

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
April 14, 2021

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Tom Gilbert, John Zimmerman, and Michael Bailey, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Communications Specialist Samantha Fowle, Public Works Director Joseph Birch, Town Manager Sean Williams, and citizens. Commissioner Michael McNiesh joined the meeting via phone. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

1. MINUTES

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner John Zimmerman to approve the Town meeting minutes and Closed Town meeting minutes of March 24, 2021. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

2. VETERANS' COMMITTEE

Chairman Donald Schildt updated the group with several items from the Veterans' Committee.

1. The 40th Anniversary of the ARIA crash will be held on May 6th with a ceremony at 10:30 A.M.
2. The Washington Bus Trip will occur September 15th pending COVID
3. Veterans' picnic is scheduled for September 18th at Heritage Park. Mr. Schildt requested approval of two letters to be sent out seeking donations.
4. Veterans' Day is November 11th, the Committee is hoping to have the band and reception included this year. They are struggling to find a Made in the USA gift.
5. Mr. Schildt requested a potential increase in the annual budget for the Committee.
6. A request was made to promote the brick sales so additional bricks can be added to the memorial.

3. TOWN HALL RENOVATION UPDATE

Town Manager Sean Williams updated everyone with the completed design costs estimating approximately \$500,000 for renovating the entire first floor of Town Hall including the meeting room. The work will be completed in three phases and include some interesting challenges.

4. SPRING GARDENS WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT BID

Burgess Weddle advised that the Spring Garden water main replacement bid has been completed and made public. The pre-proposal bid will occur on April 22nd at 9 A.M. with proposal required May 6th.

5. MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN POSITION UPDATE

Manager Williams advised numerous individuals applied for an open Maintenance Technician position. Several candidates were interviewed and a candidate has been offered the position and updates will occur.

6. ORDINANCE 2021-02

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed creating a new provision authorizing Town staff to take possession and remove any parked or abandoned vehicle in violation of 80-17B, or obstruct traffic or interfere with clearance of snow/ice.

7. ORDINANCE 2021-03

Burgess Weddle discussed potentially increasing the assessment fee on water bills to \$100 in order to cover the cost of the loans for the new Water Plant. There was discussion about increasing the assessment fee versus increase water rates and the importance of quality water being produced at the new plant. Water bill payments can be made monthly in smaller amounts if that will assist citizens. Notices regarding the assessment fee will be included in the bills being sent out for May.

8. ORDINANCE 2021-04

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed amending the definition of a Snow Emergency from 2 inches of snow/ice to 4 inches of snow/ice.

9. SENIOR PARADE/FIREWORKS

Burgess Chad Weddle advised of plans to have a parade and firework display for the high school seniors on Sunday May 22nd in the afternoon with a parade and fireworks to follow at approximately 9 P.M. Private donations will be collected in the hopes of raising up to a total of \$7,500. There was discussion involving the need to open the event to private and homeschooled seniors. An additional committee meeting is taking place to discuss the concerns to involve private and homeschooled seniors.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Michael Bailey to pay up to \$7,500 for fireworks if the funds are not raised. The motion passes 4-0.

10. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to pay the bills submitted for the time period. The motion passes 4-0.

11. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS

Burgess Chad Weddle advised a garage door was installed for the Glade Valley Food Bank at Town Hall. The Food Bank will be moving items out of the one vehicle bay to allow the Town to store items in that location.

Burgess Weddle kindly reminded citizens not to illegally dump trash in the parks.

Burgess Weddle announced the need for election judges for the upcoming September elections. If interested, please contact Town Hall.

A shred event will occur on May 22nd from 9 A.M. until Noon at the Walkersville Fire Company. A suggested amount of \$5 per box will go towards the Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company and Recuse Company.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver announced the next compressive plan workshop will occur on May 11th. It will focus on economic development.

Administrator Hauver advised a staff draft of the comp plan will be completed by June.

Public Works Director Joseph Birch advised the sink hole at Mill Run was fixed.

Dir. Birch advised Town staff will be repairing asphalt patches over the coming week throughout Town.

Dir. Birch noted ECM began work on Biggs Ford Road today, may be completed by Saturday or early next week.

Heritage Park walking paths will begin the first week in May weather dependent.

Water main valves will be inserted on MD 194 at the Storm Pond at the end of May.

