

**Mayor & Council of Federalsburg
Workshop Meeting
Wednesday, February 19, 2025
6:00PM**

The Mayor & Council of Federalsburg held their monthly workshop meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 6:00 PM, in the Mayor & Council meeting room located at Town Hall. Those in attendance were Mayor Abner, Councilmembers Hammond, Sewell, and James, Interim Town Manager Mercedes Moyer, Chief Gasser, Superintendent of Water/Sewer Abid Kahn, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Hall and members of the public.

Call to Order

Mayor Abner called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Previous Month's Minutes

Minutes were not approved. The amended minutes for the February 3, 2025 will be approved at the March 3, 2025 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting.

Proclamation-March Endometriosis Awareness Month

Shannon Hannawald, a representative from Endo Warriors explained what endometriosis is, her journey battling endometriosis, and her appreciation for the continuing community support. She requested that everyone wear yellow on March 7, 2025 to represent endometriosis. She would also like anyone participating on March 7th. "Yellow Day." to take a picture of themselves or a group wearing yellow and send it to Endo Warriors so the picture can be on their Facebook Page.

Mayor Abner read and signed the Proclamation and proclaimed March as Endometriosis Awareness Month.

Supervisors Reports

- **Maintenance Supervisor, Eric Hall Reported the Following:**
 - The roads were plowed and maintained throughout the snowstorms. Mayor Abner commended the maintenance department for how well the roads were plowed and maintained throughout the snowstorms.
 - New Projects. Work on Smith and Charles Streets when the ground thaws out.
 - The Maintenance Department will be using a new pot hole material that is a tar base.

- Trucks are in need of repair because of the wear and tear from the recent snowstorms
- They will be ripping sections of road up and will be using cold patch, but it will take time.
- They have a pile of millings at the plant that will also be used to fill pot holes.
- **Superintendent of Water/Sewer, Abid Kahn Reported the Following:**
 - The Water/Sewer Department is catching up on things. Pump Station one has some issues but we repaired it and saved the town \$10,000.
 - New pumps for the Brooklyn Station should arrive tomorrow and as soon as the weather improves the Water/Sewer Department will be able to install them at the Brooklyn Station.
- **Chief of Police, Chief Gasser Reported the Following:**
 - Memorandum reports will be given to the Mayor and Council and Town Manager at a weekly rate in order everyone has a better understanding of the type of calls the Police Department deals with on a daily basis.
 - Invited the Mayor and Council an opportunity to ride with one of the Police Officers that are on duty and get a feel of what is happening in Federalsburg.
 - We will have a monthly work schedule that will be given to the Town Manager so the Mayor and Council can call the officer and get a quicker response instead of calling 911
 - Transition is going well. Our officers will be getting more training for community involvement
 - Councilmember James asked if part of that training would be dealing with crisis intervention techniques. Chief Gasser responded that we are expanding our community policing training and part of that training does include refresher courses in crisis intervention techniques.
 - Councilmember James asked if the Police Department would be doing National Night Out. Chief Gasser said that are planning for that event in August
 - Mayor Abner will be giving resources for Community Policing Grants
- **Interim Town Manager, Mercedes Moyer Reported the Following:**
 - Grants- Pump Station project is still out for bid but did receive the construction permit
 - Grants- FEMA Brick Project is currently frozen because of the Federal Government
 - Grants- Mercedes will be working with Chief Gasser to the Community Policing Grants

- Code Enforcement- Will check back with Crystal Steel
- Interim Town Manager- Staff is adjusting well with me and I have faith in our Supervisors. Promoted Sheri Hendrix to Office Administrator and commended her and Sandy Smith for their hard work in the front office.
- Interim Town Manager- Created Virtual Town Calendar for the entire Town Staff. It's working well.
 - The Mayor and Councilmembers thanked Mercedes for her hard work.

Discussion/Appointment Vacant District 2 Council Seat

Mayor Abner announced that the candidate the council voted to appoint to fill the vacant councilmember seat for District 2 declined. Another candidate was disqualified due to giving false information and not on the voter registration list. For the record, "There are two candidates left, Mr. Ian Ferguson of 203 Buena Vista Avenue, and Mr. Robert Willoughby of 208 West Central Avenue."

