

**TOWN OF INDIAN HEAD
TOWN MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 3, 2024
GoToMeeting**

Mayor Paulin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Roll Call

Brandon Paulin, Mayor
Ron Sitoula, Vice Mayor
Cassandra Grumbine, Councilwoman

Attended By

Ryan Hicks, Town Manager
Andrea Brady, Town Clerk
Ginger Foster, Finance Officer

NUMBER OF CITIZENS AND GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE: 7

Minutes: May 6 Town meeting minutes, May 23 FY25 budget hearing, and May 29 work session minutes. Vice Mayor Sitoula made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Councilwoman Grumbine seconds the motion. The minutes were approved as presented by voice vote: 3-Ayes, 0-Nays.

Reports of Officers, Boards and Committees:

- A. **Permits** – The permits report for May was read. (See attached)
- B. **Finance Report** – The finance report for May was read. (See attached)
- C. **Town Manager's Report** – Boardwalk parking, professional services agreement was signed with ARRO for engineering services as it relates to the development of 24 additional parking spaces in Riverwatch. All materials for the East Poplar stormwater project have been delivered and public works is ready to go. Per the engineer, we should wait to start in the summer, so we have drier weather. We are looking to begin the project in July. The Town conducted a virtual site meeting with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) as it relates to the wastewater permit application. A draft permit will be issued. The Town still needs to coordinate sampling and investigate sources of I&I (inflow and infiltration). The Town is developing an I&I inspection RFP (request for proposal) for televising and/or smoke testing. Water allocation permit, the Town is waiting for AC Schultes to install the new well. Henderson RFP, the Town is applying for additional Boardwalk funding. Old PNC Bank building, a lease agreement with the Boys and Girls Club was signed in November. Construction is scheduled to begin soon, and a sign has been installed stating “Future Home of the Boys and Girls Club”. The Town is developing an RFP for repairs of the Mattawoman dock and will put the project out for bid. MS4 inspection, the Town performed outfall inspections last month, and letters have been sent to property owners. Paving repairs took place last month on various streets within Town.
- D. **Code Enforcement Report** – The Town issued 59 notices of violation for the month of May 2024. 36 grass and weeds violations, 12 rubbish and garbage violations, 4 property maintenance violations, 1 nuisance/noise violation and 7 inoperative/untagged vehicle

violations. The Town completed 39 rental inspections for the month of May and cleared 32 violations.

E. Planning Commission Report – The May Planning Commission meeting was canceled.

F. Bureau of Fire Prevention – No report.

G. Charles County Recreation – No report.

Briefings: None

Presentations/Recognitions: None

Resolutions: None

Ordinances: Ordinance 05-01-24 was introduced during the May 23rd FY25 budget hearing and is on this evening's agenda for adoption. The Town also held a Constant Yield Tax Rate hearing prior to this evening's meeting. Ordinance 05-01-24 is an Ordinance adopting the Town Financial Plan and Budget and setting the tax rate, schedule of fees for various permits, the major facilities fees, water, sewer, and trash removal and disposal rate for the fiscal year 2025. The property tax rate will increase by \$0.04 cents to \$0.34 per \$100 of assessed value. The Town has not increased the tax rate for over two and a half decades. Water/sewer/trash rates remain the same. Bulk trash pickups will increase from \$50 to \$75 per flatbed truckload. Mayor Paulin made a motion to adopt Ordinance 05-01-24. Councilwoman Grumbine seconds the motion. During the voice vote there were: 2 -Ayes, 0-Nays, 1 abstained. Mayor Paulin asked Town Clerk Brady to take a roll vote. Councilwoman Grumbine: Aye. Vice Mayor Sitoula: abstained. Mayor Paulin: Aye. The Ordinance was adopted by roll vote, 2 – Ayes, and 1 – abstained.

Petitions: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Miscellaneous: Mayor Paulin read the upcoming events and meetings for June.

