

# Town of Chesapeake City

## Town Council Meeting Minutes

*Monday, December 9, 2024*

Present: Mayor Rich Taylor, Sarah Ford-Ferrara, Frank Vari, Lee Adams, Hunter Dann, Brian Hunsberger (staff), Rob Bernstine (staff), Tom Yeager (attorney)

Absent: Ed O'Hara, Tonya Lockwood (staff)

Mayor Rich Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

### Approval of Minutes:

*November 12, 2024, Meeting*

**Motion:** Lee Adams made a motion, seconded by Hunter Dann to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2024, Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

*November 25, 2024, Workshop/Special Session*

**Motion:** Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve the minutes of November 25, 2024, Workshop/Special Session. All in favor, motion carried.

### Council Reports:

Lee Adams

Water and Sewer- The WWTP is nearing completion, there are a few punch list items that are being worked on. The as-built drawings have been submitted and we are hoping to close out the project early in the new year. Items still not working correctly could be considered warranty items. Lee read the WWTP flows for last month from the County Report (distributed). We have completed the Sensa-Phone upgrades at Bank St, the VFW, and the Bo Manor Pump Stations. A service lateral on the Town's side was cleared of roots at 100 Biddle St. The Lead & Copper Rul Revisions (LCRR) notices were sent, and we have started to collect data. Rob has a meeting scheduled with MDE for funding this ongoing project. We capped the main at the old north water plant for a construction project.

Planning Commission- The Planning Commission did not meet in December due to a lack of Action Items. The Zoning Administrator, Rob Bernstine, approved 1 application this month for a fence on Cecil Street.

Hunter Dann

Public Safety- The Public Safety Committee did not meet in November, as the meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be held in early 2026. We did increase the police hours for the boat parade, and we had no real issues in town. The owner of the Anchorage has called the Town Hall multiple times to ask what we can do to monitor illegal parking in their private lot. The town can't enforce parking issues on private property, so the owner will need to take care of calling a tow truck. There were a approximately 6 car break-ins over the Thanksgiving holiday. The police have video that is useful in finding the assailant(s), and a screwdriver, which may assist also. Trooper Kim is also continuing to work on the registration renewal consideration for our outstanding parking tickets.

Sarah Ford-Ferrara

Historic District Commission- The Historic District Commission did not meet in November due to a lack of Action Items.

Docks- The north dock has been moved to winter storage and the south docks' water lines have been winterized.

Ed O'Hara

Economic Development and Tourism- (In Ed's absence): The Lighted Boat Parade was largely successful! This weekend we have the Poplar Hall Parade of Horses, Poplar Hall Christmas Market, and Chesapeake City Candlelight House Tour. Next weekend will be the NEW Holiday Variety Show, also put on by Poplar Hall.

Frank Vari

Public Works- The last day for yard waste pick-up will be Tuesday, December 10, 2024, and will resume on the first Tuesday of March 2025. January and February will be Christmas Trees only. Our recycling numbers are great thus far and we are on track to be the top recycling town again! We continue to use the left-over millings to fill potholes in the alleys throughout Town. The bathrooms at Helen Titter Park have been winterized. We are aware of the waste management complaints made over the last week or two. The company had a few vehicle issues and the missed items were collected.

Parks and Rec- Minutes from the Parks and Rec Meeting were distributed. The next meeting will be held on February 16, 2025. They have completed the winter flower displays, and the town continues to look fabulous!! There are 51 sponsors and 35 participants for the New Years Day 5k.

Rob Bernstine, Town Manager

The Town Manager's Report was distributed to Council.

Brian Hunsberger, Treasurer

The Monthly Financial Reports were distributed and the account balances as of today were read.

Mayor Rich Taylor

Thank you to Councilperson Dann for his hard work on Thanksgiving evening! Thanks for all the hard work on street sweeping lately. Jeff and crew have the Town looking great!

Action Items:

*Event Application – Sip and Stroll*

The yearly event is held along Bohemia Ave where guests have access to tastings of varied spirits, beer, cider, and food.

**Motion:** Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve the Event Application for the Sip and Stroll. All in favor, motion carried.

*Resolution 2024-010 – Sip and Stroll Alcohol*

See description from Event Application – Sip and Stroll.

**Motion:** Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve Resolution 2024-010 – Sip and Stroll Alcohol. All in favor, motion carried.

*Resolution 2024-009 – Adopting the 2024 Comprehensive Plan*

A joint Public Hearing was held for the Draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, to obtain input from the public. A Draft of the Comprehensive Plan was sent to the State and other local agencies for review on August 19, 2024. Notice for the Public Hearing was placed in the Cecil Daily Newspaper on October 9, 2024, and notice was given at Town Hall, on the Website, and on Facebook on October 3, 2024. No comments were submitted prior to the start of the meeting. Jamie Kendrick from Woodvalley Strategies spoke and explained the reasoning/requirements for a Comprehensive Plan and answered questions from the audience. A copy of minutes from the Public Hearing was distributed to the Council for review at the meeting held on November 12, 2024. Following the Council Meeting on November 12, 2024, a few minor typographical errors have been made. Following the Council Workshop/Special Session on November 25, 2024, a few additional requested changes were made, specifically the wording on the potential for the former Chesapeake City Elementary School property.

**Motion:** Lee Adams made a motion, seconded by Frank Vari to approve Resolution 2024-009 – Adopting the 2024 Chesapeake City Comprehensive Plan. All in favor, motion carried.

*Sidewalk Estimate*

Estimate to fix the brick sidewalk leading to the emergency exit in the Town Hall Meeting Room and also to fix the brick sidewalk near the entrance to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Overlook on the Promenade. Estimate total for both is \$4,000.00.

**Motion:** Hunter Dann made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve the estimate from Hunters Concrete for \$4,000.00. All in favor, motion carried.

Discussion Items:

*Former Elementary School Property*

The new Cecil County Administration has stated that they intend to convey the property to the Town in the near future. They need us to provide something in writing stating the town's interest in obtaining the property. The town did write a letter expressing interest last April, so we can reference that in our new writings. There are large costs associated with taking the property, but also for not. By accepting the property, we control our destiny rather than the County. It has been estimated at \$8,000.00 per month for the upkeep of the building. We need to discuss what we would like to see at that property, which is shaping the future of the town.

Rich and Rob will draft a letter to the new Administration and will get it to them ASAP. Tom suggests the town request the title work to be done by the County and that we would receive the property "free and clear".

**Motion:** Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve Rich Taylor and Rob Bernstine the authority to draft a letter to Cecil County expressing the Town's interest in obtaining the Former Chesapeake City Elementary School Property. All in favor, motion carried.

Public Comment:

Lilly Howard from the Cecil Whig was in attendance and asked a few clarifying questions.

Council Comments:

Tom: He will attend Cecil Night in Annapolis on January 9, 2025, if others from the Town would like to attend.

Sarah: Thanks to Shawn Burk for the organization of the Boat Parade!

All: Merry Christmas!

Brian: Explained the Snowman Sprint, which will be done in conjunction with the Winter Nights, Cecil Lights- Snow Much Fun Event!

Hunter: Schellville is a fantastic display of a mini town all decorated with Holiday Lights. There is a train, an ice rink, it's incredible! You should give it a visit if you are able.

Adjourn:

**Motion:** Sarah Ford-Ferrara made a motion, seconded by Hunter Dann to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. All in favor, motion carried.

*\*An audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Tonya Lockwood

Richard L. Taylor, III, Mayor