

Mayor & Council of Federalsburg
Regular Meeting
Monday, May 5, 2025
6:00PM

The Mayor & Council of Federalsburg held their regular meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025 at 6:00 PM, in the Mayor & Council meeting room located at Town Hall. Those in attendance were Mayor Abner, Councilmembers Hammond, Sewell, James, and Ferguson, Interim Town Manager Mercedes Moyer, Chief Gasser and members of the public.

Call to Order

Mayor Abner called the Mayor and Council workshop meeting to order at 6:10 PM. Mayor Abner welcomed all guests that were present and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Previous Month's Minutes

Councilmember James made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Ferguson and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero, approving the minutes from the April 29, 2025 Mayor and Council meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from Monday, April 28th were reviewed. Councilmember Sewell requested a correction on the 3rd line towards the end regarding her absence at the June 2nd meeting. Mayor Abner stated she would be absent from that meeting as well.

Decision: Minutes of April 28th were approved with corrections.

2. Federalsburg Better Together Presentation:

Discussion: Susan Runnels and Kat Stark introduced Federalsburg Better Together, a collective impact initiative funded by the Governor's office. The program aims to engage community members in identifying assets and creating a vision for the future. Specific focus areas include economically stable families, healthy children, and safe communities. Discussion included identifying community assets (Lions Club, historical society, library, Chambers Park, 117 Main Street).

Decisions:

- To sign up for Federalsburg Better Together announcements and communications.
- To participate in a neighborhood walk to discuss ongoing projects and envision future goals.

- To participate in asset mapping sessions to identify community assets (physical and human).

3. Ethics Committee Appointment:

Discussion: A review of the current Ethics Committee membership revealed inconsistencies in the appointment process. Concerns were raised regarding the validity of an existing member's appointment and the lack of established qualifications and term limits for committee members. The need for a clear process, including qualifications, term limits, and a potential reserve member, was highlighted.

Decisions:

- To dissolve the existing Ethics Committee.
- Councilmember James made the Motion 2nd by Councilmember Hammond to have 3 members on the Ethics Committee with 1 reserve member. All were in favor.
- Councilmember Ferguson discussed his request for appointment of the following people, Roberta Butler, Amber Korrell and Carla Thorne as Ethics Committee members with Adam Dukes as the reserve member. The Mayor & all Councilmembers liked this request. Motion was made by Councilmember James and 2nd by Councilmember Ferguson to appoint Roberta Butler, Amber Korrell and Carla Thorne as members of the Ethics Committee with Adam Dukes to serve as a reserve member. All were in favor, motion passed.
- Interim Town Manager and Town Attorney to contact to let them know of their appointment and next steps.
- To schedule a future meeting to discuss and establish qualifications, term limits, and procedures for the Ethics Committee.

4. RFP for Lawn Care Selection:

Discussion: Review of received bids for lawn care services, including price comparisons between different companies (Marshall Property Management, Hammond Lawn Care, Bentons Lawn Care, Chesapeake Turf & Pest Control Management, Travers Adventures, Jackson's Lawn Care). Concerns were raised about ensuring services are performed and payments are properly validated.

Decision: Councilmember James made the Motion to award the contract to Marshall Property Management for \$38,620, contingent upon a mutually acceptable contract that includes stipulations for damage to property, payment upon service completion, and a method for verifying completed work (e.g., receipts per property), Councilmember Sewell seconded the motion, all were in favor, Motion passed.

5. Police Department Budget Discussion:

Discussion: Concerns were raised regarding potential budget cuts to the police department and the impact on public safety. A detailed review of the police department's budget and IT services expenses followed. The cost of IT services (BDK) was considered high and a discussion occurred about finding a more cost-effective provider and combining services for different town departments to reduce expenses. Concerns were also raised about the accuracy of budget reporting in several areas. The allocation of funds for police training, including academy attendance and other training programs, was reviewed. Questions were asked regarding the uniform allowance and the replacement process for uniforms. Salary increases for police officers, addressing previous inconsistencies and aiming for fair compensation. The impact of salary increases on the overall budget, including related costs like state retirement contributions was discussed. The council expressed concern about the high percentage of the budget allocated to the police department (50%) and advocated for a reduction to make room for other crucial town needs. Council agreed to review and potentially adjust salary increases while ensuring fair compensation for officers. Further discussion is needed to reduce the overall percentage allocated to the PD budget.

Decisions:

- No formal decisions were made regarding the police department budget cuts; further discussion and potential alternative solutions are needed.
- To review IT services contracts with BDK for potential cost savings and improved service contract terms. A review of service needs and potentially exploring alternative providers was discussed.
- Further clarification and adjustments to the budget for police-related expenses will be undertaken. An examination of the current allocation of funds will be conducted to ensure appropriate accounting and allocation.

Action Items:

- Send out official notification to newly appointed Ethics Committee members. Coordinate with the Town Attorney to schedule quarterly meetings.
- Review the police department budget and IT service expenses.
- Review the uniform policy.
- Draft a contract with Marshall Property Management including stipulations for service verification and damage control.
- Draft letter to churches, fire department and other agencies not being billed to inform them that as of July 1, 2025, they will be charged for water usage

- Create an RFP for IT services encompassing all town departments, including the wastewater treatment plant and police department. The current provider, BDK, was noted, but an RFP has never been issued. A comprehensive list of current IT services required needs to be compiled.

6. Other Items:

- **Forensic Audit RFP:** The RFP for a forensic audit covering the last five years was approved.
- **Cleaning Services:** Renegotiated cleaning services have been done and the new lower cost has been reflected in the drafted budget.
- **Police Canine:** The police canine program was discontinued.

7. Public Comment:

- Sabrina Turner shared experiences of increased crime and violence in Federalsburg, emphasizing the importance of adequately funding the police department for community safety.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilmember James made a motion seconded by Councilmember Ferguson and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandy James, Council Member
Mercedes Moyer, Interim Town Manger
Sheri Hendrix, Office Administrator