Prior to opening the floor to public comment, Mayor Paulin gave an explanation for the tax increase for those residents who were not logged in for the Constant Yield Tax Rate hearing. The Council has seen an increase in criminal activity, especially violent crime in recent months and years (date from CityProtect.com via Charles County Sheriff's Office). Charles County Sheriff's Office is stretched thin addressing this issue county-wide which leads to response times in the Indian Head area leaving some waiting 35 – 45 minutes on average for serious incidents and over hours for minor incidents. The tax increase is to combat these issues by offering more public safety improvements such as; extra duty patrols, bolster our residential camera rebate program, and create a more permanent public safety presence in Town. The goal is to be more proactive to address public safety and reduce response waits for emergencies. Additionally, these investments will calculate against the county tax differential, which is a formula that addresses duplicate services and gives municipal residents (in this case Town of Indian Head) a credit/rebate on the county portion of their property tax bill.

Callers that had to be muted due to sound interference were told they will need to unmute themselves in order to comment during the meeting. The system will not allow us to unmute their microphones for them.

Citizen's Comments: The Lateuleres, Mattingly Avenue – They do not support the increase to the taxes and does not believe that the solutions that are being proffered are sufficient to combat what is being seen.

Laura Butrick – Meadowside Court – Ms. Butrick wanted to review several budget line items, including contracting, professional, and legal fees. Mayor Paulin and Town Manager Hicks gave a list of several contractors that work with the Town, including Southern Maryland Recycling, Outsource IT, ARRO engineering, EAST Inc. who run the wastewater treatment plant, and Planchek who does both code enforcement and permit inspections, just to name a few. Legals fees pertain to the Town's legal counsel. The Council discussed some of the work handled by these contractors. Ms. Butrick expressed concern over the phone expenses, and what she felt was a lack of enough detail on the posted budget. The Council and Town Manager went over some of the phone expense including the phones located in all Town buildings, cell phones required for certain town employees, and lines required at wells and lift stations. Ms. Butrick also inquired about the neighborhood watch expense. Mayor Paulin explained that is used for the extra duty town patrols. Ms. Butrick feels that the town budget is high. Ms. Butrick asked about the gifts and awards item. Mayor Paulin explained that is used for the annual donation to the IHVFD, and he also explained the meetings/conferences expense. Mayor Paulin offered to meet with Ms. Butrick to discuss all of her budget questions and he explained that the revenues can be seen in a different section of the budget. Mayor Paulin also encouraged everyone to attend the budget hearing in the future where the Town Manager provides a fantastic budget presentation that outlines both revenues and expenditures. The budget hearing is very educational and breaks the information down into percentages. Ms. Butrick asked for a more detailed explanation on upcoming meetings that are listed in the newsletter. Mayor Paulin encouraged both Ms. Butrick and all residents to email him with any questions they may have as it relates to the budget or other town matters. The Council has worked really hard to not have a tax increase for decades at this point, but due to inflation the Town is getting hit hard as well, and the Town has made numerous cutbacks before reaching this point.

The Lateuleres, Mattingly Avenue – Ms. Lateulere wanted to add to Ms. Butrick's comment, when talking about the increase in the cost to the Town you need to look at what needs to be reduced. While the natural solution is to tax more so we can keep doing more, maybe there are things that need to be cut. The implications to the demographics of the population need to be seriously considered, and she does not feel that it has been. Mayor Paulin explained that town staff has been greatly reduced over the last decade. The Town has made numerous cuts to try to maintain the tax rate for over two and a half decades. The Town has reached a point where it has become difficult to maintain and run essential services, and the need to combat public safety issues.

It was brought to our attention in the chat window that some callers were having trouble unmuting themselves. Those callers were asked to please hang up and dial back in and Council will wait to allow time for logging back in. If this was not an option for people, they were asked to send an email following tonight's meeting which will be shared with all members of Council and included in the record of this evening's meeting.

