

**MINUTES  
WORKSHOP  
MARCH 18, 2024  
TOWN OFFICE – 300A SOUTH SETON AVENUE**

**Present:** *Elected Officials* - Mayor Frank Davis; Commissioners: Amy Boehman-Pollitt, President; Jim Hoover, Vice President; Valerie Turnquist, Treasurer, Timothy O'Donnell; and Clifford Sweeney. *Staff Present* - Cathy Willets, Town Manager; Kim Mondshour, Town Accountant; Sabrina King, Town Clerk; Jessica Housaman Recorder; Jared Brantner, Superintendent of Water and Sewer; and Jimmy Click, Director of Public Works.

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**I. Call to Order**

A quorum being present, Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt, President of the Board of Commissioners, called the March 18, 2024 Town meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Upcoming meetings were announced.

**Commissioner Comments:**

- Commissioner O'Donnell: No comment.
- Commissioner Turnquist: No comment.
- Commissioner Sweeney: No comment.
- Commissioner Hoover: No comment.
- Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt: No comment.

**Mayor's Comments:** No comment.

Commissioner O'Donnell arrived at 7:03 PM

**II. Agenda Items**

Agenda #1 – Discussion and review of water rates. Mayor Davis presented the agenda item through a power point (exhibit attached). The Mayor informed the Board that staff did try to address all the questions that were asked and understands this will be a continued discussion. He added if there are more questions after tonight, that staff will get those answers. Mayor Davis also thanked staff for all the time spent researching the answers and turned to the Council for any questions.

The Council asked questions related to the water fund projects; clarification on what is defined as “priority funding area”; why does the Town supply water outside Town boundaries; and asked about the sewer plant and the water compacity. It was also asked how the smart manhole covers are and how have they benefited the Town?

Mayor Davis added that the power point related to the water fund projects were not in any order, just a list of projects. Ms. Willets noted “priority funding area” typically refers to within Town limits and certain funding agencies are only limited to funding in the Town limits. Jared Brantner, Superintendent of the Water and Sewer Department, explained in depth of the water compacity and how the Sewer Plant treats “wild water”. He noted how the machines work while processing large amounts of water that comes through during a heavy period of rain. He explained in further detail why this helps the collection system and noted that I&I is what causes the problems due to the rain getting into the system. Mr. Brantner explained that the Town purchased (4) four smart manhole covers and noted that they have them placed in strategic locations and briefly noted how they have benefited with preventing sewer overflows.

Other items discussed related to purchases and projects using ARPA money and the upcoming budget FY25. The Board asked if the new Stormwater Management Utility fee money would be designated to cover any smart manhole covers.

Staff explained the Stormwater Management fee will only go towards MS4 related projects and briefly noted the upcoming project that Ms. Ahsan, Town Planner is currently working on.

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The Board asked other questions related to the project for the 16" waterline coming down the mountain; how many times staff measures well depths; tap fees in Town; who calculates the tap fees when there is new construction. The Board also asked about impact fees; 90-day reserve versus having potentially a 45-day or a 180-day reserve; is there a change in overall usage since the water rate increase; and an understanding of where the Board stands about having a water rate increase.

Staff explained that the Town already has a 10" waterline on the mountain and the Town would be adding a 16" line and once that is completed, the Town would not be using the 10" line anymore. Staff informed the Board that well depths are measured weekly, and staff referenced the power point to explain in detail how many taps there are in the Town. Staff also noted that the engineers who assist with any new development project in Town would be the ones to determine how many taps are needed.

Commissioner Turnquist explained that she is against raising water rates because Emmitsburg has approximately 56% of residents living at or below the Alice level. Commissioner Turnquist suggested the Town looks into the budget before the Board raises any water rates. She also expressed concerns about the interest income that is coming into the water and sewer fund. She continued that she is not convinced that all the interest that the Town is earning is going back into the appropriate fund.

Mayor Davis assured her and the Board he can guarantee that the money is going where it should be.

Commissioner Turnquist added that her understanding is, 50% of the interest goes to the General Fund, 25% goes to the water, and 25% goes to the sewer and believes that the numbers need to be looked at.

Commissioner Turnquist added that the percentage of salaries that are estimated to be charged for FY24 to the water and sewer fund and has already exceeded those percentages so far for FY24.

Mayor Davis explained that is not true because Town staff just had a budget review for FY24 for the last (2) two quarters and we are on target.

Commissioner Turnquist referenced a sheet that was provided during the last workshop and reiterated how the Town has exceeded what was estimated. She went on to ask the other Board members that approved the water rate increase if it was their intent to approve a 217% increase for a (1) one in a half inch meter for year (1) one. Commissioner Turnquist then referred to the ordinance that had the approved numbers and went into detail of each increase per meter. She then explained that the numbers need to be looked at carefully to see if there is any room.

Mayor Davis briefly spoke and explained that staff is looking into the numbers carefully and the Board has to take into consideration staff just showed roughly between 15 and 20 million dollars' worth of projects that have a failing infrastructure. He explained that just because there is money showing in a fund does not mean it will help touch any of those projects and potentially (1) one project can wipe the Town out. Mayor Davis also noted that he is dead set against doing a (5) five-year 36% rate increase but can't say they are not going to do any rate increase anymore. He knows that residents are struggling but the Town and the Board are committed as a group of people to provide a service and we can't do that for free. Lastly, he reiterated that a 36% increase in the last 18 years is not a big increase and are still cheaper than other surrounding Towns.

Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt briefly acknowledged the concerns and how the Commissioners want to fully understand the numbers that they're presented so that they can make the best decision moving forward. Commissioner Boehman-Pollitt also noted that she hopes everyone can gather collectively to resolve any issues related to the water and sewer fund and knows that there will be additional questions.

Agenda #2 – Discussion and review of water capacity. The Board agreed that this item was discussed during the

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first agenda item.

**Set Agenda Items for April 1, 2024 Town Meeting**

**Administrative Business:** (1.) For consideration Proclamation declaring April 2024 Child Abuse Prevention Month. (2.) For consideration, Proclamation declaring April 20, 2024 Earth Day in the Town of Emmitsburg. (3.) For consideration, Proclamation declaring April Fair Housing Month. **Consent Items: (NONE)** **Agenda Items:** (1.) Approval of water treatment plant clarifier construction bid for consideration. (2.) Approval of bid for engineering for Emmitsburg Dam inspection as required by MDE for consideration. (3.) Approval of FY2023 budget transfers for consideration. (4.) Approval of ordinance 24-01 to amend Title 10 vehicles allowing 48-hour parking on East and West Main Street for consideration. (5.) Approval of ordinance 24-02 to amend Title 10 to remove the red citation box from the square for consideration. (6.) Approval of Policy 24-01 – parking meter fees for consideration. (a.) This would increase parking meter fees to 25 cents per 30 minutes. 50 cents per hour.

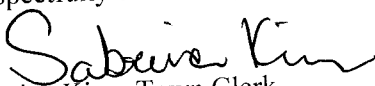
*Motion:* Commissioner O'Donnell motioned to amend the March 18, 2024 Town meeting agenda as presented; second by Commissioner Hoover. Yeas – 5; Nays – 0. The motion was adopted.

**III. Sign Approved Text Amendments and/or Resolutions**

**IV. Adjournment**

With no further business, Commissioner Hoover motioned to adjourn the March 18, 2024 Town meeting at 8:42 p.m.; second by Commissioner O'Donnell. Yeas – 5; Nays - 0. The motion was adopted.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Sabrina King, Town Clerk  
Minutes Approved On: