

**COMMISSIONERS MEETING
JUNE 6, 2011**

The June Commissioners Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00pm. President Dale Mumford, Commissioner Anthony Casey, Chief of Police Gary Foster, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Jerry Sutton and Dan Devilio were in attendance. Commissioner Linda Jo Epperly-Glover arrived at 7:15pm.

President Mumford led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING: The meeting began with a public hearing for the proposed budget for fiscal year 2012 and for the increase in charges (11%) to the users of the Town water and wastewater systems. President Mumford asked if there was any public comment regarding the proposed 2012 budget or the 11% water/wastewater increase. He explained that this is the last of the 11% increases that the Town had to have as a condition of the loan for the required upgrades. As there was no public comment President Mumford adjourned the public hearing and moved on to the regular meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2011, President Mumford 2nd, approved.

POLICE REPORT: Chief Foster reported that they have made several noteworthy arrests recently, the details are in his attached report. We are still waiting to hear about the grants for traffic safety. We may get \$1,000 - \$1,200 from this. The Homeland monies should be coming sometime this month and should be around \$7,000 - \$7,500. \$1,000 of that will go to Denton collectively from most of the local Police departments to put Crimestar on our main server so that they can share information. The other money will hopefully be used for updating computers and adding cameras around town. We do have a seized funds account that had \$80 spent out of it to purchase stolen coins that were attempting to be passed at local banks. As a result of that and a search warrant, we ended up with 3 arrests. Schedules have changed. The officers will be doing 2 weeks of days and 4 weeks of late shifts with enhanced longer hours for the late shift. This will help provide better coverage as well as reducing overtime costs for court days. This new coverage resulted in an arrest for a handgun violation that came from a citizen's tip. Another citizen's tip resulted in an arrest for a drug violation. We are getting more calls from citizens and we greatly appreciate the help. It remains anonymous.

Vehicle purchase – the Chief recommended the vehicle for \$22,000 under the government contract, which starts now. President Mumford indicated that it would need to be painted and prepped on top of that. He suggested that we get that one now and then come back for the next fiscal year for the next vehicle. Commissioner Casey said that if we were to order now it would be 45 days until the first payment. We could put a down payment on the first vehicle and wait for the payment terms to come in for them both. President Mumford agreed that we needed to get the first vehicle done for the current fiscal year and requested a motion be made to authorize Dale and the Chief to complete the paperwork on behalf of the Town to obtain the first vehicle in this fiscal year and to start the paperwork to have the 2nd vehicle purchased early in FY12. Anthony made the motion and Dale 2nd, the motion was passed. The Commissioners discussed that we will be using the K-9 fund money and possibly the confiscated drug money. Jerry Sutton asked if we had recorded the confiscated drug money as it is a budget item. President Mumford responded that it is sitting in the bank and is destined to come to the Town. Commissioner Casey suggested we use the K-9 money for the first

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vehicle and when the drug money is turned over to the Town, use that for the 2nd vehicle. Chief will get copies of the paperwork for the drug money that is in the Ridgely Police account and Jerry indicated that we need to have that information for the auditors. Chief indicated that the money has been released to the Town. Jerry also questioned the Homeland Security funds and what they consider the fiscal year. Chief said that they are behind the normal fiscal year, they normally shut down the funds in May. We should get a letter from Caroline County Emergency Services with the “award” in the form of a formal letter that explains the money coming in.

President Mumford asked the Chief about the basketball posts. Chief has spoken with the 2 problem areas (Park Avenue and across from the apartments on Maryland Avenue) letting the residents know that if they wanted to play, the basketball posts needed to be in their yard. Commissioner Casey indicated that he sent Sargent Berry over to the posts across from the apartments because it used to be kids playing and now there are adults there and doing more than just playing basketball, using it to hang out. He suggested that the apartments put up “no loitering” signs. Chief said that he would discuss that with the owner. The “kids” that are playing there are up late (after 10pm) and leaving their trash. President Mumford discussed “loitering” and having a list of people from the land owner of people that are allowed to be on the property. Any unauthorized people would be trespassing. We should clarify this with the State’s Attorney. Chief said that we could do this and then the violators could be charged with trespassing. Chief gave an update on the problems of the current police vehicles and the various maintenance problems. Chief also discussed the 2 trailers that are a part of the traffic safety program. Since they cannot be turned over for Town use (must stay in the traffic safety program) Terry Ober has offered to facilitate having them moved to Queen Anne’s County shop, it is just a matter of executing the titles. One is the sobriety checkpoint trailer and the other is the lab with the safety seats. We need to get them out of here as they are serving no useful purpose. Jerry indicated that we need to check to see if they are items that are on the depreciation schedule. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion authorizing Chief to begin the paperwork for the 2 trailers from the traffic safety program that are in need of transfer. Commissioner Casey 2nd, unanimous approval. Passed.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to pay the bills, 2nd Commissioner Casey, passed.

PUBLIC WORKS & W/WW: Attached reports were provided by Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works & David Crist, Wastewater Superintendent.

President Mumford discussed the Tech Park and how the ownership and use of the park is going to be resolved. Diane has found a lot of information for us. This is going to take some time to figure out. We have allocated water and sewer for the park and with the current economy it is doubtful that it will be taken to capacity.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT: As Diane Wojcik was not present at the meeting, President Mumford reviewed her report. The Bamboo at Mr. Hopkin’s has been cut again and looks better. Bills have been sent to Mr. Hopkins for the original cutting. Diane had worked hard on some grants, but unfortunately the fire department application was turned down due to the fact that the entire area they serve needs to be at 51% of low to moderate income. They have not yet discounted the Maryland Avenue repaving application.

