

**Commissioners of Ridgely
Minutes
May 2, 2011**

The May Commissioners Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00pm. Dale Mumford, President; Linda Jo Epperly-Glover, Commissioner; Anthony Casey, Commissioner; Diane Wojcik, Town Administrator; Carol Balderson, Out-going Clerk-Treasurer; Stephanie Berkey, Incoming Clerk-Treasurer, Melissa Leonard, Asst. Clerk-Treasurer; Gary Foster, Police Chief; Gerald Sutton, John Balderson, Dan Devilio, Jeff & Carolyn Garrett were present.

President Mumford led the Pledge of Allegiance which was followed by a moment of silence in honor of our military and recent events involving the death of Osama Bin Laden.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Commissioner Epperly-Glover to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2011 workshop. Seconded by Commissioner Casey, approved.

President Mumford had Commissioner Casey step forward to take his oath which was administered by the out-going Clerk-Treasurer, Carol Balderson.

President Mumford announced that Carol Balderson has announced her retirement. He thanked her for many years of devoted services and a round of applause. Carol spoke for a few minutes reflecting on her career and indicating that she has worked for 26 years under 21 different Commissioners. She is very much looking forward to her time off.

President Mumford discussed the personnel issues at hand. Stephanie Berkey has been the Assistant Clerk-Treasurer and needs to be appointed as the Clerk-Treasurer. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to appoint Stephanie Berkey as the new Clerk-Treasurer, Commissioner Casey seconded, unanimous approval. Melissa Leonard has been a temp in our office since January 2011. She has done quite well in the position and needs to be appointed as the Assistant Clerk-Treasurer. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion that we appoint Melissa Leonard to the position of Assistant Clerk-Treasurer, Commissioner Casey seconded, unanimous approval.

TREASURERS REPORT: The Clerk-Treasurer reported a General Fund Balance of \$228,445.17, Sewer Fund - \$147,760.29, Water Fund - \$35,885.83. Bills were presented for approval. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to pay the bills, Commissioner Casey seconded, passed. The Commissioners were reminded that the tax rate needs to be set and our letter to the County is due in May.

POLICE: Chief Foster discussed the upcoming Old Time Ridgely Days and the Strawberry Festival. Permits for the race and the Strawberry Festival Parade have been approved. There is a meeting on May 13, 2011 for the Homeland Grants. We are probably going to be getting \$1,000 - \$1,500 in reimbursable funds. The Homeland

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Grant should be for about \$7,500 hopefully in June. The signs are now in the Rails to Trails park and will be up in the Martin Sutton Park soon. We have been monitoring the speed in Lister Estates and we are not seeing any egregious violations. The majority of the vehicles are going about 18-22 mph. If there is a specific time that needs to be focused on, please let the Chief know so that he can provide coverage.

President Mumford informed the Chief that at the last budget meeting it was discussed that the officers use their own phones for Police work. Chief indicated that they were requesting \$50.00/month to help cover the cost of their cell phones as they are an important part of the job. President Mumford indicated that the Commissioners had approved the \$50.00/month for the new fiscal year. Forms would need to be signed stating that the Officer is responsible for the phone, not the town.

Chief Foster asked if we should proceed with bids for a new vehicle. He has several different vehicle and financing options. We are looking at a 4wd Ford Escape and the cost without equipment is \$23,500. Ordered vehicles will not be ready until September. President Mumford indicated that we have \$4,000 in this year's budget, so a down payment would come out of this. Chief Foster was advised to proceed with getting 3 quotes and then come back to the Commissioners with a breakdown of the options and his recommendation.

Cameras- Chief met with Jeff Jackson and we are moving forward with the cameras in Town, but need to find out where we can attach them. Chief also reminded everyone that this is the time of year for increases in bike thefts and theft from unlocked vehicles – be mindful.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: A copy of the Town Administrator's report is attached. Diane Wojcik offered congratulations on behalf of the Town to newly re-appointed Commissioner Casey.

Diane needs approval of Resolution 2011-01 and Resolution 2011-02 to proceed with the CDBG applications for the Fire Station and Maryland Avenue. A public hearing will also need to be scheduled for our next meeting. Everything will need to be finalized and the grant request signed by the next meeting as the application is due on May 20th.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover motioned to have President Mumford sign the Resolutions, Commissioner Casey seconded, passed.

Ordinance #2011-341 – Mobile Storage Units needs to be signed tonight. Cary Malkus counted the current PODS and there are 3. We will notify them of the new ordinance. We introduced the Ordinance No. 2011-340 for Property Maintenance Addition to the Section 302.4 weeds at the last meeting. This Ordinance outlines noxious vegetation and adds bamboo to the list. This also needs to be signed. Commissioner Casey made a motion to sign the Ordinance No. 2011-340, President Mumford seconded, passed. Commissioner Epperly-Glover motioned to pass Ordinance No. 2011-340, Commissioner Casey seconded, passed.

207 Park Avenue – There is a great deal of controversy over 207 Park Avenue, the burned house of Viola Raikes. She does not accept mail, so it is very hard to deal with the property and the problem. A neighbor is upset because this devalues the neighboring homes and wants action taken. Cary Malkus has inspected the property and we have

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pictures. The law requires that the property be “secured” and per Mr. Malkus, it is. Commissioner Casey indicated that she should be charged the vacant property fee and if that is not paid, she will be subject to next year’s tax sale.

