

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
MARCH 4, 2024
TOWN MEETING**



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm for the March 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, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Chief of Police Jeff Eckrich, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Donna Eveland, Blair Carmean, Christine Eckrich, Domingo Llanes, Brett Meyers, Sharon Adams, Brittany Gross, Ryan Walls, Cody Gross, Cathy & Rick Schwab. Attending via Zoom Meetings: Lokia Pierce.

President Hurley opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve the following minutes: January 9, 2024, vote to go into closed session, January 9, 2024, closed session, February 5, 2024, town meeting, February 21, 2024, vote to go into closed session, February 21, 2024, closed session. Commissioner Buckle seconded the motion, 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 \$385,083.60, total sewer funds reconciled \$47,161.82, total water funds reconciled \$40,825.86, total ARPA funds reconciled \$43,193.66. The fiscal year 2025 constant yield tax rate is .4656. We will need to decide if this is the rate that we will go with in an upcoming town meeting so that we can plan for the FY25 budget.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David Crist presented the Caroline Softball Lease for President John Hurley to sign. There will be a kick-off meeting for the new comprehensive plan with Rauch, Inc. on March 12, 2024.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Chief Eckrich said that he is back to full duty. He is working on a grant through US DOT for a 3x8 message board.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Melissa Leonard said that she wants to form a board of appeals for planning and zoning. Commissioner Casey made the motion to allow the formation of the board, 2nd Commissioner Buckle, all in favor, approved.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Gerald Sutton thanked the staff for their hard work during the mid-year budget revision. It has been a challenging budget year. He did note that with the February income tax, we have collected \$10,000 more than this time last year.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cathy Schwab said that the Ridgely Historical Society and the Hannah Henry Circle are participating in the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of Caroline County. There is a reception on March 15, 2024, at the Museum of Rural Life in downtown Denton. Local establishments will be donating food. On March 16, 2024, there will be a free event on Market Street in Denton and a 5k race. The festivities continue March 17, 2024. The Hannah Henry Circle will be hosting a yard sale at Martin Sutton Park on April 16, 2024, to raise funds for a sign.

OLD BUSINESS

President Hurley read a proclamation for endometriosis awareness month. He encouraged everyone to wear yellow on March 15, 2024, in support.

NEW BUSINESS

President Hurley introduced Ordinance No. 2024-396 an ordinance to reappropriate funds and adjust revenue estimates in accordance with events that necessitate changes in the budget adopted for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024.

Blair Carmean of the Chicken Bridge Tax Ditch Association thanked the Commissioners for their support the previous year. Last year the County gave them \$1800, and he is hoping that they repeat the donation this year. He requested that the Commissioners allocate \$6000 in the FY25 budget for the tax ditch.

Blair Carmean (also of the Caroline Tennis Association) thanked the Commissioners for the use of the tennis courts last year. They will again be hosting Tennis Camps June 8-29, 2024.

Sharon Adams of the Ridgely Lions Club thanked public works and the police for their help with the Strawberry Festival. She made a formal request to hold the event again at Martin Sutton Park on May 26, 2024. This year they plan to have the entertainment ending at 4:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Domingo Llanes of Caroline North Little League discussed the scoreboards that are being installed by a licensed contractor at the Cowbarn Fields. Melissa Leonard explained the permitting process. The official 911 address for the property will be 103 Cowbarn Road. This year they have 138 players signed up and he thanked the town for the team sponsors. A discussion was had about trying to secure grant funding for the gravel driveway.

President Hurley acknowledged the thank you notes in the Commissioner packet.

President Hurley asked how many people joined the meeting via zoom. Melissa Leonard said that there was 1 attendee via zoom. He said that we will give it 3 months to see if more people utilize the service before making any decisions about investing in equipment for the meeting room.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 pm.

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