

Regular Meeting
Town of Preston
September 14, 2009

The regular meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ellery Adams at 7:00 p.m. Also present was Commissioner Robert Stacey, Commissioner Bill Willis, and Mimi Willis.

Attendance: Kathleen Barry, Harold Moxley, Gary Waltemeyer, Roger and Sandy Banko and family, Valerie Brey, Dawn Dickinson, Jeff Phillips, Carl Burke, Abby Schmidt of the Times Record, and Attorney Walter Palmer.

There being no corrections to the previous meeting minutes, they were approved as submitted.

The minutes of the Special Meeting with Mr. Kratovil were approved as submitted.

The minutes of the Special Meeting regarding the hiring of an architect were approved as submitted. Commissioner Adams then introduced Mr. Carl Burke, a grant writer, who was invited to speak. He said he is chief executive officer of Strategy Consultants based in Chestertown. They serve non-profit and public agencies with services such as funding research and grants development in all areas. He said they can develop grant proposals for state programs. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, or stimulus act, will have a lot of grants available through the next year to 18 months as well as the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention will probably fund some of what the police do. He charges an hourly fee. Ellery said we have some real need. Mimi said she tried the U.S.D.A. Stimulus plan and tried hiring new police officers and were turned down. Mr. Burke said he would do a little digging *pro bono* and see what is out there to help, especially with private foundations. He will let Mimi know.

Police Dept. Report: Chief Trise submitted his report as follows:

- wrote 25 citations
- had 15 calls for service
- put in e-ticket system in both vehicles
- he said he has a couple of students who want to volunteer to work for the police department; washing cars, filing, etc. Mimi said the Town could use them for scanning information into archive machine.

Chief Trise then explained the e-ticket system. The tickets automatically print out as a summons rather than a citation, since the summons is not signed.

Public Works Report: Commissioner Robert Stacey gave the Public Works report submitted by Dale Whitley, who said he:

- cleaned out both pumping stations and vacuumed drywell of station at west end of town.
- cleared power outage alarm at station at east end of town and repaired the fence
- changed meter at 118 Maple Ave. to the outside.
- installed conduit for electric service at the new building on Backlanding Road
- put dump truck in shop for repairs
- repaired light at east end of town on the welcome sign; fixed one at sewer plant; and replaced light at top of water tower
- sprayed banks of lagoon for weeds
- removed dead trees at the park and worked on parking lot at new town building

Town Manager's Report: Mimi gave the following report:

- 6 residents' water have been cut off
- the new computer has been installed and the audit will start Tuesday
- sent out a total of 2 clean up letters for Mr. Malkus
- working on grant for park bathroom; met deadline and waiting to hear if approved.
- will be attending a workshop on the 30th for the Governor's Census Outreach Campaign
- highway funds budgeted was \$80,000., have received \$8,875., a 90% cut in revenue. Will have to discuss budget cuts. There is some in reserve that may have to be transferred. We have already spent \$17,000. in highway funds to date.

- Police Protection is to be cut by 30%; from \$7,000. to \$4,900.
- entered bills for payment
- entered real estate taxes for 2009-2010
- still working on mandated Debt Policy
- prepared corporate tax bills
- talked to Comcast and switched bills, since Police Dept. is supposed to be free and Town pays
- received letter from Lisa Orndorff regarding Christmas advertisement for \$100.00 for a flyer that we participated in last year.

Unfinished Business: Ellery said:

- a tree will be moved to the park from Mr. and Mrs. Willis' back yard, probably around the end of September.
- there are 3 new volunteers for Parks and Recreation Committee: Sandy Banko, Donna Brock and Michelle Barry. We still need 2 more members.
- he said for three musical events he asked for sponsors and got a good response at the first mailing.

New Business: A motion was made to pay the bills for August which was seconded and carried.

