

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
January 24, 2024

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, January 24, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Gary Baker, Mike McNiesh, and Betsey Whitmore Brannen, Town Manager Sean Williams, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Director of Public Works Joe Birch, Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey, and a total of 11 citizens. Commissioner Tom Gilbert was absent. The meeting was streamed on the Town's website.

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

1. MINUTES

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to approve the Town meeting minutes of January 10, 2023, as presented. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0-1, with Commissioner McNiesh abstaining.

2. AWARD ENGINEERING CONTRACT FOR DISCOVERY WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT

Town Manager Williams discussed again that Daft, McCune, Walker was the only company to bid, in the amount of \$380,000 for the engineering plans. Due to concern on the board about the lack of bids for this project and cost, Town Staff contacted Town Engineer Firm, Wilson T Ballard, who reviewed bid and determined that the bid should be \$500,000, noting that DMW quote was "much lower than all other comparisons". Manager Williams also noted again that Spring Garden Estates water main was also replaced by DMW, with an engineering fee of \$80,000, with 67/68 connections, as compared to Discovery with 667 connections. Commissioner Brodie-Ennis thanked Staff for doing this leg work.

Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to award the Discovery water main replacement engineering bid to Daft, McCune and Walker in the amount of \$380,000. Commissioner McNiesh asked confirmation that this would be paid out of ARPA Funds. Manager Williams confirmed. The motion passed 4-0.

3. WALKERSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL WATER METER REPLACEMENT

DPW assessed the water meter at the Walkersville High School, which Director Birch stated was the original meter and was installed in 1975, is no longer working properly. Water was still flowing through it, but not recording any data, so they are not being billed properly. Director Birch asked for \$8,121 to order new meter. It will be received in 3-4 mos., and school will receive an averaged bill until meter is replaced.

Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Brodie-Ennis to replace the water meter at \$8,121. There was no discussion. The motion passed 4-0.

4. CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Burgess Weddle advised that Frederick City has a Charter Review Committee. While sharing a portion of the Preface to the 1978 code, he pointed out two statements "the recording of local law is an aspect of municipal history, and in the community develops and changes, review and revision of old laws and consideration of new laws, in the light of current trends, must keep pace" and "The codification for the Town of Walkersville reflects an appreciation of the needs of a progressive and expanding community. He discussed how two citizens had made some recommendations to the board on the need for updates to the Charter, as well as Commissioner

Brannen working on the Continuity of Government. Articles to be reviewed per Burgess Weddle would include the following:

Article 1 – Incorporation – Burgess or Mayor?

Article 3 – Officers

Article 4 – Powers of Office (Recommended by Commissioner McNiesh)

Article 6 – Vacancies

Article 7 – Elections/ Terms of Office

Burgess Weddle asked that Commissioners consider allowing the formation of a Charter Review Committee. He asked for each Commissioner to choose someone, or themselves, to be on the Committee. Burgess Weddle would like 10-12 people for the board.

Commissioners discussed prerequisites for Committee members including residency, age, registered voter, or business in Town. Burgess Weddle suggested meeting once a month and including Town attorney in most of the meetings. Asked for member recommendations to be submitted by Feb. 14.

5. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

Commissioner Whitmore Brannen asked to introduce at February 14 meeting. She asked that a couple of sentences be struck from the wording of C7-9, “beginning in September 2006” and “For any special elections held in 2023 polls will be open from 11:00am-7:00pm” as no longer applicable. Discussion about how it will be determined who has a 4-year term first, Burgess and top two or lottery amongst bottom four, as well as in the event of a tie, having a runoff. Manager Williams also inquired as to how the resolution will be formatted- two separate resolutions, one for 2024 Special Resolution and one for everything else? Burgess Weddle stated there was an advantage for the two to be separate, as the special resolution only applies to the 2024 election. Commissioner Brodie Ennis inquired about term limits, which was agreed that will be an entirely new resolution in the future. Discussion about what would be included in the term limit resolution.

