

Town of Westernport

Council Meeting

June 5th 2023

Commissioners: Phil Whetstone, Kristi Williams, James Wills, Allen Shapiro

Attendees: Laura Freeman Legge, Mike Llewellyn, Sandi Corsaro, Greg Harvey, Dick Walls, Eric Alexander, Pete Davis, Stephan Hoffmann

Mayor Judy Hamilton welcomed all and opened the meeting with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Hamilton asks for a motion to approve the minutes of May as read. Commissioner Shapiro makes motion, Commission Whetstone seconds, motion carries. Mayor thanks the audience for coming out for the meeting even though we had to adjust the meeting time to 2:00 PM. Announcements from the agenda: The next council meeting will be held Monday, July 10th at 7:00 PM. The city building will be closed June 19th for Juneteenth, and July 3rd and July 4th for the Fourth of July.

Mayor Hamilton updates on the sewer leak above the Catholic Cemetery, the Town has met with several funding agencies we are trying to get funds to fix it. Water Phases 5 – 7 we are waiting on an update from USDA to see what additional funds we will be receiving. A reminder that it is parking at owners risk at the ballfields, we have ordered 'Park at own Risk' signs to put up. The Town is looking at closing two alley ways -- one on Waverly St. and one on Wood St. Sewer lines are directly under the alley ways, we will post signs and close those alley ways so we don't risk busting the sewer lines beneath.

Citizens participation plan renewal is presented to meet the requirements of 24 CFR 570.486 and 24 CFR 91.115 explains how citizens can get information from the Town. Commissioner Williams moves to accept the Citizens Participation Plan. Commissioner Whetstone seconds. No questions motion carries. Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan is presented. Motion to approve Residential Anti-Displacement Plan made by Commissioner Wills, second from Commissioner Shapiro. Motion carries

Last business Mayor Hamilton has is to appoint Laura Freeman Legge as active Clerk while our town clerk is out. We are unable to appoint Renee as acting Clerk while she is out. Commissioner Whetstone Motions to approve, Commissioner Williams seconds. Motion carries.

Commissioner Wills goes over the Late Penalty list 92 customers are on the list.

Late Penalties = \$3,325.00 Total Balance = \$27,878.11

Commissioner Wills was able to meet Steve Bennett of BBA on water project. There was a leak over at the bridge 5 hours to fix. Costs at the Filter plant exceedingly high in the winter time, so we are going to do an energy evaluation.

Commissioner Whetstone became Streets commissioner June 1st and plans to meet with Glen every Friday so we can go over his needs wants with what the town crew is doing and what projects we need to take care of.

Commissioner Williams brings up 325 Vine St. as Surplus Land. The Town's attorney states that we have to declare that its surplus then advertise to put it out for bids. Highest bidder gets the property. Commissioner Williams motions to declare 325 Vine Street as surplus land. Commissioner Whetstone seconds, motion Carries.

Questions about other property on Wood Street, Commissioner Williams said we will look into it since we don't know what the parcel #s are. Commissioner Williams is now over Parks and Recs – we will be getting a committee together beautify Westernport is to be done by the town residents. That'll be put on Facebook and sent out through Nixel for anyone that wants to be involved.

Commissioner Shapiro states that accounts haven't been reconciled in the last 6 months are now up to date. These are the balances at the end of May 2023.

Water Fund = \$118,509.76	Garbage Fund = \$79,320.83	Sewer = \$156,432.26
Water Distribution = \$150,532.42	General = \$190,121.12	Bay Restoration – \$76,432.87
Water Line Maintenance Amount = \$52,697.10	Late Fee Account \$74,501.34	

Commissioner Whetstone motions to accept financial report through May 31st. Commissioner Wills seconds. Motion carries.

Comments from audience:

Ms. Sandi Corsaro says she knows she isn't a town resident but she has been listening to the water issues. When we do the water system are we anticipating an O&M fee for Horserock? There has been no discussion on the council side. Asks favor – if we do start discussing – before it hits the paper will you let them know? Horserock People were upset that they saw it in the paper first. Kristi recommends that there is a representative here at the Town meetings, that can be brought back to them so they don't feel blindsided. The Town is unable to control the newspaper, and the newspaper finds out in the Public Meetings. If there was a representative from Horserock they could take it back to them to discuss.

Dick Walls – House 121 Jamesson Ave – A Gentlemen just purchased it, he has 6 months to a year for rectification we've been doing the best we can of what we can do legally on our end. We can't do anything until the deed has been transferred. The properties are connected and it has been purchased by 2 separate owners. You can't start the foreclosure process until October. Up until they have the deed there is nothing they can do. The county had no knowledge that the two properties were adjoined. County Tax office says that 121 is condemned. There is a car on Smoot Street with no license. We can't send a tow truck onto someone's property to tow it away. Commissioner Williams will look into the vehicle on Smoot Street. We could maybe do a junk abatement – we'd have to get a court order in order to do that. The Town will have to pay for the removal it's not a short process.

Greg Harvey from Piedmont – had hearing. They are filing rebuttal and rebuttal briefs they won't know until July 16th if they are a failing and distressed water system. All the local water systems have said they have zero interest in taking it over and they don't want to supply water. Raw Water Agreement – if they deem them a failed utility he isn't sure what they are going to do. They have no interest in shutting the plant down. They have no interest in letting them get water out of savage or the Potomac. State of MD would allow it, State of WV says the river is contaminated. The ruling is whether they are distressed and failed.

There is a high level of political interference supporting the line from Keyser to Piedmont. Until they receive the ruling they are unable to commit. It won't be announced until after the second quarter with the mill property. But if he could get the raw water agreement – we have it in draft but we need to get their council to agree on.

Kristi Tri Towns EMS – Received 2nd stage of receiving grant through Senator Cardin's office. They granted 175k that has to go onto the next level they will find out the end of June beginning of July if they are going to receive funding. They are looking to purchase a new ambulance. They are down to 1 ambulance. They want to dispel rumors, there is no reason for the county to move out of tri-towns and into Barton. There is a possibility, but once she has the information she will let the community know. Barton is also their own separate entity. Their new building could take up to 2 years. Their grey and black unit is currently down state getting fixed right now. They do have another chase vehicle. That is in use and no plans of going anywhere


Ms. Sandi Cosaro just wanted to make the observation to get ready for the 4 wheelers. Sheriff's department has asked to have conversation to discuss this area. If you see them and know who they are you can reach out to Kristi or to Mike Simpson with names and they can contact the owners.

Motion to adjourned public meeting made by Commissioner Shapiro, Commissioner Whetstone seconds. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 2:53 PM.



Laura Freeman Legge, Town Clerk



Judy Hamilton, Mayor