

**Town of Westernport
Council Meeting
November 14, 2022**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Kristi Williams, Eric Alexander, Phil Whetstone and Allen Shapiro

ATTENDEES: Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn, Patty Wiltison, Bob Wiltison, Peggy Newlon, James Newlon, Bob Hannon, John Fazanbaker

Mayor Judy Hamilton opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Commissioner Kristi Williams. A motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes was made by Commissioner Alexander and seconded by Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Copies of the minutes are available. Mayor Hamilton had some announcements: Tree Lighting will be Wednesday, Nov. 23 at 5:30 pm.; Christmas Parade will be on Thursday, Dec. 1 at 7 pm.; Holiday Closings for Thursday, Nov. 24 and Friday, Nov. 25. The mayor announced that the next council meeting will be on Monday, December 5. This will be the first Monday of the month. The council meeting will be held on the second Monday of the month when it is appropriate. This is a change. All financial information will need to be available for the early meeting.

The mayor announced a new 3-year contract with Burgmeier Hauling. They are giving us an increase due to the increase in gasoline. In 2023, the cost will be \$16 per unit/household; in 2024, the cost will be \$16.80 and in 2025, the cost will be \$17.64. Starting January 1, 2023 the town will increase the cost of garbage pickup to each household. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to increase the town's garbage rate by \$1.00 starting in January 2023 with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Commissioner Whetstone made a motion we accept Burgmeier's 3-year contract with a second from Commissioner Shapiro. Motion carried.

The design phase of Phases 5 through 7 of the Water Distribution System is in progress. Bennett and Brewer are expecting to start this phase in the spring of 2024. This will include Kelly Avenue, Horserock and Franklin. We have finished the Lincoln Drive Project and closing out on everything. The contracting company has applied for an Asbestos Removal Certification for 327-329 Maryland Avenue. The mayor continued with a Beautify Westernport Day planned for 2023. This project will need volunteers and we will focus on places downtown. Also, we will be asking residents to spruce up their own properties. There will be more on this later. Mayor Hamilton attended Westernport Elementary School's 100-year celebration. The Town had a Proclamation for the school. Mayor Hamilton and Commissioner Alexander attended the Veterans' Day Celebration on Friday, 11/11/22 at the Masonic Lodge. It was a joint effort of the Westernport American Legion and the Masons. They had an inspiring speaker.

Town Attorney Mike Llewellyn announced that the town now owns the Maryland Avenue Ball Fields. Mayor Hamilton commended him for his hard work on this project.

Commissioner Whetstone gave the Water Report. He reported that last month we had 155 customers on the shut-off list with penalty amount being \$3,915. The total outstanding was \$49,978.33. For the month of October, we had 125 customers on the shut-off list with the penalty amount being \$3,125. The total outstanding is now \$25,516.33. The mayor stated that residents are getting help with their bills from Social Services and other agencies. Residents strongly suggested delinquent customers be turned off. The council heard their concerns and is acting aggressively on this.

Commissioner Alexander gave the Street Report. Kids riding bikes, scooters etc. on our streets with no helmets or lights, even after dark, continues to be a problem. The commissioner is working with Mike, Kristi and security on this. Riders must follow the traffic patterns and obey all traffic signs and lights. Maybe we need to have a class on bike rules, regulations and safety and maybe this could be done during Fire Prevention Week. Some traffic signs in town need to be changed. At the top of Waverly and Wood we have an alleyway to Walnut Street. There are water, sewer and gas lines under this

alleyway and people are driving over this unpaved section of the alleyway. This would be a topic of discussion for a council work session.

