



Commissioners of Leonardtown

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DANIEL W. BURRIS
Mayor

LASCHELLE E. MCKAY
Town Administrator

**Town Council Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2020
Virtual Meeting due to Covid 19
Meeting recorded Live on YouTube – Town of Leonardtown Channel**

Attendees Onsite: Daniel W. Burris, Mayor
J. Maguire Mattingly IV, Vice President
Tyler Alt, Council Member
Nick Colvin, Council Member
Christy Hollander, Council Member
Mary Maday Slade, Council Member

Also, in attendance were: Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator; Rebecca Sothoron, Treasurer; Will Moorehead, Just Tech; Teri Dimsey, Executive Secretary; A complete list of attendees is on file at the Town Hall. Viewers on Town of Leonardtown YouTube Channel.

Councilmember Colvin provided the invocation and Ms. Dimsey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Burris entertained a motion to approve the minutes.

Councilmember Mattingly moved to approve the minutes of Monday, May 11, 2020 as presented; seconded by Councilmember Colvin; no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Treasurers Report – Rebecca Sothoron

Ms. Sothoron reported that there were no transfers to or from the checking account and we are 92% through the budget year.

We have had several discussions about what we think will happen with the income tax. We did receive the May distribution which was 22% higher than the same time last year which means we think we will reach the budget for FY20 and may even have a surplus for FY20.

There are two budget amendments that will affect FY20 that were addressed during last month's meeting and are being brought forward today for Council's approval.

Budget Amendments BJ03-20 and BJ04-20 Roof Replacements

We have two roofing projects, one for the Town Hall and one replacing the sludge bed roof at the wastewater treatment plant.

The Town Hall project does require electrical work that is situated between the buildings to move the cables underground to ensure it will be safe enough for them to begin the job.

Councilmember Mattingly moved to approve Budget Amendments BJ03-20 and BJ04-20 to fund a new roof for the Town Hall and the sludge drying beds approved at the May 11th. 2020 Town council meeting; Councilmember Alt seconded, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Sothoron remarked that in light of our current situation and in response to the coronavirus, I would like to address some concerns about what may happen to our budget this year going forward, in particular, on how the State anticipates the next fiscal years and how the income tax affects sales tax effect. Obviously, we don't collect sales tax here, but the State is doing as much analytics as they can to try to figure out how it will affect the State budget and then the trickle-down effect to all of those.

An MML webinar provided some points to consider, such as, Saint Mary's has the lowest unemployment rate of all counties in the State of Maryland. The State has been using some forecasting models to help try and predict aspects of a multi-year recovery and predict how it will affect income tax etc.

For us, within the Town of Leonardtown, not only do we have lower unemployment here in St. Mary's County, we also have the benefit of growth within our current housing developments and business economy. My impression is that any forecast that the State has for the State as a whole would not be as great of an effect on Leonardtown.

On top of these facts are the fact that we develop our budget annually and use a lot of our revenue for one-time capital items. So, even if going forward, we experience a bigger drop than we would ever anticipate, and because we have the ability to fund recurring expenses, we would just have to cut back on those one-time capital items. This gives us some level of comfort that we are in a position to be able to move forward and not have a big effect on our regular operations or services. This should provide us a cushion that not a lot of other jurisdictions will have available.

Our unemployment was 2.8 and is now 7.3 but, for comparison, there is a jurisdiction that is at 22.8 unemployment.

We did receive some updated projections for Highway User Revenue. In FY 20 budget we had originally anticipated \$181,000 and we are hearing it might be closer to \$174,000. It is manageable and for FY21 we approved \$207,000. They're projecting \$184,000. We have time to make modifications for both because we haven't spent all of the Highway User money yet this year and we only have three weeks left to go. There is no time limit, it just has to be used for certain purposes which gets tracked year-after-year. Trying to predict what is going to happen is just using a lot of assumptions.

LGIT As Property Insurance Provider

We prepared a pretty lengthy memo, along with supporting documentation to address the recommendation to change the Town's property insurance carrier as we have had the same broker since the early 90s. Back then, private insurance companies were able to offer a very competitive premium for local government business and there was no reason to change, but as you review the property quote from LGIT, there is a significant difference from what we're currently paying. We already have liability coverage with LGIT and have been extremely happy with their customer service.

We are looking forward to having someone physically visit every single Town property and build an inventory, assess the condition and come up with an extensive revised statement of values so that we can be sure that we have the proper coverage for all of our buildings.

