



MINUTES

**Commissioners of
St Michaels
Meeting Minutes- Legislative Session
Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
St. Michaels Branch of the Talbot Co. Library
106 S. Fremont Street
St. Michaels, MD 21663**

1. 6:00 pm - Call to Order for Working Session - Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Breimhurst, President, called to order a live and remote Working Session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 6:00 p.m. in St. Michaels, Maryland and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Also present at the meeting were Commissioners Joyce Harrod, Al Mercier, Tad DuPont and Katrina Whittington. Other Representatives included Town Administrator Rob Straebel, Town Planner Steve Ball, Town Clerk Vickie Sharp, Public Works Operation Manager Brian Thompson and Captain Oswald. Members of the public were present as well as remote attendees on Zoom.

2. Announcements from COSM and Staff

Commissioner Harrod mentioned that there is another open house for the library. There was a tour conducted at the CBMM welcome center, grand opening on December 2nd. Toured Ferry Cove – oyster farming.

Commissioner Breimhurst – closing day for EC property on September 28, 2023, possible future home of Town Office. There will be multiple public sessions for the master plan at the Environment Concern property at Christ Church.

Town Manager Rob Straebel - The town has received a grant from MDOT for nature trail extension, \$48,360 for construction drawings. An RFP was sent out for website redesign, 9 proposals received, and a committee of staff members was set up to review the RFP's. An RFP for IT services is on the website, current IT contract is expiring December 1st. Readvertising for the Town Clerk on constant contact, Indeed, Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, Town website and social media. Resumes are due October 23rd. Environmental Concern Master Planning meetings are at Christ Church Tuesday 6-8pm on October 3rd and Wednesday October 4th from 4-6pm Health insurance quotes have been received, there is a 2.28% decrease for employees due to younger staff. The Town had CPR training for 18 employees.

Public Works Brian Thompson – Update on smart meters, everything is updated and reading. We are still working out some minor issues. Out of 1,270 meters, only 85 are left to be changed due to needing parts.

3. Comments from the Public

A volunteer for the Farmer's Market wants to add a Market Day on December 2nd. No objections from the Commissioners to adding the December 2nd Market Day.

4. Presentation by Choptank Electric

Maintenance program regarding pole safety. Most recent one filed was in 2018 and poles are inspected on a 10-year cycle. Choptank does not do this, they hire an independent contractor

RAMS (Resource Asset Management Solutions) out of Cambridge. They inspect the safety and integrity of the pole (rotting, woodpecker damage etc), visual inspection, sounding inspection. If there is an emergency after the inspection, they will stay on site and a crew is dispatched. Verizon poles – if any issues are identified Choptank works with the local Verizon district to make changes happen since the pole is a Verizon asset. Verizon has completed their inspections in 2021/2022. Choptank coordinates with 911 and if a pole is hit and there is a dispatch number for Choptank. There was public comment regarding the poles and safety in St. Michaels. The emergency number for Choptank Electric is 800-410-4790.

5. Ordinances for Discussion

Ordinance No. 551 - Burning Outdoor, **AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING AS AMENDED THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS CODE, CHAPTER 122, “BURNING OUTDOOR”, FOR THE PURPOSE OF BETTER REGULATING OUTDOOR BURNING IN THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT FIRE CODES AND BEST PRACTICES.** Added section 122-5 cooking equipment to draft ordinance. Commissioner Breimhurst questioned the enforcement of 10ft distance, Chief Oswald noted that was Fire Chief Cooper’s recommendation.

Commissioner Harrod motioned to move the draft burning ordinance to the public hearing on October 25th, seconded by Commissioner Mercier, was passed on roll call vote 5-0 in favor.

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Review of Town finances – Town purchased the Environmental Concern property. The renovation of the building, meeting room and Police Station, per Tim Crosby \$275 per square foot. Town will take a closer look at what improvements need to take place, possible cutting of the meeting room and keeping meetings at the library. Surplus properties that have been sold are the Long and Foster building at 109 S. Talbot Street, 2 lots on Fremont Street and 800 S. Talbot Street. Chief Oswald noted the current location is ideal for the Police Station, noted the prison restroom needs to be updated. Commissioner duPont suggested that the current administrative building at 300 Mill Street be rehabilitated into a police station, dependent on the open space grant with the State. Commissioner duPont noted the Town should get multiple estimates from contractors other than Tim Crosby.

Trash truck – acquired in 2012, currently pick up approximately 40 cans Talbot Street and the parks. The DOT inspection noted this is the last year the body of the truck can be repaired. Brian Thompson noted that it takes about a year to get a new truck. A new truck would cost \$230,000, Commissioner duPont suggested using dump trucks for bulk items and using a dumpster at the Public Works area. Brian Thompson brought up the issue of smell, animals and public dumping. Commissioner Breimhurst suggested a fee for bulk pickup to go towards a private hauler.

8. Comments from the Public

Adia Khalil stated her concern regarding the budget. Also, as a representative from Loding Association stated her concern about another percent increase. It was also noted that no major renovations should be done at the Environmental Concern (new administrative offices) and to stop neglecting the Police Department. Ms. Khalil also stated her concerns with the attorney fees the Town is incurring.

Roy Myers spoke about the DNR and FEMA grants. He also noted that we should get State funding for the Police Department and is concerned about the Reserve funds, suggesting that there should be a minimum threshold the Town cannot go below.

Doug Rollow, municipal leasing for the trash truck which will give us current expenditure we could use as a starting point.

Kristen Greenaway inquired if the cost of the police station includes raising Mill Street. Commission Breimhurst confirmed that it does and anticipates Mill Street will be paid for by grants.

9. Comments from the Commissioners

Commissioner Harrod inquired about the number of police officers and Chief confirmed there are 5 police officers and himself, hiring is ongoing.

10. Announcement of Future Meetings - to be held at Library

October 11, 2023 - Working Session
October 25, 2023 - Legislative Session
November 8, 2023 - Working Session
November 22, 2023 - Legislative Session
December 13, 2023 - Working Session

11. Adjournment of Open Session

Commissioner Whitting made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner duPont at approximately 7:58pm.

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.