

COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY

AUGUST 3, 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 John Hurley, Commissioner Chad Leister, Commissioner Brad Sears, Director of Operations David Crist, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Sheriff Donald Baker, Nancy Sears, David Tribbett, Jr., Cathy & Rick Schwab, Anna Mansfield, Al Witkofsky, Cara Avery.

Invocation was offered by Rev. Buddy Dunn of Faith Fellowship Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The July 6, 2026, town meeting minutes were approved.

CLERK-TREASURER

The Commissioners approved payment of the bills. The Treasurer's Report was then presented, showing reconciled balances in the General Fund, Sewer Fund, Water Fund, and ARPA funds. It was also reported that David expects to order the smoke testing equipment using the remaining ARPA funds and that the expenditure must be completed before the end of the calendar year.

General Fund reconciled balance reported at \$116,252.94.

Sewer Fund balance reported at \$3,572.46

Water Fund balance reported at \$12,700.12

ARPA balance reported at \$9,573.98.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David reported that the sewer line replacement grant is moving forward. The updated work schedule has been submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the Town is awaiting approval and scheduling of a site visit. He advised that state personnel may be in Town for field review. David also presented proposed Public Works vehicle lettering and stated that applying the logo to vehicles and equipment, including the backhoe loader and Bobcat, is expected to cost approximately \$2,500. He reported that street paving was completed, including an additional section of West 2nd Street, at approximately \$2,000 over budget, which he said was favorable given fuel prices and the condition of the roadway. He further advised that the Town's lift has been repaired, allowing staff to resume tree work, with additional work expected to be contracted later in the season as needed.

- Talkie Communications requested permission to place an underground internet hub near the Town water tower and route service south along Sunrise toward Greensboro.
- David expressed concerns about the proposed location because of existing infrastructure, including water meters, utility easements, and the sewer gravity main beginning near the end of 4th Street.
- The Commissioners discussed the proposal and agreed to await additional information, including route flexibility and any future contractual terms, before taking action.

CAROLINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

A representative of the Caroline County Sheriff's Office presented the monthly law enforcement report. The report reflected 480 hours worked, 310 calls for service, 7 reports taken, 66 traffic stops, 9

citations, and 82 warnings. Report categories included one assault, one burglary, three domestics, one police information report, and one sex offense. The Commissioners also noted National Night Out scheduled for August 4, 2026, with events in both Ridgeley and Federalsburg; Corporal Ferguson and Town staff were recognized for their planning efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development report covered three ongoing projects. Members reported continued work on a proposed pine tree harvest and stated that additional review of state regulations and permitting is needed so the project does not affect the water system. The committee also reported progress with the Tuckahoe Diner following a recent site tour and stated that the operator hopes to open within the next few weeks. In addition, the committee has been working on a concept for a sign and pavilion on the land beside the Town building. The landowner has settled on a sale price, and the committee expects to present a proposal to the Commissioners at the next meeting.

- Committee members stated they have been coordinating with Dave regarding the tree harvest and related permitting questions.
- The next Economic Development Committee meeting was announced for August 20, 2026, at 3:30 p.m.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society reported that the Rob Roy sign has been completed and is intended to be installed in front of the new housing on the former site, pending the required Miss Utility locate request. The Commissioners discussed that the request must be made by the person or contractor performing the work, and the Society stated it would follow up with Mr. Lomax regarding that step. The Society also reported that the sign includes additional historical information and a QR code; during a Hannah Henry meeting, former employee Connie Wilkerson reviewed it and was pleased to find her name included among the listed workers. The train station will be open one more time next month. The Society also discussed coordinating with David to retrieve railroad signs in Federalsburg and noted receipt of donated bottle caps for future display.

OLD BUSINESS

The Commissioners considered Ordinance No. 2026-404 amending Chapter 27, Identity Theft Prevention Program, to satisfy the Town's obligations under the Maryland Personal Information Protection Act and related federal requirements, including the Federal Trade Commission Red Flags Rule and the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACTA). After the ordinance title and summary were read and prior review was noted, the Commissioners approved the ordinance by voice vote.

The Commissioners revisited whether fireworks should be included in the 2026 Winter Festival. It was reported that an informal poll conducted through Town Hall contacts and on Facebook showed majority support for fireworks. Upon motion and second, the Commissioners approved including fireworks in the 2026 Winter Festival.

The Commissioners received an update on enforcement options for untagged vehicles and parking issues. Commissioner Leister reported significant difficulty finding a tow company willing to remove vehicles from private property, especially where access is limited and recovery value is low. He also reported that neighboring municipalities have experienced substantial complications with towing enforcement. Greensboro's fine-based approach was discussed as a possible alternative, including warning letters followed by fines and potential liens, while also recognizing the need to review how such enforcement would apply to renters and property owners. The Commissioners distinguished between vehicles located on Town streets or in alleys and vehicles on private property and directed that additional enforcement options be brought back for further consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

The Commissioners introduced and considered Resolution No. 2026-03 establishing a temporary 12-month moratorium on processing applications for data centers within the corporate limits of the Town of Ridgeley while the Town studies the issue and considers appropriate local regulations. In presenting the resolution, the Commissioners discussed Caroline County's Resolution 2026-012 adopted July 21, 2026, and the possibility that development interests restricted in unincorporated areas could shift toward incorporated municipalities. Discussion focused on the complexity of data center regulation, including impacts on water use, sewer capacity, energy demand, noise, vibration, and residents' quality of life, as well as the need for coordination among Caroline County and other municipalities because water and electric system impacts extend beyond municipal boundaries. System capacities stated in the resolution were reviewed, including municipal wastewater design capacity of 200,000 gallons per day with more than 39,100 gallons per day remaining, and municipal water design capacity of 200,000 gallons per day with more than 16,100 gallons per day remaining. Upon motion and second, the resolution was approved by voice vote. Commissioner Sears stated he would take the lead in preparing a program management plan and work toward presenting a draft ordinance to the Commissioners by April 2027.

The Commissioners reviewed proposals submitted for energy audits of municipal buildings under the MEA grant program. The grant amount was stated as \$86,145. After discussion, the Commissioners found Rauch Engineering's submission to be more comprehensive and noted the firm's local presence and municipal experience. Upon motion and second, the Commissioners approved selection of Rauch Engineering for the Town's energy audit work.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Al Witkofsky again raised concerns about Sunday morning construction activity at the development, stating that roofing work had resumed shortly after 8:00 a.m.

Rev. Buddy Dunn commended Commissioner Sears for his good job communicating with the County.

Russ Duerstine announced a weekly chess club for young people to be held on Thursday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. at the church next to the firehouse at 201 Sunset, with space for up to 12 students, and Town staff invited him to send the information for possible posting on the Town website.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

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