

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
FEBRUARY 2, 2026
TOWN MEETING**

The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm in the town hall.

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, Lt. Rick Baker CCSO, DFC Trenton Hilyard CCSO, DFC Ashley Collison CCSO, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Rick & Cathy Schwab, David Tribbett, Jr., Jamie Romph, Sharon Adams, Bob Zimberoff, Anna Mansfield, Christine Eckrich, Jeff Eckrich, Norma Pinkney, Russ Duerstine, Domingo Llanes.

- Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Reverend Buddy Dunn.
- Approval of Previous Minutes: January 5th, 2026, meeting minutes approved.
- Clerk-Treasurer: The Commissioners approved paying the bills. Total general funds \$225,487.69, water funds \$27,425.45, sewer funds \$18,434.12, ARPA \$18,495.57.
- Director of Operations Report: Discussion on snow/ice storm management and the potential acquisition of a salt spreader. David Crist suggested purchasing the drop box off the state program for \$6013 and if possible, get 2 pallets of salt. He suggested using ARPA funds. After discussion, President Sears made a motion to purchase a salt spreader for public works, Commissioners Hurley and Leister were also in favor.
- Zoning Report: Melissa Leonard gave an update on an accident at the post office and asked the Commissioners to participate in the "If I Were a Mayor" contest through Maryland Municipal League with the 4th graders at Ridgely Elementary. The commissioners agreed. The Commissioners agreed to hold off posting late fees on water bills until Tuesday February 17th because of the ice storm.
- Sheriff's Department Report: Presented by Lieutenant Baker, covering hours worked, calls for service, and traffic stops. He introduced DFC Hilyard and DFC Collison of the Ridgely Patrol.

- Historical Society Update: Upcoming events at Winchester Mill and ongoing projects.
- Old Business: Public hearing and vote on charter amendments and ordinances related to town governance and animal keeping. After the hearing Charter Amendment 2026-01 repealing outdated provisions was introduced. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve, 2nd Commissioner Leister, unanimously approved. Ordinance No. 2026-400 AS AMENDED Chapter 64 ANIMALS allowing chickens in the town. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve, 2nd Commissioner Leister, unanimously approved.

Ordinance No. 2026-401 repealing Chapters 24 (Town Historian), 44 (Recreation Commission), and 51 (Tree Commission). Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve, 2nd Commissioner Leister, unanimously approved.

- New Business: President Sears discussed the establishment of the Economic Development Commission. He introduced members Russ Duerstine, Hiran Patel, Anthony Zaza and Dave Tribbett. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to appoint the new members to the commission, 2nd Commissioner Leister, unanimously approved.

President Sears discussed project assignment protocols for the Commissioners.

- Sheriff's Department MOU Negotiation: Assigned to the Commissioner Hurley for negotiation and scheduling.
- Town Code Update (Chapters 173-178): Assigned to Commissioner Leister for review and update.
- Identity Theft Prevention Program Update: Assigned to President Sears for compliance review and update.

They will discuss all projects at the workshop meeting scheduled for February 18, 2026 at 6 pm.

Sharon Adams with the Ridgely Lions Club said that the 45th Annual Strawberry Festival will be Sunday May 24, 2026. They want to honor veterans in the parade to help mark the country's 250th anniversary.

Public Comment

- James Romph the recent snow/ice storm and emergency parking protocols. He asked public works to remove the piles of ice in Lister Estates. David said that when the temperature is above freezing they will get back out there to break it up and remove what they can. Mr. Romph also asked to have public works vehicles marked.

The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn at 7:07 pm, seconded and approved by all commissioners present.