Councilmember Sewell stated for the record, "I think Mr. Rob Willoughby is the most qualified candidate to fill the seat."

Councilmember Hammond voiced her concerns of having a special election to appoint Mr. Willoughby on the town council. Councilmember Hammond is saddened that Councilmember Sewell wants certain things passed that she along with the Mayor will switch things around to get what they want.

Councilmember James stated, "I think we should start changing everything on the charter. I went through the charter and I found a lot of things that should be changed and I'm not talking about changing it through an amendment. I'm talking about changing it through Maryland law. As Maryland law says to change the charter. Where you are going to advertise it. You're going to let the voters know that this is what the charter is changing into. We're going to do it the right way. We are not doing it through amendments"

Councilmember Sewell stated for the record, "Please state exactly what I have done because if you can't say exactly what I have done you should not be discussing this in an open forum. You just can't say you do this and dispunge my reputation when you don't have anything to back it up." Councilmember Hammond stated, "The only thing I have to back it up is when you asked for a special election because you wanted Rob Willoughby in." Councilmember Sewell stated, "I felt that was an appropriate way to handle that. It was discussed. It did not move forward. I did not throw a hissy fit. I moved along with the rest of my council members. I wasn't an obstructionist."

After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Councilmember James, seconded by Councilmember Hammond, and unanimously approved by a vote of three to zero to appoint Mr. Ian Ferguson to the vacant council seat for District 2.

Mr. Ian Ferguson accepted the vacant council seat for District 2 and will be sworn in at the March 3, 2025 Mayor and Council meeting.

Discussion-Access to Bank Accounts

Interim Town Manager Mercedes Moyer requested administrative access to all the Town's Bank accounts and credit card accounts in order to do things like transfer funds into different accounts. I need the access to keep the business of town moving forward. It is Interim Town Manager Moyer's understanding that the Mayor and Council have to grant that access during an open meeting.

Mayor Abner read a letter from Interim Town Manager Moyer requesting administrative access to the financial accounts for the Town of Federalsburg.

After a lengthy discussion, Councilmember James made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hammond and unanimously approved by a vote of 4 to 0 giving Interim Town Manager Moyer administrative access to everything financial for the Town of Federalsburg.

Discussion-Review Town Property Lawn RFP

Mayor Abner thanked Interim Town Manager Moyer for all the information about the town properties that need to be cut and maintained.

Interim Town Manager Moyer explained that whoever the Mayor and Council approve the RFP for the lawn maintenance of town properties must have special certifications for spraying according to Mr. David Parks, a representative from the Department of Agriculture. Interim Town Manager Moyer also said she will meet with the Maintenance Supervisor, Eric Hall. to discuss him moving forward to get his certified spraying license.

The RFP contract will be advertised in the newspaper in order to get the certified lawn care company that has the special certifications from the Department of Agriculture.

Discussion-Community Garden, Heather Harding

Heather Harding, Greenridge Road expressed interest in creating a community garden with residents and other community organizations in Federalsburg. Heather Harding

stated, "I am coming before the Mayor and Council of Federalsburg to see if they would be interested in supporting a community garden."

After a lengthy discussion, the Mayor and Council gave their permission for Heather Harding to start a community garden. Heather will work on next steps with the Interim Town Manager and will put out information to the community to draw up interest.

Public Comment

Ms. Roberta Butler of Brooklyn Avenue reported that "I was listening to you all arguing about the lawsuit. Mayor Abner and Councilmember Sewell stop saying that you all gave us the opportunity to change the redistricting. You didn't and that is why you got sued." Ms. Butler also asked "How much debt is Federalsburg in?" "Stop saying the lawsuit caused the debt."

