

**Mayor & Council of Federalsburg
Workshop Meeting
Monday, August 18, 2025
6:00PM**

The Mayor & Council of Federalsburg held their workshop meeting on Monday, August 18, 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, and members of the public.

Call to Order

Mayor Abner called the Mayor and Council workshop meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Mayor Abner welcomed all guests that were present and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Previous Month's Minutes

Unavailable

Discussion- American Water presentation by JW Walker

American Water representatives Rachel Lancaster and JW Walker presented a potential water system partnership. American water has experience in operating water systems in 14 states, including recent acquisitions in Maryland, and emphasized their commitment to community impact through investments and employee retention. The company promised to provide enhanced safety culture, capital investments, and water quality improvements if selected to operate Federalsburg's water system, while ensuring employees would transition to American Water with improved benefits and opportunities.

The meeting focused on exploring the potential sale of Federalsburg's water and wastewater system to American Water. The discussion outlined the process, benefits, and considerations of such a sale, the financial benefits, debt clearance, and potential rate changes. Council members raised concerns about water rates, environmental compliance, and protection for the residents. Council expressed interest in further discussions and requested additional information, including rate comparisons and historical trends.

Discussion-Budget Modification

Councilmember James discussed modifications to the wastewater treatment plant budget to address the deficit. She presented findings of two inflated line items in maintenance and emergency repairs. Historical spending patterns can determine that these items can be reduced. Councilmember James proposed reducing both line items by \$50,000.00. James found other questionable items such as a \$35,000.00 grant with

no record, retirement loan expenses, and truck maintenance costs. Councilmember Ferguson provided information on the needs for supplies, chemicals, and explaining their daily usage and costs. He believes the employees have a good handle on what their inventory and testing supplies are. Council plans to revisit discussion at the next meeting.

Discussion-County Ballot Box

Allison Murphy, from the State Board of Elections reached out to Councilmember James, to submit a request for the ballot box to be placed in the Federalsburg Municipal parking lot. Councilmember James explained the dropbox would be delivered 45 days before each election day and picked up the day after each election. The primary election is held on June 23rd, 2026 and the general election is November 3rd, 2026. Mayor Abner stated that the dropbox has been in that location for previous elections. Councilmember James made a motion to allow the ballot dropbox placement at the Federalsburg Municipal parking lot, seconded by Councilmember Ferguson, and unanimously passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Discussion-Public Works and Water Treatment Plant Uniform Policy

Councilmember Sewell explained there is currently no uniform policy despite the budget having allocations for uniforms of \$4000.00 for Public Works and \$5000.00 for Wastewater. Councilmember Ferguson suggested that a shoe allowance be put into place. Councilmember James suggests implementing a per-employee allowance and returning all costly items if an employee leaves. Councilmember Sewell will research what other towns do for uniform policies and Council will work on developing a formal uniform policy.

Public Comment

- Mr. Thomas at 319 South University Road
 - Questioned the County Police Office taking over Federalsburg Police Station. Mayor Abner responded that the Council is working on a MOU, but there would be a public meeting to discuss the MOU with residents.
 - Concerned about American Water taking over the wastewater treatment plant. Councilmember James responded that no decisions have been made about American Water and emphasized that the council is trying to find solutions to the Town's problems.
- Julie
 - Stated that cars are not stopping when residents are in the cross walk by Carol Evans Title Company. She said that it's a state law that if cars don't stop it is a \$1500.00 fine.

- Questioned how to login to Town Hall Streams to view the meetings. Mayor Abner let her know tonight the meeting had to switch to zoom and the link was provided on Facebook due to the live presentation.
- Requested a list of all the debts over \$10,000.00 that are owed, the amount, date, purpose, and use of loans. Mayor Abner asked her to fill out the Freedom of Information Act request form and send it to her email at kmabner@federalsburg.org.
- Roberta Butler at 317 Brooklyn Avenue
 - Expressed her apologies for other residents' actions during the meeting.
- Donald Nagel-302 Vesper Avenue
 - Thanked Council for the work they put in on the water and sewer issues.
 - Advised that any lease vehicle you are responsible for maintenance. Mayor Abner stated that Enterprise lets us know when the maintenance is due but the town has to pay for the maintenance.

Mayor and Council Action Action Items

Councilmember Ferguson

- Follow up with Abid about certification requirements
- Coordinate with Robbie from Pixel Lumen about Town water tower services
- Asked for approval to have the Maryland Food Bank set up and distribute food in the Municipal Parking lot in October. Councilmember Sewell made a motion to approve the distribution of food from the Maryland Food Bank in the Municipal Parking lot, seconded by Councilmember Hammond.

Councilmember James

- Expressed frustrations with the town attorney's lack of responsiveness on various matters that leads to delays in important tasks.
- Addressed a situation involving a resident seeking to connect to the town's sewer line, where GMB's involvement and communication were questionable, and the owners already paid the Town tap in fee. The Council agreed to follow up with the County Administrator regarding the sewer connection issue.
- Work with Sheriff Baker to address the crosswalk by Carol Evans Title Company office.
- Unity Day is September 27, 2025.
- Reminder from quarterly to monthly water bills.

Councilmember Sewell

- Fence was fixed at the drainage ditch at Brooklyn that kids were previously playing near.
- Grass does need to be mowed in that area. Discussed issues with the mower that Public Works has.
- Farmers market is this Saturday August 23, at the Municipal Parking lot.

- Music on the Marshyhope is this Saturday August 23, in the afternoon.

Councilmember Hammond

- Jason McConnell approached her about a youth program. Jason was unable to make the meeting but would like to set up a time to meet with Councilmember Hammond when he has all the information together.
- Jennifer Neal from Uppershore Aging (Federalburg Senior Center), reached out to see if the town would be willing to donate snacks to the senior center.
- Updated on signs for the tractor trailer issues in town. The letter is completed, but the fine amount and letter needs to be reviewed by the Town Attorney.

Mayor Abner

- Asked for approval to work with the National Watershed Alliance to try and get cut flowers and grass planted along the Maryshope.

Next Steps

None at this time.

Closed Session

Announcement of Closed Session - The Mayor and Council of Federalburg will go into Closed Session Under the General Provisions Article, 3-305 (B) (1) to discuss a personnel matter. A motion was made by Councilmember Ferguson, seconded by Councilmember Hammond and unanimously approved by a vote of five to zero to go into closed session Under the General Provisions Article, 3-305(B) (1) to discuss a personnel matter. The closed session began at 8:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sheri Hendrix, Office Administrator