

Town Commissioner's Meeting
Charlestown, Maryland
May 23, 2023
6:00 PM
Town Hall, 241 Market Street and on Zoom

Attendees: Renee Capano, Rob Rinehart, Richard Mahan, Lou Wood, Jackie Akers, Bryan Lightner, Mary Culver, Kathy SanDoe
Public in Attendance: Charlene Notarcola, Clerk of Courts, Tom Costanzi, Katie Fortune, Principal Charlestown Elementary School, Mike Berth, Cecil County Emergency Services
Zoom: Julie Campagna, Ursula Boudart, Hope McHenry, Sgt. Mike Kalinsky, George Stanko, Rob Psioda

President Capano called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Tom Costanzi was asked to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Old Business

Town Commissioner Appointment - President Capano & Charlene Notarcola, Clerk of Courts: President Capano stated that the FY 2024 budget would be finished and adopted this evening. In addition, Commissioner Candidate, Jackie Akers would be sworn in as the new Commissioner. While several great candidates were interviewed for the position, the decision was unanimous to select Jackie Akers. After Charlene Notarcola conducted the swearing in of Jackie Akers, she was welcomed to the Board.

FY 24 Budget – Commissioner Mahan: On Thursday evening, May 18th, there was a public hearing during which the budget was discussed in depth. It is in balance at \$1,669,585.00. Amendments can be made as needed to keep the budget in balance. Commissioner Wood commented that after the loan for repairs to 630 Water Street is repaid to the Utility Fund the rental funds will need to go towards parks and recreation expenses. Commissioner Akers motioned to approve the FY 24 budget. Commissioner Rinehart seconded. Approved 5-0.

FY 24 Real Estate Tax Rate Resolution – Commissioner Capano: President Capano stated that the Town is not raising taxes. Once the Resolution is approved, it is sent to the County so the appropriate amount of property tax is collected. It was resolved that the Board of Commissioners wish to keep the FY 24 tax rate at \$0.3313 cents for each \$100.00 of assessed value. Commissioner Mahan motioned to approve the 2023-06 Resolution. Commissioner Wood seconded. Approved 5-0.

Town Banner/Wreaths Map Layout – Bryan Lightner: All of the banners have not been installed due to missing brackets. A map has been created to show evenly spaced locations for banners to be placed. President Capano offered to review the map and drive through Town to verify placement for the banners, seashells, and wreaths. Commissioner Rinehart stated that bollards are needed by the telephone pole on Louisa Lane where trucks with boat trailers keep hitting the pole. Mr. Bobby Straiton said they would place three bollards around the pole.

New Business

Emergency Operations Plan Update – President Capano: The Emergency Operations Plan was written in 2003 and updated in 2009. Mr. Mike Berth, an Emergency Planner with the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services, stated the County just rewrote their procedures. He suggested the Town reference Perryville’s Response Plan as they are a municipality like Charlestown. There needs to be a command/control aspect to the plan. It is necessary to be able to contact residents in case of an emergency. A hazard mitigation component should be added to the Emergency Operations Plan, so the Town can plan for different situations. Code Red works to notify residents of emergency situations but it is self-registered and only works if information is up to date. The Town needs to create scenario templates. Where would the Town command center be located – Town Hall, the Fire Department, Charlestown Elementary School? We’ll also need to coordinate with Cecil County for warming/cooling center locations. At Town Hall, there should be a back-up power generator, to help keep Town operations going. Transportation needs and access issues should also be addressed. Commissioner Wood said she would check with the property owners at the end of Cool Springs Road, to see if emergency access to Route 40 from Cool Springs could be used as an evacuation route. A list of special needs and elderly residents should be available and kept current. Ms. Katie Fortune, Principal of Charlestown Elementary School, said she could assist with exercises and drills and is willing to share videos with the Town. President Capano stated back-up power generators are coming for the pump stations, wells, and water tower. The Town should coordinate with the Fire Department for a command center and use the County’s EOC (Emergency Operations Center) as a back-up. DNR recommends creating MOU’s (Memorandum of Understanding) with neighboring towns and the county. Mr. Berth stated there is NIMS (National Incident Management System) training online through FEMA – IS700.B. This independent course study is available through the Cecil County Government Emergency Services website. Mr. Lightner noted that hazards need to be identified and plans in place to address different emergencies. Commissioner Rinehart suggested high water level pole markers could be in place during storm events, to warn where rising water could be an issue. President Capano stated that a policy of no street parking during blizzards would make it easier to clear streets and Mr. Straiton said cul de sacs are particularly difficult to clear during snow events when cars are parked on the street. Mr. Berth said Town maps are especially helpful in identifying locations in need of assistance. In the event of an active shooter threat or terrorism Sgt. Mike Kalinsky is a good resource. All high schools are set up as shelters in case of power outages or other catastrophic events. Possibly the use of sirens would get the public’s attention. Mr. Stanko suggested having pre-planned messages to use as PA announcements. A procedure for Town evacuation and communication plan should be ready to execute when needed. Town representatives could go to the County EOC to assist in coordination efforts. New sandbags and sand could be ordered in preparation for flooding events. The County can support residents if they are evacuated to the school. Charlestown is in Zone B for hurricane evacuation. Mr. Berth stated that a preparedness checklist should be created for Town residents. For example, all propane tanks need to be anchored. A resident list of small boats, jet skis, canoes and kayaks will also be helpful if boat recovery is required. After an event, the Town needs a realistic plan for getting residents safely back into their homes. The Town should look at the County hazard mitigation plan for suggestions. Using an Emergency Management Wheel is a great organizational tool for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery plans. In the case

of flooding, it was suggested that the campground at Holloway Beach consider closing their gates to help contain debris. Mr. Straiton was asked to build additional road closure barriers. The Emergency Operation Plan will take cooperation between the Town, residents, churches, marinas, restaurants, schools, fire department, sheriff's department, and county and state resources. The conversation will continue at the July 25th Commissioner's meeting.

Comments

Tom Costanzi gave the discussion a thumbs up.

Rob Psioda suggested sending a newsletter for educational awareness and setting up a project web page to keep the community updated. He said a community workshop would also be a great way to involve the residents. FEMA and County resources can help build a knowledge base.

George Stanko offered National Night Out in August as a great opportunity to educate the public.

Commissioner Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mahan seconded.
Approved 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy SanDoe