

Town of Westernport
Council Meeting in person at the Fire House and via Zoom
March 8, 2021

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

ATTENDEES: Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn, Kristi Williams, Kitty Mitchell, Sandra Corsaro, Joe DeMichele, Carey DeMichele, Ron Baer, Lisa Barcase, Bob Hannon, Jeremy Metz, Karen Kelly, Dave Riggelman, John Lepley, Leo Nesmith, Debra Nesmith, Bob Wiltison, Patty Wiltison, Jeannie Gentry, Pete Davis, Kathy Tetrick, Robert Tetrick, Gina Nesmith, and Tom Hamilton. There were more attendees but they did not sign in.

Mayor Laura Freeman-Legge welcomed all. The group stood for the Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion carried. Copies of the minutes are available. The next meeting will be on Monday, April 12 at 7 p.m. There will be a work session on Wednesday, April 7 at 5 p.m.

The town will send out information for bids for Phase IV of the Water Project March 11 thru March 13. A pre-bid meeting will be on March 17. Construction should start within 30 days. It was noted that our attorney must approve all insurance claims before being submitted.

During Phase 2 of the water projects, the sewer line on 102 - 109 Spruce from Gay Street to Pleasant Alley was crushed. It was the town's fault. The quote to make the repairs is \$10,996.15. Commissioner Whetstone made the motion to accept the bid with a second from Commissioner Hamilton. Motion carried.

The town will take over the Operations and Maintenance (O & M) of the Bruce High School Fields for 5 years. The agreement was presented at this meeting. Commissioner Hamilton made the motion the town accepts the agreement with a second from Commissioner Shapiro. Motion carried. Mayor Freeman-Legge made the announcement that the town office will be closed on Easter Monday, April 5. Town workers will also be off.

The annexation of outlining areas of Westernport was discussed. Preliminary results are in: 61% of Westernport residents are in favor, 25% of Franklin residents are in favor with 0% of Horserock are in favor. Horserock residents are not interested in **this and say, "Not pursue."** We would like to hear from Stoney Run and Franklin.

Mayor Freeman-Legge stated that the Water Department is catching up on issues due to COVID-19. However, 186 customers are behind in payments. The late fee outstanding is \$3720 with \$46,620.80 due to the town for utilities received.

Attorney Llewellyn presented **ORDINANCE No. 2.8.2021** for the second reading and second vote. It involves Interim Financing from M & T Bank not to exceed \$600,000.00. Commissioner Hamilton made the motion to accept **ORDINANCE No. 2.8.2021** with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried.

Street Commissioner Whetstone gave his report. There is still a water service line leak on Greene Street. He remarked that Westernport had more snow this year than in the last 4 years. Westernport will need to get help with grass cutting this coming season.

Water Commissioner Llewellyn gave her report. A week or so ago, a boil water notice went out to residents. Westernport got a lot of rain and some mud got into the water system. The town will need to replace the 1950's Filter Plant furnace. A quote of \$8500 was received from Twigg Plumbing & Heating. There is a quote coming from Royal Aire, which is for approximately \$6,000. We will replace this furnace but for now it is on the back burner.

Police Commissioner Hamilton gave her report. Large pieces of equipment owned by MPL are being parked near access roads near the Waverly Street Bridge and other places which hinder fire and rescue vehicles to move freely throughout the community.

Finance Commission Shapiro gave his report. A copy of the report is available. He mentioned several checking account figures (Water, Sewer, Garbage and the General Fund).

Mayor Freeman-Legge brought up the Mt. Mountain Rail Trail originally owned by an 1830 Group. They have abandoned the 7-½ miles of track. New owners are needed. The trail does go from Cumberland to Frostburg. It would be great if we could have a Rail Trail come down from Frostburg through George's Creek communities: Midland, Lonaconing, Barton and then Westernport.

Mrs. Sandy Cosaro of Horserock spoke on the annexation of outlining areas of Westernport. She is not in favor at this time but feels more meetings and more information is needed before decisions can be made. The town sent out surveys for input from all the utility customers. Some questions: Would water rates go up? Would taxes go up? Who would be paying for the streetlights? Would there be one water meter for Horserock like for Luke?

Then discussed was Water Distribution Phases 5 through 7 at a cost of \$14M. These phases would complete the Water Distribution System for Westernport. Town and outlining areas would get new water tanks, new water lines, new pumping stations and new light fixtures. MDE will pay \$2M with USDA paying \$12M. The \$2M from MDE would be a grant. The \$12M would be a 40-year loan for Westernport. The state spent a lot of money on COVID so we are happy with a 50/50 deal. According to Commissioner Shapiro, the town is pursuing forgiveness on loans for Phases 1,2,3. When all phases of Water Distribution System are done, it should last 50 years.

Mrs. Corsaro said again she would like to have meetings with Horserock residents on the Water Distribution System for their area. Also, she would like to see the plans for the project. The mayor agreed with her. Mrs. Karen Kelly of Horse Rock also requested plans and a timeline from Westernport for the Horserock water system.

Several others spoke on Annexation and the Water Distribution System but they did not sign up or give their names.

Mrs. Kitty Mitchell of Maryland Avenue thanked the mayor and council for cutting down several trees on her block. She said she, along with her neighbors, like the trees but over the years they have caused damage to the sidewalks and made a slippery mess of the sidewalks with the berries dropping from the trees. She asked if there would be anymore cutting. The mayor said, "Not at this time." There are plans for replanting in the future and for getting rid of the stumps

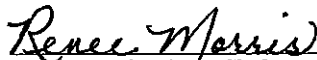
Ms. Kristi Williams spoke for the Tri-Towns Ambulance & Rescue Service, Inc. Calls, 185; Calls, 79 for Westernport and McCoole; 73 Priority 3, 2 P2, 2 P1, 2P0. There were 81 mutual calls with Lonaconing. All active members are trained on the N-95 masks. Kristi informed the group that their subscription drive will start early this year due to problems with the post office.

Many comments from the large audience but residents did not always identify themselves. A man spoke on the damage the gas company has made while working on lines. A woman also spoke on problems with the gas company. Mayor Freeman-Legge will meet with them after the meeting. Mr. & Mrs. Nesmith of Roosevelt Street said they heard the fire hydrant near their home was not pulling water when their house was burning. Commissioner Hamilton said it was pulling some water but all five fire trucks on scene were full of water. There was plenty of water. A stem on the fire hydrant on Philos & Roosevelt was repaired after the fire the stem was broke during the fire. All fire hydrants will be replaced with the completion of the Water Distribution System.

Director of Public Works Tim Jackson stated that water lines are flushed in the spring and some bi-weekly. Mr. Jim Marsh was told that Phases 1,2 and 3 have been completed. Phase 4 will be on Waverly and Wood Streets. The water line will go from a 8" line to a 10" line. Someone ask about the number of out-of-town customers. Mayor Freeman-Legge said approximately 110. Mrs. Kathy Tetrick asks about the water and sewer lines on Horserock. The town will get quotes to reline lines. Residents are advised to get a 3-way flapper valve for their sewer line. The International Plumbing Code promotes these valves and the State of Maryland follows this code.

Mr. Bob Wiltison ask about Luke and the maintenance of their water line from Westernport. He was told that Luke must maintain their water system. Mayor Freeman-Legge said again that public meetings needs to be held on annexation, water & sewer rates and county and town taxes. She also told the group that the \$17 surcharge for the raw water line completed many years ago would not change.

A motion to close the meeting was made with a second. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.


Renee Morris, Town Clerk


Laura Freeman-Legge, Mayor