

**TOWN COMMISSIONER MEETING  
MINUTES  
September 23, 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 by President Vandervort. Commissioners Gell and Price were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ryleigh Johnson.

The Accounts Payable were reviewed for approval. Commissioner Gell moved for approval with Commissioner Price offering the second. The motion was approved by all (3-0).

The minutes from 9/3/08 were reviewed. Commissioner Price moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Gell seconded the motion and all approved.

Administrator's Report began with the report that Verizon wants to install 325 feet of telecommunications cable lines from US 7 up and along Revelation Drive. This cable will be installed via bore at a minimum depth of 4 feet. This was presented for information only.

The annual excess soda ash report was submitted from Miller Environmental. A request for better estimate on the usage may be requested in order to budget more accurately.

The Town Hall drainage project was discussed and subcontracting part of the project was suggested. It was revealed that Maryland Soil and Erosion is slowing this project. The Administrator assured that he would revisit the situation since the work is weather sensitive.

Sending the Maintenance crew to LGIT Driver Safety Class was discussed and approved.

The Canon copier maintenance agreement was discussed. Entering a new agreement was suggested and should last until the copier requires replacement.

It was confirmed that the Intense Development Area (IDA) designation for a certain section of the Town has now been approved.

There was no public comment.

Darryl Wilson, Director of Business Development, Strategic Planning, from Chesapeake Utilities appeared to make a presentation concerning natural gas pipeline installation for Charlestown. He revealed that they operate with the Public Service Commission approval. Chesapeake Utilities is unique in that they own transmission as well as distribution facilities and they are diversified with interests in propane, an information systems consulting group, an eastern shore natural gas pipeline and Central Florida Gas. Mr. Wilson also presented handouts further describing this company. Chesapeake Utilities began in 1860 as the Dover Light Company.

Their Distribution Expansion Team (DET) explores various factors which would impact a decision to expand into any specific area. Obviously Charlestown and vicinity fulfill their models. He expounded on the comparative costs of natural gas with natural gas being the least expensive, very convenient, very safe, very efficient and the cleanest. Discussion ensued on the comparisons of the efficiencies of different heating/cooling systems.

An audience member (a builder representative with Charlestown Crossing) contributed information on his own experience with natural gas and this supplier. Commissioner Price asked about service to existing areas as opposed to new development and the difference in installation costs. It was explained that Baltimore Gas & Electric already has service in parts of Cecil County as a non-exclusive franchise. Also Chesapeake Utilities' research into the opportunities of Cecil County and Charlestown indicate a growth opportunity they would like to pursue.

The Commissioners were most enthusiastic in pursuing the installation of natural gas service. Mr. Wilson suggested a letter be sent from the Town to the company expressing strong interest and willingness to

support this effort. A town meeting for a public hearing on the issue was advised. Easements and right-of-way issues historically have not been issues within the Town. Commissioner Gell suggested the company make presentations at the County Comprehensive Plan meetings.

Town Commissioner's Meeting day change. It was proposed to change the second meeting of the month to Wednesday so Commissioner Durange may attend the meetings until the end of her term (January 2009); thus no interim appointment needs to be made. Commissioner Price noted that the term is almost over (6 more meetings, at most, before the next election) and four commissioners are able to conduct Town business. A change in the meeting time had been implemented previously to assist in a Commissioner's attendance. The Town Charter speaks only of the first meeting of the month which must be held on a Tuesday. President Vandervort mentioned having the Town's attorney investigate the legality of moving the first meeting of any month. Discussion began about having special meetings and it was disclosed that special meetings involve special notices being advertised for each meeting. Commissioner Price made the motion to move the second meeting of each month to Wednesday until the 2009 election. Commissioner Gell made the second and all voted in favor of the motion.

The newly vacated seat on the Ethics Board will have to be advertised. Commissioner Price made the motion to do this with Commissioner Gell supplying the second. All approved the advertisement to fill the seat.

Two quit claim deeds were presented for approval. This action stems from the 1950s when the Town streets were resurveyed to clarify and correct property boundaries. These deeds are to officially convey street-side land from the Town to the property owners. Commissioner Gell made the motion to approve issuance of the quit claim deeds with Commissioner Price seconding and all approving.

The idea for a mural for the Veterans Park's rest rooms was presented for discussion. Photos of a resident artist's work were viewed. Other ideas, perhaps a change in the roof line and area plantings were discussed. Commissioner Price proposes to get ideas for designs and plantings from the Visions Committee. He will be moving forward on this.

Document storage was presented for discussion. President Vandervort reiterated his desire that anything scanable be done so. It was explained that an indexing system is needed before scanning. Throw-nothing-away is now the Town's policy and they must be stored as the State directs. Some originals must be kept forever but many may be destroyed on a schedule. An effort should be made to keep storage expenses down. Motion to approve obtaining an indexing system and off-site storage of document boxes was offered by Commissioner Gell. Commissioner Price seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Registration for MML Academy for Excellence in Local Governance for H. Burden and President Vandervort was presented for consideration. After a short discussion Commissioner Gell moved to approve the registrations. Commissioner Price made the second and all approved.

A resident's letter revealing complaints about vandalism at her Bayview Avenue home was read. A copy of the letter was given to the attending Sheriff's Department representative, Sgt. Campbell. When it was revealed that there have been other letters, he asked to receive copies of them. Sgt. Campbell stated that citizens should share as much information about problems as they can.

Discussion about a resident police force arose because being familiar with the Town and the problem areas, it should be very effective. It was pointed out that even though Charlestown pays for extra patrols there is still law enforcement protection at hand from both the State and County forces. Sgt. Campbell was asked to encourage foot patrols during the regular Sheriff's patrols. Another thought was that a

letter be sent to residents explaining how to report problems. A resident complained that the dispatch system does not make a caller feel that their calls are important. It was mentioned that vandalism is mentioned more and more often in calls to the Sheriff's Patrol.

The final draft of Charlestown's 2008 Comprehensive Plan was presented for approval and adoption. Commissioner Gell moved to approve the Charlestown's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Price seconded the move and it was unanimously approved.

Long Term Disability Benefit - President Vandervort favors giving the employee money to procure coverage on their own. Any plan would cover full-time employees only. President Vandervort believes Social Security would cover any disability situations an employee may have. There was little agreement on this point.

Two scenarios were presented: Give each employee the cash equivalent of the premiums in their pay as a raise to finance their own coverage, or not. Or, mandatory coverage from the Town. The Town Administrator suggested he meet with the affected employees to hear their opinions on the two options. The issue was tabled pending the outcome of this meeting.

MML Harford/Cecil Chapter dinner to be held in Elkton on October 16. The Commissioners plan to attend this function except for Commissioner Price who has a previous engagement. Names and numbers of attendees will be gathered and reservations will be arranged.

Commissioner Gell would like "NO OUTLET" sign on Cecil/Frederick corner. Commissioner Price made the motion to have this sign installed. Commissioner Gell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Parking lot at ball field is attracting loiterers. Commissioner Gell would like to gate replaced and have it be locked dusk to dawn.

Commissioner Gell would like water hydrant to be installed at the ball park and would like the cost of this to be investigated.

The Town Administrator spoke of certain enterprises tapping into Town fire hydrants. The Town has hydrant defenders and will coordinate the locks with the fire departments. If the Town were to sell bulk water, hydrants need to be set up for this. The Administrator will provide policy for the sale of bulk water.

Cecil Hotel purchase money. In order for MD Historical Trust to refinance, Charlestown must make a loan. They will not make a loan on a purchase using cash. It was estimated that it would take twice as much to restore as to purchase. Grant money is available annually for restoration. Go ahead was given for 120 day contract.

Commissioner Price reported on the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Parks/Vision Committee. He cited good progress on the linear park project. Commissioner Gell requested the map of Charlestown's proposed parks to present to the County for inclusion in Cecil County's Comprehensive Plan.

President Vandervort adjourned the meeting at 8:55