- Mimi did some grant writing for the park. Mimi said she wrote it from the Open Space Program for a bathroom at the park and some new carpet for the playground for a little over \$12,000.
- Speed limits on Railroad Avenue were lowered last month to 15 mph. Signs to be erected.
- Eastern Shore Ass'n of Municipalities dinner on 9/22/09 at Waterview Restaurant for \$40.00 each. Robert Stacey made a motion to pay for the dinners, seconded by Ellery and carried.
- Ellery discussed the Council of Governors (C.O.G.) membership. It was formed so various governments could get together and discuss issues of common interest and sometimes work together to get funding for a variety of things. It was decided at the last meeting there was no reason to have a meeting unless at least one County Commissioner attends. The Town of Henderson has withdrawn. He believes we should wait until after the next meeting to see what response the County has. At one time, this was a very valuable organization.
- Mr. Stacey is working on some beautiful street lights for our parking lot at the new Town Hall. Robert Stacey said he would gather the information and bring it to the Commissioners and Mrs. Willis for their input.
- Congressman Kratovil will be holding a Foreclosure Prevention Workshop in Cambridge on 9/26/09 at Maces Lane Middle School.
- Ellery said Sandy Banko sent a letter and asked her if she wanted to speak about it. She said it was about the school crosswalk and the traffic situation, and the current crossing guards are not trained properly. She would like to see a uniformed police officer present. Roger Banko agreed with his wife and said the Board of Educations has taken responsibility, but still thinks it is the Town's problem. He requested the Town change the police department schedules so either the Chief or the Officer would be available for crossing guard. Kathleen said she thought the crossing guards should be in a uniform. Bill Willis mentioned the crossing guard should be certified. Ellery suggested a meeting with Robert Jester, Dept. of Transportation, Lt. Jones, State Police Dept., Chief Trise and the Commissioners to come up with a solution. He asked Chief Trise to help on a temporary basis.
- Ellery then brought up the advertising for Christmas that was previously mentioned Mimi to bring more information to the work session
- Mimi said the meeting for Tourism will be held at Preston Town Hall 9/24/09 at 10 a.m.
- Regarding the budget cuts, we are \$9,000.00 over budget on highway funds due to the cuts. Mimi said we have to pay for street lights; approximately \$16,000. per year, out of our reserve.

On Agenda: Mr. Gary Waltemeyer said the special meeting with Mr. Kratovil was not posted properly. He thought it said "closed" meeting. Mimi said it read "special" meeting. He complained about several other items.

A discussion was then held on the new building. Ellery said electricity has been furnished to the building under ground. At Mr. Stacey's suggestion, we put the conduit in ourselves, rather than hire a contractor, with the help of Dale and Chris. During the special meeting held, an architect was hired, Christine Dayton from Easton. There are ongoing discussions between her and the Commissioners about adding another rest room. Approval has been received to install insulation in the ceiling. We are trying to get the Police Dept. complete first, since they are paying rent. He said the Town has saved a considerable amount of money so far. The Commissioners chose to have the shell erected by T. J. Farms and the interior finished by Commissioner Adams, with volunteers, some paid laborers and the Town's own paid public works employees, to keep the cost down. All costs have been paid by cash so far. He then made a motion that the building be completed as previously planned by Commissioners Mills, Stacey and himself, in as expeditious manner as is reasonable. Commissioner Stacey seconded, for discussion only. He said there were suggestions to put a committee together not to oversee it but to keep up with what is going on in the building. Commissioner Willis said he is not in favor of continuing the way it has been going. He said he believes they should get all the contingencies resolved before going forward. That would mean we have architect's approved drawings to work with and we get a building permit for the interior phase of the building and form a committee including a member of Planning and Zoning and perhaps 3 citizens. Kathleen said Planning and Zoning and the committee would meet to discuss decisions to be made regarding décor. They would not be a decision making body but an opinion body. Bill Willis then said that in addition to the foregoing 3 items, the 4th would be that Commissioner Adams would continue as supervisor with certain stipulations with checks and balances and any decisions made would have to be approved by all three Commissioners. Kathleen was not in agreement with the required approval by all the Commissioners. Kathleen asked Mr. Palmer what the ruling is on conflict of interest. He said you have to be real careful. He said the conflict of interest rules are not only to protect the Town but also to protect the individual commissioners. Mr. Moxley suggested an estimate of future expenses be prepared and approved by all the commissioners so the work could proceed. Bill Willis then suggested the employees working on the building report to Dale when they come in. Ellery asked for a vote on his motion that the building be completed as planned by Commissioners Mills, Stacey and himself, in as expeditious manner as is reasonable and he further moved that a permit be obtained for completion of the building and that an advisory committee be formed. Commissioner Adams recused himself from the vote. Commissioner Stacey voted aye and Commissioner Willis voted nay. Ellery said there is no change in direction, everything will continue as it has been.

Mr. Palmer said the Commissioners are really operating on thin ice using the current informal manner, even though it is saving the Town money. He said the Commission needs to work more as a group to protect the individuals from any claims in the future. He said he believes having Ellery as the general contractor is a good idea; an oversight committee is essential; detailed outline of future building plans is good and anticipated cost. Ellery asked Mr. Palmer to write a motion that would be acceptable to all of the Commissioners. Mimi said a special hearing could be called for the building motion.

Mimi showed a drawing submitted by Mr. Waters entitled "Line Revision for ASG" from Mrs. Fletcher to be signed by the Commissioners and Planning and Zoning. All three Commissioners and Planning and Zoning will look at it and sign it at their leisure.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Johnson