

## MINUTES



**Commissioners of  
St Michaels  
Meeting Minutes Special Session  
Wednesday, August 23, 2023, 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm  
St. Michaels Branch of the Talbot Co. Library  
106 S. Fremont Street  
St. Michaels, MD 21663**

1. 4:00pm - Call to Order for a Special Session - Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Breimhurst, President, called to order a live and remote Special Session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 4:00 pm in St. Michaels, Maryland and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Also present at the meeting were Commissioners Joyce Harrod, Tad duPont, Katrina Whittington and Commissioner Mercier. Other representatives include Town Administrator Rob Straebel, Town Clerk Vickie Sharp, and Town Planner Steve Ball. Approximately 7 members of the public were present as well as remote attendees on Zoom.

2. Announcement of Closed Session

The Commissioners will vote to have Closed Session immediately after the Special Session on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 pursuant to Maryland Code, under the Open Meetings Act, General Provisions Article Section §3-305(b) to discuss the following: (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

3. Announcements from COSM and Staff

Commissioner Whittington asked could we meet with the Town power provider to see what communication we have if a line goes down in a storm so that fire does not start and spread. Commissioner duPont stated that there was a committee for the utility poles and how the electric lines could be moved to back streets since they could not be buried. Commissioner Briemhurst stated there is a bigger issue that no matter where the poles are located if the lines go down and start sparking fire what is the local utilities plan for shutting off power. Will need to follow up with Choptank Electric.

Rob Straebel stated there were 4 interviews for the Town Clerk position. Believe a good candidate has been found, has a lot of experience in local government and could start as early as the Tuesday after Labor Day. Gives plenty of transition time for Vickie to move into the Finance Director position.

4. Comments from the Public

David Wojciechowski stated his concern regarding the utility poles in town and to put burden of proof on the Utility Company and have them come to the Commissioners and state if the poles are safe or not safe. Commissioner Briemhurst requested that this topic be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Richard Loomis wanted to know the address of the property that was going to be discussed in the Executive Session, the address was not released. Asked that his email that was sent to the Commissioners be put on record. A copy was not handed out therefore no email was added to the record. Does a property acquisition need a majority vote. Rob Straebel stated that no decisions would be made in a closed session.

Roy Meyers, the Commissioners had a study regarding if the utility lines could be buried and it was determined that it was too costly to do so. Find the study and make available to the Commissioners. Support going to Choptank Electric and having them on the hook and what they are going to do.

5. Old Business

a. Consultant contract with Mahan Rykiel Associates, Inc.

Selection Review Community unanimously recommends hiring Mahan Rykiel & Associates of Baltimore to complete the Master Plan for the Environmental Concern Property. Total cost-plus add-ons is \$55,190. Would like a motion to approve the contract and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract. Commissioner duPont stated he was not in favor and feels that the Town should wait until the sale is completed, move the Town Office into the building and get a feel for things before moving forward with the Master Plan. Commissioner Briemhust stated there is a time limit to getting the open space funds from the DNR. DNR will not give you money for open space projects if you have already purchased the property. There is a concurrence which will allow the Town to purchase the property and submit the Grant application afterwards. If we don't do this now, there is a chance of losing about \$2M in grant funds. Steve Ball clarified that currently we do not know the amount of the grant money we could receive; it would be based on the Master Plan and how much property is to be in open space. We need to know what the Town wants to do with this property, how much would be open space and how much for the Town Office. A Master Plan has to be done in order to get the open space grant. The Community needs to be involved in the decision of the Environmental Concern Property. This purchase is not in the budget and will need to be careful of the money that will need to be spent to get the Town Office moved and to tear down the old office. The grant is just about done but cannot be submitted without a Master Plan. Mark Berman questioned dates within the contract, Steve Ball stated that The Agreement has incorrect dates and will be adjusted prior to signing. Depending upon what the community decides with the Master Plan, the Town may be able to apply for other grants as well. David Wojciechowski asked could this process be completed in Phases, Steve Ball commented that there needs to be a Master Plan and it will be in phases. Once the plan is submitted changes cannot be made. There is no guarantee that a grant will be awarded, it is very competitive. Mr. Huntoon spoke in favor of the agreement. Mr. Hart spoke about concern of traffic on West Chew picking up with the Town office being relocated to Environmental Concern property.

Commissioner Harrod motioned to accept the Mahan Rykiel & Associates Agreement, with date corrected. Commissioner Whittington seconded and was passed on a roll call vote 4-1 in favor. Commissioner dupont was not in favor.

6. Closed Session Statement

The Commissioners will vote to go into a Closed Session immediately after the Special Session on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 pursuant to Maryland Code, under the Open Meetings Act, General Provisions Article Section §3-305(b) to discuss the following: (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

Commissioner duPont motioned to go into closed session. Commissioner Harrod seconded and was passed on a roll call vote 5-0 in favor.

7. Adjournment of Open Session

At close of Open Session, COSM will convene into Closed Session

8. Adjournment of Closed Session

Public Participation: All comments from the public will be taken during the period set aside for "Comments from the Public." The "Comments from the Public" portion of the Commission agenda shall have a limited time period as determined by the Commissioners, and shall be at the beginning and at the end of each agenda. To be recognized, a member of the public should raise his or her hand and wait to be recognized by the President. Comments and questions should be kept brief and to the point, and be directed to the President.