

TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING  
MINUTES  
September 23, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Vandervort at 7:30 with Commissioners Durange, Letts and Sheets in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Steve Vandervort.

The Accounts Payable report was reviewed and after a short discussion concerning a rescinded check, Commissioner Sheets moved to pay the bills and all approved.

The minutes from September 8, 2009 were reviewed with Commissioner Sheets making the motion to accept the minutes as written. The vote to accept was 3 - 0 with 1 abstention.

Cpl. Adam Streight, the new Charlestown liaison officer, was present to deliver the Sheriff's Report and to introduce himself. He had no written report prepared for this meeting because of the recent changes in command but promised to have the expected report available starting with the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

There was no public comment.

Brandi Burwell, area specialist for the USDA Rural Development, was present to speak about grants and low interest loans available from her agency for water and sewer projects in rural towns. Since the median household income (MHI) for the Town is so high (\$50,000), Charlestown could qualify for only 15% grant money for many projects. For water waste projects, however, the Town could be eligible for much more. These funds may be used to pay fees, acquire land and to rent or purchase equipment necessary to support a qualifying project. President Vandervort explained about the Town's interest in this program because of the impending BRAC expansion, the county's ongoing I&I project in Charlestown, repainting of the water tower, stormwater drainage issues and the need for a third well.

Ms. Burwell suggested that these projects be rated in order of priority, affordability and feasibility before submission. The nature of these projects could make them be eligible for 45% grants with the remainder being covered by loans at around 3.5% interest for up to 40 years. USDA will work with other State and Federal agencies in order to offer the best packages for qualified projects.

It was explained that preliminary engineering and environmental reports must be initially submitted for all projects. After review of these preliminaries by USDA, an invitation to submit an application could be forwarded to the Town. A determination would then be made as to what combination of grants and loans may be offered.

Mr. Joseph Mangini, the circuit rider for Maryland Rural Water Association, spoke about his duties in Maryland. He made suggestions for priorities with I&I project first, then the new well, third the water tower painting and then the stormwater project following that. Median household income of the Town is the most important criteria which disqualifies Charlestown from grant and lower rate loans. Also affecting the qualifications is the rate structure for utilities. If this rate is too low, the municipality is obviously not able to afford its utility system and the State of Maryland will consider this another disqualification from grants and low interest loans.

In closing, Ms. Burwell mentioned that she would be happy to hear from anyone who may have questions about these programs.

Mention was made of the meeting of the Harford/Cecil Chapter of MML to be held in Port Deposit on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners were encouraged to list their meal preferences as soon as possible.

The annual maintenance agreement for Fund Balance support service was presented and after a short explanation about removing the GASB-sm module, Commissioner Durange moved to continue the service. The motion was approved 3-0 with 1 abstention.

Town Administrator's Report -

- Avalon Yacht Basin, 8 Louisa Lane Partners - It is known that they paid water and sewer fees from July 2004 until the fourth quarter of 2006. The reason the billing stopped is not known and the original meter crock cannot be found. They would like to have water service restored from the 6" main. It was suggested to authorize the tap-in via a one-inch meter which the Town would provide. Since the new owners

obviously were paying for the service and there is no record as to why it was discontinued, it was decided to allow the tap-in without a new hook-up fee but the excavation and plumbing work would be done at the owners expense.

- Mr. Pumpaly mentioned that we have been contacted in regard to codification of the Charter and Code of Charlestown. It appears we are in compliance and nothing needs to be done.
- After six months of investigation, a decision as to the best video security system has been made. Fire Protection Industries, Inc. seems to have the most desirable system. The cost of the entire system with one fixed camera and one pan/tilt/zoom camera and three remote computer locations is \$10,801 or an initial payment of \$520+/- and then \$261.38 per month. The five-year, buy-out program was determined to be the most suitable. Questions concerning warranty and repair issues during term of the lease were unable to be answered at this point. It was questioned whether these vandals would be prosecuted by the Town when caught and it was agreed that this would happen. Commissioner Durange motioned to follow the recommendation of the Town Administrator and acquire this system. Approval was unanimous.
- Mr. Pumpaly presented a contract to be signed from Chesapeake Utilities for a natural gas franchise agreement with the Town. This document has been reviewed by some Commissioners and the Town attorney who deemed it to be legally sufficient. President Vandervort, however, suggested that an expiration/renewal date be added to the document before it might be signed. This will be investigated.
- An on-site gasoline tank proposal was presented with a spread sheet showing gasoline used by the Town maintenance vehicles. A proposal from Southern States to install, outfit and fill a 500 gallon tank with gasoline at the daily fluctuating rate less the Federal tax and including delivery was presented. It was estimated that this would save around \$2,200 a year. There are still questions regarding insurance and security issues which need to be addressed. Also it was revealed that the Town may be able to recoup three prior years of Federal and State fuel taxes.
- Maryland Rural Water Association Identity Theft Prevention Program as it relates to fraudulent water service users. Essentially, the Town needs to develop a program to determine the "red flags" to be recognized when new accounts are initiated. Commissioner Durange moved to allow Mr. Pumpaly to sign as the responsible for the program. All agreed.
- The Maryland Treasurer requires that each town have in place and on file a Local Government Debt Policy. Charlestown's Debt Policy is compiled from documents in the Charter. This "Policy" and attending report must be sent to the State Treasurer's Office. The Board is asked to approve and sign the "Policy". Commissioner Sheets made the motion and all approved.
- The Wellwood Club is considering renovations to the main building and requests a four inch tap-in to the 6" main on Water Street which they will then extend more 2" lines for other uses. Although this is a new tap-in to the main it was asked and answered that it would not require a hook-up fee since it is not a new service. The commercial, four-inch meter required for this would not be paid by the Town since the meter (at about \$2,500) is so costly.

Commissioner Letts brought up a discussion concerning the upcoming Town election. He indicated that the Charter (Article VI) indicates that changes to the "In Town" voter list must be checked by the Town Commissioners. Additionally, it was stated that the "Town Only" voter registration list must be supported with "Town Only" voter registration forms. After a short discussion it was decided to table this issue until after the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting during an executive session.

The motion to adjourn was made by President Vandervort and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.