



# City of Bowie

15901 Excalibur Road  
Bowie, Maryland 20716

## REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JULY 12, 2021

### CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the Bowie City Council was held on Monday, July 12, 2021, in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Mayor Pro Tem Boafo called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Pro Tem Boafo led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

### QUORUM:

In attendance were Councilmembers Boafo, Esteve, Gardner (arrived 8:18 p.m.), Harrison, Ndebumadu and Woolfley, City Manager Lott, Assistant City Manager Mears, City Clerk Hernandez, and Staff.

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. Joe Puhalla, Melling Ln – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management. Comments attached.
2. Joy Wolfe – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.
3. Jared Hackley – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.
4. Rick Foster, Megans Chance Ct – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.
5. Sandy Milligan – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.
6. Reverend Dr. Angela Kittrell, Pastor at Bowie United Methodist Church – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.
7. Thomas Willoughby – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.
8. Gabriella Sinkovic – Spoke in favor of Emerald Golf Management.

Five additional comments were received via email. Those comments have been attached for the record.

### CITY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

#### A. Appointments/Reappointments/Swearing-In:

1. Anabel Washington was sworn-in as a member of the Bowie Youth Council. She had been appointed at the July 6, 2021 City Council Meeting.

### CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Lott announced that July 29<sup>th</sup> will be the last printed edition of the Bowie Blade due to a shortage of advertisers and a lack of revenue. There will be a Bowie section on the Capital Gazette website.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilmember Harrison made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items: A) Approval of July 6, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes; B) Adoption of Resolution R-48-21 Approving the Application and Receipt of Financing for the FY 2022 Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Community Legacy Application, (the "Project") Further Described in the Application Dated July 1, 2021, (the "Application"), to be Financed Either Directly by the Department of Housing and Community Development (the "Department") of the State of Maryland or Through Other Departments or Agencies of the State of Maryland; and C) Adoption of Resolution R-49-21 Accepting a Bid Proposal for Traffic Signal Maintenance Services. Councilmember Woolfley seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Adoption of Resolution R-50-21 Awarding a Contract to the University of Baltimore Jacob France Institute to Prepare an Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan – Economic Development Director, John Henry King stated that staff took note of Council's discussion at their last meeting about having more public interest sessions and calculated the additional cost for doing so. Resolution R-50-21 voids Resolution R-46-21, which was adopted at the July 6, 2021 Council Meeting, and awards the contract for \$105,419.

Councilmember Harrison motioned to adopt Resolution R-50-21. Councilmember Esteve seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Bowie Loans Programs Briefing – Ms. Shelly Gross-Wade, President and CEO of FSC First, Inc. presented on the different programs they manage and the services they have provided to Bowie businesses during COVID. FSC First is a premier non-traditional lending partner to businesses in Bowie. They provide creative and innovative financing that other lenders would not usually consider. They structure a-typical deals with creative terms, and their capabilities are broad, including leveraging funds. They also manage the City of Bowie's Revolving Loan Fund which is currently capitalized at \$450,000. During COVID they had seven new grant programs which provided \$37,000,000 to 159 small businesses and provided an additional \$1,200,000 to 14 businesses with another grant.

Councilmember Woolfley asked about FSC's expense and process for borrowers in default. Ms. Gross-Wade responded that they are patient and work with the borrower so long as they are cooperative to see if they can recover. If they end up in default, FSC First activates their personal guarantee which means they must become gainfully employed and they are obligated to pay FSC First as another creditor. FSC First will also liquidate any assets that they have pledged as collateral. Councilmember Woolfley asked if the work is done at FSC First. Ms. Gross-Wade stated that it is done at FSC First's expense, that the City is not billed for that, and that they outsource this work to a law firm specializing in SBA liquidations. She also stated that one of their board members specializes in commercial liquidations.

Mayor Pro Tem Bofo thanked Ms. Gross-Wade for her presentation and for FSC First's efforts, especially during COVID.

B. Bowie Golf Course – Assistant City Manager Mears gave the staff report, stating that the City has leased the City owned golf course to Bowie Golf Management since 1981. Their current lease expires on September 30, 2021, and the owners of that group will cease operation of the business. In preparation for that, an RFP was issued seeking qualified respondents for a long-term ground lease of

the property, and management, operation, capital improvements & maintenance of a public golf course.

The City received two proposals for the management of the Golf Course, from Indigo Golf Partners and Emerald Golf Management, neither of which met all of the significant goals of the RFP, including the leasing of the property, providing capital financing for needed major capital improvements, and a long-term relationship with the City. While the proposals did not meet all the requirements of the RFP, City staff recommended continuing with the process to allow golf to continue to be a City of Bowie amenity. Assistant City Manager Mears stated that the management company would need to hire the day-to-day staff and City staff would like to see staff currently there be interviewed and allowed to continue on regardless of which proposal is accepted. With Indigo Golf Partners, there was a clear difference in management experience from the other proposal as they have many years of experience; they have many successful examples of working with municipal golf courses; and in terms of the management of capital items necessary for the future, they work with capital budgets of expending approximately \$10,000,000 per year. It would be beneficial to have that experience for the City. Assistant City Manager Mears asked Council to make a motion to direct the City Manager to negotiate a golf management agreement with Indigo Golf Partners at a term and rate note to exceed those included in the proposal.

Councilmember Esteve thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and summed up the City's current situation with the Bowie Golf Course. He stated that golf should continue and that based on the proposals, it is apparent that the City will have to make some capital investments to have golf continue as a public amenity. He also stated that it is important to have a local management company and that it is hard to argue against a local proposal. Councilmember Esteve stated that there are advantages and disadvantages to a national or regional footprint. He feels confident that Emerald's proposal is going to be the best one long-term for residents, golfers, and taxpayers.

Councilmember Woolfley stated that he was hoping to have an arrangement similar to what was in place the past 40 years. He asked if there were any indications during the walk through with bidders if there were any similar arrangements elsewhere, where the management companies were providing capital funding. Assistant City Manager Mears stated that they did not have any conversations in that regard. He also stated that there were several folks who were at the walk through and that due to the lack of proposals received, this was not something that was going to be supported. Councilmember Woolfley stated that the City can pursue an arrangement like they are discussing or can do this in-house.

Councilmember Ndebumadu thanked supporters for attending and stated that she regularly plays golf at the golf course. She had questions on the lease/structure of the proposals and the management fees, the financial section, the public/private partnership, the management of general golf operations, the utilization of technology to support the customer experience, and the Emerald findings section related to Community Development Cooperation funding.

Councilmember Harrison asked if there was a minority partner in the Indigo Golf Partners group. Assistant City Manager Mears stated that no he was not aware of one but that it was not a question that the RFP asked.

Councilmember Gardner stated that he is very familiar with the management currently in place, and that capital improvements are needed, but that John Hubert is a pillar of the community. He stated that with proper funding, improvements could be made.

Councilmember Esteve motioned to have Council hold a Special Meeting on Tuesday, July 13 at 8:00 p.m. virtually, to go into Closed Session for discussions on the contract and then reconvene into open session to award a contract. Councilmember Woolfley seconded the motion. The motion passed

July 6, 2021

6-0.

C. Discussion on Voting Center in Bowie for 2022 Elections – Council directed staff to begin working with the Prince George’s County Board of Elections to find a voting location within the City for the 2022 election cycle that is at a location other than the Bowie Gymnasium. Council requested an update by early October and stated that if the discussion with the Prince George’s County Board of Elections is not fruitful, it is important to find ways to mitigate issues had at previous elections at the Gymnasium such as lack of access to the gym, traffic, and long lines. Councilmembers Woolfley and Esteve stated that those issues are not acceptable for the City’s residents. Suggested locations are the Bowie Baysox Stadium (a Prince George’s County property), the Sears property, or the library.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Ndebumadu motioned to adjourn the Regular City Council meeting. Councilmember Esteve seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Awilda Hernandez, MMC  
City Clerk

Remarks to Mayor and Bowie City Council  
July 12, 2021

Dear Mayor Adams and members of the Council. My name is Joe Puhalla, and I have been a Bowie resident for 39 years. I am a former President of the Bowie Chamber of Commerce, A Commissioner in the Bowie Boys and Girls Club, Chair of The Community Advisory Committee Bowie High School for five years and President of the BSR Board of Directors for three years. Currently, I volunteer at Anne Arundel Medical Center. I mention these involvements to highlight that community involvement has been a very important part of my life.

