

COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
MARCH 7, 2022
TOWN MEETING



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 10:00 am in the Town Hall and via Zoom for the March 2022 Town Meeting. The following were in attendance: President Leonard John Buckle, Commissioner John Hurley, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Director of Public Works David Crist, Chief of Police Jeff Eckrich, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Ridgely Historical Society Cathy & Rick Schwab, Jessica Duerstine, Blair Carmean, Shannon Hannawald, Mike Passwaters, Donna Murphy Meade, Joe Anderson, Joanne Sisco, Norma Pinkney, Jenni Mayer, Amber Taylor and Loge Knight.

President Buckle opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2022 Town Meeting, 2nd President Buckle, all in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

CLERK-TREASURER

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve paying the bills, 2nd President Buckle, all in favor. Total general funds reconciled \$396,202.49, total sewer funds reconciled \$415.14, total water funds reconciled \$622.87, total ARPA funds reconciled \$705,061.31. The PNC LGIP accounts have been closed and the money is being transferred to the Shore United investment accounts. The State of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation provided the 2022 Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification for Ridgely. The constant yield tax rate for FY23 is .5121 with potential revenue of \$645,545. This will actually lower Ridgely's current tax rate of .5686. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve going with the constant yield tax rate for FY23, 2nd President Buckle, all in favor. In order to use the ARPA funding from the federal government, the town must adopt an appropriate purchasing policy for the funding. The purchasing policy was prepared by Valerie Mann, who has been contracted by the town to help with the ARPA management. It was presented to the Commissioners for review. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to adopt the purchasing policy, 2nd President Buckle, all in favor. The policy was adopted.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

David Crist discussed the issues the town has had with Mike Peters who built Ridgeway Estates. The town has never signed off on the town for final approval and many things that he was required to do have still not been done. David asked the Commissioners for approval to start legal proceedings against Mr. Peters. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve, 2nd President Buckle, all in favor. We are able to use the ARPA funding to purchase a sewer line camera and David is getting prices for this. The Martin Sutton Park improvements will begin later this month, beginning with the repaving of the tennis courts. The price has increased \$10,000 since the fall. Also, to be completed, is repaving and enlargement of the basketball courts, repaving the walking trail and the parking lots.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Chief Eckrich said that he is in the process of filling 2 full time positions. In the interim, the part time officers will be covering shifts.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Melissa Leonard said that rental inspections letters have been mailed out and they are starting to be scheduled.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Gerald Sutton said that he thought the budget revision went well and we are already working on the FY23 budget.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cathy Schwab said that on March 1, 2022 at the County Commissioners meeting they renamed Chicken Bridge Road to Hannah Henry Way. There will be a celebration on Saturday April 9, 2022 with food, vendors, games and cars from 12-3. They invited the Commissioners to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2022-389 FY22 Budget Revision, 2nd President Buckle, all in favor. The Ordinance was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Shannon Hannawald, founder of the Endo Warriors of the Eastern Shore discussed her story with Endometriosis. President Buckle presented Shannon with a Proclamation to proclaim March as Endometriosis Awareness Month. All of the outside lights at the town hall and train station will be yellow for the month.

Sandra Pitts was not present, but she had requested earlier to be able to put a plaque on the tree at Martin Sutton Park that was planted in memory of her late husband. President Buckle discussed putting a bench at the tree where the plaque could be place. The town would provide the bench for Mrs. Pitts. David Crist will meet with Mrs. Pitts to let her know and to see where the bench will be placed.

Mike Passwaters of 148 E. Bell Street discussed the potholes and condition of East Bell. David discussed that he is looking into paying the county to tar and chip the road. The other options would be to repave the road or to put millings on the entire road, but then it will not be able to be plowed. The Commissioners agreed to see what the costs would be to have the road tar and chipped.

Jennifer Bair from Lister Estates Home Owners Association discussed their concerns: more street lights, potholes on Lister Lane and Robin's Court, a sidewalk in Robin's Court that is damaged by a drainage pipe, and some of the trees that the town re-planted after removing the larger trees that damaged the sidewalks have died. David Crist said that a list was sent to Delmarva Power for LED bulb upgrades in the town, and all of the lights in Lister Estates are on that list as well as Caroline Avenue and Greenridge. Public works will work on putting cold patch in the potholes. He will look at the drain at 25 Robin's Court to see if we can get it fixed. Other sidewalks were repaired when we removed the trees. Sidewalks are the responsibility of the homeowner, but David asked for a list of the sidewalks in question. The town replanted the trees and the homeowners were provided gator bags to keep the trees watered. It is not in the budget to replant trees again. We have a long list of trees that are in need of being removed that have priority for funding.

Joe Anderson from Caroline Tennis Association said that they will be doing the summer camp at the Martin Sutton Park courts again this summer July 7 – August 3 on Wednesday evenings from 6-8:30 pm and Saturday mornings from 9-12. Melissa asked for a certificate of liability insurance. A discussion followed about what will the high school do during the repaving of the courts.

Blair Carmean of the Chicken Bridge PDA thanked the Commissioners for their continued support and requested \$6,000 to be allocated in the upcoming budget. A discussion followed about the flooding issue at 480/Maryland Ave in the County. He has a meeting soon with Leslie Grunden with the County to address the issue. David Crist asked to be kept in the loop about the meeting. There was a discussion about the ditch and sediment from the old milk plant and boat factory off of 2nd Street in the farm field and questions if it was owned by the town. David said that he did not think we did own it, but will do some research to see.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Loge Knight of His Hope Ministries asked the Commissioners to be partners with the shelter and asked for a \$5,000 donation. The Commissioners discussed that that amount is half of what is annually budgeted for all donations and that it would not be possible for that amount this fiscal year. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to give a \$500 donation at this time and to look into another donation for the next fiscal year, 2nd President Buckle, approved.

Stephanie Berkey led a discussion on a request from Chris Dorr to remove the old carriage house from his mother's property. The town has asked that he provide written notice that we are allowed to go onto the property and then we will proceed with estimates on removal. At this time, it is not something that the town or the historical society can afford to restore.

Blair Carmean thanked the town for the improvements that are being done to Martin Sutton Park.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Berkey, CMC
Clerk-Treasurer