

MINUTES  
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING  
March 23, 2016

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, March 23, 2016, at 7:30 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Gary Baker, Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Russell Winch, and Debbie Zimmerman, Town Manager Gloria Long Rollins, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Public Works Director Bob DePaola, 12 citizens, and Mike Persley from Frederick News-Post. Commissioner Donald Schildt was absent.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and moments of silence to honor those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack in Brussels. A prayer by Burgess Chad Weddle thanked God for his presence in our lives and asked that he keep us mindful in our ever-changing world.

1. MINUTES

*Commissioner Debbie Zimmerman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Russell Winch, to approve both the Town meeting minutes and the Closed Legal/Personnel meeting minutes of March 9, 2016. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

2. PRESENTATION BY WALKERSVILLE SOUTHERN RAILROAD – PAUL KOVALCIK AND WAYNE KIRCHOF

Mr. Wayne Kirchof and Mr. Paul Kovalcik, board members of the Walkersville Southern Railroad, addressed the Commissioners. Mr. Kirchof noted that the letter that the Frederick/PA Line Museum requested the Town send to Governor Hogan would not be necessary. He stated that the railroad has never received a direct subsidy from the State of Maryland, that the State/Federal government has spent money improving the crossings and maintenance of the bridges, and that WSRR is working with the State to extend the lease. At this time there has been no determination of a sale of the railroad and he feels there is no basis for the perception of a threat to the line.

Mr. Paul Kovalcik, using the opportunity to share the story and good things about the railroad, reported that they have grown in revenue and ridership exponentially, selling over 15,000 tickets last year. They've added dinner trains, a steam engine ride, and special events and bus charters that are sold out months in advance. They've been in existence for 25 years with a 20 year partnership with the Chesapeake Railway Association (CRA), a non-profit group with a model utilized from other tourist railroads. Frederick City Transportation department is also involved with enhancing the tourism and access to the line through the right of way along the line. They've had a strong growth element in their volunteers, with 55 participating in the annual volunteer training. Volunteers are required to attend 8 hours of training. Future participation potential is fantastic. Their 25 year business plan has proven to be a sustainable and viable plan to ensure the life of the tourist railroad. They operate with no debt, which is a sound business practice. The letter requested at the last meeting is not necessary. The Strategic Goods Movement plan is the State's plan to protect the infrastructure of the main corridors through the State. Walkersville's line has not been utilized to haul freight for 25 years. It would be disingenuous to solicit the Governor to add this as a strategic route that needs protection. Walkersville Southern Railroad is here and successful as a tourist rail line.

Mr. Kirchof noted that there has been some interest in adding a freight line to support the new development in the Rotorex property, but it is not economically feasible at this time. The current lease expires in 2018 and they are currently negotiating the renewal with the MTA. Their next meeting is in May and there may be an update on the status at that time and there are a lot of details to work out with the State. Commissioner Winch noted the railroad is the Town's largest tourist attraction and suggested that they attend a town meeting in May. Commissioners were in agreement that the railroad has their support and there is nothing further to do at this point.

3. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND FEBRUARY 2016 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

*Commissioner Russell Winch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker, to approve the February 2016 financial statements and pay the attached bills. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

#### 4. COMMISSIONERS' CONCERNS

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis reported that she attended a Gladetowne HOA meeting.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis also reported that she had attended the County Council budget meeting and spoke in support of the Walkersville Library remaining in the capital projects budget. She will also attend the next budget meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Burgess Weddle will write a letter in support of the library dedicated funds and the \$1M grant received by the County.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis will be attending a Green Team meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Russell Winch asked when the crack sealing will be done throughout the Town. Mr. DePaola reported that the Town has purchased a new crack sealing machine and the scheduling is in the works now.

Commissioner Debbie Zimmerman announced that Opening Day at Heritage Farm Park is Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Rollins reported that the cost of meals being catered to the Senior Citizens will increase by \$1, to \$6 per meal beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>. *Commissioner Russell Winch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Debbie Zimmerman, for the Town to cover the increase in the cost of Senior Citizen meals, a subsidy of \$2 per meal. The motion passed by a vote 4-0.*

#### 5. CITIZENS' QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Bob Sussman asked when the County Council budget meeting will be held – April 16<sup>th</sup>.

Burgess Chad Weddle reviewed the announcements printed on the bottom of the agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Long Rollins  
Town Manager