

Town of Westernport
Council Meeting in person at the Council Chamber and via the Internet
April 12, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Phil Whetstone, Sarah Llewellyn, Judy Hamilton and Allen Shapiro

ATTENDEES: In person: Kristi Williams and Kitty Mitchell, Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn

Via the Internet: Sandra Corsaro, Sharon Shumaker, Ronda Wertman, Tiffany Placka, Sharon Wilson and Deborah

Mayor Laura Freeman-Legge called the meeting to order and ask all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and the prayer. Kristi Williams gave the prayer. The next council meeting will be on Monday May 10 at 7 p.m. A special meeting before the monthly meeting may be scheduled. The mayor is waiting to hear from the USDA. Mayor Freeman-Legge asks for a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Commissioner Shapiro made this motion with a second from Commissioner Hamilton. Motion carried.

The mayor announced that bids were open for Phase IV of the Water Distribution System and the project is estimated to cost \$2.6M. The low bid of \$1.952M was from Carl Belt Inc. The town has a new Emergency Reporting System. This is mainly for water issues but it could be extended to other issues. To get into this system, people may go through the link on our Facebook page or you can text 888777Westernport. Commissioner Shapiro would like to see this information in our next water bills. The mayor agreed. Since last Friday about 100 people have signed up.

The council looked at **ORDINANCE 4.12.21**. This ordinance is for the bond between the Town and the USDA. The rate is 1.375%. **There** were no questions on this ordinance. Commissioner Hamilton made the motion **to accept ORDINANCE 4.12.21 with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried.** Attorney Llewellyn spoke on **RESOLUTION 4.12.21**. This resolution authorizes the town to borrow money for Lincoln Drive. Commissioner Hamilton made the motion **to accept RESOLUTION 4.12.21 with a second from Commissioner Llewellyn. Motion carried.**

The mayor made the announcement that Commissioner Llewellyn would now be the Street Commissioner and Commissioner Whetstone would become the Water Commissioner.

Water Commissioner Whetstone gave his report. Twenty-one (21) customers have been **Red Tagged** for shutoff. If customers will meet with a town representative, a payment plan can be worked out. There are 101 customers on the shut-off list with \$24,467.37 outstanding. The mayor announced that this amount is back to pre-Covid numbers.

Street Commissioner Llewellyn gave her report. It is spring and the street department is busy cutting grass. The town needs a new mower and Somerset Steel has one in stock. Original price for mower was \$11,400 but we get a government discount. This brings the cost to \$8,678.44. There was some discussion on how the mower would be received. Would the town pick up or would Somerset Steel deliver? Would there be a delivery cost? Commissioner Llewellyn will look into this. Commissioner Shapiro made the motion to purchase the mower from Somerset Steel at a cost of \$8,678.44 with a second from Commissioner Hamilton. Motion carried.

Commissioner Llewellyn announced that Westernport would celebrate Earth Day by having a clean-up day on Saturday, April 24, starting at 10 a.m. Suggested places that need a clean up were: Maryland Avenue, the Waverly Street ambulance access road and behind the Dollar Store. Commissioner Llewellyn welcomed other suggestions. The town will supply garbage bags but volunteers should bring their own gloves. The mayor

will sign any high school student's volunteer paper. There will not be a gathering with refreshments after the cleanup because of COVID.

Commissioner Hamilton gave her Police report. She reviewed the **Burning Permit Ordinance**. Anyone planning to burn must get a Burning Permit from the county before they get a Burning Permit from the town. The Code Enforcement Office is in charge of this and he will look at the potential burning site. Only debris from the land is allowed to be burned. If the proper paperwork is not obtained, the fire company will put out the fire. The Code Enforcement Officer Mike Simpson is on vacation right now but Commissioner Hamilton will check out Burning Permits if necessary.

Commissioner Shapiro gave the Financial Report. He presented the Budget for 2021-2022. Some changes were made after the work session but they were minor. Our income did increase by \$50,000 due to our new water customers: Luke and Piedmont. Some expense money was not spent in 2019-2020 due to Covid and will be moved to the new budget. Income and Expense for the 2021-2022 Budget will be \$1,755,676.00. Project money is not included in this amount. There is a 4% raise for employees included in this new budget. Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to accept the 2021-2022 Budget with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried.

Figures for March 2021

Water Fund	Beginning	\$157,357.53	Ending	\$141,997.64
Garbage		9,222.82		9,241.55
Sewer		105,647.84		122,242.28
General Fund		275,879.98		166,521.14

These amounts do not include our savings.

Commissioner Shapiro announced that the town would be receiving \$1,442,585.00 from the American Rescue Plan due to COVID-19. The town will receive ½ in 30 days and the other ½ in December or January. Commissioner Shapiro is recommending that this money be used as our portion of Phase IV of our water project. If we do this, we will not have to borrow any money for Phase IV and save the taxpayers some money. This money can be used for water construction. Commissioner Shapiro made the motion to use this money for our part of Phase IV of the Water Distribution System with a second from Commissioner Hamilton. Motion carried. Commissioner Shapiro recommended we open a separate banking account for this money. Mayor Freeman-Legge acknowledged that we would not have to raise water rates for Phase IV.

Ms. Kristi Williams spoke for the Tri-Towns Ambulance & Rescue Service, Inc. The subscription drive is on going and it is going well. During the month of March, the squad answered 105 calls. Three calls were P1, 6 calls were P2, 47 calls were P3 and 34 calls were P4. Four calls were scratched. Volunteers are needed. Ten people are carrying the load plus the paid employees. Volunteers 16 years of age or older are welcome.

The mayor announced that the town would be getting 3 summer employees through the consortium program for the high school students.

Mrs. Sandy Corsaro of Horserock spoke and stated that at the August 2019 council meeting she asked that the minutes be posted on Westernport's website. She was told that the minutes would be on the website. So far they have not been on the website. She stated that it takes weeks to get the council meeting minutes. Mrs. Corsaro would like some clarification on the sewer shut-off flapper valve that was discussed at the last council meeting. She has called different areas and no one seems to know anything about this valve. Also, she found out that a sprinkler system is only required in new houses. The council is aware of this sprinkler system law. The mayor said that the International Plumbing Code wants this sewer flapper valve in all houses and the State of Maryland adheres to this rule.

Mrs. Corsaro believes that her mother's house on Maryland Avenue did not have this flapper valve. The mayor told her that she believes all the houses on Maryland

Avenue probably have this valve. If houses do not have this valve, they are more likely to have a sewer backup. This valve protects the homeowner. Mrs. Corsaro asks if the town has plans to send out a notice to residents that they must have this valve. On the advice of counsel, Mayor Freeman-Legge said, "No plans at this time."

Mrs. Corsaro continued to say that she has had 3 sewer backups on her Horserock property. She had damage but never turned anything into the town for reimbursement. L & M Plumbing has checked the Corsaro home and it does not have the flapper valve. The mayor did say that it is possible to have a sewer backup with the valve installed. The mayor said that this valve is an extra precaution. Mrs. Corsaro went on to talk about some personal information about her and a town employee that was not true. She wants Mayor Laura-Freeman Legge to instruct all employees that most information handled at the town office is confidential and should not be repeated. Mrs. Corsaro told all that, the rumor about Horserock having an attorney, is not true.

A motion to close the meeting was made by Commissioner Shapiro with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Meeting closed.


Renee Morris, Town Clerk


Laura Freeman-Legge, Mayor