

Unapproved

Commissioners of Ridgely

Special Meeting/Work Session December 15, 2008

There was a Work Session held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00 pm. Chuck Hunter, President; Linda Epperly-Glover, Commissioner; Kathy Smith, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; Merl Evans, Chief of Police; Chuck Creason, Lt. Police; Joanne Stepp, Admin. Asst.; Missy Vanskiver, Asst. Clerk; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present. Dan Divilio-Times Record, Cathy Schwab, Rick Schwab, Elsie Ebling, Leo Stepp, Dale Mumford, Betty J. Mumford, Janice White, Brenda Walls, and JOK Walsh-President of the Caroline Co. Historical Society, and two ladies from Tourism office were also present. President Hunter reviewed the agenda – 1) JOK Walsh regarding rail preservation, 2) Consideration of Award of Bid for old spray irrigation system, 3) Consideration of loan for Bell St. pump station, and 4) Consideration of FY09 Budget amendments – Ord. No. 317. There will be an Executive Session after this meeting to discuss one more personnel item, pending legal info from Town Attorney.

JOK Walsh talked about the town's unique history. Ridgely was a railroad town. He said he was only recently made aware of the fact that the rails were going to be covered over for rails to trails. He requested that the committee take another look at saving the rails (approx. 800 feet), some are dated 1903. He said they could run the trail parallel to the rails, north or south side. Martin Sokolich said the lease agreement was between MDOT and DNR. DNR has no interest in the tracks because they weren't going to take possession of them any way. It specifically said that MDOT had interest in removing and retaining those tracks.

JOK said he spoke with Sylvia Ramsey at MDOT and she indicated that she didn't think it would be a problem to leave the tracks there.

JOK talked about the various destination projects they have planned in the county to draw tourists and presented some interesting history of the town.

Robin Eaton said there was some discussion early on in the rails to trails project about leaving the tracks and the caboos where it was and working around it. The problem was storm water management. He said if you leave the tracks there is going to have to be more ditch work and a storm water management pond somewhere.

JOK suggested they call in an engineer and take another look at it before they commit to a plan. Nancy Gearhart said they had been concerned about dealing with Delmarva Power's easement (now they have found out there isn't one), and DNR had told them they had to stay on the rail bed. They had misinformation the first time around.

Martin said the budget was an issue.

Joe said this project has been talked about for quite a few years now. There was a committee formed to look into it and there has been a lot of time put into it. He said he invited Sylvia Ramsey from MDOT and John Wilson from DNR to this meeting, along with Cindy Todd our consultant, but they could not make it. The plan has been completed and reviewed; there was a public hearing. It got through DNR and MDOT. If there is any change to that plan it will have to go back through that system.

Joe said if we change it we will have to find more funds; the \$200,000 won't cover it.

JOK said he would be glad to be in charge of finding more money.

There were several suggestions/questions as to doing the trail in sections on either end and leaving the section between Central and Park Ave. until last.

Commissioner Smith suggested EDC and Rails to Trails get together to meet on this.

JOK talked about the restoration work the Co. Historical Society has been doing on the telephone exchange building in Memorial Park. It appears to have been built in 1937 or so. Should put basic exhibits in that building and leave it open during the day. He also talked about ongoing projects in other areas of the county. They have taken on 47 projects in the county.

JOK said USDA originally said they needed to have a written agreement with the town. He presented some possible basic conditions that would set the relationship between the Historical Society and the town (presented possible agreement). The three main objectives are: 1) historic preservation, education, and small business development through tourism; 2) the Society has undertaken to do this project; and 3) the Society would continue to be the owner of the building. They don't want to be the owner. Originally the town was going to do the inside of the telephone building; now the Co. Historical Society is going to do it at their cost. They (Co. Historical Society) could lease the building for \$1 for 99 years. If the town wants them to remove the building they agree to do that within 180 days. USDA wants the county to be the owner; but it needs to be insured by the town and the town would need to lock and unlock the building. The town would be responsible for building maintenance after it is renovated, but the county is willing to help with some of that.

The ESHI grant is being taken back, but we can reapply later.

Two of the ladies from the county tourism office spoke about creating tourism destination sites.

Irrigation Bids – David said they advertised and received two bids. Mark Callahan's bid was the highest, plus he wanted to move the big system himself which would be a cost saving to the town.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to accept Mark Callahan's bid, seconded by Commissioner Smith. Unanimously approved.

Bell Street Pump Station Loan – Joe said he sent letters to 7 banks. 2 of the banks responded they needed more information centered around how the town intended to pay the loan back. He said the Commissioners are considering an impact fee, and should do this, for those housing units going into the Bell Street Pump Station. Funds would also come from sewer fees. The 2 banks said with no development happening, the town would be looking at increasing rates to pay for the loan.

We received a check from Caroline Co. for \$36,300 to be applied toward the pump station. The loan would now be \$75,000. Queenstown Bank is offering a \$75,000 tax-free loan with a fixed interest rate of 4.5% for 15 years. The payments would be \$573.75/mo. This can be covered in our budget without increasing fees.

President Hunter made a motion to pay Krocker \$36,300 now with the balance to come after a loan is agreed to, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously passed.

Consideration of Ord. No 317 – FY2009 Budget Amendment – President Hunter said they are still looking into the cell phone issues. They have talked about keeping all the town vehicles in town as a means of cutting fuel costs. Don't have an answer yet.

He said they have received comments from residents asking that they not take the cars away

from the police. The Commissioners are listening.

President Hunter said Robin volunteered to come up with some better ways to manage fuel.

Robin said we currently have 2 above-ground tanks for gas and diesel. They have meters on the pumps. Public Works keeps handwritten logs of mileage and use. He can account for all the diesel his department uses. There is a camera on the pumps and they are inside a locked gate.

Could continue using the current system but get 2 new meters and an outside weatherproof box with the sheets and enforce all employees to fill it out so they can account for all fuel use.

Additional cost would be about \$425.

Option 1 - They could also set up a key system. Each employee would have a key to a specific spot which would run simultaneously with that odometer to track each employee's use.

Someone would have to read those meters. The cost installed would be \$12,159 (including 2 meters and 2 new pumps). This system won't work with the existing pumps.

Option 2 - Key pad system. Each driver would be issued a pin number and would punch in the vehicle, mileage, etc. It would be integrated with a system that could be loaded into a laptop and could print reports for every user. It would even be able to give you mpg of that vehicle. Cost - \$18,420.

Option 3 - Wright's Express Cards - There are various locations where these could be used. The towns of Denton and Greensboro use these. There would be a card for each person and the only thing they can be used for is gas or diesel. Each month you get a report for each person. The inconvenience is that it would not be on site, and there would be some initial costs. He would have to get a small tank for gas for the back of the truck for small equipment (about \$500).

Option 4 - He contacted the county and they would accept us as additional users on their system. The only location is in Denton. There would be cards for each vehicle and each driver. You can set limits on the amount per vehicle (with Wright's Express Cards as well). Still would need the truck tank.

There was some discussion on usage, costs, liability, etc.

Gentleman from Foster's said he would talk to his supplier and see if he could get a better price for the town.

Ordinance No. 317 - Joe said this ordinance would amend the FY 2009 Budget. \$11,500 will be added to sewer revenue for the sale of the spray irrigation rigs. There is an adjustment in water/sewer income based on a full year's assessment of what we have coming in. General Fund Revenue - \$1,355,951.25, Sewer Fund Revenue - \$1,803,565, and Water Fund Revenue - \$219,500.

Major changes that were made was one person out of the administrative side, two out of the police side, and one out of public works.

There was an increase in workmen's comp expense of about \$7,500. There were one or two small items in water/sewer, about \$250 cut in membership dues. Electric for the Ridgely House in sewer was \$1500 and water was \$2000 so we are making that even (\$1500 each). The total projected costs for the general fund are \$1,340,927. This will leave a surplus of \$15,024.25. Sewer costs are \$1,792,701, leaving a surplus of \$10,864.

Water costs are \$219,352, leaving a surplus of just \$148.

Joe explained that this will bring the FY 2009 budget in line. He has made the recommendation that they look at the trash fee to start addressing the deficit. This could be anywhere from \$37.50/qtr. to \$45/qtr. \$37.50/qtr. will bring in for the remaining part of FY09 \$43,200. This

amount could be used to start reducing the deficit. \$45/qtr. would bring in \$51,840.

President Hunter made a motion that the Commissioners give up their salaries for the balance of the fiscal year, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover, and opposed by Commissioner Smith.

Dale Mumford questioned the revenues in the general fund (property taxes, local income taxes, etc.)

Joe said real property is what has been billed. \$90,000 for local income taxes was given to him by the state. That may need to be adjusted later.

Commissioner Smith suggested a budget committee.

President Hunter said the auditor wants to meet with the Commissioners in two weeks to finalize the audit. Don't have time for a committee on this now, could have one for the next new budget. Cathy Schwab and Nancy Gearhart said the Commissioners should not give up the little money they get.

President Hunter withdrew the motion for the Commissioners to give up their salaries.

Brenda Walls said she understood the town was out two officers that won't be replaced, so that means there is not 24-hr. coverage? Merl said there is not.

Brenda said we have no one at 2 am. Denton Pharmacy was broken into last week.

Commissioner Smith said she has done a lot of research on this and 5 is the number of officers for 24/7 coverage.

Lt. Creason said that will not work.

President Hunter made a motion to adopt Ord. No. 317 amending the FY 2009 Budget, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Commissioner Smith opposed. Motion passed.

Dale asked that Joe check the state revenues again.

Cathy Schwab expressed concern about the status of the police dept. Public safety needs to come first.

Foster's Market expressed concern for the police as well. Doesn't want to lose any more officers.

President Hunter made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk