



THURMONT TOWN MEETING
DECEMBER 15, 2020 AT 7:00P.M.
THURMONT MUNICIPAL OFFICE
MEETING ROOM

AGENDA TOPICS

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
2. APPROVAL OF 11/24/20 and 12/8/20 TOWN MEETING MINUTES
3. CLOSED SESSION STATEMENT – 12/8/2020
4. THURMONT POLICE DEPT. BRIEFING – CHIEF EYLER
5. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS
 - a. Commissioner Buehrer
 - b. Commissioner Hooper
 - c. Commissioner Hamrick
 - d. Commissioner Burns
 - e. Mayor Kinnaird
 - f. Jim Humerick
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS:

- HOLIDAY TRAIN DISPLAY CONTINUES EVERY SATURDAY AND WEDNESDAY IN DECEMBER UNTIL DECEMBER 23
- HOLIDAY DECORATIONS CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT – DECEMBER 22
- TOWN OFFICES CLOSED ON DECEMBER 24 AND 25
- LAST DAY FOR CURBSIDE GRASS & LEAVES PICK UP – DECEMBER 28
- TOWN OFFICES CLOSE AT 12 NOON ON DECEMBER 31
- NEXT TOWN MEETING IS JANUARY 5, 2021

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

TOWN MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 15, 2020

A Town Meeting of the Thurmont Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. The following were present: Mayor John Kinnaird; Commissioners, Buehrer; Hooper; Hamrick; and Burns; CAO, Jim Humerick; Sr. Admin. Assist. Becky Long; Chief Eyler; Dick Lee

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Kinnaird led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF 11/24/20 AND 12/8/20 TOWN MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: Commissioner Hamrick said "I make a motion that we approve the 11/24/20 meeting minutes as they were presented to us." Commissioner Hooper second. Vote: 5-0-0, motion carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Hamrick said "I make a motion that we approve the 12/8/20 meeting minutes as they were presented." Commissioner Buehrer second. Vote: 5-0-0, motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION STATEMENT FOR 12/8/2020:

Mayor Kinnaird read the Closed Session Statement for 12/8/2020 into the meeting (see attached)

THURMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING – CHIEF EYLER

Chief Eyler said "it has been a while since we have had a police briefing so I thought tonight would be a good night right before Christmas. I just want to cover a few things on what we currently have, some highlights and some challenges that we face, not all the challenges of course, but just a few. Currently, we have 12 sworn personnel and we are down 2 positions; one position is going to be filled on January 8th and I think you may already have received that memo and it is going to be a Mr. Weaver retired from Frederick City so once he starts January 8th, we will have 13 sworn personnel, then we will still actively recruit the 14th one which is hard to do right now. We have 3 civilians – code officer, administrative coordinator and a receptionist. I wanted to let everyone know that one of our goals, we have many goals in our Department, and I have been here 15 years as of December 1st and we have reached many of our goals and we still have a ways to go which is good because that keeps me here because I want to complete everything we can. One of our goals among many is - to provide the citizens of Thurmont with a cost-effective professional law enforcement agency. We have done that and we will continue to do and I want to make sure you know that and the citizens know that we will do this from here on out as long as I am Chief and hopefully after I leave it continues. So that is our major goal. I did a short assessment of the Thurmont PD, and I know that we have come a long way and I know that you have seen that. I looked at our personnel over the year and we have well-trained, professional, dedicated personnel that are really dedicated to this profession and they are loyal to this Town and the citizens. They want to do everything they can to make it as safe as they can and they will be as professional as possible. They do a great job and I am happy with the personnel we have, the civilian and sworn, and it goes a long way and we get a lot of support from you guys and the citizens. Our equipment, I can't complain about our equipment as

