

**Commissioners of Ridgely  
Town Meeting  
May 3, 2010**

The May Town Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00 pm. Linda Jo Epperly-Glover, President; Dale Mumford, Commissioner; Anthony Casey, New Commissioner; Diane Wojcik, Town Administrator; Gary Foster, Police Chief; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present.

The following folks were also present: Roger Layton – County Commissioner, Dan Divilio – Times Record, Joanne Stepp, Leo Stepp, Arlene Hege, Cathy Schwab, Rick Schwab, Joyce Faulkner, Melvin Faulkner, Daniel North (BSA), Mike Redgraves, Amy Casey, Roxanne Walls, Dave Walls, Elsie Ebling, Denzil Cheek, and Joanne Shipley.

**Opening** – President Epperly-Glover opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those who protect us.

Incoming President Mumford reported that the April election produced a tie between Linda Epperly-Glover and Anthony Casey.

The Judges of Election held a drawing to see who would get the 3-year term. Elsie Ebling drew Linda's name for the 3-year term.

The Commissioners introduced Stephanie Berkey, who is the new assistant clerk.

President Epperly-Glover said Andrew Markey is the new employee in public works.

She went on to say Commissioner Mumford will be the president for the next two years since he will be the longest sitting commissioner.

At this time Linda Jo Epperly-Glover and Anthony Casey were sworn in.

**Treasurer's Report** – Clerk reported a General Fund balance of \$183,267.55, Sewer Fund - \$16,991.86, and Water Fund - \$1,595.77.

**Historic Society** – Cathy Schwab reported that Old Time Ridgely Days went well. There was a big crowd and they ran out of food. They made just over a thousand dollars.

(More than half way there for the clock.) Need to work on parking for next year.

Cathy thanked Robin and his department for their work on getting the park ready, and the Commissioners for allowing them to again hold the event.

Cathy asked the Commissioners to pick up the tab for the porta-pottie. Commissioners okayed.

Rails to Trails was dedicated that day and there was a lot of representation there; a good showing of elected officials.

Cathy asked if they could move the sign at the telephone building – 30" x 13". It will be placed on the house, out of the way for mowing grass. Asked for Commissioner approval.

Cathy asked that anyone who has any ideas, suggestions for next year to please let them know.

Cathy said they are being presented with an award at the Baltimore College of Art. It was a project where two students came out and took measurements and pictures of our train station for their project. They made a model of it and will present it on Wednesday at 10 am. They will bring the model back.

Rick Schwab said they will try to get John Wilson here at their annual meeting in June to give a duplicate presentation.

**Town Administrator's Report** – Diane reported she has been busy helping downstairs. Diane reported that she finally got an answer regarding the Ridgely Fire Station application for an ARRA grant. Apparently there was only one grant awarded and that was on the western shore. She contacted Sen. Colburn, Addie Eckardt, and Jeanne Haddaway and gave them packets with info about the fire station and a light for Central and 480. Hopes to get some support.

Diane reported that with MML, there is a proxy to file when the elected official will not be attending. This gives the administrative officer the right to vote. Please sign.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion that the Commission President sign the proxy, seconded by Commissioner Casey. Passed.

Diane said Martin Sokolich has suggested a meeting with the Planning Commission or representatives to devise a checklist for those applying for a building permit; a review of the current permit process for repairs and renovations and we should also give public notice. She wants to submit several items for our web site for Public Notice, brush pickup, etc. and feels this information should be included.

Arlene Hege said alley pickup info is already on there, but there is nothing for building permits.

Diane reported that we sold 3 vehicles and removed them from our insurance. There are 3 more to go; including the ambulance. They need to be more visible.

Diane said all the Commissioners have signed the letter to be sent with the Business License application. However, Jack Hall sent another letter talking about amnesty, protective enforcement, etc. Confusing...

President Mumford said we need to get together with Planning and Zoning.

Diane said the issue of a drainage area for Liberty St. has not been solved. Kevin Clark from the County is coming over to look at the problem. If it would be a solution, would it be permissible to obtain a CDBG grant to run a storm drain to the Chicken Bridge drainage ditch by the old Pet Milk plant? She talked to Blair Carmean about it. If so, she will pursue it. Grant applications are due May 21.

