

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024
TOWN MEETING**



Summary of the August 7, 2024, closed session:

DATE: August 7, 2024, TIME: 1:30 PM PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: To discuss personnel matters.

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."

VOTE TO MEET IN CLOSED SESSION: In favor: Commissioner Hurley, Commissioner Sears; Opposed: None; Absent: President Buckle.

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Employment status options of current Ridgely Police officers and support staff.

ACTION TAKEN: Current police department officers and support staff laid off on July 1, 2024, will not be brought back for employment and we will continue to utilize the Caroline County Sheriff's Office for public safety. The town attorney will prepare the statement for the September meeting.

Summary of the August 19, 2024, closed session:

DATE: August 19, 2024, TIME: 5:00 PM PLACE: Town Hall

PURPOSE: To discuss legal and personnel matters.

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 Buckle, Commissioner Hurley, Commissioner Sears; Opposed: None.

TOPICS DISCUSSED: Redacted OSP report review and statement for September meeting, other personnel matters

ACTION TAKEN: None

The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm in the town hall for the September 2024 town meeting. The following were in attendance: President Leonard John Buckle, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Brad Sears, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Director of Operations David Crist, Zoning Administrator Melissa Leonard, Sgt. Keith Collison CCSO, Lt. Richard Baker CCSO, Sloane Franklin SAO, DFC Tracy Ferguson CCSO, Konner Metz Star Democrat, Alicia Moxley, Domingo Llanes, Kelly Buckle, Cathy Bowrey, Leroy Harris, Robin Martin, Heather Amador, Jenifer Nesselroad, Makenna Nesselroad, Gary Nesselroad, Lilian Lone,

Anna Mansfield, Jessica Duerstine, Joshua Duerstine, Dawn S. Chase, Brenda Walls, unable to read signature, Stephanie L. Larimore, Christine Eckrich, Jeffrey Eckrich, Matt Eckrich, Nick Lone, Timmy Eckrich, Brianna Eckrich, Chad, Barbie Utz, Bobby Utz, Sue Cherry, Todd L?, Annie Rossi-Gill, Clint Gill, Norma Pinkney, Joe Anderson, Scott Barron, Jim Ray, Kristie Thompson. VIA Zoom: Valerie Douglas, Brandon Samuel, Theresa, Samsung SM-S9286, Matthew Malinowski, JPD, Heidi Olson King, Megan Clarke, Megan Clarke-2 Devices, Frankowski, Nancy Sears, Zak Kneipp, Do, Galaxy A50, Jamie Romph, Cameron King, Sharon Adams, Donald's iphone, Patrick's iphone, Dave, iphone (3), Mason, Megans iphone, Brianna Puffenbarger, Lokia Pierce, TJ Adams, Galaxy Tablet w/ spen, Megan Nichols, Don.

President Buckle opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the following minutes:

- August 5, 2024, Town Meeting
- August 7, 2024, Vote to go into Closed Session
- August 7, 2024, Closed Session
- August 19, 2024, Vote to go into Closed Session
- August 19, 2024, Closed Session

Town Attorney, Chip MacLeod read the attached statement regarding the Ridgely Police Department. It is also available on the town's website www.ridgelymd.org.

STAFF REPORTS

CLERK-TREASURER

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve paying the bills, 2nd Commissioner Sears, approved. Total general funds reconciled \$197,558.83, total sewer funds reconciled \$48,431.70, total water funds reconciled \$41,925.31, total ARPA funds reconciled \$3,319.21. The county asked for legislative requests for the upcoming session. As always, we will ask for a traffic light at Route 480 and Central Ave., and support for the DAF legislation.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David discussed the current situation with the aging camera system. We have been having multiple issues with the system. Midshore Technology Solutions provided quotes to upgrade the systems at the town hall, Martin Sutton Park, and Railroad Memorial Park for a total of \$22,237.63 (can be broken down by location). David would like to use ARPA funding to complete the upgrade. Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the upgrade, 2nd Commissioner Sears, all in favor, approved.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Melissa Leonard said that the next comprehensive plan meeting will be tomorrow at 5 pm at the town hall. Community outreach for the plan will be done at the Ridgely Block Party at Martin Sutton Park on September 28th.

CAROLINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sgt. Collison went over the activity report for August. He introduced DFC Tracy Ferguson as the deputy assigned to the Ridgely post. DFC Ferguson grew up in Ridgely and is a member of the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department. They will be available after the meeting to meet with the residents and answer questions.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Not present.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Not present.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Sears read and presented the proclamation for Ridgely goes Purple.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Sears said that he has tried to speak with the businesses and organizations in the town. Incredible things are happening in town. September 14th is the Little League Car Show, September 17th is the neighborhood gathering dinner with free health screenings, September 18th is the pinewood derby at the high school, September 27th at the memorial park is the purple walk, September 28th is the Ridgely Block Party. He thanked the planning committee for their hard work.

Patrice Flamer and Lokia Pierce received a \$99,000 grant for a 2–7-year-old play area. This project will involve input from the community.

The town yard sale organized by Chad Leister was a tremendous success.

Holly Justice of the block party committee hope to see everyone come to the event. It will be a great family day. She thanked her assistant Tina Hurley for doing such a great job.

Ray Maxie is still concerned about the sidewalks. He has heard that it is the homeowner's responsibility. He is concerned that there are boats and trees covering them. He wants to know if the town should be sending letters to the homeowners. David Crist was asked to respond. David said that we are working with an engineering firm to try to get grants for the sidewalks. Most of the grants are reimbursable with an 80/20 split. We are doing due diligence. The trees will also need to be addresses, as they cause the most problems. There is no specific grid for the sidewalks and many homes do not have them and may not want them.

Jennifer Nesselroad was upset that during the last meeting (which she attended on Zoom) her questions were not asked or answered. She would like to see an itemization of the ARPA expenses. She questioned the sale of the police Tahoe. David Crist said that according to Sheriff Baker the Tahoe is not a pursuit vehicle. She is very angry that the Commissioners did not apologize to the former Ridgely police officers.

Robin Martin has questions regarding the budget. She would like to know how many full and part time employees the town has. She also wanted to know the locations of the security cameras. She asked about having an ethics commission. She reminded the commissioners that they are representing the residents and encouraged them to involve the community as it will go a long way.

Heather Amador read the town charter regarding the police chief and removal from office and questioned why the charter was not followed. Town Attorney Chip MacLeod responded that a criminal investigation would trump the charter. She wants to see an open meeting where the town can discuss having a police department.

Domingo Llanes, President of Caroline North Little League and Caroline Cougars Football/Cheer said that they are having a car show at the Cowbarn fields on Saturday and asked everyone to attend. They are expecting a great turnout. He is meeting with the town staff next week to discuss what little league has going on. Numbers are going up again and they want to involve the town.

Anna Mansfield is disappointed that there was no public apology to the police or a clarification on the statement. She asked Sgt. Collison about coverage and how the numbers are being tracked to ensure that we are only paying for what we are contracted for. She questioned why we even have a contract if we already would get the coverage from the Sheriff's Office. We could use the \$500,000 to repair sidewalks and other issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

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