

**TOWN COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
CHARLESTOWN, MARYLAND  
March 8, 2022 at 6:00 PM  
Town Hall, 241 Market Street, and Via Zoom**

**The meeting was called to order by President Karl Fockler at 6:00pm.**

**In attendance:** Lou Wood, Karl Fockler, Jack Kronner, Curtis Elmer, Jeff Fields, Renee Capano, Jeff Fields, Bryan Lightner, Mary Culver, Kathy SanDoe.

**Public attendees:** Rosalyn Bott, Diane Letts, Dennis Taylor, Richard Mahan, Prosper Boudart, Ursula Boudart, Holly Miller, Kevin Urick, Charlene Notarcola, Rachel Rothwell, Brian Rothwell, Felecia Kennedy.

**Via Zoom:** Thelma McMullen, Steve Troegler, Jamie Edwards, Dennis Wood, Laura Elmer, Debra Myers, Robert Gell.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Holly Miller opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Minutes: February 22, 2022 – Motion to approve by Commissioner Kronner, seconded by Commissioner Elmer. Carried 4-0.**

**Accounts Payable** in the amount of \$67,206.41 were presented for approval. **Commissioner Elmer moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Kronner. Carried 4-0.**

**March 2022 Election Results**

1. Renee Capano—105
2. Lou Wood—90
3. Jeff Fields—69
4. Richard Mahan—62
5. Ursula Boudart & Sean Durgin—56
6. Jack Kronner—35
7. TJ Patterson—30

**Commissioner Swearing-in** – Incumbent Lou Wood and newcomers Renee Capano and Jeff Fields were sworn in under oath by Charlene Notarcola, Clerk of the Cecil County Court.

**President Fockler took a moment to express gratitude to Commissioner Kronner for his service.**

**Election of Officers** – Vote Counts:

- President – 4-1 Karl Fockler
- Vice President – 5-0 Renee Capano

- Treasurer – 3-2 Jeff Fields
- Planning & Zoning – Renee Capano
- Maintenance – Curtis Elmer
- Law Enforcement – Lou Wood
- Parks & Recreation – Lou Wood

**Miller Environmental – February Report** - Mr. Lightner provided a review of the report.

**Cecil Co. Sheriff’s Report** – Sgt. Kalinsky was unable to attend; Commissioner Wood provided a review of the report.

**Maintenance Report** – Commissioner Elmer read the report from February. He stated the new meter replacement project is 95% complete.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Town Administrator Update – Bryan Lightner**

Mr. Lightner mentioned there are five grants that were applied for this fall. The first one submitted in September for the dredging around the boat ramp, town pier, and fire boat dock, we haven’t heard back yet.

The grant submitted to the Chesapeake Bay Trust was not approved, which was for a larger rain garden, bioswales, and a stream restoration project, however, it will be re-submitted to another grant program in the near future. President Fockler stated we could do some of the projects with Town funds, Mr. Lightner will need to follow up local engineers and get some cost estimates for specific components.

Two other grant proposals were submitted for the design of living shoreline projects at Foot Log and Avalon Parks. We should expect to hear the status of those awards in the April/May timeframe.

The sidewalk enhancement project with the State Highway Administration along Market Street is progressing and will turn into comprehensive assessment, to both address our safety concerns and improve the visual appeal of this important area in the center of Town. We will follow up with them and provide additional information on recent development activity as part of their assessment. The bridge on Cecil Street will be addressed as soon as the weather breaks, SHA’s maintenance staff will install swales downhill of the sidewalk to help drain the debris that collects in the area after storm events.

The water meter replacement project is coming to an end, with 315 out of 332, meter installations completed. There are 17 still incomplete, which will be addressed by the end of March.

The RFP to design the addition for Town Hall couldn’t get out in February, but will be advertised this month.

Text My Gov is a way for residents to text us questions and receive answers, and may be a program worth trying. The cost estimate is \$1,000 to start, and \$2,500 a year to maintain. We can create a community survey to see if this might be worth using.

We’re also considering whether a credit card reader in Town Hall would be cost effective and could also develop community survey for this as well.

The Election Board is currently paid \$150 for the Chair and \$125 for the Board members, for their day of service on Election Day. President Fockler would like to see us get in line with the Cecil County reimbursement rates. **Commissioner Fields made a motion to approve a raise to \$325 for the Chair, and \$300 for the other Board members, and to select an alternate Election Board member, which was Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Approved 5-0.** Diane Letts suggested Mary Culver, Office Manager, could be an alternate.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Low Income Household Water Assistance Program – Bryan Lightner**

Mr. Lightner stated that this program would be an agreement between the Department of Human Services and the Town of Charlestown and that it's part of the Maryland Rescue Act of 2021. He said that residents in Town with outstanding water bills are qualified and that if the Town agrees to the terms, the State would provide funds to those residents in need. Commissioner Fields expressed that he hopes it gets passed, and President Fockler is in favor of taking a further look into it. **A motion was made by Vice President Capano to approve the program, with the contingency that it's reviewed and approved by the Town attorney; Commissioner Wood seconded; approved 5-0.**

### **AECOM – Bryan Lightner**

Mr. Lightner explained that AECOM would like to renew the agreement with us for engineering services, which if approved, would be for another 2 years. Commissioner Wood feels their work regarding erosion and sediment control and stormwater management in Cool Springs isn't worth the pay and President Fockler agrees there are settling issues around the utilities in Cool Springs, particularly around the stormwater system. Commissioner Capano asked if we should do an RFP to look for other companies to provide engineering services. President Fockler suggested having the Town Attorney review the agreement. After some discussion, it was decided Mr. Lightner will collect some cost estimates from local engineers and see what services they could provide the Town.

