

**COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
JANUARY 3, 2024
TOWN MEETING**



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm for the January 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, Financial Assistant Gerald Sutton, Cathy & Rick Schwab, Carolyn Crist, Rosalie Harris, Brandon & Jennie Samuel.

President Hurley opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Hurley asked Carolyn Crist, Rosalie Harris, and Jennie Samuel to come to the front of the meeting room to present them each with a Commissioners' Challenge Coin for going above and beyond in helping the town during the Christmas in Ridgely festivities.

Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2023, 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 \$209,395.81, total sewer funds reconciled \$46,736.61, total water funds reconciled \$40,457.96, total ARPA funds reconciled \$71,539.54. Last year we raised \$22,380 for the winter festival. We budgeted \$35,000 for anticipated donations for the 2023 festival, and to date we have raised \$54,000. The costs for the festival are \$46,668 as of today, with a few outstanding statements still coming in January. If there are any remaining funds, they will be put towards the required deposits on the amusements for 2024.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

David Crist reviewed the winter festival. It went smoother than the first year, but we still have a lot of things to learn and improve on. We will be deciding later this month if we will proceed with a festival for 2024. The main issue that we have is being understaffed for the event. It would be easier to hire help for the event than to rely on volunteers. We are competing with so many other events during this time of year and the volunteers are stretched thin.

Heartland Holdings has purchased Hanover Foods. We were very recently informed that they are using the old Hanover lagoons for DAF pits. If they are allowed to continue, this will be devastating to the town. DAF causes a horrible stench that consumes a 4-5-mile radius and draws thousands of flies. Denali is the big company that is behind the pits. The county has passed a 60-day moratorium on the use of the DAF pits and there is a hearing on January 23, 2024, at the HAPS building in Denton to discuss the pits. The town is planning to attend to oppose the pits. The Commissioners discussed their concerns and opposition to the DAF pits.