Brashear Street did not qualify for the chip seal resurfacing program from the county. However, the street department was able to acquire some excess blacktop from the new water line project on Washington Street. Our men graded and applied this material along with some cold patch repair material to make a big improvement on this street. Commissioner Alexander reported on his progress with the trees in Georges Creek. He has found a company that can extract them and chip them without entering the creek. MDE told the commissioner that no permits would be needed for this project. He does want to get this in writing. And, Commissioner Alexander inquired about funding through the MDE and he has not heard back from them. Commissioner Alexander is working with our grant writer and the state highway to see if there is any money out there for this project. Cost of the chipper, saw, and truck with driver would be \$2,000 per hour or \$20,000 for a ten-hour day. The owner has told the commissioner that the job looks to be about a 20-hour job. The town would supply the flagmen. The work would be done on the weekends.

The town needs a radar sign and flashing lights. There is a speed problem at McDonald's, the Dollar Store and other areas. Drivers are coming into town at 60mph. It is clearly marked 25mph. Commissioner Alexander has informed the sheriff's department of this problem. Also looking for grant money for this. The town men have winterized the parks and busy putting up Christmas decorations.

Commissioner Williams gave the Police Report. She stated that our new security officers have been working for a month and a half and it is going well. What they learn in town is turned over to the sheriff's department. In meeting with Sheriff Robertson and the second in command, Commissioner Williams learned that there is an app to notify the department anonymously of trouble in the community. But, make sure it is current information and give as much detail as possible. Also, information on deputies is also available. Road closures and weather information is also available. Code Enforcement Officer Mike Simpson is always looking out for vehicles with dead tags and those up on cinder blocks. Several vehicles have recently been removed. Information from residents is welcome on this problem.

Commissioner Shapiro gave the Financial Report. The financial report still includes the money from the American Rescue Plan (\$600,000) so it is a little inflated. Approximately \$90,000 in taxes came in during the month of October.

	General Fund	Water	Sewer	Garbage
Beginning Oct. 1	\$ 1,046,306.03	\$ 43,490.64	\$ 152,623.90	\$ 13,832.98
Ending Oct. 31	\$ 1,176,450.29	\$ 21,579.28	\$ 175,904.90	\$ 21,051.87

Commissioner Shapiro plans to get with Jason Patterson, our financial report expert, to see if our financial report can be made friendlier. This would be helpful when we go to PACE. Commissioner Shapiro emailed to the council the balances on all the town's accounts. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to approve the financial report with a second from Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to give Christmas Bonuses (\$100 to full time employees and \$50 to part time employees) at this Thanksgiving time. The second was from Commissioner Williams. Motion carried. PACE has been scheduled for January 19 and 20, 2023.

Commissioner Alexander wants to get in touch with Steve Bennett concerning the water overflow issue on Ross and Likens Streets. Mayor Hamilton said she would be talking with Mr. Bennett on Friday of this week and will bring it up.


Mr. Bob Wiltison, Commander of Victory Post 155 American Legion in Westport spoke. He informed the group that the legionnaires are still meeting the 4th Monday of every month at the Masonic Lodge. The old building is still for sale but the group is active in the community. Some of their activities: Giving out candy at Halloween, Hot Dogs at the Tree Lighting Ceremony, Help to John Fazenbaker with the


food give-away program and give out candy at the Christmas Parade. Jim (Hefty) Newlon is 1st Vice Commander of the post. The Westernport Legion and the Masons work together. New flags purchased by the Masonic Lodge are: American, State and Legion. The masons have welcomed in the legionnaires. This is a very good thing and approved by both entities. Mr. Wiltison thanked all for letting him speak this evening. Mr Wiltison also told the group that the Westernport Legion is not the only legion that does not have a building.

Mayor Hamilton and Commissioner Williams offered the town's assistance in any project the Masons and the Legion take on. And, they thanked them for all they do. Commissioner Alexander mentioned that the legion has always helped with sports in the community.

Commissioner Williams told the audience that leaves are not to be put out in the streets. Leaves are to be raked, bagged and put out for the garbage. Mr. Wiltison asks that shale is a problem on Horserock and hopefully can be sucked up.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Williams with a second by Commissioner Whetstone. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.


Renee L. Morris, Town Clerk



Judy S. Hamilton, Mayor