### **73 Edgewater Water Service – Kevin Urick**

Mr. Urick shared with the Board that his well has failed and would like to connect to the Town's water system, if possible. Mr. Lightner stated that we do have an agreement with conditions for situations like this, which stipulates that if you reside outside of Town limits and want to hook up to Town water, you have to pay the connection fee of \$7,000, pay for the cost of the pipe, and consent to annexation in the future. Mr. Urick already has a sewer hookup through the County and is close to where the Town water line ends. Mr. Lightner stated he will speak with the Town Attorney to ensure the agreement is brought sufficiently up to date. **Commissioner Capano motioned to approve the agreement with Mr. Urick, on the condition that the Town attorney reviews and approves the deed restriction agreement, and Mr. Urick signs the same. Commissioner Fields seconded; approved 5-0.**

### **Veteran's Park Security – Bryan Lightner**

Mr. Lightner expressed the concern around recent vandalism at Veteran's Park and asked the Commissioners if the Town should consider placing a motion sensor on the Ice House facing Veteran's Park in an attempt to deter further vandalism. Commissioner Fields and Commissioner Wood feel that along with a motion sensor, the Town needs to install another security camera facing the direction of the marina. **A motion for installing a second security camera and motion sensor was made by Commissioner Elmer and seconded by Commissioner Capano; approved 5-0.**

### **THIS MARKS THE END OF OLD AND NEW BUSINESS.**

Commissioner Wood wants to make sure we can schedule events with bands at Town parks, and perhaps include some movie nights. President Fockler agrees and suggested Commissioner Wood work with Commissioners Capano and Elmer to put together a schedule of events.

Commissioner Capano stated that going forward she would like for audio recordings of the Commissioner meetings be made available on the Town Website for download.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Thelma McMullen** – Ms. McMullen wanted to follow up about the erosion at Foot Log Park and is concerned that the meetings with MDE keep getting cancelled. Mr. Lightner state that he will be meeting with MDE on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am to determine if the project needs a state permit or just one through the Town.

**Kevin Urick** – Mr. Urick thanked Mr. Lightner for getting him on the agenda so quickly.

**Diane Letts** – Ms. Letts expressed the need for more transparency in regards to the Town budget and the public's right to know that it is being followed. She also stated that nothing is being done to the Town Charter to ensure the Election Board is following State regulations for Elections. Commissioner Capano stated that the Town should be transparent going forward and suggested we broadcast a livestream video of the ballot counting on future Election Days.

**Dennis Taylor** – Mr. Taylor suggested that the Town offer a stipend to the Election Board alternate since they would be required to be on call for that day.

**Rosalyn Bott** – Ms. Bott asked if the Town still has the same employee health insurance as two to three years ago and if the Town has a new accountant. Mr. Lightner confirmed we have the same health insurance and same accountant. Ms. Bott also asked for an update on dredging for the Town pier and the cemetery signs. Mr. Lightner will reach out to DNR for the status of the Town's dredging grant proposal and will look into cost estimates for the cemetery signs.

**Ursula Boudart** – Ms. Boudart asked about the status of the park ranger position. Mr. Lightner stated that details still need to be finalized but the position will be part-time on the weekends. Ms. Boudart stated that the Town's Charter needs updating, specifically Article 4; she suggested the wording "requires quorum" should be changed to "requires majority." She also stated that the

Town's budget should be displayed outside on the bulletin board, handed out to residents, or emailed at least once a month. Ms. Boudart stated that she feels the Town needs to address the lack of income received from the lodging tax for Air B & B's. She said that the state charges 7%, the county charges 6%, and the Town only gets a small amount in return. She also feels that the Town should have a permit process for someone to open an Air B & B, to ensure they meet certain requirements. Ms. Boudart also stated that the Town needs signage at all beaches, including the campgrounds, that says "swim at your own risk." Lastly, she suggested that the Town's code laws should have penalties.

**Prosper Boudart** – Mr. Boudart suggested that the Town look into getting antique signs from the State Highway Administration for the cemeteries because they might be willing to donate them. Mr. Boudart also asked for an update on 630 Water Street's rental status. Mr. Lightner stated that it's been advertised for a month so far and he has provided two draft leases to potential renters but that he hasn't received any back yet.

**Richard Mahan** – Mr. Mahan stated that he feels the Town should sell 630 Water Street because the layout for a rental property is poorly designed. Mr. Mahan also talked about an issue on Conestoga Street where there is a supposed illegal business operation and he suggested the Town enforce its codes.

**THIS MARKS THE END OF PUBLIC COMMENT.**

**President Fockler motioned to adjourn at 8:00pm, seconded by Commissioner Wood. Carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Culver, Office Manager