

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY  
FEBRUARY 3, 2025  
TOWN MEETING**



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm for the February 2025 town meeting. The following were in attendance: President Leonard John Buckle, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Brad Sears, Director of Operations David Crist, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Sgt. Keith Collison, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Nancy Sears, Owen Bailey, Tony Holt, Cathy & Rick Schwab, Sharon Adams, Leroy Harris, Berl & Darlene Lovelace, Christine Eckrich, Lila Amador, Heather Amador, Anna Mansfield, Patrice Flamer, Lokia Pierce. Via Zoom: Heidi Olson King, Jen, Samsung-sm-S9216, iPhone 7, Kelly Buckle, Frankowsk, Iphone 2, Iphone, Megan Clark, Jro.

Commissioner Sears welcomed Darlene Lovelace from New Beginnings United Methodist Church for the invocation.

President Buckle opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion and Commissioner Sears 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve the following minutes:

- November 25, 2024, vote to go into closed session
- November 25, 2024, closed session
- December 2, 2024, town meeting
- January 6, 2025, town meeting

**STAFF REPORTS**

**CLERK-TREASURER**

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve paying the bills, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Sears all in favor. Total general funds reconciled \$139,758.42, total sewer funds reconciled \$49,438.40, total water funds reconciled \$42,796.76, total ARPA funds reconciled \$30,179.86.

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

David Crist said that a lot of January was spent pushing snow. The January storm caused constant snow drifts, and the bitter cold kept the snow around much longer than normal. Because of this, public works are still taking down the Christmas decorations. David has been working with Leslie Grunden from Caroline County to try to secure grant funding to replace the old sewer lines. We have applied for a grant through MDE in the amount of \$1,080,000. He is worried that the Federal Government could hold up the process. There are 2 other grants they are also working on submitting for the line replacement. Commissioner Sears asked if we receive the grants would we anticipate having to do a rate study, which David confirmed we will have to do. That study will dictate what water, and sewer rates the town will have to charge.

**CAROLINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Sgt. Keith Collison said that they responded to 199 calls for service in January. The department is on track to have the 3<sup>rd</sup> officer dedicated to Ridgely in mid-March.

#### ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Melissa Leonard reported that Tuckahoe Gardens is obtaining financing for renovations of the apartments. They will be applying for a building permit soon. The seven lot subdivision at the end of Sunrise Avenue has been approved. 2025 rental inspections have begun.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Gerald Sutton reported that the FY24 audit is very close to completion.

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cathy Schwab said that Mike Osborne donated 3 old Ridgely postcards to the historical society. She has posted them on the Historical Society's website.

#### OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Caroline North Little League is requesting sponsorship. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to donate \$500, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Sears, all in favor. David Crist said that we are also covering a lot of the grass cutting for the league.

Sharon Adams of the Ridgely Lions Club said that they are looking into hosting an event on July 11, 2026, to celebrate our country's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They are hoping to have the commissioners and community support as they would like to have fireworks for the event. Commissioner Sears said that we will look at the budget to see what we could do to help. David asked them to bring back a concept plan of the event.

Commissioner Sears talked about the organization Caroline Better Together. They support numerous charitable organizations. They are holding a community dinner on February 26<sup>th</sup> from 530-730. The event is free and open to all.

Tony Holt with the Caroline Tennis Association requested the Martin Sutton Park tennis courts be reserved in June for the summer tennis camps. There will be about 40 kids attending the camp. There was a discussion about the cracks in the courts. David has reached out to the company that did the work on the courts. He will come to fix them when it is warmer, weather pending.

Patrice Flamer from Spirit and Mind introduced Owen Bailey, the Director of Land & Use Conservancy. He assists them with the Martin Sutton Park grant. They presented a packet of information about the equipment they would like for the park. They will be reaching out to the public for input. They will be meeting with the Lions club next month and might set up an information booth at the Strawberry Festival.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Anna Mansfield asked if we had given any thought to having the meetings available at any time online. Stephanie said that they are saved to the zoom cloud and should be available. She also asked if we had any plans to have an ethics commission. Commissioner Sears told her of the waiver the town has from the state. It has been suggested if there is a suspected ethics violation

you can take it to the Commissioner, Town Attorney or town staff. We would then appoint 3 individuals that have no relationship with those involved that would meet with legal counsel. If warranted, a hearing will be held. She also discussed that there are sections of the charter that are outdated. Commissioner Sears said he is aware that a charter revision could be worked on in the future.

Heather Amador asked if the Commissioners/Town/Sheriff's Office are no longer interested in investigating certain crimes. There was a package theft from the porch of her neighbor, and she had evidence (which she discussed) and was never contacted and wants to know why this is something we no longer do. Sgt. Collison replied that he has not contacted her because he has not had a need to yet. He already has the pictures, and the car has been identified. He got that information from the victim and a family member. All the information she mentioned, he already had, but he will talk to her after the meeting.

Christine Ekrich asked when the elections were being held and the process. Stephanie said the election date is the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in April and the last day to file for candidacy is by 4 pm the first Monday in April. She asked if we will be holding workshops. She was told that they are done on an as needed basis, often as a special meeting. The public can come to a workshop, but there is no public comment. We are planning to have one during budget planning.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm.

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