

**Town of Westernport
Council Meeting
April 11, 2022**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Phil Whetstone, Judy Hamilton and Allen Shapiro

ATTENDEES: Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn, Kristi Williams, Eric Alexander, Dick Walls, Candidate Jim Hinebaugh, Rhonda Wertman and Pam Burkett

Mayor Laura Freeman-Legge welcomed all and asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Kristi Williams. The council needs to meet another time this month. This meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25, 6 p.m. The next regular council meeting will be on Monday, May 9, 7 p.m. at the city building. The mayor asked for a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. The motion was made with a second. Motion carried. The city building will be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday.

The Lincoln Drive Sewer Project will be starting April 18. The road will not be shut down until after the sewer line has been photographed. If significant repairs need to be made, then the road will have to be shut down for these repairs. If no significant repairs are needed, then Lincoln Drive will remain open. We will try to give residents a significant amount of time to prepare. Phase IV of the water project has been completed. Paving was delayed due to the weather.

Westernport has a 2008 surplus truck out for bids. Bids are due April 18. There are some serious issues with the truck.

The mayor introduced Jim Hinebaugh, Republican Candidate for District 1A. Mr. Hinebaugh told about his life and career. He was a commissioned officer in the army and also worked in the Corps of Engineers. He ran for Garrett County Commissioner in 2014 and 2018 and won both times. He put a lot of time and effort into his job as Director of Economic Development. He was the director for 17 years. He mentioned that Delegate Beitzel is leaving Maryland Government and he is running for his position. Mr. Hinebaugh told the group that there is a lot of money out there for economic development and not enough time to spend it. He told the group that our district is 2 to 1 Republican and our legislature is about 2 to 1 Democrat. Mr. Hinebaugh has worked with a lot of different counties in MD. The Primary Election will be held on July 19. Mr. Hinebaugh stated that he is the only candidate running who has experience in local government and working with the legislature. Commissioner Shapiro stated that he has known Mr. Hinebaugh for at least 10 years. He is a hard workers and done a lot for Garrett County. Mr. Hinebaugh thanked the mayor, council and the audience for listening to him.

Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn spoke on **ORDINANCE No. 4.11.2022**, which is for the issuance, sale and deliver of by the Town of a revolving line note in a principal amount not exceeding Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000.00). This is a borrowing ordinance for the Lincoln Drive Project. This is for interim financing. Due to circumstances, M & T Bank wants Westernport to adopt a new line of credit. Attorney Mike Llewellyn explained this in detail. Westernport will have more time to pay back this initial line of credit. The rate of interest on this money is 3.386%. This was the first reading of **ORDINANCE No. 4.11.2022**. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to accept **ORDINANCE No. 4.11.2022** with a second from Commissioner Hamilton. Motion carried. This was the first vote.

Attorney Llewellyn spoke on the Amendment to the Town of Westernport Policies & Procedures. The council wanted to add **Background Checks to the Policies & Procedures**. Mr. Llewellyn explained in detail the particular type of background check that is appropriate for each position at the town. Maryland does not allow background checks on potential hires until after the first interview. Also, a potential employee must sign a permission paper for the background check. Commissioner Hamilton made the motion to accept Background Checks to the Policies and Procedures with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried.

Attorney Llewellyn explained the **CONTRACT OF SALE** for the Ball fields on Maryland Avenue. It was thought for many years that Westernport owned this property. But, Verso, after closing the mill, sold this property to Westernport Properties, LLC. The town has applied for **OPEN SPACE** money to purchase this property and the owner has agreed to sell this property for less than half of its appraised value. October 31, 2022 is the deadline for the sale to close. Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to purchase the Ball Fields whether or not we get **OPEN SPACE** money with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried.

Commissioner Phil Whetstone gave the Water Report. One hundred and sixty-seven (167) customers are in the arrears with their payments. Late fees amounted to \$5,245. The new total outstanding is now \$38,710.31.

Commissioner Judy Hamilton gave the Police Report. The council is still working with Luke to share a police officer. This project is in the talking stage and exploring all options.

Commissioner Shapiro gave the Financial Report.

| | General Fund | Water | Sewer | Garbage |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| March 1, 2022 | \$218,576.53 | \$ 99,437.70 | \$118,938.99 | \$21,100.51 |
| March 31, 2022 | \$184,191.80 | \$41,482.35 | \$106,523.54 | \$ 9,514.26 |

Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to approve the financial report with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. A truck was purchased during the month for \$38,228.00 out of the Water Fund. Commissioner Shapiro discussed the 2022/2023 Budget. This is the first presentation. It is mostly similar to the past but there are some changes. We can now add money to the budget from the sale of water to Luke and Piedmont. Thirty-one Thousand (\$31,000) was budgeted for Luke and \$90,000 for Piedmont. Late fees amount was increased. Employees will get a 4% raise. Money for police was added at \$40,000. Money for equipment was added at \$50,000 but it was not for anything specific. Bond expense added to the budget is \$280,000. Money for a Clean-Up Project will be added to the budget. This amount will be \$10,000 and be headed up by Mike Simpson, Code Enforcement Officer. Residents can apply for a grant up to \$500 to improve their property. This would be up to 50% of their expense. The money must be used for the exterior of their home and property. A new roof, painting, new sidewalk are some items that would qualify. Rules and regulations will be specific.

Mayor Freeman-Legge added that our new budget amount is \$2,092,600. Commissioner Shapiro added that this is because we are a Regional Water Supplier with Luke and Piedmont as customers. Commissioner Hamilton made the motion that they accept the first reading of the 2022/2023 Budget with a second from Commissioner Shapiro. Motion carried. The second reading of the budget and the ordinance will be on April 25 at 6 p.m. at the city building.

Ms. Kristi Williams of the Tri-Towns Ambulance and Rescue Squad spoke on the two fundraisers that were held last year: Trip to Hershey Park for 4 for 2 days and a Grill with accessories. Due to problems with the website, the fundraisers ran into trouble. The Barton Hose Company helped out and the problem was solved. Refunds were offered but none were taken and the TTARS apologized for any inconvenience. Two grants have been applied for: one from the state and one from the federal government. An emergency shelter is needed, replace a chassis and equipment, a garage and outside painting.

Ms. Williams told the group that 80% of all calls are made by volunteers. Thirteen new members have been added in the last month. At 16 you can join and be a dispatcher. You can also apply for an EMT position. You must be 20 to be a driver. Incentives can be: \$3.00/hr. or be paid by the call. Jonathan Dayton heads up the incentive program. The group did purchase a generator and it was very expensive.

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Renee Morris
Renee Morris, Town Clerk

Laura Freeman-Legge
Laura Freeman-Legge, Mayor

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