

## **TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING**

*CHARLESTOWN, MARYLAND*

March 25, 2014

The Town Meeting was called to order by President Bruce Hechmer at 7:00pm.

Commissioners present were Renee Capano, Ken Confalone, Joseph Letts and Robert Gell.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by: Dakota Strong

Approval of the Minutes of March 11, 2014 – Commissioner Confalone motioned to approve the minutes and Commissioner Letts seconded it. All were in favor, approved 5 – 0.

Accounts Payable Review – Commissioner Confalone motioned to approve the Accounts Payable in the sum of \$211,536.10. Commissioner Letts seconded it. All were in favor, motion approved 5 – 0.

Charlestown Community Ball Field – Dave Gordon stated that he wanted to help the Town maintain the Town ball field. The equipment that was purchased last year was not a drag but a tiller that got rid of the grass that was growing in the infield. He feels that we need a drag and he has researched and found some reasonably priced ones. He also feels that diamond tek is also needed to even out the surface of the field. President Hechmer stated that we should maintain the field. It was decided that the town would buy a 6' x 3' drag and 7 tons of diamond tek and fix the backstop. Dave would store, be responsible for the drag and use the drag as needed. Commissioner Confalone motioned to purchase the above mentioned drag, 7 tons of diamond tek and to fix the backstop. Commissioner Letts seconded it. All were in favor, motion approved, 5 - 0.

FY 2014 – 2015 Initial Budget Work Session - Mr. Pumpaly summarized the documents that he included for the Commissioners in their meeting book. He included an MML overview of documents that are or are not required to make available to the public during the budget process. He also included a current and increased scale of the constant yield tax rate, property tax amount to be expected, State Highway Administration user revenue; tipping fees at the landfill are going up. He also included the Cecil County Appropriations to Municipalities proposed rate, the water increase that will go into effect in July as well as the sewer increase from the county. Robert Corn from Miller Environmental is suggesting a capital improvement, antenna revenue, income tax that the Town can expect, cemetery lot sales, potential boat slip revenue, new building permits and hook ups. Commissioner Gell expressed that with just the tippy fees increasing, will warrant a tax increase since we do not want to subsidize anything.

Commissioner Confalone suggested that the Commissioners spend one meeting on revenue and then the next on expenses. Revenue drives expenses and the purpose of a budget is to express in numeric terms what the Town wants to do next year. We are only going to have the amount of money that we had last year, except an increase of approximate \$20K. "If you look at the expense side, does anyone want to do without any services that we have this year?" President Hechmer discussed the possibility of moving the tower money into the general revenue fund. Now it goes into the water fund and sits there. If it got moved it would give us approximately

\$90K instead of the \$20K but it is still not new revenue. “The huge question is a tax increase and I am not in favor of it, stated Commissioner Confalone.” Commissioner Capano stated that she is not in favor of raising taxes either but she sees the entire road damage due to this past winter and she feels that we will not have enough Highway user fund to fix all the streets. President Hechmer stated he is not in favor of raising the taxes. Commissioner Confalone summarized that no one is in favor of raising taxes. Commissioner Confalone stated that with the slip tax, we had expected to collect \$20K and have collected \$2K. Mr. Pumpaly stated that the taxes have not been increased for as long as he can remember and things have been going up every year. President Hechmer asked if the taxes were raised 30% what that would mean to the taxpayer. Mr. Pumpaly stated that it would increase a resident’s bill approximately \$175 to \$225, as a rough number.

Mr. Pumpaly stated that much of the Town’s equipment is aging and will need replacement shortly. President Hechmer mentioned that maybe contractors should be considered. Commissioner Letts stated that “we would then be at their mercy” and they would come after they plow their regular accounts.

Commissioner Confalone stated that \$150K was obligated by past commissioners for the Artesian interconnect. Mr. Pumpaly stated that just today he was informed by URS that if we needed to exchange water with Artesian it would not work, as they are at a 100psi water pressure and we are at a 45psi. Commissioner Confalone said the project looked good at the time but who knew that water if we pumped water in we had to worry about how to get it out (sewer).

Mr. Pumpaly stated that he needs a back hoe for several projects in town. He may be able to get through the next year with it but it won’t last for long. He suggested that we ask someone to go to Richie Brothers and purchase a used one.

Commissioner Confalone stated that without a tax increase the roads that were damaged this winter will not get repaired. Commissioner Capano mentioned that there is water on Cecil Street like a spring. Mr. Pumpaly stated that he was aware of it and there are many other places around town that have been damaged by this winter.

President Hechmer asked if a public hearing is required. It was answered that if an increase of \$25K or more is proposed, a public hearing is required. Commissioner Confalone questioned how much income tax can be expected. Mrs. Fletcher said \$70K is predicted this year.

Another way to handle this problem is not increase taxes and use \$100K from savings and wait for the assessed home values go up. Separate trash from taxes and let people pay trash on their own. Commissioner Capano suggested putting it into their utility bill as a separate item. Commissioner Confalone said that the increased tipping fee is an increase of \$10K. Mrs. Fletcher stated that the cost per household for trash and recycle removal is approximately \$200. Commissioner Confalone suggested looking at our long term capital fund and using our reserve. Mr. Pumpaly suggested that with the boat slip fee at 50% capacity it would be approximately \$35K but we can’t count on that.

Commissioner Confalone suggested that we make a utility fund that includes water; sewer and that the cost for household waste disposal would come out of that, instead of the general fund. Commissioner Capano asked if there was a reason that we just renew contracts without asking for bids. The contract for Miller Environment was reviewed. Commissioner Confalone said the benefit in keeping the same company is that they have knowledge of the town.

It was discussed to lower the price of Cecil House. President Hechmer asked the commissioners what they wanted to do. Commissioner Letts motioned to lower the asking price for Cecil House to \$99,900 and Commissioner Confalone seconded it. Commissioner Capano asked how long it should be listed at that price. President Hechmer stated that it would be put on the agenda in a few weeks to discuss it again. Commissioner Gell said that he wants to see the Cecil House be preserved historically. All were in favor, motion approved 4 – 1.

### **Town Administrators Report**

#### **Old Business**

- No old business to discuss

#### **New Business**

- No New Business to discuss

Commissioner Capano updated the commissioner and said that she is working on arranging an outdoor movie to be shown at the athletic fields. She has not worked out all the details yet.

*Commissioner Gell motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm and Commissioner Letts seconded it. All were in favor, motioned approved 5 – 0.*

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Janine Antoshak, Town Clerk*