

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
FEBRUARY 6, 2023
TOWN MEETING**



Summary of the February 6, 2023 closed session:

DATE: February 6, 2023

TIME: 5:30 PM

PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: To obtain legal advice.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: §3-305 (b)(7)) "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. §3-305 (b)(8) "To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation."

VOTE TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION: In favor: Commissioner Hurley, Commissioner Buckle; Opposed: none.
President Casey arrived at 5:32 pm.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

PFA's Litigation and joining as a plaintiff in the federal litigation.

ATTENDING: President Anthony Casey, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Leonard John Buckle, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Director of Public Works David Crist, Macleod Law Group Chip MacLeod & Rebecca Guay

ACTION TAKEN: Macleod Law Group, LLC discussed the benefits to the town of joining the federal PFA's lawsuit as a plaintiff against the manufacturers of the PFA's (forever chemicals). There will be no cost to the town. The Commissioners were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss. A vote will be held at the February 6, 2023 town meeting on the legal services agreement between the town, MacLeod Law Group, LLC and Baron & Budd, P.C., and Cossich, Sumich, Parsiola & Taylor, LLC.

The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm in the town hall for the February 2023 town meeting. The following were in attendance: President Anthony Casey, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Leonard John Buckle, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Director of Public Works David Crist, Chief of Police Jeff Eckrich, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Shannon Hannawald, Blair Carmean, Christine Eckrich, Lokia Pierce, Joe Anderson and Holly Justice.

President Casey opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2023 town meeting, seconded by Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved.

STAFF REPORTS

CLERK-TREASURER

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve paying the bills, seconded by Commissioner Buckle, all in favor approved. Total general funds reconciled \$229,199.70, sewer funds reconciled \$46,575.88, water funds reconciled \$38,145.29, ARPA funds reconciled \$871,617.63.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

David gives presented his report to the Commissioners (attached).

CHIEF OF POLICE

Nothing to report.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Melissa Leonard brought to the Commissioners the recommendation from Planning and Zoning to create an amendment to the town code regarding sprinkler systems in remodeled homes. The proposed change would require a home that is having over 50% of the structure remodeled to have a sprinkler system installed. They need the Commissioners to approve moving forward with a new ordinance. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve creating an ordinance with the recommended changes, seconded by Commissioner Buckle, all in favor.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Gerald Sutton said the FY23 audit was complete and there was an increase in the positive fund balance. He also said that Ridgely has the lowest tax rate in the county for a municipality with a police department.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

David discussed that the town's attorney, Chip MacLeod, was assisting larger law firms with a federal PFA's law suit against the manufacturers of the PFA's (forever chemicals.) They would like the town to agree to join the suit and sign a legal services agreement. There is no cost to the town. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to sign the legal services agreement, seconded by Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved.

Shannon Hannwald received a proclamation by the Commissioners designating March 2023 as Endometriosis Awareness month. She gave a presentation about her struggles with the disease.

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Anthony Casey thanked Shannon Hannawald for sharing her story and helping to make everyone aware of the disease.

Lekia Pierce is a Ridgely resident and she is working to open a cannabis consumption lounge in Ridgely. She wants a safe environment where people can come together. The lounge would need an educational element and be for people 21 and older. She gave background regarding the project and would like the support of the community.

Blair Carmean of Caroline Tennis Association said that they will be hosting the youth tennis clinics again this summer and want to reserve the courts on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings June 10th – July 8th.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie L. Berkey, CMC