6. TOWN CODE CHAPTER 9 – ANIMAL DISCUSSION

Manager Williams discussed speaking to legal about adding to the Code in regard to domestic animals in Town. Asked for direction on how town would like to proceed. Town can make changes to Code, but the issue is enforcement. May be worth reaching out to county agency and see how much assistance they can provide with enforcement. County allows 9 animals. Commissioners agreed they not interested in dictating number of animals allowed, more interested in nuisance control. Town Manager will reach out to county agency. Burgess Weddle has a county wide meeting coming up that he will discuss nuisance enforcement.

7. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Gary Baker a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mike McNiesh to pay the bills submitted for the time period. Commissioner Baker inquired about MSP payment. The motion passed 4-0.

10. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Burgess Weddle shared thoughts, and thanked Dave Bussard for his service to the Town, upon his retirement.

Burgess Weddle read a letter from District 5 representative Mason Carter.

Burgess Weddle and Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey discussed EDC Pop up event on May 4, as well as ribbon cutting on Feb 10.

Director of Public Works Joe Birch provided an update on the follow items:

- Wilson T Ballard is still working on putting together the age for Green St.
- Due to recent weather, meter replacement was put off. Trying to start up again next week. Glade Manor I and II, and Glade Towne will be first.
- DPW put in a lot of time last week/weekend with two snow events and a water main break in Glade Towne on January 20. All vehicles have been refitted, and are ready for the next event. More salt has been ordered to get us up to 100%.
- Micro Sewer Feasibility study kick off meeting was today at 1:30pm. Watek Ben Mohaved and Commissioner Baker attended. Mr Mohaved asked many questions and needs to collect data. Director Birch will provide updated as they are available.

Commissioner Baker asked if most vehicles were removed from road during snow. Director Birch advised no issues, and didn't have to involve MSP.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver advised that the night prior, the Planning Commission voted to approve the draft Comprehensive Plan. Susan will be transmitting to the Burgess & Commissioners before their next meeting. She advised she would like some dates that would work for the public hearing, possibly in March, and asked that there be a full board.

Town Manager Sean Williams will be out of Town Jan 31-Feb 12

Commissioner Baker will be out of Town for Feb 14 meeting.

Commissioner McNiesh will be out of Town for Feb 14 meeting.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis discussed Parks Commission working on a stargazing event at Heritage Farm Park with a local Astronomy group. Date not confirmed.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis also wanted to thank DPW for their work on the water main break and snow.

Mike McNiesh acknowledged invitation from Fire Company for annual banquet.

Burgess Weddle read announcements.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS/WATERSHED UPDATE

Gary Grossnickle of 8816 Devilbiss Bridge Road discussed blind spot on Devilbiss Bridge Rd by Heritage Park. Suggested eliminating as it was in years past. Also asked how many acres are in the Hundred-year flood plain. Town Manager Williams and Planner Hauver advised they would provide him link to information.

Don Schildt of 1 Glade Road. Concerns with ordinance on animals in Town. He talked to other resident pet owners that stated 4 dogs was plenty, due to lot size and close proximity to other houses. He also advised that the county never addressed the issue that was brought up in December, they said that was on the Town. He also had concerns with the comprehensive plan,

and wanted to provide his public comment as he may be out of Town at the time of public hearing. He discussed lack of medical facilities, and changes to zoning of agricultural land and that it is disappearing too fast. He quoted several newspaper articles. He is against growth in Town.

Burgess Weddle announced new Trooper Reeve and Cpl. Conklin provided background information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Wed., Feb 7 – Parks Meeting 7pm
Tues., Feb 13 – Planning Meeting 7pm
Wed., Feb 14 – Town Meeting 7pm
Mon., Feb 19 – Town Office Closed President's Day
Mon., Feb 26 – EDC Meeting 7pm
Tues., Feb 27 – Planning Meeting 7pm
Wed., Feb 28 – Town Meeting 7pm

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Ashley Bailey, Communications Specialist