

Mayor & Council of Federalsburg
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, AUGUST 4,2025
6:00 PM

The Mayor & Council of Federalsburg held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, August 4, 2025 at 6:00 PM, in the Federalsburg Library located at 123 Morris Ave, Federalsburg, MD 21632. Those in attendance were Mayor Abner and Council members Sewell, James, Ferguson, and Hammond, Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan and members of the public were also present in the meeting room, as well as on Zoom.

Call to Order

Councilmember James called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed all guests that were present.

Approval of the Previous Month's Minutes

Councilmember Ferguson made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hammond and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero, approving the minutes from June 2, 2025, and June 18,2025, July 7, 2025, and July 21,2025 Mayor and Council Workshop meetings. Councilmember James pointed out a date error on July 21 minutes to be corrected. Town Clerk Cyrus explained no access to files for June 16,2025 minutes until allowed back in Town Hall. Council member James made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Ferguson and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero, approving the minutes from the June 2, 2025, and June 18,2025, July 7, 2025, and July 21,2025 Mayor and Council Meetings and Workshop Meetings with the correction of the date for the minutes of July 21,2025 .

Town Treasurer Financial Update

Jamie Washington provided the current financial status for the Town of Federalsburg. Provided a list of printouts of outstanding, projected revenue, projected vendor payments, and current account balance.

SERCAP EPA Technical Assistance

Josh Milner from Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP) is an organization that assists with grant and loan applications. Josh went over different services that they have helped up with in that past and what is currently available. Josh discussed EPA funding options for water and wastewater upgrades and took a wishlist for EPA technical assistance: sludge press, grit skimmer, and sprayer system projects. He also talked about USDA loans and grants. He then explained that SERCAP also provides low interest well and septic loans.

Planning and Zoning Recruit

Lywanda Johnson of Charlotte Ave has lived in Federalsburg for 25 years. She presented her reasons and qualifications for being accepted onto the Planning and Zoning committee. She wishes to use her strengths to serve and support the community as it grows and evolves. Council member James made a motion to appoint Lywanda Johnson to the Planning and Zoning Committee seconded by Councilmember Hammond and unanimously passed by a vote of five to zero to appoint Lywanda Johnson to the Planning and Zoning Committee vacancy.

Water Tower Lights

Robbie Hayes talked about the origin of his work with water tower lights. Mayor Abner asked if the lights could be controlled locally rather than remotely. Robbie confirmed that a controller is on site at the water tower; however, the cell modem is not working. Robbie also explained that they have not received payment from the town since 2023 but they have wiped the slate clean. The annual bill is \$1800 for the cloud subscription so that it can be controlled and updated remotely. Explained there is a difference in cost to maintaining the lights in person than remotely. Offered to walk someone locally through resetting the system to attempt to make it fully operational again. Mayor Abner stated will coordinate for access and reboot the system with Robbie's help.

Nuisance Property Issues

Town Attorney, Lyndsey Ryan, discussed solutions for property nuisance and code violations without a Code Enforcement Officer in place. Ms. Ryan discussed creating templates for routine issues such as: rubbish in front yards and on porches, grass, siding, etc. Once a week town staff can ride through and look at reported properties and there will be a letter for typical issues. The staff will need to contact the town attorney for unusual property code issues. Ms. Ryan then went over the procedure for code violation enforcement.

Truck Routing Letter

Town Attorney, Lyndsey Ryan and the Mayor and Council discussed solutions to the ongoing problem with large trucks driving through town rather than the designated truck routes causing damage. A letter has previously been sent to trucking companies to educate these companies where trucks can and cannot drive; however, it has not deterred them from driving through town. Council member Ferguson inquired about raising the fines and fining the companies for their drivers violating this ordinance. Ms. Ryan stated the ordinance would have to be changed to raise the fine and to make the trucking companies responsible for their drivers. Council member James suggested that the police patrol more often to enforce this ordinance. She also mentioned ordering more road signs to ensure clearly posted on town roads.

Update on Federalsburg Volunteer Fire Department

Councilmember James stated that she and Mayor Abner sat down with members of the Volunteer Fire Department. They came to an agreement and they will be metering the department's water but will not be charging them for water. It was disclosed that the town already has some meters in inventory and will utilize those rather than the expense of buying meters for the fire department.

Federalsburg Police Department Update

Council member James went over the expense of maintaining a police department and the benefits of the county absorbing the Federalsburg Police Department. Concerned citizens asked how this transition will actually save money for the town. Council member Ferguson explained that the cost of the police department through Caroline County will have an annual recurring cost will be \$787,000 with an upfront of \$75,000. Sheriff Baker of the Caroline County Sheriff's Department stated that they have done this for the town of Ridgely and saved them several hundred thousand dollars. The agreement would maintain current police staffing levels while providing officers with better pay and benefits. Sheriff Baker also stated that he would be designated as Police Chief as in other town police departments that have been taken over by the county sheriff's department.