Councilmember Slade remarked that it states "the Town was generally experiencing one property loss per year." What does that mean?

Ms. Sothoron responded, that at a time in the early 1990s, the Town had a few incidents, where a building was hit by a car and a garbage truck overturned and was totaled so there were a few claims during that time. On a good note, we have not had a property loss in a very long time.

Councilmember Mattingly inquired about training they offer on-line and in person.

Ms. Sothoron stated that they do them all over the State, we are probably too small for them to do an individualized training but we have taken advantage of training that they do in the southern Maryland area.

Councilmember Hollander noted that her company has provided their training sessions, they have had a couple of claims and LGIT have been really easy to work with.

Mayor Burris noted that back in the 1980s many private companies got out of insuring municipalities and local governments in general.

Ms. Sothoron stated that because of the monetary threshold over the course of the year, we ask that Council agree to waive the sealed bid requirements.

Councilmember Mattingly moved to approve the Local Government Insurance Trust as provider of property insurance for the town outside of sealed bid requirements; seconded by Councilmember Slade, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Burris invited former Council Member Hayden Hammett forward for a presentation.

Mayor Burris thanked Mr. Hammett for serving as Council Member from 2012 to 2020 and his term on the Planning and Zoning Commission and presented Mr. Hammett with a Proclamation from the State of Maryland signed by Governor Larry Hogan, Lt. Governor, Boyd Rutherford, and John Wobensmith, Secretary of State. He also presented Mr. Hammett with a lovely memorial tray depicting a photograph of the Leonardtown Wharf from the Town Council and Town Staff as a keepsake.

Mr. Hammett responded that he has certainly enjoyed working with the Town over these last eight plus years and gave Councilmember Colvin a congratulations, good luck and best wishes to the Town.

Planning & Zoning Report – Laschelle McKay

No meeting is scheduled for the month of June. There was going to be a public hearing for the text amendments which were introduced but was rescheduled to be held during the July meeting and the Ordinances will then be on the August Town Council agenda for approval.

The Meadows at Town Run received a favorable recommendation and will come before Town Council for approval of Phase 2 which will be on next month's agenda.

Police Report

Deputy Nelson is unable to attend but submitted a written report for Council's review.

Town Administrator's Report – Laschelle McKay

Ms. McKay reported that staff has been busy with all the COVID related issues and the recent protests, along with working with all the restaurants and preparing them for opening with safe spaces outdoor spaces. There are a lot of hoops to go through to meet the safety requirements as set by the health department, the sheriff's department and the fire marshal. We are working with a couple restaurants that wanted to be ready to open on Friday per the Governor's order and they had a nice crowd of folks show up. We also met several times with the Sheriff's department to coordinate the requests for protests.

To show support to all the healthcare workers, St. Mary's Medstar hosted a plane parade flyby and posted the video on their social media.

Economic Development has put out a grant for small businesses and we are working with local businesses to make sure that they have received the information. We are collaborating closely with LBA and Economic Development and are in the midst of putting together a campaign to support the businesses as they open back up and really promote them, make it a coordinated effort with the Town and our community.

We learned that the Health Department and St. Mary's College were proceeding with a pilot program to monitor wastewater to detect coronavirus in individual systems so that eventually they may be able to predict if going to be a surge in cases based on areas of the county. MetCom is currently doing the pilot program all over the county at their facilities and asked if we would want to participate. It is just a one-time sample collection which our staff would do and they would then submit it to MetCom and St. Mary's College would then make it part of the study.

If this study is successful and continues on into the future, it may be something that we would want to participate in down the road. There may be some financial costs associated with the continued study but no costs are associated with the one-time sample collection.

As you know, Mr. Johnson retired last month and Mr. Bucior has been promoted to Superintendent. This has required hiring a new Operator Trainee, Mr. James Cornett, who joined us this past month.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Burris

Mayor Burris thanked the organizers of the peaceful protest held at the Governmental Center last week. We all agree that the means of death of Mr. George Floyd was deplorable and unacceptable and he thanked the Sheriff, his staff and all involved in monitoring and controlling the protest. The Sheriff met with the organizers beforehand and they came to an agreement of time and location of both protests and all parties were satisfied with the outcome. Thanks also to Governor Hogan on Maryland moving forward on re-opening.