I have seen the development of Bowie Golf Club for most of its existence. I knew Dusty and Fred and John. My son Brian was a very good golfer – winning the County Golf Championship as a senior at Bowie High School. He looked up to Fred Ryder, Dusty Shrodes and John Huber – he recently told me that they not only helped develop his golf skills, but also his development as a person. Isn't this part and parcel of what a community golf course should be?

This course, a partnership between the City of Bowie and Bowie Golf Management is testimony to what commitment to quality management and ensuring that the course is seen as an integral component of the community at large. I have always been impressed with the professionalism and dedication of those who have made this 40 year relationship work.

I have spent considerable time at the course over the past two months to observe the day to day operation first hand. I offer the following:

- Those who come to play are not just patrons they are part of the Bowie Golf family. Most know the staff and spend some time talking about their experiences, families, etc.
- The patrons represent every race, gender, age group and socioeconomic group
- Staff consistently work to ensure that needs of patrons are met (example of cell phone lost)
- I came to the course the morning after the recent violent storm. Mr. Huber was heading up an integrated crisis management team response – dealing with BGE re: the restoration of power, overseeing the cutting and removal of fallen trees from the course, removing debris from the greens in short, bring the entire team together to ready the course for reopening.

Mayor Adams and members of the Council – I have been a part of the 40 year history of the Bowie Golf Club. All things considered, I believe they have been very good years. As you weigh the decision before you tonight, I hope that 40 years from now as the community looks back at what has transpired, I trust that they (and many of you) will be able to say that you made the correct decision – to select Emerald Golf to continue to build the partnership with the City and carry on the excellent foundation that has been built.

## Awilda Hernandez

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**From:** Kenneth Rothermel <kroth.sr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 4:01 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** {EXTERNAL}; Bowie Golf Course

My name is Kenneth Rothermel. I have been a resident of Bowie since 1970. I have been a full member of the Bowie Golf Club for more than 10 years. I believe the current management of the course should be maintained. They are familiar with the property, they treat the golfers with respect, and enhance the city Bowie.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

## Awilda Hernandez

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**From:** Rosann Ndebumadu  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 4:46 PM  
**To:** Awilda Hernandez  
**Subject:** Fwd: {EXTERNAL}: Bowie Golf

All my best,

Councilwoman Ndebumadu

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**From:** marg106118 (null) <marg106118@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 9:28:51 AM  
**To:** Rosann Ndebumadu <rndebumadu@cityofbowie.org>  
**Subject:** {EXTERNAL}: Bowie Golf

I am aware that this evening the city council will be discussing the management of the Bowie golf course. Being an avid golfer and a frequent player at Bowie I would like to see the present management continue to oversee and run this course. John has been a with Bowie a long time and has been an excellent manger. He knows the facility and the community of Bowie. Let's keep this management.

Marguerite Spetrini  
Ann Arbor Court.  
Bowie, 20716

Sent from my iPhone

## Awilda Hernandez

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**From:** Rosann Ndebumadu  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 4:47 PM  
**To:** Awilda Hernandez  
**Subject:** Fwd: {EXTERNAL}: Bowie Golf Course

All my best,

Councilwoman Ndebumadu

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**From:** Pat Ruggiero <patruggiero1959@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 9:09:57 AM  
**To:** Rosann Ndebumadu <rndebumadu@cityofbowie.org>  
**Subject:** {EXTERNAL}: Bowie Golf Course

I understand the council will be deciding on management of the golf course at tonight's meeting. I have played Bowie for many many years and have always been happy with the management. I would urge the council to vote for allowing the current management to continue to manage the golf course. I think they do a very fine job and it would be advantageous to have a local group handling the course.

Excuse my thumbs--Sent from my iPhone.

Excuse my thumbs--Sent from my iPhone.



