



# Commissioners of Leonardtown

---

41660 Courthouse Drive • P. O. Box 1, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650

301-475-9791 • FAX 301-475-5350

J. HARRY NORRIS III  
Mayor

leonardtown.commissioners@verizon.net  
leonardtown.somd.com

LASCHELLE E. MCKAY  
Town Administrator

## **Commissioners of Leonardtown** **Town Council Meeting Minutes** **September 12, 2011 ~ 4:00 P.M.**

Attendees: J. Harry Norris, Mayor  
Walter Wise, Vice President  
Daniel W. Burris, Councilmember  
Thomas R. Collier, Councilmember  
Leslie E. Roberts, Councilmember  
Roger L. Mattingly, Councilmember

Also in attendance were: Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator; Teri Dimsey, Recording Secretary, Dick Myers, The Bay Net; Guy Leonard, County Times; Jessica Goolsby, the Enterprise; Sgt. Harold Young, SMCSO. A complete list of attendees is on file at the Leonardtown Town Hall.

Mayor Norris called the regularly scheduled meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and called for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Norris proceeded to take up the first item of business.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes for the August 8, 2011 Town Council meeting were presented for approval.

**Mayor Norris entertained a motion to accept the minutes as presented.**

**Councilmember Burris moved to approve the August 8, 2011 Town Council meeting minutes; seconded by Councilmember Mattingly; no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

### **Deputy Report** – Laschelle McKay

Ms. McKay reported that Deputy Smolarsky is still on desk duty but working very hard to be released under her doctor's care and return to full duty. She hopes to know more in October and will keep us informed of her progress.

Mayor Norris noted that we had a deputy in the audience. Sgt. Harold Young introduced himself and stated that he is in attendance today to witness the proceedings and offer any support necessary.

### **Treasurer's Report** – Rebecca Sothoron

Ms. Sothoron reported that \$300,000 was transferred from the checking account to the LGIP and that is a direct result of the tax receipts that we have been receiving. We are 17% through this budget year

The one agenda item on my report is for Council to approve the new Residential Water and Sewer Rate Structure which I will recap what work has been done to this point.

Council has had two workshops where we established the common ground to calculate the rates. The first objective was to make sure that any new rate structure would yield the same amount of revenue as the old rate structure, we call this being “revenue neutral.” We would develop a rate structure that would not necessarily promote extreme conservation but would make the billing field more equitable. So the more you use, the more you pay, which is the complete opposite of where we have been all these years.

We wanted it to be uncomplicated so that people would understand it and that the first year's rates would allow us to make sure the following years rates would be stable. We did not want to make the rate low the first year and have a rate hike in the second year. We want to create stability.

And lastly, after crunching the numbers, we wanted to make sure that the rates were affordable, and, obviously, there are different definitions of what affordable is, but taking into context what percentage of a person's household income that has to be used to pay for water and sewer. There are some national standards which we talked about in the workshop and hopefully the rate structure that is recommended will be affordable within those guidelines.

To summarize, this new rate structure would only apply to in-town residential customers at this point. It will be based on metered water consumption. We anticipate that the first reading will be taken about September 26<sup>th</sup>. Technically, the rates are effective October 1<sup>st</sup> because September 30 we are still billing on a flat rate. In order to process an invoice at the end of a quarter we have to back up a couple of days to allow for processing time. So we think September 26 is the date we will read the residential meters and then the last week of December. So we are shooting for a 90 or 91 day window which will show up on the bill.

The out-of-town customers will still pay a flat rate with a 40% surcharge just like it was approved for the current quarter. The rate structure will include a minimum charge and a consumption component. For the water rate there is a recommended minimum quarterly charge of \$30, which includes any usage from zero gallons to 10,000 gallons. For every thousand gallons or fraction of 1,000 gallons over that it would be \$2.50 and that does not have any type of maximum. You pay for what you use.

