

**Town of Westernport  
Council Meeting  
September 8, 2020**

COMMISSIONERS: Phil Whetstone, Sarah Llewellyn and Allen Shapiro  
At the Council Chamber

ATTENDEES: Attorney Matt Gilmore and Chuck Long via the Internet

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. With a motion and a second, the council voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Minutes are available. Mayor Laura Freeman-Legge welcomed all. She announced that a special meeting would be held on Thursday, September 17 at 5 p.m. A vote for the engineering firm for Phase IV of the Water Distribution System will be taken at this meeting.

The next council meeting will be held on Monday, October 5 at 7 p.m. It will be on Zoom and in public at the council chamber. Attendees are to wear masks.

There is a delay in the Luke Waterline. Items for this line are hard to get but, hopefully, it will be completed by November 20.

Employee Benefits furnished by Keller Stonebraker were discussed. The old plan will be renewed. Commissioner Shapiro made the motion for this benefit plan with Keller Stonebraker with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried.

Bids were received for Phase IV from Bennett & Brewer of Frostburg, CDI Kimbell of Pennsylvania and RK&K of Keyser. A discussion and a vote will be held on September 17. MDE will give us 50% of the funding for Phase IV at 1.75% interest. This is a substantial impact on our residents. Council voted it down 2 years ago. We have 960 utility customers and it would mean \$5.45 a month extra on their water bills. If we do not take this funding now, we will not get funding for Phases V, VI and VII.

Some additional comments: An average utility bill for our customers is \$95/month. With increases, it would be more. Commissioner Shapiro is torn between the positives and negatives. We plan to go to the USDA and the CDBG for the other 50% and ask for forgiveness on grounds of *hardship*. The community can't grow without infrastructure. We will see benefits from Luke and Piedmont. Commissioner Shapiro recommends and made the motion to accept \$1.25M @ 1.75% interest for Phase IV. Commissioner Sarah Llewellyn made the second. Motion carried.

For Phase IV, B&B Engineering will not exceed \$223,463. Attorneys should look over Steve Bennett's proposal. Costs are not all in. Mayor Legge doesn't think all the mapping is completed.

The Boat Ramp on the Potomac River is controlled by the DNR. The ramp is being used but is in need of repairs. The DNR will approve funding in fiscal year 2022. We don't know the grant percentage or if a permit will be forthcoming. Former Mayor Arnel Morris had engineering completed. Commissioner Whetstone made a motion to apply for funding with a second from Commissioner Llewellyn. Motion carried.

Street Commissioner Phil Whetstone gave his report. The gas company is not making good decisions with blocking streets. All entities should be communicating: the town, the gas company and fire and rescue. Commissioner Whetstone suggested to Laura we let the patching wait for a while until some problems are resolved. A hole in the 200 block of Maryland Avenue needs patched. We should wait until spring to do total patching.

Water Commissioner Sarah Llewellyn gave her report. The water department treated 14M gallons of water during the month of August. Commissioner Shapiro asks about late charges on water bills. Mayor Legge will check with the governor's office to see the status on this issue. Commissioner Shapiro informed the council of the quote from the Hach Service Company on our new service agreement with them for \$4,653.00.

Commissioner Llewellyn made a motion we take the Hach quote of \$4,653.00 with a second from Commissioner Shapiro. Motion carried.

Mayor Legge told the group that Rental Registration Letters have been sent out. The cost is \$50.00 per year per rental unit. If we do not get funding for rentals, we will enforce the fee.

Finance Commissioner Shapiro gave his report. August is usually a bad month financially.

General Fund, August	
Total Income	\$ 16,755.42
Total Expense	65,608.83
Total Other Expense	365.00
Net Income	(49,218.41)

Water Fund, August	
Total Income	\$ 54,378.30
Total Expense	36,462.69
Net Income	17,915.61

Sewer & Garbage Fund, August	
Total Income	\$ 23,275.00
Total Expense	20,838.50
Net Income	( 7,503.07)

Mr. Charles Long stated that the wood chips that have been placed on the Maryland Avenue Playground look good. He was told that the raising of the water rates was not for Phase IV but for Phases I, II and III. The mayor stated that everyone should keep it mind that we have many miles of new water lines. Mr. Long told the group that drugs are a big issue on Rock and Vine. Calling the sheriff is a joke. There is a drug house on Vine and there are gang fights.

Commissioner Shapiro stated that our sheriff is doing a fabulous job and is trying very hard to support Westernport. We need to give him credit for the job he does every day. Report, report, and report: more people need to call the sheriff when they see something suspicious. A discussion of cameras on light poles with blue lights. Perhaps we should talk to the sheriff about a possible grant for this

Motion to close was made by Commissioner Shapiro with a second by Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

  
Renee Morris, Town Clerk

  
Laura Freeman-Legge, Mayor