Diane said Kiddie Kastle is still going to foreclosure. She brought us a check but it could not be deposited. Have been in close contact with Jack Hall.

Diane said Joanne Stepp stopped by and she found the folder containing the street study she did that tells where all the bad cracks and breaks are. She found that if we are a revitalization area or historic, there is a sidewalk retrofit program that would pay for the sidewalks through the State Highway. In the future, if we should pursue replacement of the old sewer lines, perhaps that would be revitalization and sidewalks could be included.

Diane said Mike Redgraves will try to locate a Boy Scout Troop to help get house numbers on every house.

Diane reported that pertaining to the discussion of the cost of street lights, she called the Cabell Corp. and they pay for the lights at Strawberry Ct.

Diane asked if there was a consensus on riding bikes on the sidewalk, and if we are going to revise Ordinance 185 to allow it?

**Old Business** – President Mumford reviewed the proposed budget for 2011. The State Dept. of Assessments and Taxation anticipates that to receive the same amount of revenue from real property tax the tax rate should be .4616/\$100 of assessed value. Our rate is .481/\$100. This budget is based on .4616 since we have to increase water/wastewater rates. Needs a motion.

Joanne Stepp asked if assessments are being lowered by 17%, how can you get more money?

President Mumford said there isn't much new construction; not sure how they arrived at this.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover asked what happens if you leave the tax rate at .481?

President Mumford said 2/3 of the budget expenses are for personnel. There is not much to be cut. He anticipates about \$100,000 less in expenses and \$60,000 less revenue.

The budget includes \$25,000 for a new police car.

President Mumford said when an employee leaves we have to pay them for days they earned. There is \$10,000 put aside for severance, then maybe we could hire someone to work side by side with the person they are replacing.

President Mumford noted highlights as follows: Lost \$112,000 in Highway User Funds, had to pay a loan off to Provident State Bank of \$12,000, and unsure of income tax funds (so far we are coming up short). In September we refinanced the Ridgely House and the Street Loan. In July we have to pay \$10,000 to MDE followed by \$25,000 in February, 2011. It goes up after that.

President Mumford said we've been talking about setting aside the 11% additional water and wastewater and coming up with some documentation that will not allow those funds to be withdrawn without the approval of all three commissioners.

There was about \$10,000 spent on overtime for snow removal - was not budgeted.

President Mumford asked for questions on the proposed budget.

Rick Schwab and Joanne Stepp questioned the property taxes. Most saw a 17% drop in their assessments – how could you get more revenue?

Rev. Denzil Cheek agreed.

President Mumford said the Homestead Tax Credit plays into that too. It's about \$20,000 difference.

County Commissioner Roger Layton said not too many years ago, because the assessments were going wild – the Commissioners put a 5% cap on it. Now that the assessments are going down, you really won't see a big reduction in your bill because it is falling back to that 5% level. He thinks assessments will start coming back up in 2012.

Cathy Schwab asked if the part-time person hired for public works will become fulltime soon.

President Mumford said when you hire a fulltime person you are obligated for 7.3% for retirement, health care, etc. and all of a sudden the fringe benefits are 30 to 40% of the salary.

Cathy Schwab said she has been disheartened over the last several months because she feels the Town looks a little seedy in some areas. Little things don't cost the Town a lot of money and makes a big difference.

President Mumford said he understands that, but we are getting through this year by the skin of our teeth.

President Mumford said we will discuss the FY 2011 Budget again on May 17 and vote on it at that time.

**New Business** – **Resolution for annual increase for water and wastewater** – To be effective July 1, 2010 as agreed – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Casey. Passed unanimously.

**Abolish COG** (Council of Governments) – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to abolish the COG, seconded by Commissioner Casey. Passed unanimously.

**Public Comment** – Cathy Schwab thanked Chief Foster for his help and reminded folks about the Farmer's Market – Friday from 4 pm to 7 pm.

Dave Walls said the new guy is really covering some ground with the lawn mower – good job.

President Mumford said he looked forward to working with the Commissioners and adjourned for refreshments.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson, Clerk