

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY  
DECEMBER 2, 2024  
TOWN MEETING**



Summary of November 4, 2024, closed session:

TIME: 10:08 am

PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Closed under General Provision Article § 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

VOTE TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION: In favor: President Buckle, Commissioner Hurley, Commissioner Sears, Opposed: None.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

- 10.8-million-dollar legislative bond initiative submitted by an individual not associated with or authorized to act on behalf of the town or the county, and without consent.

ATTENDING: President John Buckle, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Brad Sears, Director of Operations David Crist, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Melissa Leonard, Town Attorney Patrick Thomas.

ACTION TAKEN: The state has been made aware of the unauthorized submission and will not move forward with the application.

Summary of November 25, 2024, closed session:

TIME: 10:30 am

PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: Attorney-Client privileged discussion regarding threatened litigation.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Closed under General Provision Article § 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

VOTE TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION: In favor: President Buckle, Commissioner Hurley, Commissioner Sears, Opposed: None.

ATTENDING: President John Buckle, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Brad Sears, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Melissa Leonard, Town Attorney Patrick Thomas, LGIT attorney Jason Levine.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

- Discussed threatened litigation with Town Attorney, LGIT counsel and Town staff.

ACTION TAKEN: Direction to LGIT Counsel to contact attorney threatening litigation.

The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm for the December 2024 town meeting. The following were in attendance: President John Buckle, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Brad Sears, Director of Operations David Crist, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Sgt. Keith Collison, Kelly Buckle, Rick Schwab, Cathy Schwab, Anna Mansfield, Norma Pinkney. Via Zoom: Scott Barron, Valerie Douglass, Jen, Robin Martin, Barbie Utz, Megan Clarke, Frankowski, Heidi Olson King, Matthew Malinolski, Heather Redgraves, Jamie Romph, Jamies Iphone Pro Max 12.

President Buckle opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the following minutes: November 4, 2024, vote to go into closed session, November 4, 2024, closed session, November 4, 2024, town meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sears, all in favor, approved.

#### STAFF REPORTS

##### CLERK-TREASURER

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve paying the bills, seconded by Commissioner Sears, all in favor, approved. Total general funds reconciled \$133,877.97, total sewer funds reconciled \$49,160.46, total sewer funds reconciled \$42,469.60, total ARPA funds reconciled \$30,164.73.

##### DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David Crist said that we have received some complaints about leaves. The leaf vac has been having mechanical issues and has needed repairs. They are going to push for a big clean up this week. The public works Ford F250 was down for a week having the diesel fuel bracket repaired. Commissioner Sears asked if the spare truck was utilized. David said that it was and that is why we have the spare in addition to pushing snow. We also have a spare plow.

Regarding the sewer line update, David has had meetings with the county to work in conjunction with them to apply for funding to replace the old terra cotta sewer lines. He wanted to make it clear that just because it is terra cotta, does not mean that it is failing. We will need to have an engineer prepare a scope of work. We do not have a timeline yet. Most likely, grant funding will not cover the entire cost, but we want to get as much as possible. Starting on the deepest lines makes the most sense, but much depends on the engineering study. Commissioner Sears said that we are going about doing it the right way – an incremental approach. Commissioner Hurley indicated that the School Street area already has pvc lines. David said that it will also be necessary to do a smoke test on the sewer lines. This will help us find areas with problems and illegal hook-ups. Commissioner Sears talked about the Trinity area that received \$200,000 in state allocated funding in 1995. The work was completed in 1998. David said that it was the main trunk line, which most likely will not have to be redone.

Public Works did a great job with the Christmas lights. The large inflatables will be going up on the Saturday before the parade, due to high winds. Robin Martin and Heather Redgraves were concerned about the Central Avenue intersection and asked if lighting could be added to the intersection.

Miguel Ochoa is the owner of the Sunrise Avenue lots, where he plans to build 7 houses. He is requesting a waiver on the water and sewer allocation reservation fees. He is very close to beginning the project. All three commissioners agreed that this was not a good idea and would be opening the door for other projects down the road.

##### SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sgt. Collison reviewed his monthly report (attached). He discussed with the commissioners that once the field training is completed for the new deputy they will be fully staffed. The field training will begin in March.

#### ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Nothing to report.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Nothing to report.

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cathy Schwab congratulated the Christmas in Ridgely Winter Festival on winning the Chesapeake Best of the Best Awards for the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight year. The Ridgely Historical Society also was a winner that evening and Gerald Sutton, CPA, also won for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. Ridgely was well represented at the awards with many winners. This will be the 16<sup>th</sup> year for the Historical Society Christmas Decoration contest. The contest is on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December and there will be many prizes.

#### OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business

#### NEW BUSINESS

David Crist said that the sidewalk repair on Maryland and 3<sup>rd</sup> will be starting soon. After that we will begin doing intersections in our right-of-way.

Commissioner Sears said that he would like to have the town meetings begin with an invocation before the pledge of allegiance and invite the local clergy to participate. The Commissioners agreed it would be nice to have. Commissioner Sears made the motion to approve, seconded President Buckle, all in favor, approved.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Anna Mansfield asked if the leaf vac is on a schedule. David Crist said that it is hard to do with weather. Wet leaves cannot go through the vac. She also asked if we could upgrade the technology for the meetings that could be always viewed. She also would like to see a crosswalk on route 480 going to Martin Sutton Park and a light.

Commissioner Hurley said the town businesses did very well at the best of the best awards. Many of them were in the top 3 or were winners.

Stephanie Berkey said that the current winter festival donations were right at around \$50,000.

David Crist said that if we must charge for the festival, we will no longer do it.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

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