Public Comment

- Don Nagel commended Officer McNeill for going above and beyond by assisting a woman with a walker from the store to her apartment. He then questioned if anyone on council is trained in Maryland Open Meetings Act. He questioned the Mayor and Council procedure to announce and address the closed session on 7.30.25. Ms Ryan explained that they have the closed meeting forms at Town Hall, but the minutes for the closed session for a personnel issue were not complete yet.
- A concerned citizen (woman did not give name or address) questioned the Mayor and Council statement that restitution was made for missing funds, because it was also stated that the amount of missing funds was unknown. Council member James explained that although there was record that the person repaid the majority to the town, the Mayor and Council were advised by the town attorney to go back 5 years per the original complaint. Until the forensic audit is completed we will not know the exact amount of funds missing. The woman also expressed concerns with getting no answer at town hall. Council member James advised that you can put your payments in the drop box at Town Hall and Town Hall staff have been temporarily located at Union United Methodist Church until Town Hall is able to reopen.
- Heather Harding invited everyone to the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Judy Center on Thursday August 7, between 5-6:30 pm.
- (Name inaudible), of River Road, requested clarification of information provided at the previous Town Hall meeting. Asked for the amount owed on the \$475,00.00 line of credit. Mayor Abner advised the amount owed on that line of credit is \$313,181.00. The gentlemen then asked for confirmation that the 2025-26 budget that was passed was not

balanced. Council member James explained that there was only one part of the budget that was not balanced. Two line items in the water treatment plant budget were inflated to make the budget not balance. The Mayor and Council will be working on correcting the budget next month.

- Stacey Whitaker of Vesper Ave requested assistance in obtaining documentation to determine where the water and sewer lines are located going into her house. They have been digging under the advice of public works and have not found them. Lyndsey Ryan advised that she can check the Smart Site Plan. Council member James confirmed that she downloaded all of the Smart Site Plan documentation. Council member Ferguson inquired if she had contacted someone with a camera to check her lines. She confirmed that someone came out the next day and she hasn't had a back up since; however, they need to find so they can move the clean out to prevent further problems.
- Barton Johnson, of 106 Charlotte Ave, Federalsburg, is a Maryland licensed realtor. He inquired as to the steps to acquire a building for 220 and 222 Denton Rd, Federalsburg. Council member James and Mayor Abner explained that the former interim town manager was the person that issued permits. They will go through her files and get back to Mr. Haro. Mr Johnson then inquired about the status of the forensic audit. Mayor Abner explained that it has not started yet because they have not chosen a firm to execute the audit. When Mr. Johnson asked why a firm has not been chosen, Mayor Abner explained that it is a project that will cost at least \$50,000.
- A concerned citizen (woman did not provide name or address) inquired about what phone extension to call for permits. She is looking to get a permit for window installation and she has not received a call back. Council member James advised that she has transferred the phones to the emergency cell phone. As of August 5 you should be able to reach someone from Town Hall. The woman explained that she left messages on extension 105 for permits.
- Don Nagel inquired about the status of the Town Hall mold issue. Council member James advised that Town Hall was tested for mold and asbestos. They found toxic black mold, but no asbestos. The mold had spread farther than the upstairs area. During an insurance walk through they found areas where water is coming through the building. Structural problems must be fixed to stop further mold infestation before the mold can be effectively remediated. The same person that initially tested came back to test all of the downstairs area. If the testing comes back free of mold they will seal off the upstairs, thoroughly clean that area, and reopen the downstairs area of Town Hall. Then they will look into fixing the structure so that mold can be removed.
Mr Nagel then asked for the status of the Town Manager. Council member James explained that the new Town Manager wanted to quit on the second day, but she was convinced to stay. Then she had a family emergency that caused her to take some time away. During this time they had a closed session with her on 7/30/25. She has agreed to work on a contractual basis, because she does not have the time to devote the full time hours that are needed. The Mayor and Council disclosed their plan to cover all departments in the interim without a Town Manager.

Mayor & Council Action Items:

Councilmember Ferguson: Reported the following

- Will get the site map for Stacey Whitaker,
- Work on water tower light programming with Mayor Abner and Robbie
- Work on the wastewater treatment plant items needed

Councilmember James: reported the following

- Proposed further employee development and training by donating MML money to office staff to attend.
- Addressed collecting on unpaid loans from town to local businesses.
- Asked Attorney Ryan about the status of the Ethics Committee She advised that they have inquired with other jurisdictions regarding complaint procedures and have chosen a model to adapt to Federalsburg. Will be presenting a draft for review and adoption within 30 days.
- GMB is the firm hired for the pumpstation project. She would like to set up a way to meet with them regarding the need to stay within the allotted budget for the project.
- The Town Of Federalsburg will transition from quarterly water bills to monthly billing as of the November 15th billing. Additional reminders will be issued.
- Brought up the need for project management
- Tuesday August 5 from 5-8pm is the community policing event National Night Out in Federalsburg with free food and activities for everyone.

Councilmember Sewell: reported the following:

- Commended the entire Town of Federalsburg staff for their commitment during the past few months.
- Added that there are approximately 15 vendors scheduled to be at the National Night out on August 5

Councilmember Hammond: reported the following

- Thanked everyone that came to the meeting and encouraged everyone to continue to stay engaged.

Mayor Abner: reported the following

- Thanked the town staff for their hard work
- Commended Parks and Rec for a very successful farmer's market and gave a reminder that they will have 2 more this year on the fourth Saturday of the month

Adjournment:

Councilmember James made a motion seconded by Councilmember Ferguson and unanimously passed by a vote of 5 to 0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM for a closed session regarding a personnel issue.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Cyrus, Town Clerk