The Lateuleres, Mattingly Avenue – Ms. Lateulere asked Mayor Paulin about Town residents paying the same as other county areas for county taxes but have less patrolling factors. Ms. Lateulere asked how patrolling factors were determined by the county and if it is based on population density, or what the reasoning is. There was also no reduction in county taxes when they removed the dedicated community policing officer from this area. With the justification for the Town tax increase being public safety and a specific item of that being extra patrols, Ms. Lateulere asked if this is something the residents are already paying the county for, and if petitioning them to facilitate extra patrols due to the rise in crime was an option as opposed to the increase. Mayor Paulin spoke about the rise in population on the other side of the county and the Sheriff's department's efforts to bolster their efforts in that area because they have a population of around 100,000 in that area. Mayor Paulin reviewed the tax differential formula that

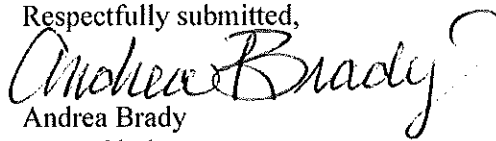
calculates what the Town spends on duplicated services. This gives a rebate on the county portion of the tax bill for those duplicated services. A large portion of the Council's effort is to dedicate our resources to those items that will give a larger tax differential to give the public safety service as well as a rebate through the tax differential. Ms. Lateulere feels it would be cheaper for the Town to hire their own police with an AM and PM rotation schedule, and provided information she was able to find online as it relates to pay rates for CCSO officers. Mayor Paulin went over the plan to formulate a service agreement with the CCSO or State Police with the funds that the tax increase will bring in and have a dedicated officer at a non-overtime rate. Ms. Lateulere spoke about the obligation at the county level to maintain the national response level to this area because the residents pay for it and feels there should be more push back on the county. Mayor Paulin spoke further on the plan to address these public safety concerns. The Council has routinely met with the CCSO, and they have gone to HQ in La Plata to discuss the public safety needs for the Town's residents. On the large scale it is difficult for the CCSO to address every community's individual problems and we had to do something to address the problems. The funds will also bolster the camera rebate program. The application for the rebate program can be found on the Town's website. Ms. Lateulere also feels the Governor's office should be involved if the county is not meeting the response times.

A message was received in the chat window that Mr. Bell and Mr. Wilkerson were not able to be heard. Another reminder was given to sign off and sign back in or send in an email with their public comment to be included in the record and it will be provided to Council. Mayor Paulin also stated that letters can be dropped off to the Town Hall or mailed to 4195 Indian Head Highway, Indian Head, MD 20640 and all comments received will be included in the record for this evening's meeting.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Paulin made a motion to adjourn the meeting with the stipulation to keep citizens comments open to allow submittal of comments after this evening's meeting. Vice Mayor Sitoula seconds the motion. Mayor Paulin adjourned the meeting at 7:45pm.

Mayor Paulin asked everyone to please submit their comments via email or letter to be included in the record and to be provided to Council for their review. He thanked everyone for their attendance and expressed being open to meetings with anyone interested in discussing things further.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Brady
Town Clerk



Town of Indian Head, Maryland

BUILDING / USE & OCCUPANCY / SIGN PERMITS
ISSUED DURING THE MONTH OF: May 2024

BUILDING PERMITS;

| <i>DATE</i> | <i>NAME</i> | <i>RESIDENTIAL</i> | <i>COMMERCIAL</i> | <i>OTHER</i> |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5/1/24 | Joanie E Raines 808 Indian Head Avenue | | | Repairs after fire damage |
| 5/2/24 | Turnout Holdings 410 Bland Drive | | | Interior renovations |
| 5/9/24 | Ryan & Stacy Bascombe 10 River Watch Lane | | | Fence |
| 5/17/24 | Fence & Deck Connection for: Courtney May 50 Caswell Drive | | | Deck |
| 5/29/24 | McGee Fence for: Jean Hobgood 601 Indian Head Avenue | | | Fence |

USE & OCCUPANCY PERMITS;

| | | | | |
|---------|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| 5/22/24 | Free State Flippers 10 Prospect Avenue | | | SFD – Interior Renovations |
|---------|---|--|--|----------------------------|

TEMPORARY USE & OCCUPANCY PERMITS;

No Temporary Use & Occupancy permits were issued during the month of May.

