

**Town Commissioner's Meeting**  
**Charlestown, Maryland**  
**July 25, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**  
**Town Hall, 241 Market Street and on Zoom**

Attendees: Renee Capano, Rob Rinehart, Richard Mahan, Jackie Akers, Bobby Straiton, Bryan Lightner, Kathy SanDoe; Lou Wood was not in attendance.

Public in Attendance: Mark Dobbins, Michael Berth, Rosalyn Bott, Tom Brittingham, Jacki Brittingham

Zoom: Chris Williamson, Tom Costanzi

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

Ms. Rosalyn Bott was asked to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**New Business**

ENERWA Report Card – Mark Dobbins: Mr. Dobbins, on behalf of the Elk and North East Rivers Watershed Association, brought their Water Quality Report Card for 2022 to the Commissioners to review. The ENERWA, a 501-c3 organization, was created in 2014. They are working on monitoring water quality in both watersheds, as well as, projects that help to improve water quality. In the area next to North East Isles on Route 7, they hope to help the Town of North East create a passive park along North East Creek. During a recent Project Clean Stream Event, the group helped to collect over 5,000 pounds of tires and more than 2,000 pounds of trash in that area. Much of the area tested by ENERWA is along Stoney Run and North East Creek. Sixty percent of the area surrounding the North East River Watershed is agricultural. The North East River has been graded as 'C' which is an improvement from 'C-'. They are beginning to look at trends on individual sites using Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's). Watching trends will assist in improving water quality. They are holding their own in both watersheds and watching both nitrogen and phosphorus levels decrease. Watershed Organizations are volunteer based and most of the water quality samples are shore-based. Field testing takes about an hour and training is required to test samples. It is possible to shadow active volunteers and then take official training. Testing occurs from April through November and reports take a couple of hours a month. A sample kit with meters costs \$2,500.00, with samples costing \$200.00 per year per site at \$25.00 per sample. They would like to expand the samples further south on the North East River. Results from a certified lab are important for obtaining grants. Ninety-five percent of the North East Watershed is in Cecil County. The other five percent is in Chester County, PA. The Charlestown Wharf is one of their current test sites in Town. Future test sites could include points along Peddler's Run and Red Rum Creek. Training takes place in late March/early April with shadowing in the fall. Mark suggested including the Water Quality Report Card on the Charlestown website. He will also email Bryan dates for training. On another note, Mark is part of the Cecil County Watershed Stewards Academy, and his capstone project was planning and creating a rain garden at the entrance to the North East

Town Hall, at a cost of \$11,500.00. Since the rain garden was installed, sand bags are no longer needed at the meeting entrance during heavy rain events.

Emergency Operations Plan Update – President Capano: Three things will work together in Town to assist with emergency preparedness: the Watershed Master Plan, the Emergency Operations Plan, and Town Hall Addition, to include an Emergency Operations Center/Resiliency Hub. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, Jessica Cook from Ben Cardin’s office visited the Town. Jessica Seipp, with the Dewberry team, joined the group to see how stormwater flooding is being projected, and five potential project sites were reviewed. They discussed where to place a rain garden, possibly in Fireman’s Field. Jessica Cook spoke about funding and suggested looking at other avenues for money such as a MEA grant for \$500,000.00. A shovel ready infrastructure bill has been introduced in Congress, which may also be beneficial to the Town for implementing projects. Suggested elements for becoming a Resiliency Hub are providing emergency heating and cooling, refrigeration for temperature-controlled medications, plug-in power for computers and cell phones, ventilation and emergency lighting, showers and cots. The building must also be ADA compliant with elevators, if appropriate. Generators have been ordered for Town Hall, the Water Tower, Wells #1 and #2, and the Avalon Sewage Pump Station. A portable generator will be ordered for Veteran’s Park and as a back-up for the other generators. A contact sheet needs to be created with cell phone numbers of key personnel. Decisions on how and where to send people in an emergency needs to be determined. For example, Perryville High School is currently an Evacuation Center. Three assisted living homes need to be considered in an evacuation. There are different types of emergencies, which can include flooding, a railroad disaster, or possibly a chemical spill from a tractor trailer. Other scenarios need to be studied and plans developed. A reunification center also needs to be set up to afford the ability to unite people during and after an emergency. Another thing to consider is where Town Hall could operate if the building is damaged. One possible option could be the Maintenance Shop. A land line is needed for Town Hall. Recordable Walkie Talkies where everyone hears at all times are also necessary. President Capano stated that FEMA training is available and will send information. MOUs and MOAs with surrounding towns and Cecil County need to be explored. The August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting will contain an update for the Town Hall expansion. Working with local businesses, the marinas, restaurants and churches will help improve safety and communication during an emergency event. For example, Lee’s Marina has a second floor that could be used. There are also four showers and an ice machine. Commissioner Rinehart said the Charlestown Missionary Baptist Church has offered the use of their kitchen during an emergency event.

President Capano said MML has a 400-page document that she will review and will use to start an emergency preparedness tool kit. The Town also needs an ordinance about when to declare an emergency and procedures to follow. The declaration is typically good for seven days. The first step is creating an Emergency Preparedness Plan and a Continuity of Operations Plan.

Michael Berth, with Cecil County’s Department of Emergency Services, suggested using the Perryville High School as an emergency shelter. He also mentioned the Town’s EOC may be eligible for assistance from the Red Cross. He noted educating the residents is key and preparing an emergency preparedness toolkit is very important. He stated Cecil County has a THIRA – Threat Hazard Index Risk Assessment, as part of its recently adopted All Hazards Mitigation Plan, which Charlestown can use for guidance in preparing plans for the Town. This covers

contingency plans for different threats, such as hurricanes, winds, chemical spills, train and plane incidents, pandemics, suspicious car, active shooter, fire, and bomb threats.

Chris Williamson stated that the time of year, day versus night should also be taken into consideration when preparing for emergencies. Immediate response is with first responders and that recovery, including restoration of utilities, and rebuilding, can take many months.

Assignments – to be completed by the August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting

- Recall Roster for key personnel: Bryan Lightner and Kathy SanDoe
- Land line for Town Hall: Mary Culver
- Walkie-talkies – durable and recordable with a three-mile range: Commissioners Mahan and Akers (A budget amendment will be made to cover the amount.)
- FEMA – Cecil County, Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM – MML, A FEMA Student ID is required to obtain credit for taking the FEMA test. It is a pass/fail test with at least 70% of the questions answered correctly.: President Capano
- MOU and MOA – Coordinate with other towns in Cecil County: Commissioner Rinehart and Bryan Lightner

President Capano would be the one to declare a Town emergency. She is currently working on a ham radio license.

Commissioner Akers motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rinehart seconded.  
Approved 4–0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy SanDoe  
Town Clerk