For the sewer rate, there will be a minimum quarterly charge of \$58.86, which includes usage from zero to 10,000 gallons and then every 1,000 or fraction thereof over 10,000 gallons will be \$5.89. The difference with the sewer charge is that a cap has been recommended because we all recognize there are users that may have high usage but it is outside of the home and not going to the sewer system and does not need to be treated. This would make the cap of the

sewer charge \$135.43 per quarter. So, a customer that uses 16,000 gallons or less per quarter would have a bill less than the current flat rate, any use above 16,000 gallons will have a higher bill.

If Council approves the recommend rate structure the plan to notify customers will be handled several different ways. This last flat rate bill will be on the postcard but we will put a label on each bill, in bold, neon or something to bring to their attention that this is their last flat rate bill but that all future bills will be based on consumption.

This information will also be placed on the Town Website and Facebook and will be available at the front desk at the Town office.

Mayor Norris stated that Ms. Sothoron spend an enormous amount of time researching and compiling information with involvement from staff and then putting this information into a structured format for presentation to Council, ultimately to be implemented for our residents and commercial businesses. They all have done an outstanding job and we appreciate all their efforts.

**Councilmember Roberts moved to approve the New Residential Water and Sewer Rate Structure as presented; seconded by Councilmember Collier.**

*Discussion:*

*Councilmember Burris asked to clarify that for a one person single household the rates will come down and for a family of four their quarterly bills will be approximately the same if they are around the 16,000 gallons, but where it will change will be those people whose water consumption increases during the summer months with watering their lawns. He also noted that this State mandated metering of water is intended for water conservation.*

*Ms. Sothoron noted that that is a choice each resident will make but this too can be offset with savings in the winter months if you want to use more in the summer months.*

*Councilmember Roberts noted that Ms. Sothoron provided each Council Member with a breakdown of where we would have been with the new rates for our water consumption each quarter. Mine indicated that I would have saved money over the winter months but once I put in new landscaping in the spring I ended up paying more for the summer months. Of course, this is a choice I need to make if I continue to water my lawn more often in the summer and I will have to pay for that water consumption.*

*Mayor Norris wanted to reiterate that this was not intended to obtain more revenue as it does not generate any additional revenue. Our goal is to maintain the same level of revenue to pay our expenses; this State mandated metering was mainly for water conservation.*

**Mayor Norris asked for all those in favor, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Sothoron reported that the auditors will be arriving the last week of September.

**Planning Report** – DeAnn Adler

Ms. Adler reported that the Planning and Zoning meeting last month was canceled as we had no cases on the agenda. This month's Planning and Zoning meeting will also be canceled.

**Town Administrator Report** – Laschelle McKay

Ms. McKay reported that there is a small piece of property in front of Sunshine Day Care located on Doctor's Crossing. In order to make the connection from Singletree to Clark's Rest, there is a small piece of property that we needed to obtain to make that connection. We have a copy of the Deed signed by Alfred Mattingly and some of the other heirs to that property on which they have signed off to turn that small piece of land, 8,235 sq. ft., over to the Town. We thank them for that to allow us to make that connection which will be very important to the residents of Singletree.

**Councilmember Collier moved to accept the 8,235 sf property, which will become part of the Doctor's Crossing extension, by the Town; seconded by Councilmember Mattingly.**

*Discussion:*

*Councilmember Burris inquired about the SMECO easement.*

*Ms. McKay responded that we are working with SMECO to sign off on this easement but this transfer will complete the process.*

**Mayor Norris asked for all those in favor, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. McKay reported that the Travel Writers Conference is here in Southern Maryland and the Town is working closely with Carolyn Laray, Tourism Director for St. Mary's County Government to showcase the Town of Leonardtown. A small group of the writers stayed at the Executive Inn and Suites and attended a small reception at Leonardtown Wharf along with sampling wines from Port of Leonardtown Winery on Sunday. It was a beautiful evening with a gorgeous sunset which only enhanced the view of the Wharf. Ms. Laray scheduled dinner at Café des Artistes and Chef Loic entertained them with stories of the Cafés beginnings. They were then scheduled for several other events and excursions throughout this week and I will be presenting to another group during one of their excursions at the Port of Leonardtown.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Norris reported that the St. Mary's County Board of Education held their 11 Laps to Remember in the Town Square. Promoted through the schools, it was extremely well attended and organized with our staff and they did an outstanding job. It turned out to be quite a large event and was a very moving tribute to those fallen and the first responders on September 11, 2001.

## Council Reports

### Events – Councilmember Mattingly

Councilmember Mattingly reported that Ms. Shepherd is working on the fall Beacon Newsletter and if anyone has any stories of interest to please let her know.

### Upcoming Events of Interest/Meeting Reminders:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
September 11-15		Travel writers in Southern Maryland area
September 17	9 AM	Walk for the Poor to benefit the Society of St. Vincent DePaul @ Father Andrew White School
September 17	7:30 AM	Yoga at Leonardtown Wharf
September 18	12 PM – 5 PM	Taste of St. Mary's Leonardtown Square Sponsored by SMC Chamber of Commerce
September 22-25	THURS 3-9 PM FRI 9 AM-9 PM SAT 9 AM-9 PM SUN 9 AM-6 PM	St. Mary's County Fair – County Fairgrounds
September 27	11:30 AM	State of the County Luncheon @ Bay District Volunteer Fire Department
September 28	5:30 PM	Business After Hours Baldwin Design Group, Inc.
October 7	5 PM – 8 PM	First Friday Celebration in Leonardtown
October 9	1- 3 PM	Antique Tractor Parade to benefit Christmas in April by the So MD Antique Power Association in the Leonardtown Square.
October 9	1 PM	A Golf Cart Parade by the LVFD will follow the Tractor Parade, with an Oyster Scald and Bull Roast at the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Dept.
October 15-16	SAT 10 AM-6 PM SUN 11 AM-6 PM	SMC Oyster Festival @ Fairgrounds
October 29	1 - 4 PM	Scarecrow-Making and Trick-or-Treat on the Square - Leonardtown Square

**Upcoming Events of Interest/Meeting Reminders:**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Meeting</u></b>
October 31	10AM-3PM	Boy Scout Potomac Heritage Century - Rest stop at Leonardtown Wharf Park
November 11	10 AM	Veterans Day Parade
November 25	5 PM – 9 PM	Christmas on the Square

Ms. McKay noted that there is also a Century bike ride from the College of Southern Maryland for a 100 mile ride and back. They are expecting approximately 400 cyclists and there will be a water stop along the way at the Port of Leonardtown Winery.

**Economic Development – Councilmember Burris – No Report**

Councilmember Burris stated that he has been extremely busy with the damage from Hurricane Irene in and around Town.

**Streets and Roads – Councilmember Wise**

Councilmember Wise reported that he would like to meet with the Mayor to discuss and review some suggested areas that may need attention.

**MML/SMMA – Councilmember Roberts**

Councilmember Roberts reported that as the leadership team this year, Council Member Mattingly, Ms. Dimsey and herself attended the SMMA Chapter meeting hosted by the Town of Indian Head. There was a lot of talk about the weather of course after Hurricane Irene came through. There was some discussion about the upcoming MML Fall Conference. They have some really on-point sessions this year. They stressed working with your legislators and this is especially important as they mentioned MML concentrated on getting some road and police money but the Governor’s representative who was in attendance said that the extra money the Towns received would not have happened if MML had not concentrated, educated and pushed with the legislators the importance of these funds.

**Capital Projects – Councilmember Collier**

Councilmember Collier thanked the facilities staff along with Mr. Wheatley for all the extra hours during and after the extreme weather conditions we experienced in a short time frame, earthquake, Hurricane Irene and massive flooding along with all of the power outages.

Mayor Norris stated that Mr. Bucior, Mr. Lacey and Mr. Shepherd worked 30 hours straight during the hurricane. They were also helping in other areas outside of their work duties assisting residents and others with fallen trees and debris both in and around Town.

Mayor Norris entertained a motion to adjourn.

**Councilmember Burris moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m.; Councilmember Collier seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted:

---

Teri Dimsey, Recording Secretary

**Approved:**

---

J. Harry Norris, III, Mayor

---

Walter Wise, Vice President

---

Daniel W. Burris, Councilmember

---

Thomas R. Collier, Councilmember

---

Roger L. Mattingly, Councilmember

---

Leslie E. Roberts, Councilmember