Events – Tyler Alt

Councilmember Alt reported that there was great response to the launch of the Leonardtown Virtual Programming Platform, Leonardtown Arts & Entertainment Online (A&E Online). The VisitLeonardtownMD.com website has seen a great increase in traffic since the launch of the virtual programming through the site. There have been almost 2,000 visitors to the site since it launched late in April.

The site now offers a wide variety of online classes from cooking and fitness to learning something new like how to knit or dance Salsa through the Learn & Share series of the site. The instructional videos in the series have been taught by local teachers/instructors, businesses and organizations, and now include a series of tutorials from local St. Mary's College students. The informative videos are the result of a video project the students were assigned by their teacher, Professor of Art Carrie Patterson (a local artist and owner of Carrie Patterson Art Studio in Leonardtown). The instructional videos are on a variety of subjects such as making paper and watercolor paints from objects found in and outside your home, making fresh guacamole, creating a turmeric face mask, basketball techniques and more.

Additionally, a variety of original online shows have premiered through the site and the Town's Facebook page to astounding success such as the Leonardtown Virtual Artist Showcase and the Robbie and Donovan Friday Night Party – two new music variety shows featuring local Southern Maryland artists like Robbie Boothe, Donovan Farrell, Wes Ryce, Latrice Carr, Phillip Michael Parsons and more, and Discovering Leonardtown, a new online series that highlights the Town's landmarks, history, businesses, arts & entertainment, its people, and more. Thousands have viewed the shows, and the Town's YouTube page has seen an increase in subscribers.

At this time, we are continuing our plans for the 18th Annual Beach Party event for Saturday, August 8th from 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Mayor Burris remarked that we have been receiving many calls from our vendors and we will be looking at all the variables and make a final decision on the Annual Beach Party, doing what is best for the community.

Community Development and Planning – Nick Colvin

Councilmember Colvin reported that there were about six U & O permits issued last month along with nineteen other building permits which is a good sign. Meadows at Town Run continues with construction. The Leonardtown Library and Garvey Center has been issued a temporary U & O. It looks great from the outside and we are all anxious for the opening.

Utilities – Christy Hollander

Councilmember Hollander reported that the Route 5 water main relocation continues and looks like a lot of progress has been made. Thank you to the staff for working with the businesses and obtaining the barriers for the outdoor seating. It is the best we can do, looks great and people seem to be enjoying the outdoor street seating. It is great to see people coming back into Town. My family has happily ordered carryout quite a few times from the various restaurants and we too are anxious to join our community in Town.

SMMA Update – Jay Mattingly

Councilmember Mattingly reported that on May 13, 2020 he attended a SMMA virtual meeting. The Mayor (Andrew) of Port Tobacco was elected President, Mayor Jeanine James of LaPlata as Vice President and Matt Simpson as Secretary. He continues to serve as District Vice President for another term. MML has moved the Summer Conference to a virtual format which will be held June 29th and 30th.

My wife Katie and I participated in helping to put up the high school graduation banners and they look great. Lots of congratulations to the kids and the parents who took lots of photos posing with the banners.

It was exciting to see the plane parade flyover for the all the healthcare workers.

Sending out my thank you to Sheriff Tim Cameron, the deputies and the entire State Police as they worked together with the organizers/protestors to support and provide a peaceful protest.

Business Development/Retention – Mary Maday Slade

Councilmember Slade stated she appreciates everyone's enjoying the extended outdoor seating. She also wanted to thank everyone for helping put up the banners and so excited to see the community enjoying them. She expressed her hope that this could be done every year for the graduates. She hopes we could add this project to the budget. It was great to see so many getting their picture taken underneath their particular banner and posting on Facebook.

Ms. McKay responded that that is certainly a possibility. We had support from some very significant sponsors and we may be able to reach out to them again next year.

She remarked that she spent the weekend walking her dog around downtown and saw people practicing safety precautions but also enjoying the outdoors, sitting in the Adirondack chairs on the square, sipping wine and just enjoying the downtown vibe. It was wonderful to see.

Mayor Burris entertained a motion to adjourn.

Councilmember Mattingly moved to close the regular meeting at 4.36 p.m.; seconded by Councilmember Slade, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Teri P. Dimsey

Approved:

Daniel W. Burris, Mayor

Tyler Alt, Councilmember

Nick Colvin, Councilmember

Christy Hollander, Councilmember

J. Maguire Mattingly IV, Councilmember

Mary Maday Slade, Councilmember