

TOWN COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES
February 10, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Vandervort at 6:40 pm, ten minutes late because of a lack of quorum. Present were Robert Gell, Joe Letts, Donna Sheets and Steve Vandervort. The Pledge of Allegiance was once again led by Ryleigh Johnson.

The Accounts Payable report was reviewed and Commissioner Gell motioned to approve paying the bills. Commissioner Sheets seconded the motion and all concurred.

The minutes from 1-13-09 were reviewed. Commissioner Sheets noted an error in that the head of the Town's Safety Committee should be Commissioner Letts, not Commissioner Sheets as it is now shown. Commissioner Letts requested that the bids received for the Cecil Inn alarm system be noted in these minutes. Commissioner Sheets motioned to accept the minutes when the noted changes are completed. Commissioner Letts seconded that motion and it was passed unanimously.

Robert Corn delivered the Miller Environmental report for January. A fire hydrant on the corner of Cecil and Caroline Streets has now been replaced and is back in service. A new hydrant was installed with the old hydrant being kept for study and as a possible spare. The locked hydrants on Old Philadelphia Road were discussed and it was explained why some hydrants need to be locked. It involves easy access and a pull off for tank trucks

Sgt. Dennis Campbell delivered the Sheriff's report for January 2009. Commissioner Sheets asked about recent break-ins at the Holloway Beach campground and requested foot patrols in that area. Commissioner Letts discussed the recent spate stolen cars and the increased patrols and police visibility in Town. He discussed the upcoming "Neighborhood Watch" information meeting scheduled for the 17th of February at the Fire Hall. It was noted that grants may be available to help with security issues via Homeland Security. Residents commented that patrols are more visible. It was explained that the patrol schedules are set up at least a month in advance and the frequency has been increased.

Town Administrator reported that the municipality's finances are strong. He discussed the total monies (approximately \$159,000) that are expected to arrive shortly from DNR, AT&T, Champion and Lambdin. Two items that impact the budget involve the purchase of the Cecil Inn and the ongoing I&I study. He discussed the changes made with the maintenance cell phone plan. Since this agenda included a number of speakers, Mr. Pumpaly asked to defer the remainder of his report so they may be heard more promptly.

The public hearing for Ordinance 2009-01 regarding pets kept in Town was opened. President Vandervort explained the evolution of this Ordinance. Commissioner Letts questioned the wording and the definition of "farm". It was explained that any pet that became a nuisance would be covered by another, previous Ordinance. The

Commissioners engaged in a short discussion on this “pet” ordinance. With no comments offered by the public, the hearing was then closed. Commissioner Gell made the motion to accept the Ordinance and Commissioner Sheets seconded. Ordinance 2009-01 passed 3-0 with Commissioner Letts abstaining.

Public Comment - A resident commented on how recent snow is not being cleared from many sidewalks. It was noted that many of these walks are the Town’s responsibility and that there may be a Town ordinance that covers the clearing of the remaining, private walkways. This problem is going to be addressed as required.

John Burrell from Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) was present to distribute literature and speak about the history of LGIT. He spoke of “Training Grants” available for Town personnel from LGIT. In 1988 Charlestown joined LGIT. Mr. Burrell presented a 20-year award to the Town.

Kevin Brennan was present from the Army Corps of Engineers to talk about flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration projects in Charlestown. The Corps can offer only non-structural flood damage reduction solutions. It was noted that the Amtrak culverts are no longer adequate because of upstream development. There is a \$2M cap for Federal assistance which must be cost shared 65/35. Ecosystem restoration involves purchasing properties (approximately seven) from “willing” sellers, demolishing the dwellings, moving the residents and restoring the lots to pre-development state. Non-Federal sponsors may be liable for approximately \$1,067,000 under this program. Flood damage reduction appears to be a logical alternative. Redirecting streams toward the larger Amtrak culvert, coupled with additional holding ponds upstream may be a solution. More and larger holding ponds would be needed to slow water upstream from Charlestown.

Commissioner Gell noted that with the existing development, the County’s 10-year flood plan and Charlestown’s 100-year flood plan, Route 7 flooded. He commented that it could only get worse when the planned developments for the area are in place. A resident commented that the County should change their upstream flood plans to 100-year plans. Mr. Brennan mentioned that a dialog with the County about expanding its flood plan would be helpful.

The Commissioners discussed the flood damage reduction alternative and the possibility of the proposed developments being liable for 100-year flood plans. President Vandervort explained the necessity of having upstream developers share in the costs for flood damage reduction. Mr. Brennan noted that any further work on this project would have to be “cost shared” and his department would like to be reasonable in allowing longtime to investigate acquisition of the finances. He asked that the Town Administrator keep him informed of progress.

Steve Miller, Kathy Kunda and Nelson Bolander were present from the Cecil County Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Miller announced that Katrina Vandervort has been selected as “Youth of the Year” for Cecil County. This competition will continue to State and Federal levels with additional scholarships available at each level.

Mr. Miller spoke of the decrease in donations along with the drop in their annual budget. He noted the costs to run the Charlestown Club and the expenses involved per child. He spoke of the increases in costs for various programs. Mr. Miller distributed a letter recently received from a parent. It was noted that many people are perhaps not aware of how badly donations are needed. Commissioner Sheets promised to publish their needs in the "Chatter" and questioned the types of donations that may be made. (i.e. supplies, equipment, furnishings)

President Vandervort addressed the next agenda item concerning term limits and vacancies on the Zoning Appeals Board and gave the background account. He asked the Commissioners for their input and discussion ensued concerning following the rules in place. President Vandervort indicated that he would address the issue directly with the Appeals Board chairman for resolution.

The second Town Commissioner's Meeting of the month has previously been moved to the fourth Wednesday at 6:30. It was requested to move the start of this meeting at 7:30 pm. Commissioner Sheets made the motion to change the start time with Commissioner Letts seconding and all approving.

Commissioner Gell wants to schedule interviews for the Ethics Board vacancies. It was noted that the interview process must be consistent. If adjustments need to be made in this process, the Commission agreed it should be done transparently.

At this point Commissioner Letts had to leave the meeting

Commissioner Sheets spoke of a discount prescription plan available through the National League of Cities for Charlestown residents who do not have medical insurance. Commissioner Gell spoke of a "Cecil Soil" magazine article about a local family and which included much local, Charlestown history.

President Vandervort brought up discussion about drainage projects at Town Hall and Frederick Street and the need to begin these projects soon. Phase 1 of Town Hall drainage can be done by the Town. The Frederick Street (Elmer land) drainage problem can be fixed by the Town. A handout describing costs for materials was made available. Commissioner Letts moved to make the purchase the materials needed. Commissioner Sheets made the seconded and all approved.

Commissioner Gell discussed exploring grants from the State which may be available for these "shovel ready" projects. The Town Administrator spoke on Phase 2 of Town Hall drainage projects and the huge disparity in estimates.

The I&I invoices from the County were explained by Debi Keeley. Investigation revealed that the work is divided into six projects and the County has now provided details matched to invoices. Most of Projects 2 and 4 have been done and should be completed for around \$6,800. The County will communicate with the Town to make sure Charlestown has the money before proceeding with the other projects.

Commissioner Sheets questioned when Trinity Woods and Charlestown Manor would be able to start paying the same rates as the rest of Charlestown. President Vandervort gave

a short explanation about how Charlestown's acquisition of the sewers in these places would actually raise rates across-the-board.

The Town Administrator resumed his report and spoke of a junction box near the road at the water tower that Delmarva repaired and erected a safety barrier. He reported that the dredging at fire boat pier will be done Wednesday (2/11) and the entire project should be done by 14 February but the Town can get one more week if necessary.

Mr. Pumpaly told of the need to repair the front end of the 10 year old dump truck and the estimates he received for repairs. Commissioner Sheets moved to allow him to make his own judgment on whom to use with Commissioner Gell seconding. All approved 3-0. Post office Lease is now on a year-to-year basis. It was suggested to renegotiate asking for \$8,000 per year and pointing out the Town's expenses.

Inspection and maintenance for cathodes and anodes in the water tower was brought up and it was noted that Corpro has been the contractor for this. Commissioner Sheets motioned to move forward with the contract with Commissioner Gell seconding and all approving.

The trash removal contract proposal has been mailed out and the pre-bid meeting is scheduled for February 26. The present contract expires in June 2009.

Personal, floating holidays for part-time employees was addressed. In the past, holidays and leave were pro-rated for part-time. It was decided to have part-time accrual rates be one-half the non-exempt rate.

Commissioner Gell motioned to adjourn with Commissioner Sheets forwarding the second. It was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.