RIGHT OF WAY PERMITS;

No Right of Way work permits were issued during the month of May.

DEMOLITION PERMITS;

No Demolition permits were issued during the month of May.

GRADING PERMITS;

No Grading Permits were issued during the month of May.

SIGN PERMITS;

No Sign permits were issued during the month of May.

TEMPORARY SIGN PERMITS;

No Temporary Sign permits were issued during the month of May.

FINANCE REPORT 5/1/24 to 5/31/24

CASH BALANCE MAY 1, 2024 \$1,094,819.93

REVENUES

| | | |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| General | 163,828.65 | |
| Trash | 109,310.72 | |
| Water & Sewer | 196,288.05 | |
| Parks/Pavillion | 200.00 | |
| Land | | |
| Prior Year | | |
| SUB-TOTAL | | 469,627.42 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|-------------|
| Bond Draw(s) | - | |
| Boardwalk | - | |
| Money Market Interest | 8.49 | |
| SUB-TOTAL | | 8.49 |

TOTAL REVENUES 469,635.91

EXPENDITURES

| | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| General | (183,276.30) | |
| Trash | (45,575.11) | |
| Sewer/Water | (232,345.63) | |
| Parks/Pavillion | (11,111.80) | |
| SUB-TOTAL | | (472,308.84) |

| | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| OldLine & Blue/Payments Merchant Fee(s) | (531.33) | |
| Bond Pymts | - | |
| Investment Funds | - | |
| Payroll | (75,281.48) | |
| Wire Trans FICA, W/H Tax, Sales Tax | (21,500.60) | |
| SUB-TOTAL | | (97,313.41) |

TOTAL EXPENDITURES (569,622.25)

CASH BALANCE AS OF MAY 31, 2024 \$994,833.59

OLD LINE INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| PARK FUND | 15,562.66 |
| BOARDWALK | 189,976.89 |
| SEWER/WATER FUND | 46,869.47 |
| REFUSE FUND | 119,861.37 |
| HIGHWAY USER | 815,421.78 |
| TOTAL OLD LINE INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS | \$ 1,187,692.17 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| SEWER BOND (AMERICAN FUNDS) | 106,142.64 |
|-----------------------------|------------|

TOTAL INVESTMENTS \$ 1,293,834.81

Steven Alves
4 Pine St. Indian Head, MD 20640
703-914-1182

June 11, 2024

Town board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed tax hike. As a homeowner, small business owner, employee, etc. in Indian Head, Maryland I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this increase will have on our community and the local economy. The proposed tax increase will place an undue burden on families, small businesses, etc. For families: this means less disposable income for essential goods and services, potentially leading to a lower quality of life. For small businesses this could result in reduced hiring, delayed expansion plans, and in some cases, even business closures. In addition, such a tax hike may deter new businesses from establishing themselves in our area, hindering economic growth and job creation. It is crucial that we foster an environment that encourages investment and economic activity rather than stifling it with increased taxation. While I understand the need for adequate public funding and the challenges of balancing the budget, I urge you to consider alternative measures that do not disproportionately impact specific group, e.g., middle-class families, small businesses. Potential alternatives could include suggest alternatives better allocation of current resources, cost-cutting in non-essential areas, or seeking additional funding from higher-income brackets or luxury taxes. I believe that a thorough review and discussion involving community members, business leaders, and local government officials can yield more balanced solutions that will support the financial needs of our community without compromising its economic vitality. Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration. I hope you will oppose this tax hike and work towards more equitable and sustainable fiscal policies.

Thank you,
Steven Alves