## Awilda Hernandez

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**From:** Rosann Ndebumadu  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 4:47 PM  
**To:** Awilda Hernandez  
**Subject:** Fwd: {EXTERNAL}: Bowie Golf Course

All my best,

Councilwoman Ndebumadu

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**From:** Carl Plummer <Inplum@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 11, 2021 9:38:08 PM  
**To:** Dufour Woolfley <dwoolfley@cityofbowie.org>; Rosann Ndebumadu <rndebumadu@cityofbowie.org>; Ingrid Harrison <iharrison@cityofbowie.org>  
**Cc:** douglas.peters@senate.state.md.us <douglas.peters@senate.state.md.us>; geraldine.valentino@house.state.md.us <geraldine.valentino@house.state.md.us>  
**Subject:** {EXTERNAL}: Bowie Golf Course

I understand that the Bowie City Council will be meeting tomorrow to review and decide the future of the Bowie Golf Course. I'm asking for your support of the Emerald Golf Management proposal over the Indigo Golf Partners' proposal. The Emerald Golf Management Group is a local company comprised of local Bowie and Prince George's County individuals compared to a huge out-of-state corporation, i.e. Indigo Golf Partners (formerly Billy Casper Golf) Indigo, as referenced in their RFP, has developed over 300 "high scale" daily fee, resort and private golf facilities. Bowie Golf Course is a beautiful Municipal Golf Course that has been in existence for over 40 years, and provides much needed recreation, and beautiful open space for the citizens, as well as considerable native habitats and wildlife that are part of the course. During the majority of this time, the City of Bowie has not lost one dime of taxpayers' money to operate and maintain the course. Quite the contrary. The City has received lease payments in the neighborhood of \$78,000 a year for nearly 40 years, totaling nearly \$3,000,000. The Vice President of The Emerald Golf Management Group, John Huber, has been at the course for as long as I've been a city residence, which is 44 years. Mr. Huber has been the general manager and head professional since 2012 and has been responsible for all aspects of operations and management. Mr. Huber has the support and confidence of the majority of the members and golfers at the course. His company has the experience and necessary resources to invest into the course. The last thing we need is another "upscale" golf course in the area. We already have Lake Presidential, Oak Creek, and Renditions Golf Courses, which frankly cost a considerable amount of money to play. From reviewing Indigo's RFP, it's clear their mission is to "generate revenue." In fact they reference the need to invest \$ 8 million dollars to address deferred infrastructure. If a company is willing to invest that amount of money into a little municipal golf course, then the only way they can get a return on their investment, is to raise the cost of golf to the citizens of this city. The 8 million figure, I believe, is drastically inflated. As mentioned in Emerald's RFP, they believe the infrastructure figure is closer to \$3 million dollars, which would actually reflect the lease payments the City has received over the years. The City would be merely reinvesting the money received in lease payments back into the course. Indigo has no connection to the city or Prince George's County, and thus no sense of community. I might add that the word "Municipal" means associated with or belonging to a city or town that has its own local government. Bowie Golf Course is just that – a nice municipal golf course, and a "diamond in the rough" that should not be turned over to a huge conglomerate that has no connection to the City, and is only interested in making as much money as it can. Does the course need some improvements? Yes, and Emerald Golf Management has the conviction, and resources to make those improvements so the course continues to prosper and also be a source of revenue to the City. Thank you for your time, and hopefully your support.

Sincerely,

Landis Plummer  
12302 Tilbury Lane  
Bowie, Md., 20715

## Awilda Hernandez

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**From:** My Name <carrieswb@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 6:40 PM  
**To:** Awilda Hernandez  
**Subject:** {EXTERNAL}: Citizens Participation Golf Course

Good Evening, Mayor Adams, City Council, City Staff and residents of Bowie. My name is Carrie Bridges and as the Chair of the City of Bowie's Communities Recreation Committee I would like to share with you our committee's view on the Bowie Golf Course. After carefully reviewing Staff's memo concerning the Bowie Golf Course, this committee is in agreement with their findings and recommendations. We are encouraging the City Council to accept this recommendation and to direct, Mr. Lott, the City Manager, to negotiate a new management contract as quickly as possible. Time is of the essence because the existing lease expires at the end of September and it would not be beneficial to the citizens of this city if there is a gap in management. We are also recommending that the new management honor any commitments made by the current lessee. We are aware that they only received two RFP but a bird in hand beats two in a bush. Staff vetted the two proposals received and the CRC believes this matter should be decided upon immediately in order to have a seamless transition to the new management.

Thanks for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sent from the all new AOL app for Android