Speaking on behalf of Diane Wojcik, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey requested that the Commissioners grant Diane Wojcik permission to attend the Governor's Grants Writing Seminar on September 12, 2011 for \$89.00. Unanimous approval.

Diane also requested the following: there is a continued problem with some people who are repeat offenders where the grass cutting height is involved. Cary has up to 20 letters for some property owners. We would like the right to initiate a letter stating that "due to continued grass height violations, we will not be sending any more letters. When the grass height is exceeded, we will send someone to cut the grass and the cost will be born by the property owner" or something to that effect. There are a few who will not cut the grass until they get a letter, and the grass gets very high before they make a move. This is also a problem with foreclosed homes. May we initiate this change? President Mumford indicated that we would have to modify the ordinance because each instance is a new offence and the process starts anew. He is not sure this is something we can do. Commissioner Epperly-Glover indicated that along with this problem is the problem of when the grass is finally cut and it is blown into the streets. Several Town residents have come to her concerning this and suggesting that an ordinance be put in place so that grass cannot be blown onto the streets when mowing. At this point there is no such ordinance. Diane's report also indicated that we are having a problem with neglected pools. The health department is not willing to put any chemicals in a neglected pool to control mosquitos unless we have an ordinance in place allowing them to do so. In discussing pools in relation to an ordinance, the Commissioners also recognized a need to address the inflatable pools that are popular. They easily collapse and pose a danger to small children. President Mumford said that if we are going to deal with these issued, it would be wise to go back through as much as we can with Cary Malkus (Codes Administrator), to pass the appropriate legislation. Commissioner Casey suggested we schedule Cary for the next work session to discuss this. If he cannot make it he could give us a detailed list of the pools that are a problem.

President Mumford brought the discussion back to the Tech Park. The Town needs to be proactive and get together with the County. The County has not been cooperative so far. Commissioner Casey agreed that we need to get a group of questions together for the County. President Mumford said that unfortunately all of the people who made this deal are no longer at the County. We need to confirm what is still accurate and what needs to be changed. There are rumors that businesses have been turned away because it was not a business that the County wanted. Jerry Sutton said that when it was built, it was on the premise that everything would be of the "high tech" nature with the airport being nearby. Commissioner Casey asked if the property was in the Town, President Mumford confirmed that it has been annexed to the Town and we believe that the County owns the Tech Park. Commissioner Casey asked how much was their tax bill? President Mumford said he believes they are exempt unless there is money being made. The Commissioners discussed the water/sewer for the park and that they have not paid anything to date for the services. This needs to change.

President Mumford discussed the fire tower lease. When the lease was made \$25,000 was used for the Economic Development Commission. Of that, \$14,000 has been spent. When the fire company does move to the new location there will be a vacancy in town. He suggested that rather than hold the money, we tentatively agree to earmark that money available for something for the firehouse. We need to be able to give the old building something to be used for. Commissioner Casey indicated that the building is in need of repairs. Commissioner Epperly-Glover responded that earmarking it would still be economic development. The Commissioners discussed that we can let them know that we have this available. We can close the EDC account and put the money in the general fund,

earmarked for EDC. The Commissioners discussed if the Fire Department was having a capital fund campaign. President Mumford said that they were doing an informal discussion of where the funds stand since the grant had been rejected. They have had to step back and reassess the situation.

The Commissioners decided that we will close out the K-9 fund and use the money for the police car. Stephanie Berkey reported that we have a checking account open with Centreville National Bank that had originally been part of a line of credit that we no longer use. There has been a zero balance in the account for over a year. Commissioner Casey motioned to close the account, President Mumford 2nd, passed. Stephanie also reported that the credit card that was used by the Town had been in Carol's name. We cannot get a credit card for the Town unless someone agrees to be the personal guarantor. This directly affects their credit. The Commissioners discussed that this is probably a result of the economy. We can use the debit card with approval and the appropriate purchase orders. We could also increase the amount of money kept in petty cash. Moving forward we need to set up as many accounts with businesses as possible to avoid using a credit card.

NEW BUSINESS

FY12 Budget – Dan Devilio from the Times Record noted that there did not look to be any sizeable cuts or layoffs. President Mumford said that we are about \$60,000 in General Fund increased revenue. This is due to several factors some highlights of which are: reduction in health insurance costs, the negotiation of our garbage contract for 3 more years (current rates for 2 years 3rd year will have a slight increase because of the fuel crisis), we began paying for the fire department tower, we have had an unexpected expenditure of bamboo, Carol Balderson's retirement and severance, a new server was necessary for the office and new back-up system, contract for the removal of the brush, new interrogator for the meter reading system, the Police Department has the full cost this year of the Sargent and part-time officer. A significant amount of savings is in personnel. A few years ago this cost was in excess of \$800,000, now it is just over \$600,000. Our general fund shows a contingency of \$67,891, the sewer showed up at about \$18,000 and water was about .15 to the positive. The State has returned \$36,000 of the highway user fund, we are told to expect \$565,000 real property taxes this year. This is a best guess, which puts us in the positive. President Mumford is cautious about this amount. This is the last year for the 11% increase in water and sewer and the money is being set aside for the loan. Audit fees are expected to be reduced. It is a good budget with little negative effect on the employees. They have not had raises, but we are hoping to develop a schedule of grades and positions to work on salary increases later in the fiscal year. Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve Ordinance No 342, to appropriate funds and estimate income in accordance with the budget adopted for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012. Commissioner Casey 2nd, Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve Resolution No 2011-04, a resolution of the Commissioners of Ridgely increasing the charges to users of the town water and wastewater systems as specified in the resolution. Commissioner Casey 2nd, unanimous approval. Passed.

Commissioner Casey made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Epperly-Glover 2nd. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Stephanie Berkey
Clerk-Treasurer