

On February 15, 2024, the Union submitted a response to the City's proposal less than two hours before the final bargaining session. Although, the City had requested the proposal be submitted a day earlier to allow time for review. The City delayed the start of the bargaining session to allow time for its review and to provide a response to the Union.

The proposal submitted by the Union on February 15, 2024, increased its demand for an annual pay increase from 6.0% to 6.5% and reduced its 3.5% step increase to 3.0% for the proposed term of the three (3) year contract. The Union demand would increase the cost of straight time pay alone by \$809,672.00 or 42%. The Union also proposed additional paid days off. The proposal would increase costs by \$47,010.33 per year.

At the February 15, 2024, bargaining session, the City informed the Union that its second passed proposal was still fiscally irresponsible. The City also informed the Union that it failed to consider the cost of its proposal and comparable pay at other municipalities and that its current demand was unreasonable. The Union indicated that it would not change its proposal and the bargaining session ended with the Parties at impasse.

On February 22, 2024, the City submitted a formal letter to the Union noting that the parties were at impasse and must proceed with the Impasse Procedure outlined in Section 13-13 (b) of Ordinance No. 2017.



## **DISCUSSION**

### **Factors Considered**

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 2017, 13-13 (c) the Mayor and City Council may take into consideration any factors it considers significant to reaching the determination, including but not limited to the following factors: a) Wages, benefits and other working conditions of other local government employees employed in bargaining units of similar employees in other municipal or county agencies of similar size and demographics; b) the values of other benefits available to or received by City employees; c) Cost of Living information; or d) the availability of funds.

During, the hearing on April 1, 2024, the Mayor and City Council heard the presentations from the Union and the City on the disputed issues. Following the presentations, Council Members asked questions of the Union regarding wages of employees employed in bargaining units of similar employees in other municipalities. Additionally, there was discussion on the 18% wage increase in Fiscal Year 2023 by every employee in the bargaining unit and whether this wage increase was considered with respect to the wage demands made by the Union during negotiations.

### **Final Proposals**

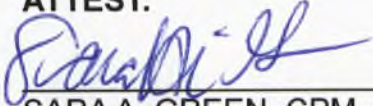
The Mayor and City Council reviewed the proposals offered by the City and the Union during the bargaining sessions and found that the negotiation session held on February 15, 2024, produced the last offer on wages and other economic demands from the City and from the Union prior to the Parties reaching impasse. Under Ordinance No 2017, Section 13-13 (b), the parties were required to reach an agreement on the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement no later than February 1, 2024. However, two additional bargaining sessions were held on February 8, 2024 and February 15, 2024 demonstrating a desire by the Parties to reach an agreement on wages and other economic demands. The Union presented in its March 25, 2024, submission to the City Clerk and during the hearing on April 1, 2024, a proposal with the City paying 5.0% pay increase on July 1, of each year of the contract and a 2.5% step increase each year up to year twenty (20) for a proposed three (3) year contract. However, this new proposal was never submitted to the City for consideration. The Mayor and City Council did not think it was proper to insert itself in the negotiations of the Parties by bridging the gap between the Parties and coming up with a compromise decision. Consequently, the Mayor and City Council did not view this Union proposal as a valid option for decision and only considered the proposals of each party submitted as of February 15, 2024.

## **DECISION**

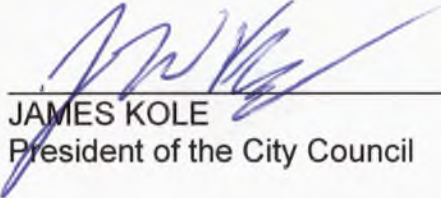
The matter before the Mayor and Council was to decide if they would find in favor of the Employer at a 5% total wage increase or the Employee Organization at a 9.5% total wage increase. The City Council voted with four (4) yes votes and one (1) abstention to approve

the Employer proposal of a 5% total wage increase. The Mayor concurred with the decision of the City Council.

**ATTEST:**

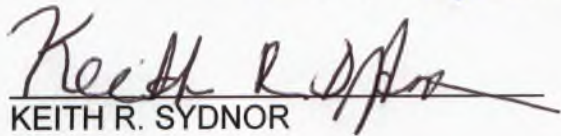


SARAA. GREEN, CPM, CMC  
City Clerk



JAMES KOLE  
President of the City Council

**APPROVED** this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2024.



KEITH R. SYDNOR  
Mayor