

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
May 10, 2023

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Tom Gilbert, Gary Baker, and Mike McNiesh, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Town Manager Sean Williams, Director of Public Works Joe Birch, Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey, and a total of 12 citizens. The meeting was streamed on the Town's website.

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

1. OATH OF OFFICE FOR COMMISSIONER – BETSEY WHITMORE BRANNEN

Burgess Chad Weddle administered the Oath of Office to newly elected Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen.

2. MINUTES

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to approve the Town Meeting minutes and the Budget Workshop minutes of April 26,2023. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

3. CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE DISCUSSION

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed the Town's current tax rate of \$.14 per \$100 of assessment and the constant yield tax rate of \$.1294 per \$100 of assessment. Commissioner Mike McNiesh expressed his desire to lower the tax rate to \$.10 per \$100 of assessment citing the Town's financial standing. There was discussion on projects the Town has completed with and without APRA funding, and the cost of future projects.

Commissioner Mike McNiesh made a motion to reduce the tax rate to \$.10 per \$100 of assessment. The motion died for lack of a second.

4. INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 2023-01 – GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Burgess Chad Weddle summarized the General Fund budget and advised anyone wanting to make public comment but would not be available can email or write a letter to be read at the Public Hearing. There was a discussion regarding community donations.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to introduce Ordinance 2023-01 – General Fund Budget. The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Mike McNiesh in opposition.

5. INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 2023-02 – WATER FUND BUDGET

Commissioner Tom Gilbert discussed passing a budget that is negative \$330,000, inquired about the possibility of lowering some costs by using ARPA funding, the possible need to continue the special assessment fee, and the total amount of water billing for the 2023 fiscal year.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to introduce Ordinance 2023-02 – Water Fund Budget. The motion passed 5-0.

6. WATER RATE REDUCTION REQUEST

Anna Dobson of 203 Solar Drive explained the issues her family had with a water softener resulting in a high usage water bill. Ms. Dobson was offered an industrial rate discount lowering her bill, but requested additional assistance. The Commissioners agreed to offer a twelve-month period of time to pay the bill with no additional interest added. It was also suggested to have Ms. Dobson contact the original contractor that installed the water softener.

7. KENNETH DRIVE STOP SIGN INSTALLATION

Burgess Chad Weddle recounted the previous discussions about speeding concerns on Kenneth Drive and the suggestion to install stop signs at Kenneth Drive and Good Turn Drive. Burgess Weddle invited anyone interested in discussing the matter to speak.

Patrick Isennock of 11 Kenneth Drive supported the idea of installing the stop signs.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to install stop signs on Kenneth Drive and Good Turn Drive. The motion passed 5-0.

8. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to pay the bills submitted for the time period. There was a discussion involving the J&J Trash Service Bill and Frederick County Dumping Fees. The motion passed 5-0.

9. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey discussed online bill pay and avoiding using the third-party site DOXO.

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

1. Contractors are working on the North Side of Maple Ave between Frederick Street and Green Street with the installation of new sidewalk, curb, and gutter. They have hit some issues with old storm drain that they are remediating. Residents that live in that area will not have access to their driveways until concrete cures which is about 24 hours. Once that section is complete, the contractor will proceed with work on the North Side from Green Street to Pennsylvania Ave with sidewalk, curb, and gutter.
2. The Advanced Metering Reading (AMR) project is ongoing.
3. Meter replacement will start in another area mid-summer with notices and door knocking. Residents can still call Town Hall and schedule a meter exchange appointment if they do not have a radio read meter.
4. The Creamery Park playground installation of equipment is complete, the poured in place material is complete, the walk path is complete, and the basketball courts/posts have been installed. Line work of the courts will occur when temperatures allow. Installation of the new gate is 3 to 4 weeks out.
5. The new walk path in Community Park is 50% completed, but work has been halted until ground dries out.
6. Public Works requested the approval to seek bids on the design plans for the water main replacement for Discovery. The work will need to be completed in numerous phases. There was a discussion involving scheduling the work with the County and other locations that need water main replacement. It was agreed to proceed with seeking bids.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert inquired about the detour signage on Glade Road and Pennsylvania Avenue. Director Birch addressed the issue earlier in the day with the contractor.

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen inquired about truck route signage involving Maple Avenue.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed the upcoming Planning Meeting on May 23rd. That meeting will include possible change to McDonalds drive-through, a possible tenant to move in to the old Brainstorm Comics space, installation of a turf field at the high school, and a local realtor working with a company interested in the Century Center location.

Administrator Hauver sent out a draft of the Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission today and will hopefully be out for review soon.

Burgess Chad Weddle noted that Administrator Hauver was directed to speak with the Town Attorney regarding the Century Center agreement and what parts are still valid.

Town Manager Sean Williams notified the Burgess and Commissioners that the Ethic Commission met two weeks ago to review Ethics forms from employees, elected officials and appointed members of Town Commissions. No other matters were discussed.

The Town submitted POS applications last week requesting funds for the potential purchase of property on Pennsylvania Avenue along with replacing the smaller playground at Heritage Farm Park.

General Code has notified the Town that a draft of the updated Town Charter is ready for review and the Town Code will be ready in a month. Once ready, copies will be made available to the public and an Ordinance and Resolution will be needed to pass those updates.

Manager Williams discussed a water billing issue with a customer on Fountain Rock Court that the Burgess and Commissioners were made aware of via email. Given that the location of the water meter installed by the Town was not ideal, Town Staff felt the homeowner should be provided with an averaged water bill.

Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to provide an average water bill to the Fountain rock Court customer. The motion passed 5-0.

A code violation was discussed regarding a camper on Fulton Avenue. There was discussion regarding the validity of the violation, possible options for addressing the issue without purchasing another fitted cover, and the Town Code. The decision was made to potentially discuss the concern at the next meeting.

Burgess Weddle discussed a possible future naloxone training.

Burgess Weddle read all announcements.

Commissioner Mike McNiesh thanked Town staff for his original and updated water bills.

Commissioner McNiesh donated his recent Commissioner pay to the Food Bank.

Burgess Weddle thanked the Veterans Committee and Commissioner McNiesh for their efforts on the Aria Memorial Event and flyover.

Commissioner Gary Baker discussed the recent visit from the Maryland Municipal League to the Town. They visited Town Hall and had a walkthrough of the water plant.

Commissioner Baker received a request from the Food Bank for the Seniors to change their lunch day to a different day of the week because of the congested parking lot.

Burgess Weddle reminded residents there is a permanent water ban between 9 AM and 6 PM for watering your lawn since the water quickly evaporates.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis discussed the installation of Foot Golf at Heritage Farm Park.

Burgess Weddle discussed the upcoming Fire Company Carnival, National Night Out, and the Veterans Picnic.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS/WATERSHED UPDATE

Rachel Shipley of the Walkersville Southern Railroad requested the use of Community Park after hours on July 7th. The request was approved at the Parks Commission Meeting. It was agreed to allow the railroad use of the park. Jesse James Day and a future Steam Engine event are occurring in the near future.

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

- Mon., May 15 – EDC Meeting 7pm
- Tues., May 23 – Planning Commission Meeting 7pm
- Wed., May 24 – Town Meeting 7pm
- Mon., May 29 – Town Office Closed – Memorial Day
- Wed., June 7 – Parks Meeting 7pm
- Tues., June 13 – Planning Commission Workshop 7pm
- Wed., June 14 – Town Meeting 7pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager