

**Town of Westernport
Council Meeting
November 8, 2021**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Phil Whetstone, Sarah Llewellyn and Allen Shapiro

ATTENDEES: Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn and Pete Davis

Mayor Laura Freeman-Legge welcomed all and they stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. She then asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion came from Commissioner Llewellyn with a second from Commissioner Shapiro. Motion carried. Copies are available. The mayor made these announcements: Holiday Closings on Thursday, Nov. 11 for Veterans Day; Thursday, Nov. 25 and Friday, Nov. 26 for Thanksgiving. The Tree Lighting will be on Wednesday, Nov. 24 at 5:30 p.m.; the Christmas Parade will be on Thursday, Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. and the next Council Meeting will be on Monday, December 6 at 7 p.m. A work session will be held on Thursday, Nov. 18 at 6 p.m.

The mayor brought up the continuing work of Phase IV. The Board of Public Works will meet on Dec. 1 and Phase IV should be on the agenda. The town has applied for a permit to fix the leak under the Westernport/Piedmont Bridge. The town is losing a lot of water. We will attempt to add that cost onto Phase IV. For the Lincoln Drive Project, the mayor is hoping to give the notice to proceed to the contractor in the next 30 days. We will need to close on the interim financing in the next month. I should hear back from USDA in the next week to go ahead.

There was discussion on the Burgmeier's Hauling, Inc. contract. The company has offered to extend the contract for another year at a 3% increase that will take the amount to \$14.53 per household. We have 760 households. The mayor thinks it is unfair to ask for a 3-year contract when we know the landfill will be closing down. If we extend the contract for the next year and then bid off the contract then, I think everyone will have a better understanding of what landfill costs will be at that time. Commissioner Shapiro referred to the recent trash bill of \$10,931.15. He mentioned that on the report, only \$7,873.50 was transferred which caused a deficit of over \$3,000. He asked, "Are we short approximately that much each month?" The mayor stated that there were 177 customers last month that were late paying. We are looking at 760 households. Commissioner Shapiro stated that we should not be operating the garbage at a deficit. The mayor said that the town is getting \$16.00 per household and we are being charged \$14.11 per unit. The extended contract would charge us \$14.53.

The mayor asked, "What would we need to raise our garbage rate to?" Commissioner Shapiro stated that the town would have to raise the garbage rate 3 or 4 dollars. There was discussion on the late fee and where it goes. The late fee goes into a separate account. The mayor said maybe we should put part of the late fee into the garbage account so as to cover the deficit. Commissioner Shapiro said that in theory we could absorb the rate increase but our deficit could grow. The council feels that landfill rates will go up significantly in the future. If we increase the garbage rate by \$.50 we will have the exact same deficit.

Commissioner Shapiro made the motion that the town accept Burgmeier's contract for the next year and increase the garbage rate by \$.50 starting when the present contract ends which should be January 2022. Commissioner Whetstone made the second. Motion carried. The council mentioned that they need to come up with a plan to address the garbage issue. Mayor Laura Freeman-Legge will reach out to Dalton of Burgmeier's to get a formal agreement. Commissioner Shapiro ask Renee to put something on our utility bill stating the increase of 3% from Burgmeier's and that the town will increase the garbage rate by \$.50 in January. Several commissioners spoke on the many ways to pay the town's utility bill. In most cases, there is a small service charge.

The mayor said that if people pay their bill monthly; they will not have a \$700 bill. Residents do complain to the mayor about their large bill. But, that does not need to happen.

The county has asked the town to maintain Rock Street in the wintertime. The mayor thinks the county wants us to snowplow, etc. from the town garage to the county line. The county will provide salt for this project. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to turn down this proposal with a second from Commissioner Llewellyn. Motion carried. The mayor will let the county know of our decision.

Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn spoke on RESOLUTION NO. 11.8.2021. This is a RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS OF WESTERNPORT, MARYLAND, DECLARING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY "SURPLUS." This is the first step in the process to allow the town to sell the Town Garage property on Chestnut Street. Commissioner Shapiro made the motion to declare this property "surplus" with a second from Commissioner Llewellyn. Motion carried. The mayor stated that this property would not be advertised until it is surveyed.

Commissioner Whetstone gave his Water Report. He reported on a leak outside the city building on a 6" line. We do have to get permits to work on this leak. For the month of October, the town used 16,930.7 units of water at the plant. We currently have 177 customers in the arrears, which results in \$3,540 in late fees. Commissioner Whetstone did approve a few weeks ago a dehumidifier for the basement of our filter plant.

Street Commissioner Llewellyn had nothing to report. The mayor spoke and said she had some complaints about a ditch on Greene Street. It was filled in once but then it had to be dug up for a water leak. The mayor does not know the condition of the ditch at this time. Commissioner Whetstone asks if there is an update on the newly acquired city building. The town is not completely in the new building garage because the Tri-Towns Ambulances have been parked there due to no front door at this time.

Commissioner Shapiro gave the Financial Report.

General Fund	
Beginning 9/1/2021	\$ 1,045,784.31
Ending 9/30/2021	1,185,191.87
Water Fund	
Beginning 9/1/2021	\$ 326,490.49
Ending 9/30/2021	291,172.83
Sewer Fund	
Beginning 9/1/2021	\$ 113,385.52
Ending 9/30/2021	116,792.15
Garbage Fund	
Beginning 9/1/2021	\$ 15,832.63
Ending 9/30/2021	12,774.98

Commissioner Shapiro asks about the Bennett & Brewer Check for **\$37,323.16 in the Water Fund Account**. He wanted to know if that was a payment for Phase IV of the Water Distribution System. Mayor Freeman-Legge is pretty sure that is for Phase IV. Commissioner Shapiro wants some research on this amount and how it is handled. Some changes will be made as to how we handle this entry in the future. Commissioner Whetstone made a motion to accept the financial report with the suggested amendment with a second from Commissioner Llewellyn. Motion carried.

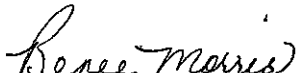
The Christmas Bonus for all employees was discussed. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion that all full-time employees get \$200 and all part-time employees get \$100. Commissioner Llewellyn made the second. Motion carried. It will be run through the payroll as required by law.

Commissioner Shapiro stated that it is in this budget for the purchase of a utility truck. We held off in July because trucks were hard to find. Things are getting better. He recommended that we purchase this truck with a secured CD for 3 years like we did the last time. The mayor told all that we would need an ordinance and asked Attorney Llewellyn to prepare one for the next meeting. The amount will be left blank until a truck is found. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion we purchase of new utility truck with a second from Commissioner Llewellyn. Motion carried.

Comp Time was brought up by Commissioner Shapiro and discussed. Comp Time is hard to keep track of. Commissioner Shapiro recommended the town eliminate Comp Time. If employees work overtime, they will be paid time and a half. If employees present proof of past Comp Time, they will be paid at their regular rate. The deadline to present this information was Friday, Nov. 5. If they cannot prove Comp Time, it is the same as not doing it. Supervisors will approve overtime for employees. The new *clocking in system* will work well with this.

The mayor brought up the issue of who will be approving the employee's regular time, overtime and time off. Commissioners who have employees will be able to look at their time on the app, check it and approve or disapprove. There was much discussion on this issue.

The mayor asks for a motion to close the meeting. Commissioner Llewellyn made the motion with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.



Renee Morris, Town Clerk



Laura Freeman-Legge, Mayor