

COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY

JULY 7, 2025

TOWN MEETING



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm in the Town Hall for the July 2025 Town Meeting. The following were in attendance: President Brad Sears, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Chad Leister, Director of Operations David Crist, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Lt. Ricky Baker CCSO, Town Attorney Patrick Thomas, Ahmad Garnett, John Buckle, Janet Phillips, Anna Mansfield, Billy Peterson, Gennie Woo, Pastor Terrence Nichols, Anthony Zaza, Sandra Pitts, Norma Pinkney, Holly Justice, Tina Hurley, Marlow Dilling, Jacob Bowie, Annie Rossi-Gill, Clint Gill (one attendee illegible). Online viewers: Valerie, Steve Lone, Jamie Romph, Robert Rager, Andrew Myer, Renee, Kia Pierce, Kia, TS, Matthew Eckrich, Asia D, Jen, Scott Barron.

Reverend Terrence Nichols, Denton Church of Free Seventh Day Adventists began the meeting with an invocation.

President Sears opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. He reviewed the protocols for public comment in meetings and said that we will be strictly following the procedures, keeping compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the procedures already in place by the Commissioners of Ridgely.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the following minutes: May 5, 2025, Town Meeting, May 14, 2025, Vote to go into Closed Session, May 14, 2025, Closed Session, June 2, 2025, Town Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leister, all in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

CLERK-TREASURER

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve paying the bills, 2nd Commissioner Leister, all in favor. Total general funds reconciled \$200,069.68, water funds reconciled \$13,415.41, sewer funds reconciled \$30,217.34.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David Crist discussed the planned road projects. He is meeting with Bramble this week to discuss the projects and the core samples on Lister Lane and Robin's Court. The street work will most likely occur in the fall.

For sidewalks, we are awaiting the safe routes to school grant information and the application process. We hope to apply.

The sewer line replacement grant has been approved by MDE, we are being held up by the Federal Government. We are waiting for the EPA to move forward.

We are planning to do smoke tests in the older sections of town soon. We will let the fire company know when this is set to be done.

The skate park fence will hopefully be fixed in the next 2 weeks.

The Sunrise Avenue subdivision is moving along nicely.

The \$22,000 storm drain project for the Ridgely Pharmacy has been completed.

We are still working on brush pick up from the June 18th storm. Our weather station at the wastewater treatment plant recorded 128 mph winds. Cleaning up debris in the streets is always the priority in situations like this. President Sears commended public works on their quick response during the storm. The seafood processing business will not be going into the Medifast building. There is a business setting up there in the fall.

CAROLINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Lieutenant Baker presented his report to the Commissioners. They did data analysis on Maryland Avenue between May 30th and June 17th. During that period there were 63,121 vehicles analyzed. The slowest speed reported was 7 mph the fastest speed reached was 45 mph. The average speed of all vehicles analyzed was 18 mph.

480 hours were worked, 373 total calls for service, 248 business checks, 95 traffic stops, and 5 arrests. President Sears presented the Second Amendment for Law Enforcement Services with the CCSO. The State Attorney General has reviewed and approved the document. He thanked town attorney Patrick Thomas for his efforts drafting the agreement. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to sign the agreement, 2nd Commissioner Leister, all in favor, approved.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Melissa Leonard reminded everyone to sign up for the emergency alert system on the new website. If you have signed up on the old site, you will need to register again. The town is aware of the house on Central Avenue with boxes piled on the porch. A letter has been sent, and the Sheriff's office has been there to do a welfare check. She is going to try to get the boxes cleaned up again. If she does not, the town will need to decide how to proceed as the next steps will be fines and court dates.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Gerald Sutton said that we are at the start of the new fiscal year. We will review the last quarter's invoice from the Sheriff's office when it is received. The town will need to plan to raise the water/sewer rates this year. They have not been raised since 2012. He does not want the residents to be blindsided by the rate change. President Sears agreed.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Gerald Sutton said that the train station will be open on Saturday for visitors.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

The Ridgely Commission has been informed of State Highway's plan to put a 4-way stop sign at the intersection of Central Avenue and MD 480. Commissioner Hurley said that the town has been asking for a traffic light at the intersection since 1957. Commissioner Leister questioned the possibility of a traffic circle. He worries that other side streets will see more traffic because of drivers trying to avoid the intersection. President Sears said that it is State Highway's decision, but the County is willing to reach out to them about our concerns. Lt. Baker said he believes the stop signs would be a bad alternative for the intersection.

Holly Justice asked the Commissioners to provide hotdogs, chips and water again at the upcoming Ridgely Block Party on September 13th from 12-7pm. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve, 2nd Commissioner Leister, all in favor, approved.

Billy Peterson, owner of Central Skate Supply, works closely with the skateboarding community. He talked to the Commissioners about the need for updates, repairs and shade at the current skate park. He would like to see a modern skate park built to replace the current park. He is willing to help the town plan for the park and acquire funding.

A discussion followed. The Commissioners all were in support of letting Mr. Peterson look for funding opportunities, but that much more information is required for any further decisions. It was suggested that he meet with a designer and Director of Operations, David Crist to begin the process.

President Sears said that New Beginnings Church will be holding their Praise in the Park event on July 26th from 10 – 5. A car show and several speakers are part of the activities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anthony Zaza is a new resident in Ridgely. He wanted to know if there was a plan to utilize social media to communicate with the residents. He has concerns about the vibrancy of the town, as he is used to living in large cities. He wanted to know if there is a plan to stimulate small business development in Ridgely. He does not think the town will stay vibrant without some development plan and would like to volunteer to help. He thinks the new website should promote established businesses in town. President Sears suggested he reaches out to the town hall so that the questions could be explored in more detail. Mr. Zaza also asked what the siren in town indicated. Commissioner Hurley explained the fire department call signal.

Sandra Pitts of 10264 School Street in Ridgely discussed the smell that is in her house that she believes is from the town water and sewer system. The town, plumbers, contractors, and the fire department have all been out there. She does not know what else to do. A discussion followed. David Crist gave her his personal cell phone number and asked that she call him the next time the smell appears so he can come over to see what he can find.

Anna Mansfield asked Lt. Baker if the Sheriff's office is planning to participate in National Night Out on August 5th. Lt. Baker said that the CCSO has never hosted the event, that the municipalities usually do that.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, 2nd Commissioner Leister. The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie L. Berkey, CMC
Clerk-Treasurer