Sidewalk evaluation is ongoing.

Town Manager Sean Williams discussed the recent damage to the new building at Heritage. A window and drywall were damaged and will be fixed. Investigation is ongoing and any information provided on the responsible party would be appreciated. Juveniles also knocked over a porta potty at Community Park at 1:50 A.M. on April 1st. State Troopers were notified of both incidents.

12. PRELIMINARY BUDGET DISCUSSION

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed the upcoming budget meeting and need for budget workshops. Commissioners were presented with current budget numbers and preliminary budget numbers for the upcoming fiscal year. The American Rescue Plan Act will also provide a need for an amended budget likely occurring in June or July once funds are received and guidelines are provided.

13. COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Commissioner Michael McNiesh requested an update on the Heritage Barn project.

Commissioner McNiesh asked on the status of the Welcome to Walkersville sign project. Manager Williams advised the sign company provided an updated cost with a slight increase. The project is moving forward, but locations need to be decided.

Commissioner Michael Bailey was thankful for the communication on the Biggs Ford road work including all updates.

Commissioner Bailey inquired about any questions on the previously proposed ordinances (blighted properties and economic development committee) from the last meeting.

Commissioner Bailey inquired about the status of online bill pay for the Town website. Manager Williams advised the new server is still being updated, but research will occur for online payment and feedback will occur next meeting. Website redesign will also need to be considered in the near future.

Commissioner Bailey advised he spoke with citizens that inquired about the possibility of creating a splash pad at one of the Town parks. There was a discussion about the potential issues of a splash pad, but interested citizens could speak with the Parks Commission directly.

Commissioner Bailey inquired about the possibility of offering a reward for damage to property at the parks.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis mentioned that Frederick County is having similar issues with sidewalks in their community similar to Walkersville.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis announced a Food Truck event on May 2nd at Heritage Park to benefit the Walkersville PTA.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis discussed the building usage agreement with GVAA. It was suggested to open the building up to GVAA only for a period of time to allow the Town time to figure out electric, cleaning, and other concerns before allowing Town citizens to use the facility. Commissioner Brodie-Ennis reported there are members of the Parks Committee that feel the building should be a GVAA only facility.

There will be a ribbon cutting event for the building Sunday, May 2nd.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis reported interested in using POS funds to possibly upgrade the existing basketball court and add a half-court basketball court at Creamery park.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis met with two Foresters to develop a plan of using native trees for the future Memorial Tree project. There will be plans for Community and Heritage Park developed.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis reported on an interesting discussion with the GVAA soccer committee and requested the Town invest funds in seed and fertilizer to rejuvenate one of the soccer fields.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis discussed the Welcome to Walkersville signs and proposed the idea of only having two signs on MD 194 instead of the originally suggested five. There was discussion on where to locate the signs.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis asked for any feedback from the proposed usage agreement. Commissioner Michael McNiesh thought the agreement looked good, but expressed concern with making sure the building would eventually be used by citizens. There was general agreement to start with the building being GVAA only to start and after six months allow public use.

Commissioner John Zimmerman asked Director Birch about the pump station located at the new Heritage Building and asked if it is always running and could be a cause for the high electric bills. Director Birch advised he would investigate the concern.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked who was currently locking the parks up at night. Dir. Birch explained that all Public Works staff is currently locking the parks in the evening and will rotate that duty.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert advised a citizen expressed interest of a potential skate park. The citizen will be directed to speak with the Parks Commission directly.

Commissioner Gilbert discussed the new Water Plant and expressed interest in having an open house to allow citizens the opportunity to tour the new plant.

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS / WATERSHED UPDATE

There were no public concerns.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (unless changed/cancelled due to Gov. Hogan/CDC recommendations):

- Tues., April 27, 7:30 – Planning Meeting
- Weds., April 28, 7:30 – Town Meeting
- Tues., May 4, 7:30 – Board of Appeals (if needed)
- Weds., May 5, 7:30 – Parks Meeting
- Tues., May 11, 7:30 – Planning Workshop
- Weds, May 12, 7:30 – Town Meeting
- Tues., May 25, 7:30 – Planning Meeting
- Weds., May 26, 7:30 – Town Meeting
- Mon., May 31 – Memorial Day – OFFICE CLOSED

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager