

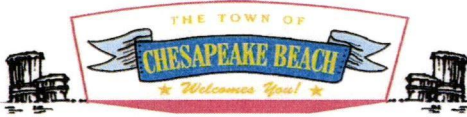
**MINUTES OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL
WORK SESSION
JANUARY 6, 2026**

- I. Bruce A. Wahl, Mayor, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were Laura Blackwelder, Daniel Duvall, Jonathan Evans, Anthony Greene, and Jamey Shuls, Council Members, Dr. Samelia Okpodu, Town Administrator, Sharon L. Humm, Town Clerk, Dan Baden, Town Treasurer, James Berry, Public Works Administrator and Josh Stinnett, WRTP Superintendent. Absent was Eric Reinhardt, Council member.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance** – The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **Informational discussion on the following:**
1. **Skip Cornbrooks** - Candidate for Legal Counsel to the Ethics Commission. The Mayor introduced Mr. Cornbrooks to the Council and asked him to provide a little background about himself. Each council member had the opportunity to ask questions. The Mayor swore in Mr. Cornbrooks as the new counsel to the Ethics Commission.
 2. **Water and Sewer Rate Discussion** – Staff provided the Council with a report that addresses questions the Council raised at its last discussion. In order to move forward with a decision on water and sewer rates, the expenses would need to be established. The Council discussed whether the UT fund should be a self-sustaining fund and what percentage of personnel costs should be included in the UT fund. Staff will move forward with the Fund as being self-sustaining, configure personnel costs to reduce operating costs, and bring back to the Council for further review to aid in the decision on the water/sewer rates.
 2. **State Highway Administration – Safe Routes to School** – Dr. Okpodu gave an overview for the Council on the current status of the project and where the project stands regarding the funding. The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project is a joint design and construction effort with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), with the Town responsible for managing the project and funding 20% of the cost. As the project is located within the State right-of-way, the Town must follow the SHA design and procurement process. The 30% design phase has been completed and approved by SHA. Following that approval, a SHA-approved RFP for the 100% design was released, but only one bid was received, and it exceeded the budget estimate, preventing SHA from awarding the contract. Subsequent review by SHA's consultant revised the design cost estimate to \$530,000, which became the basis for the current budget.

8200 BAYSIDE ROAD, P.O. BOX 400 CHESAPEAKE BEACH, MARYLAND 20732

(410) 257-2230

(301) 855-8398



During the RFP revision process, SHA advised Town to use a new expedited procurement process. Through this process, Rossi Group was selected as the design consultant. However, Rossi's proposal exceeded the budget by approximately 154%, primarily due to subcontractor costs, and SHA again could not award the contract. With SHA's approval, Messick solicited pricing for the same subcontractor scope, which came in within budget.

As a result, the Town has two options: (1) request a SHA budget amendment to award the full Rossi contract, or (2) independently contract the subcontractor services without SHA cost share. The estimated cost to the Town under Option 1 is \$164,000, while Option 2 is estimated at \$252,000. After discussion, staff will await further guidance from SHA before proceeding.

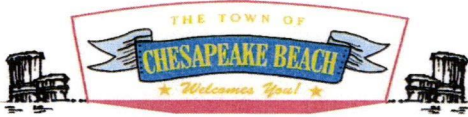
4. Disabled Fire EMS/ Law Enforcement Ordinance – Stewart Cumbo, former Chesapeake Beach Councilman, was present to speak to this proposed ordinance that would provide property tax credit relief to totally disabled law enforcement officers and first responders. Calvert County has a program in place that allows for this credit. Mr. Cumbo is asking the Council to consider adopting a provision where any disabled law enforcement officer or rescue worker who has already been approved through the County, in turn, would be automatically approved for a parallel property tax credit here in Town. The Council discussed and support this. Staff will work with Counsel to draft a proposal for Council consideration.
5. Slow Bike Ordinance – Councilwoman Blackwelder provided this ordinance which would allow for the riding of bicycles on the boardwalk under certain conditions. The Council discussed and supported this. The ordinance will be introduced at the January Council meeting.
6. Turn On the Heat in Western Maryland Campaign – The Mayor read into the record an email he received from Bill Jorch of the Maryland Municipal League. Mr. Jorch reported on the devastating flooding that took place in Western Maryland this past May, which left families displaced and vital community infrastructure damaged. Now, six months later, there is still more than 100 Western Maryland residents who are living without heat and facing unsafe conditions. FEMA has declined assistance in their appeal for support.

The Maryland Local Government Impact Hub, a 501c3 companion to the Maryland Municipal League, is launching its first campaign, "Turn on the Heat", to bring safe, reliable heat back to households affected by the May flooding. The Mayor asked the Council if they would be interested in providing support for this cause. The Council discussed and were in favor of financial support along with other suggestions that Staff will follow up on.

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IV. **Public Comment:** None received.

V. **Adjournment:**

There being no further comments, the work session adjourned at 8:17 p.m. on a motion by Councilman Greene. Seconded by Councilman Evans, all in favor.

Submitted by,

Sharon L. Humm
Town Clerk

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety on the Town website on the Town Government page at www.chesapeakebeachmd.gov.