

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
May 24, 2023

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Tom Gilbert, Gary Baker, Mike McNiesh, and Betsey Whitmore Brannen, Town Manager Sean Williams, Director of Public Works Joe Birch, Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey, and a total of 10 citizens. Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver was absent. The meeting was streamed on the Town's website.

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

1. MINUTES

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to approve the Town Meeting minutes of May 10, 2023. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

2. PUBLIC HEARING CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE

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.

There were no public comments and the public hearing was closed.

3. PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2023-01 – GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Bob Yoder of 206 Sandstone Drive discussed concerns with balancing the budget using funds from savings, some specific budgeted amounts, and the general way the Town compiles budgets. There was an extended conversation regarding Mr. Yoder's concerns.

There were no additional comments and the public hearing was closed.

4. PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2023-02 – WATER FUND BUDGET

There were no public comments and the public hearing was closed.

5. ORDINANCE 2023-01 – GENERAL FUND BUDGET

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tom Gilbert to adopt Ordinance 2023-01 – General Fund Budget. There was no discussion. The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Mike McNiesh in opposition.

6. ORDINANCE 2023-02 – WATER FUND BUDGET

Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to adopt Ordinance 2023-02 – Water Fund Budget. There was no discussion. The motion passed 5-0.

7. PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT – JEREMY PETERSON

Burgess Chad Weddle recommended appointing Jeremy Peterson to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tom Gilbert to appoint Jeremy Peterson to the Planning Commission. Betsey Whitmore Brannen expressed concerns

with the appointment process and suggested possible changes. The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Brannen in opposition.

Burgess Weddle administered the Oath of Office to Jeremy Peterson.

8. PARKS COMMISSION APPOINTMENT – MARK PECOR

Burgess Chad Weddle recommended appointing Mark Pecor to the Parks Commission.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to appoint Mark Pecor to the Parks Commission. There was no discussion. The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen in opposition.

Burgess Weddle administered the Oath of Office to Mark Pecor.

9. WALKERSVILLE LIBRARY – ROBIN BOWERS

Robin Bowers of the Walkersville Library discussed all the events being held at the library, the increased number of individuals using the facility, and the need for a large shaded area outside. The library is obtaining money through fundraising, but requested assistance from the Town.

The library also continues to offer a summer lunch program. The Town already donates \$2,500 per year towards the program, but Ms. Bowers requested an additional \$1,000 to be used towards the program. Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen explained that she currently works for the County library, is fully supportive of the programs, but will abstain from voting.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mike McNiesh to increase the previously budgeted \$2,500 to the Walkersville Library for the Summer lunch program to \$3,500. There was no discussion. The motion passed 4-0-1, with Commissioner Brannen abstaining.

There was an extended discussion regarding funding, obtaining additional estimates, and the amount of money the library was able to spend on the project. Commissioner Mike McNiesh requested the topic be tabled until a future meeting.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to provide the Walkersville Library \$10,000 as of July 2 for sun shades. The motion passed 3-1-1, with Commissioner McNiesh in opposition and Commissioner Brannen abstaining.

10. CRUM ROAD WATER TANK UPGRADE

Town Manager Sean Williams discussed ongoing conversations with the cell phone carriers at the Crum Water Tower and the need to address weight concerns especially on the hand rail. T-Mobile and AT&T submitted plans to perform upgrades to the tower sway bars and upgrades to their cellular equipment. There will be no cost to the Town.

Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tom Gilbert to allow T-Mobile to upgrade their cellular equipment and have T-Mobile and AT&T replace the sway bars on Crum Tower. The motion passed 5-0.

11. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to pay the bills submitted for the time period. The motion passed 5-0.

12. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey discussed meeting minutes and why there is a delay in them being posted on the website. There was a discussion on the availability of all recorded meetings, draft minutes, and the possibility of video meetings with outlined minutes to count as minutes.

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

1. The contractor is working the North Side of Maple Ave between Green Street and Pennsylvania Ave with the installation of new sidewalk, curb, and gutter. There were some issues with the old storm drain that runs across Maple Ave at Green Street. Engineers will develop a remediation recommendation to resolve the issue and will be an additional cost. Once the contractor pours the driveway aprons, residents will not have access to your driveways until concrete cures which is 48hrs.
2. The Advanced Metering Reading (AMR) project is still ongoing.
3. Meter replacements will start in another area mid-summer with notices and door knocking. Residents can still call townhall and make meter exchange appointments if they do not have a radio read meter.
4. The basketball court striping at Creamery Park is temperature dependent. The Town is also still waiting on installation of the new gate which is still a couple weeks out.
5. The new walk path in Community Park is half completed but will remain on hold until it dries out.
6. The new stop signs at Kenneth Drive have been installed and are flagged.

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed the new legislation involving the legalization of marijuana in Maryland as of July 1, 2023.

Burgess Weddle provided the Commissioners a draft list of HOA's/communities for Commissioners and inquired if anyone was interested in becoming the liaison to the EDC.

Councilmember Mason Carter inquired about meeting with elected officials and staff in the coming month.

A drug disposal event will occur July 22nd at the fire hall.

Commissioner Mike McNiesh inquired about the possibility of twice a week trash pickup.

Commissioner McNiesh also described a situation where a citizen called 911, had a long response time (off hours), and the Trooper that arrived discussed Troopers on and off hours of service in the Town.

Commissioner Gary Baker summarized the Planning meeting from the previous night. McDonalds is adding a second drive through lane. A new store was approved to move in to 25A Maple Avenue, but no retail sales will occur on site. The Walkersville High School will be getting a new turf field.

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen discussed a previously issued citation involving an RV, spoke with the citizen and neighbors involved, and noted there are numerous additional civil concerns occurring between the neighbors.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert spoke with an agricultural preservation representative for Frederick County and learned that municipalities may apply to have Town owned land classified as agricultural preservation.

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS/WATERSHED UPDATE

Bob Yoder of 206 Sandstone Drive discussed concerns with a townhouse he owns in Glade Towne. Those homes have to pay for street lights, street maintenance, and plowing snow unlike most other tax payers in Walkersville. There was an extended discussion involving the Glade Towne HOA, specific fees, tax equity throughout the Town, and some of the restrictions of HOA covenants.

David Ennis of 118 Challedon Drive thanked the Commissioners for supporting the library and noted the Town's support of the library.

Mr. Ennis additionally noted that the townhouses in Glade Towne are on private property and the Town should not spend tax payer funds on private property.

Mr. Ennis noted that the County's division of emergency management may be able to determine the reason there was a long response time for the previously discussed 911 call.

Shannon Kelly of 33 Maple Avenue expressed her concerns with the way individuals are notified whether selected or not for positions on Town Commissions.

Burgess Weddle read all announcements.

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

- Mon., May 29 – Town Office Closed – Memorial Day
- Wed., June 7 – Parks Meeting 7pm
- Mon., June 12 – EDC Meeting 7pm
- Tues., June 13 – Planning Commission Workshop 7pm
- Wed., June 14 – Town Meeting 7pm
- Mon., June 19 – Town Office Closed – Juneteenth
- Tues., June 27 – Planning Commission Meeting 7pm
- Wed., June 28 – Town Meeting 7pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager