

# **TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING**

CHARLESTOWN, MARYLAND

March 11, 2014

The Town Meeting was called to order by President Robert Gell at 7:00pm. Commissioners present were Renee Capano, Ken Confalone, Joseph Letts and Bruce Hechmer.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by: Dennis Taylor

Swearing-in-Ceremony of the new Commissioners – Mr. Derrick Lowe, Esq. Clerk of the Court, administered the Oath to the newly elected commissioners; Robert Gell, Renee Capano, and Kenneth Confalone, to their two year terms.

Election of Town Officers – Town Administrator, Wib Pumpaly conducted an election between the Board of Commissioners and Bruce Hechmer was elected President, Joe Letts was elected Vice President and Ken Confalone was elected Treasurer.

Approval of the Minutes of February 25, 2014 - Commissioner Hechmer motioned to approve the minutes and Commissioner Capano seconded it. Commissioner Letts abstained as he was not present for the meeting of February 25<sup>th</sup>. All were in favor, approved 4 – 0.

Accounts Payable review: Commissioner Gell motioned to approve the accounts payable report, and Commissioner Confalone seconded it. All were in favor, approved 5 - 0.

Miller Environmental February Report – Robert Corn reported that they collected and tested all the routine samples and performed all the requested readings and turning the meter off/on. He also stated that they participated in a meeting with the Town, URS and Artesian to discuss the future plans for withdrawal. As well as a meeting with the Town, URS and the Cecil County DPW to assess current and future needs for town infrastructure.

State of the Town – Commissioner Hechmer proceeded to list what has been accomplished in the last year:

- Instituted a 5 year Water/Sewer cost increase program to avoid raising taxes
- Filed suit against Marina's concerning slip tax
- Repaired sinking land containing a electric transfer box
- Town "C" dock, 100% owned and controlled by the Town and collecting more revenue due to new lease
- Installed fire department approved locking caps on fire suppression lines on "C" dock
- Reviewed town insurance policies and tweaked them to save the town money
- Determined who owns and resolved the issue of UM Church Parsonage & land
- Approved lawn irrigation water sub-meters for those who want them
- Cecil Inn was placed on the market for sale
- Instituted a parking tag program to help town residents have better access to Town amenities

- Started a trial LED lighting program at ball field
- Re-financed water system loan to save \$19K
- Obtained low interest loan to correct Town Hall/Post Office water issue
- Obtained a grant to repair/replace basketball courts/tennis courts/pickle ball court
- Applied for grants to convert Lot B into community park and for removal of sunken boat in water off our shore
- Applied for grant to help fire company obtain a new fireboat
- Applied for grant to extend the free fishing pier
- Applied for grant to test dredging spoils at water tower
- Retained URS to analyze future water/sewer needs
- Received grant from Wilmapco for bikeway program to install bike racks and signs
- Increased municipal pier slip fees to insure we have funds for maintenance, repairs and safety upgrades
- National Park Service installing “star spangled banner trail” sign at Long Point Park
- Entered into discussions with Chesapeake Utility about natural gas coming to Town
- Had discussion with builder Lennar about completion of last phase of Scott Gardens
- Created sign for identification of Veterans Park
- Paved parts of Caroline, Frederick, and South Ogle streets and in front of fire company
- Installed 2 more dog waste stations
- 630 water street – renovated and rented for two years
- Installed new BBQ grills at Veterans Park
- Obtained a new F550 truck
- Re-acquired cemetery land through legal process
- Cecil transit now stops in Town
- Ice House, new shed, painted building, new roof, plaque given by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Phillips, free termite inspection from Town resident (Kirkendall Pest Control)

President Hechmer also stated that the Sheriff’s department did an outstanding job as they had 42 criminal cases and only 5 remain open. Also the fire company responded to 179 ambulance calls and 192 fire calls and 4 water rescues in which they saved people from drowning.

Sheriff’s February Report – The Sheriff’s report was not presented.

Ice House “Concept” Planning –President Hechmer asked each commissioner to come up with some ideas and plans for the future of the Ice House to discuss at the next meeting.

Duck Decoy Final Disposition – Mr. Pumpaly stated that he had met with Mr. Gary Guyette of Guyette, Schmidt and Deeter Decoy Auction Firm. Mr. Guyette came to appraise the James Holly Duck Decoys. He assessed that the decoys are very valuable. He chose two that he suggests we could sell at his auction and bring approximately \$40K. His commission would be 10%. He would like to have them by April 15<sup>th</sup> to “ready” them for the catalog and auction in August. Dr. Gell stated that he feels selling them would be a “great loss” to Charlestown” He would like to see them displayed in the Ice House when it becomes a museum. Commissioner Letts stated that they are not “Charlestown decoys” as they were made in Havre de Grace. President Hechmer agrees that they are not “Charlestown decoys,” they were just used in Charlestown. He stated that we need a plan for the Ice House and to have an idea of what re-

modeling would cost, before we sell them. Commissioner Confalone reminded the commissioners that the Ice House project started as a stabilization project. He also stated that with the high value of the decoys, wherever they displayed must be in a secure case with an alarm system so the decoys will be protected from theft. President Hechmer also stated that the decoys would have to be insured properly before they are displayed. After discussion, it was decided that we were not going to sell them at this time.

#### Town Administrator's Report

Old Business – Mr. Pumpaly stated that there was not any old business to discuss until today when he received this motion to dismiss the slip tax case. He supplied the commissioners with the information for the motion to dismiss and the opposition of the motion to dismiss. It is to be heard by Judge Murray on April 15<sup>th</sup> in Elkton.

#### New Business

February budget - Emily Fletcher reviewed the February account balances. She supplied the commissioners with the balances of all the accounts. Mr. Pumpaly discussed some of the overages due to the severe winter weather for material and overtime.

Mrs. Fletcher presented the commissioners with an updated personnel manual which she has been working on. President Hechmer asked if the changes from the old manual were noted on the new. Mrs. Fletcher stated that she would supply the commissioners with the old manual for comparison.

Commissioner Confalone took a moment to acknowledge the past president for his long and faithful service.

Commissioner Gell asked the commissioners what their opinion of reversing the colors of our Town Flag. He knows that the colors have to do with the colonial army and he doesn't want to violate our history but would like the flag to be brighter. He stated that he would look into the cost of reversing the colors of the flag.

#### Public Comment

Dennis Taylor said that he hadn't any comment.

Jeanetta Garrett asked the purpose of the ice house. Commissioner Gell explained that the North East River used to freeze solid and the ice was cut from it and stored in the ice house with saw dust placed on it. Then it would be purchased by residents to go in their ice boxes for refrigeration. He stated that we believe this is the last ice house on the Chesapeake Bay.

Mrs. Garrett asked if the Town ever seeks grants for students wanting to pursue degrees in college but who need some assistance. Commissioner Gell explained that the Riverfest has a scholarship and that the MML Harford/Cecil chapter has a scholarship, as well as Cecil College has other scholarship. Commissioner Capano explained that the Riverfest was the only scholarship specific to Charlestown students.

Mrs. Boudart stated that the decoys should stay in town.

*Respectfully submitted by: Janine Antoshak, Town Clerk*