

COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY

FEBRUARY 5, 2024

TOWN MEETING



Summary of the January 29, 2024, closed session:

DATE: January 29, 2024

TIME: 12:04 PM

PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: To discuss personnel matters and possible or potential litigation.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Md. Code Ann., General Provision Article § 3-305(b)(1) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals." AND (8) To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation."

VOTE TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION: In favor: President Hurley, Commissioner Buckle, Commissioner Casey; Opposed: none.

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Termination of an employee that could lead to potential lawsuit.

ATTENDING: President John Hurley, Commissioner Leonard John Buckle, Commissioner Anthony Casey, Director of Operations David Crist, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Melissa Leonard.

ACTION TAKEN: No action was taken.

Summary of the February 21, 2024, closed session:

DATE: February 21, 2024

TIME: 9:04 AM

PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: To discuss personnel matters and possible or potential litigation.

Statutory Authority: Md. Code Ann., General Provision Article § 3-305(b)(1) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals." AND (8) To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation."

VOTE TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION: In favor: President Hurley, Commissioner Buckle, Commissioner Casey; Opposed: none.

TOPICS DISCUSSED: FY24 budget revision of employee costs and contracts and the potential lawsuit of a former employee.

ATTENDING: President John Hurley, Commissioner Leonard John Buckle, Commissioner Anthony Casey, Director of Operations David Crist, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Melissa Leonard, Chief of Police Jeff Eckrich, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton (via phone). Chief Eckrich and Gerald Sutton left the meeting at 10:30 am after the employee costs and contracts were discussed.

ACTION TAKEN: Employee costs will be closely monitored.

The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm for the February 2024 town meeting. The following were in attendance: President John Hurley, Commissioner Leonard John Buckle,

Commissioner Anthony Casey, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Director of Operations David Crist, Chief of Police Jeff Eckrich, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Donna Eveland, Derek Simmons, Cathy Schwab, Rick Schwab, Nick VanOrden, Christine Eckrich, Amy Horne, Norma Pinkney and Joanne Sisco.

President Hurley opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2024, town meeting, 2nd Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved.

STAFF REPORTS

CLERK-TREASURER

Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve paying the bills, 2nd Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved. Total general funds reconciled \$384,925.61, total sewer funds reconciled \$46,948.64, total water funds reconciled \$40,641.49, total ARPA funds reconciled \$71,557.77. We received an email request from Lokia Harris-Pierce to broadcast our meetings. During Covid, we used Zoom meetings, but discontinued use of zoom once everything re-opened due to the problems many government agencies were having with the meetings being hacked. Stephanie met with Midshore Technology Solutions to see a demonstration of the system they recommend for broadcasting live meetings. It would be much more efficient and secure and would include speakers and cameras throughout the meeting room. When we used Zoom, we only had a laptop set up in the back of the meeting room to show the entire room and it was not always easy to hear and to keep track of people signing in to the meeting virtually. The quote for the new system was \$5364.72. A discussion followed. The Commissioners agreed to try Zoom again for a few months to see if it gets utilized. If it is regularly utilized, they will consider installing the upgraded system.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David Crist said that he has noted that trucks continue to dump at the DAF pit regularly. He has reached out to County to ask them to pull samples and the County has not yet responded. A discussion regarding the concerns of the Commissioners regarding DAF was had. The unanimous opinion is that the DAF pits will be terrible for the Town of Ridgely and the residents. We will continue to fight against this issue.

We received three quotes from engineering firms to complete the Comprehensive plan. David recommended we accept the bid from Rauch, Inc. Commissioner Casey made a motion to accept the Rauch, Inc. bid, 2nd Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved. We will utilize the ARPA funding for this project.

Christmas is still being taken down and we hope to have that completed this week.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Chief Eckrich said that he will have the 2023 year-end report for the March meeting. He received a grant of \$6,000 from the county for equipment. He is looking into dash-cams and the cradle point system and is getting quotes for both.

ZONING ADMINSTRATOR

Melissa Leonard said that dumping issues have been cleaned up around town and that rental inspections were beginning. There is a potential buyer for the Sunrise Avenue lots that is planning to attend the next planning and zoning meeting.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Gerald Sutton gave the Commissioners the new debt schedule through 2025. The audit report is complete, and he will report on that next month. The FY24 budget revision is being worked on. It is a very tight budget.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cathy Schwab said that the Historical Library had a few visitors this past month.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Shannon Hannawald has again requested the Commissioners to proclaim the month of March Endometriosis Awareness Month. The Commissioners agreed to do the proclamation, but this time they would forever make the month of March Endometriosis Awareness Month. The motion was made by Commissioner Casey, 2nd by Commissioner Buckle, all in favor. It will be presented at the March meeting.

Amy Horne from CASA made a request for a donation to the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign. Commissioner Casey made a motion to make the \$500 donation, 2nd Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved.

Robert Zimmerhoff introduced himself as the new Director of Caroline County Economic Development and Tourism. He is looking forward to working with the town and hopeful that there will be development of the County Tech Park in August.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Derek Simmons of the Caroline County Softball League would like to use Martin Sutton Park again this year. He thanked the town for help with the fields. He asked about the drainage issues at the park and if the town would be willing to help offset the costs of having an infield mix added to the fields. David Crist told him to be sure to reserve the park with a lease and he will look at the budget to see if there is something that can be done and how to better fix the issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

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