Mayor & Council Action Items

- **Councilmember James reported the following:**
 1. Requested an update from Interim Town Manager Moyer about the town's website. Interim Town Manager Moyer responded that she wasn't sure what services Revize is capable of doing for the Town's website and the cost involved in improving the website. She is requesting the Mayor and Council if she can do an RFP to hire a middle person to design the website. The staff at the Town Hall are not experienced in web designing. Councilmember James would like Interim Town Manager Moyer to reach out to CCTC to see if they have interns that could offer their services for web designing. Councilmember James would like an email sent with an estimated date or some sort of timeline of when the process of updating the website will take place. Mayor Abner would like to have Revize do a presentation on Zoom of what we have and maybe we can question them and get clarification of what Revize can do or is it something they can show us to do. Interim Town Manager Moyer stated that she is not capable of website design and recommends a third party or RFP be created to find someone to help.
 2. Announced, "The Town of Federalsburg is looking for candidates for our Ethics Committee. Please reach out to Mercedes if you are interested for more information."
 3. Questioned, "What does the town pay monthly for the service of Debt Books?" Interim Town Manager Moyer said "I am not sure and I think it is paid yearly. By looking at Quickbooks we haven't paid them this year." Councilmember James asked if this service was suspended. Interim Town

Manager Moyer said “I am not sure.” Mayor Abner said, If you were able to log in then we did pay. It may just be that we have a three year contract.”

4. Questioned- “With the other debts, do we have totals that are not in debt books?” Interim Town Manager Moyer replied, “Yes.” Councilmember James would like to see clearly what our debt actually is in preparation for this year's budget. Interim Town Manager Moyer will cut expenses and will increase the income coming in and she will present that during the March 17, 2025 budget meeting
 5. Asked, “Why are we afraid to ask businesses to donate money to the town to maybe pave a road?” Councilmember James made a motion, seconded by Hammond and unanimously passed by a vote of four to zero to have the Town Attorney Lyndsay Ryan draft a letter on the behalf of the town, to solicit the businesses to donate money to adopt a town road.
 6. Councilmember James stated, “I would like the Mayor and Council to reconsider the vacancy part of the charter and the reason for me to say that is because I feel as though it will put us, the town as a whole, back in the same situation that we were in with the lawsuit. I feel like it will create an unjust voting system for those in Jurisdiction 2. Our Town Attorney said in the last meeting that she didn't see that the charter for vacancies needed to be changed at all. I don't understand what the push is and why the push is so hard for there to be an election and I know the Mayor said she had received emails from concerned citizens that I never saw. It was never forwarded to the entire Council. I champion for the charter as far as vacancies go in the election to stay the same. There is nothing wrong with it and the only reason I would see that there is a problem with it is because in that specific situation the Mayor does not have a vote. Other than that, what is wrong with it? I champion you as council members and colleagues to not mess with the vacancy portion of the charter and to leave it like it is because again it creates the same scenario just within that specific district that will potentially cause another lawsuit for the council.”
- **Councilmember Sewell reported the following:**
 - Judy Center Partners with us. Part of the responsibility of being partners is to attend the CLAC monthly meetings. “ I have attended and it would be helpful if other members on the council attend as well.” The next meeting is March 3, 2025.
 - Chamber of Commerce Legislative wrapup will take place April 14, 2025, at the Federalsburg Lions Club building, from 8am to 10am.

- **Councilmember Hammond reported the following:**
 - Nothing at this time.

- **Mayor Abner Reported the Following:**
 - Nothing at this time

Next Steps

- Ralph Broom, from Tuckahoe Habitat, followed up and said Tuckahoe Habitat will pay the fees for title search of the three lots in Brooklyn . Interim Town Manager Moyer asked Mr. Broom if they will be cleaning the lots, but has not received an answer to that question.
- Sent Lead Line informational email to the Mayor and Council
- Two budgets, the current and the future budget will be presented at the March 17th Mayor and Council Workshop.
- Will write a letter to Food Lion about the speed bumps
- Will be contacting Delmarva Power about the light that needs to be fixed
- Modular homes in the town of Federalsburg is not a violation of the town's ordinance

Request for Closed Session to Discuss Personnel Matters

Cancelled

Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilmember James made a motion seconded by Councilmember Sewell and unanimously passed by a vote of four to zero to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk