

## COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY

JULY 6, 2026

### TOWN MEETING



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm for the July 2026 town meeting. The following were in attendance: President John Hurley, Commissioner Brad Sears, Director of Operations David Crist, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Rick & Cathy Schwab, Thomas & Alicia Moxley, Lyle Davis, Cara Avery, Nancy Sears, Christine Eckrich, Al Witkofsky, Anna Mansfield.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The invocation was offered by Pastor Courtney Lord of Ridgely United Methodist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the June 1, 2026, Town Meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as presented, and the motion carried by voice vote.

#### **CLERK-TREASURER**

Under the Clerk-Treasurer's report, the Commissioners approved payment of bills. The Treasurer's Report was presented, and the Clerk-Treasurer also reviewed the Town's code provisions relating to fireworks after recent public discussion online regarding whether fireworks are legal in town. She explained that the noise ordinance does not list fireworks among generally prohibited noises, that town-sponsored fireworks and events are exempted, and that other community activities may require a temporary exemption or permit through the Town's special events process. She further noted that the Town Charter gives the Commissioners authority to enact legislation concerning fireworks. The Clerk-Treasurer asked for direction on whether to proceed with booking fireworks for the Winter Festival. Commissioners discussed noise concerns, including the effect on animals, and whether moving the launch area would be feasible given safety, fire marshal, weather, and site constraints. Because Commissioner Leister was absent, the matter was tabled until the next meeting, and constituent feedback will be gathered in the interim, including from residents paying water bills.

#### **DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

The Director of Operations reported that a new fiscal year tree work list is being compiled, including several large pin oaks that will require contracted removal and likely crane work. Smaller trimming work has been delayed because the Town's lift remains out of service, though staff continue trying to secure parts and repair it. He also reported that final proofs are pending for public works vehicle decals, which will be presented to the Commissioners before installation on trucks and equipment.

Street paving is scheduled for July 16 and 17 on Lister Lane, Robins Court, Carroll Lane, and East 2nd from Central to Sunrise, weather permitting. Residents will be asked to remove vehicles, campers, and similar items from affected streets by July 14 to avoid towing issues and delays. Town-owned parking near East Railroad and the side parking lot at Town Hall may be used as temporary options; Walnut is not included in the paving work.

The sewer line replacement grant project remains active. The Town and its engineers are preparing the RFP and beginning environmental impact work while awaiting the grant agreement. The project schedule will be updated to reflect delays, and additional coordination is still needed regarding whether the RFP will cover the entire project or individual phases. During related discussion, it was

noted that contact had been made with the Maryland Department of the Environment at the Maryland Municipal League, and that EPA legal review had been part of the delay.

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**

Not present.

### **CAROLINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

A June activity report was presented for the Caroline County Sheriff's Office contract patrol. The report reflected 480 patrol hours for the month, 367 total cases, 10 reports taken, 82 traffic stops, 117 traffic violations, and 3 arrests.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANT**

No separate report was presented under the Financial Assistant agenda item.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Several economic development projects are moving forward, including work toward an electronic sign to display news and current events. Additional initiatives are being pursued with an emphasis on grant support so that the financial impact on the Town will be minimal, if any. The next Economic Development meeting was announced for July 16 at 3:30 p.m., with livestream access and later viewing available through the Town website.

### **HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Historical Society reported that the Rob Roy sign has been completed and will be installed on Maryland Avenue near the new homes or apartments in that area. The sign includes a QR code so that additional information can be accessed beyond what could fit on the marker, including information drawn from Meyers history book about the shirt factory and people who worked there. The Society also reported on a recent town chat held at the Methodist Church, with thanks expressed to Pastor Courtney Lord for use of the facility. Longtime residents shared information about former businesses and activity in town, and the Society intends to organize that material for future public use. During the report, a request was made to David for assistance with several items at the station, and he asked that the list be sent to him for follow-up.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Public Hearing - Resolution No. 2026-02 Water and Sewer Rates and Charges in the Town of Ridgely**

The public hearing on Resolution No. 2026-02 concerning water and sewer rates and charges in the Town of Ridgely was opened. The Commissioners acknowledged receipt of two letters in opposition, one from Frank Manion and one from Anna Mansfield. The presiding officer invited public comments from those in attendance, and no one came forward to speak at the hearing. Commissioner Sears made a motion to approve the resolution, 2<sup>nd</sup> President Hurley, the approved resolution was presented for signatures.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ordinance No. 2026-404 was introduced to amend Chapter 27, Identity Theft Prevention Program, of the Code of the Town of Ridgely. The ordinance was read into the record in summary form and described as an update intended to satisfy the Town's obligations under the Maryland Personal Information Protection Act, the Federal Trade Commission's Red Flags Rule, and the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, as amended by the Red Flag Program Clarification Act of 2010.

The Commissioners discussed whether to send letters opposing HB 8870 regarding permanent heavier weight increases for auto-hauler trucks. During discussion, Commissioners stated that they opposed increasing loads above current federal standards and cited safety concerns and roadway impacts. Commissioner Sears made a motion to oppose HB 8870 and to send letters of opposition, President Hurley seconded the motion, and the letters will be sent.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Al Witkowski addressed landscaping conditions along the pathway near two weeping Japanese maple trees that he said had been donated by Ridgely Elementary School and planted by students. He reported that other trees were growing through the center of the maples, that commemorative plaques were missing or covered, and that overhanging branches along the pathway should be pruned. The Director of Operations stated that the Town has a growing tree-trimming list and that the lift outage has delayed some work, but he and staff took note of the request. Mr. Witkowski also confirmed that his earlier Sunday morning contractor noise complaint had been addressed; the response noted that Melissa had researched the issue and had the Sunday activity stopped.

Anna Mansfield questioned whether motorists would be able to drive in and out during the paving work. The Director of Operations responded that access would be maintained, but vehicles could not remain on the milling path. sheriff's patrol activity observed outside town limits on Route 480 was included in the Town's contracted enforcement totals. The Sheriff's Office representative stated that the matter needs to be verified. A final question asked whether Commissioner Sears had responded to Mr. Raggioni's email. Commissioner Sears replied that he had advised the sender the opposition letters would be mentioned that evening.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Stephanie Berkey, CMC  
Clerk-Treasurer