Diane presented the updated trash collection agreement for 2012-2015. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to accept the contract, Commissioner Casey seconded, passed.

Town Land Behind Cemetery: This property was discussed previously when we asked SHA to consider it for a mitigation area. They do not want it because of the trees. We have been asked by the Cemetery Association to donate a portion for the Cemetery.

President Mumford indicated that when developing begins again that land will be valuable to us. The Commissioners agreed to just hold onto the land for now.

Edward Hopkins wrote a letter to the Commissioners requesting which we consider to be noxious weeds. He states that he wants “to continue to grow plants for his business.” He does not have any business license. He wants the formal scientific names (genus, species and cultivar) of the plants, allowing him to differentiate between varieties of the same common plant. Diane has sent him a letter asking for a copy of his business license and a list of what kind of plants he is wanting to plant so that we could take it to a specialist.

President Mumford indicated that we have the Ordinance that was just signed which specifies which plants, as examples, are noxious. President Mumford questioned if there would be anything more than the Ordinance that would be necessary. Diane indicated that as Mr. Hopkins property is not zoned agricultural, we would wait to proceed until he could produce a business license. President Mumford indicated that the bamboo is growing out of control. The Judge ordered that we are authorized to control it. This could keep dragging on unless the Judge authorizes the removal of the bamboo.

Commissioner Casey reminded everyone that there is now an Ordinance that makes the bamboo illegal in the Town and that the State is taking steps to do the same. Diane is working getting a copy of the State regulations. President Mumford said that in fairness to the neighbors we need to follow the course of actions and have Cary cite Mr. Hopkins on what the Judge has approved.

OLD BUSINESS: Cowbarn – Diane took our attorney, Jack Hall a box of information on Friday. President Mumford said that we need to get everyone here to review the situation. Diane said she would get with Jack Hall about this.

We have someone new that is cleaning the Ridgely House and she is doing a wonderful job.

NEW BUSINESS: President Mumford said that we are working on the new budget, including looking into different options for electric, including generating our own. We still have another 11% increase for the water/sewer (the last of the 3 increases). The State has unexpectedly given us back \$36,000 of the Highway User Fund after taking away \$125,000 for 2 years. Our General Fund looks like there will be about a \$62,000 balance to the good. This is money that we owe ourselves. The budget will be discussed again at the workshop.

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Carol Balderson indicated that the General Code needs to be updated and if we can put it in the budget, we should. The Charter changes need to be put in as well as several others. John Balderson indicated that Medifast will be happy to take 2 bumpouts, which delighted the Commissioners. Jerry Sutton pointed out that Medifast is very helpful to the Lions Club.

Carolyn Garrett wanted to discuss with the Commissioners the water/sewer bill at her property at 102 Sunset. Asst. Clerk-Treasurer, Melissa Leonard informed that Commissioners that Mrs. Garrett had been in on Friday to dispute the past due amount on her water bill. According to Mrs. Garrett, she had dropped off a letter to the Commissioners back in August of 2008 requesting abatements on a property that had been vacant since 2007. The Town has no record of this letter and Carol had gone back in the minutes and could find no reference to this letter or a discussion. This property is now on the County's tax sale list. Mrs. Garrett would like an abatement for the letter that she sent in August of 2008. Melissa noted that after researching the account she noted usage in June & December 2008 and March 2009. The Garrett's indicated that the meter was turned off at that point. Mrs. Garrett discussed that she had given the letter in August of 2008 to previous Asst. Clerk-Treasurer, Melissa Vanskiver. She had assumed that everything had been taken care of and that the charges would be abated. When the vacant house fees were enacted she only paid the \$82.50. Melissa indicated that in order to have the vacant house fee applied there needs to be a zero balance. Commissioner Casey asked for the abatement amount. President Mumford said that even with the vacant house fee, you cannot deny the usage. Mr. Garrett said that is was cut-off at the meter after the leak. Commissioner Casey said that it shows 13,000 gallons of usage in 2008-2009, which is a big difference. President Mumford said that we need to be consistent with our policy. Melissa suggested that we can abate all but the actual usage. The last time we show usage is March 31, 2009. Per the policy the property must be vacant for 3 months which would put the account to June. The amount of the usage would need to be reconciled. Mrs. Garrett indicated that even though she had been receiving bills, she assumed that it had been taken care of. Once, she did question the bill and was told that "we don't know what is going to happen." Commissioner Epperly – Glover questioned who cut the meter off? Mr. Garrett was not sure if it was the Town. President Mumford said that if they pay the arrearage of usage and then we can apply the vacant house fee to the appropriate quarters (Oct 1, 2010 to present) and abate the difference. Moving forward the vacant house fee will be due each quarter until the water is turned back on. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve the abatements and apply the correct charges, Commissioner Casey seconded, passed.

President Mumford reminded everyone of the Old Time Ridgely Days and the Clock Dedication.

Jerry Sutton reminded everyone of the Strawberry festival and this year's 5K Run/Walk and that there will be pony rides, new this year.

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Jeff Garrett informed the Commissioners that Ridgely resident Charlie Poukish made “Yahoo” for his rockfish catch.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Casey seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Berkey
Clerk-Treasurer