

**TOWN COMMISSIONER'S WORK SESSION**  
**CHARLESTOWN, MARYLAND**  
**October 21, 2020**

The October 21, 2020 Work Session was called to order by President, Karl Fockler at 6:11 PM. The meeting was conducted on a webinar platform. In attendance were Commissioners, Karl Fockler, Jeff Fields, Jack Kronner, Joe Letts, and Lou Wood.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the public safety concerns which have been raised concerning Charlestown and our coverage from the Cecil County Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Fockler asked the Commissioners to list the issues:

1. Speeding and running of stop signs – Water Street is not safe; Market Street; Bladen; Frederick; Edgewater; Caroline & Calvert; Calvert & Frederick; Frederick at the Ball Field; Trinity Woods at the bus stop; Revelation Road & Salvation Circle; Cool Springs Road and Steamboat Court
2. 4 Wheelers, ATV, Dirt Bikes – a call on Saturday night went unanswered by the Sheriff's Dept.
3. Golf Carts
4. Traffic – parking where no parking signs are posted, no tickets were issued
5. Avalon – parking and being there after dark
6. Fireworks
7. Drinking/CDS in the park areas – (Veterans)
8. Cars parking the opposite the flow of traffic
9. Abandoned cars and trucks in Cool Springs

Commissioner Letts stated that the answer would be more enforcement. Commissioner Kronner said that the issue is that the leadership of the Sheriff's office is not telling the officers how we want the time to be spent, not sitting, but patrolling. Commissioner Fockler stated that we currently have heavy coverage on the weekends, but don't see enforcement happening.

Commissioner Letts stated that we need to have our own force. We had our own force (a wanna-be cop) who did not work out. We also used the resident trooper program and that failed as well with some of the same issues that we are currently have. We can't hire just somebody off the street.

Commissioner Fockler stated that he thinks if we would have a presence at the boat launch especially on weekends that would help a lot. They could be making sure that people pay the boat launch fee and looking at parking enforcement.

Commissioner Wood wonders if we could have a parking enforcement officer who had the correct credentials, and then see if that might get us into the running for grant money to establish our own force. We would need to have more than one. Commissioner Kronner and Commissioner Letts stated that we would need to have three or four. Commissioner Letts also stated that the chain of command would have to be strict. Commissioner Fockler stated that he

would foresee a parking enforcement officer hired for the weekends beginning on Friday afternoon through Sunday evening. This could begin without a vehicle or get a low speed vehicle that could be used by other town staff during the week. This person would write tickets and would have to appear in court if so needed. Commissioner Fockler would not want the officer armed. Commissioners Wood and Letts stated that we would not get a certified police officer if they could not be armed. The code states that we would have to hire a sworn police officer. This would involve a lot more training. Commissioner Fockler thinks we do not need an armed guard. Commissioner Wood thinks that we should look at protect rather than guard. Commissioner Kronner stated that we could close the parks to residents only. Commissioner Wood stated that we need our own police force and have for a long time.

Commissioner Wood stated that we need to start getting what we are paying for. Commissioner Fockler agreed and doesn't see any change coming after our talks with the Sheriff's Department. If we were to cancel the contract, we probably would see no difference in service. Commissioner Kronner stated that he thinks we would get State Police here faster than the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Fockler thinks that a police force is not feasible, but if we were to start out small with certain duties laid out, we could build toward and justify the need for our own force.

Commissioner Letts stated that no matter where the Sheriff Deputy sits, he won't see everything, he is still only one car.

Other than hiring part time officers do we have any other ideas? Commissioner Fockler threw out roundabouts. Commissioner Kronner doesn't think we have anywhere that they would be feasible. Commissioner Kronner stated that where roundabouts slow traffic accidents can happen. Commissioner Wood stated that one at Market and Bladen would blow the Fire Dept's mind. Commissioner Kronner stated that we don't have the space for a roundabout.

Commissioner Kronner stated we could use traffic cameras that would take a picture. Then tickets could be written. Commissioner Wood stated that this would be added paperwork for the Town Hall staff. Mr. Pumpaly stated that he had looked into speed cameras. There are companies that would place the cameras and then do the staff work and send out the tickets. This needs to be explored. Mr. Pumpaly will look into this.

What is an hourly rate for a part time officer? We currently pay the Sheriff's Department \$51.59 per hour. We could contact Ocean City to see what they pay their seasonal guys. We would need a job description and decide on hours. Commissioner Fockler stated he'd like to see an officer on a bike or the town car. What insurance would we need?

Commissioner Wood stated that there are some more things to think of. If something happens where an arrest would be warranted we would want to have the officer to have a car. We would also need to have a Sure Scan Live for fingerprinting. Commissioner Fockler would see us using the Sheriff's Office for arrests. He would like to see it real simple at the outset.

Commissioner Kronner and Commissioner Wood think that arrests could have been made if we had an official presence at our parks at times this summer.

Commissioner Fockler stated that we need to work up a financial costs and requirements for getting a police force up and running. Commissioner Wood will help to work on this.

Commissioner Fields is not in favor of a part time officer.

Commissioner Fockler thinks there is not a lot of value in the signs that tell you what your speed is.

Commissioner Letts volunteered to help Commissioner Wood and her husband, Dennis Wood, a North East Police Officer, with the work of financial costs and projected duties.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Myers, Town Clerk

Approved 10-27-2020