we have the best equipment around, we have good weapons, we have fantastic vehicles which most of them are updated and ready to roll; now there are a few we will have to put in the budget to replace a couple of cars, but that may be next year or down the road. Our Community involvement is excellent, I think, and from the feedback I get everybody says the same thing. We have enhanced and become more involved; our community events and programs are implemented and we attend them regularly. If you want to see more or the citizens want to see more just review our annual report which is on-line from 2005 up to date and we have all our events and programs we have attended and so forth. I think it is important that people look at that. When we write that we sometimes get in depth and if nobody reads it, it is really a waste of our time because you need to know what is going on as citizens, so please read that and see what we are involved in. Some of our recent programs, thanks to Kristie Wood our Code Officer and Stephanie Kennedy our Admin Coordinator this program has already been handled, but it is Operation Chill. It is a partnership with the 7-11 which is designed to enhance relationship among 7-11 stores, the police and the youth. The program gives law enforcement the opportunity to award kids that they have observed doing good deeds or exhibiting positive behavior with a drink coupon. The coupon is good for a free medium Slurpy drink at any participating 7-11 store, which we have in Thurmont, and this program makes it easy for us to interact with the kids in a positive way. It has worked out very well and we have given out several coupons. The other one they came up with is Safety Pup. During a two-week period, Thurmont Police staff posted a photo of Safety Pup at a location in Town focusing on school-aged children; the first person with the correct answer as to his location won a Slurpy coupon again and they also received a Safety Pup brochure pertaining to Halloween safety. I again thank Kristy and Stephanie for that. The other was Goggle-Goggle which was a turkey giveaway. The week before Thanksgiving the Thurmont Police staff held a contest on Facebook for a chance to win a free turkey from Hillside Turkey Farm. To enter the person or family submitted a video with their best turkey goggle, and this was hilarious. Three families submitted videos and the winner was drawn on the Police Department's Facebook during a live video and one of the individuals, of course, won and again we thank Hillside Turkey Farm for the free turkey. Another one was held the week of December 7th where the Safety Pup guessed the number of candy canes in a bowl for school-aged children. Three winners were picked for the Operation Chill Coupon and a box of candy canes and three boxes were sent out. The week of December 14-18 the Safety Pump Contest is – Guess What Local Business Safety Pup Is At. We are posting a picture each day and the correct answer gets entered for a chance to win a \$20 gift card. Names will be placed in a bowl and the Safety Pup will pull out five names for the prize and the contest is open for everyone. I think that \$20 gift certificate is to one of the local restaurants here in Town. So we are getting more involved even with COVID the way it is; we are trying to get more involved with the kids as much as possible and the Community which is a challenge for us but it is working out very well. A couple of our challenges, and of course we have addressed this many times, is staffing, recruitment and retaining qualified personnel and that is the major challenge we have. Many applicants are rejected in their background due more to integrity issues and some criminal involvement so of course we cannot accept them and they wash right out; some people are not suited for the job of a police officer and what we found out there are a lot of people not putting in for being a police officer anymore because of what is going on, police reform, etc. so it is tough getting any type of recruit or lateral. Retirement benefits we are pretty well set with that, ours is not that bad; we have a pay scale now so that is a very good incentive and we thank you for that. The economy everybody looks at that and personnel just get burned out. A lot of times you see these departments lose personnel and we are working overtime and overtime all day in and day out and people just get burned out and say they can't take it anymore and they wash out. Fortunately, we don't lose them that quick for that reason, we adjust their schedules as much as possible to meet their needs and the Town's needs and it works out well. The other challenge we have, and everybody knows about this, is opioid response. It is going to be a challenge no matter what but even

though overdoses for 2020 have decreased we will continue to do our traditional enforcement, investigate and arrest if warranted it, but our role has changed some, we look at the alternative in lieu of arrest, we educate people, there are more divergent programs out there, more counselling and the collaboration and communication with allied agencies is more prevalent but that is a big help with the drug issues here in Thurmont. The biggest one right now is maintaining public trust. With the issues of civil unrest occurring across the Country it makes it very difficult to maintain public trust. Thurmont PD personnel will continue its efforts in this area by providing the best service possible, being professional dedicated, holding ourselves accountable for our actions, maintaining the highest integrity and maintaining high standards. I mean that and my staff means that also. No matter what happens throughout this Country we are going to do the best we can to maintain professionalism and get that trust and maintain that trust here in Town, and I think we are doing a great job with that right now but things do change. There are only a few challenges we have but there are more coming we have to face with the reform, but I think we can get through it here in Town. We had some grants and I think Jim talked about them a while back, but thanks to Cpl. Bowen Thurmont PD received a grant in the amount of \$11,375 to purchase an audio-visual system for the purpose of having a recorded video interview room in our department. We have had to use the system required by allied agencies and now we are self-sufficient, it has already been installed and we can use it for interviews which works out well for us. Thanks to Officer Brian Donovan Thurmont PD received a grant in the amount of \$36,160 to purchase 16 mobile data computers that go in the vehicles. Recently Frederick County informed allied agencies at the last minute that they will no longer support the current computers and any cost for repairs will be the responsibility of each agency. The County is switching to the Dell computer and to absorb the cost Officer Donovan submitted a grant and it was approved and we already have the 16 computers which are getting updated right now which is wonderful; the only thing it doesn't cover is installation which is minimal and the docking station so that is not bad and we can put that in the budget. Just a few stats and I won't go over all of them because I know stats are boring.

Our calls for service – November 2020	775 calls for service (non-traffic)
	Total calls for service 903

Our total calls for service November 2019	795
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So it has increased and it is kind of ironic with COVID the stats did go down but now it is starting to pick up and I think what is happening people are getting more relaxed with the COVID issues and getting tired of everything that is going on and now they are coming out more, they are reporting more crimes and people are actually doing more crimes; so it has increased some.

Last year's YTD call for service total	8,246
As of right now it is	7,976 by end of Dec. maybe close to last year

Traffic citations: November 2020	58 including camera that we have
November 2019	34
Traffic warnings November 2020	98
November 2019	108
Overdoses for November 2020	8 (3 heroin) (No deaths)
Overdoses for 2019	Didn't have total but there were 3 heroins

The overdoses have decreased since 2019.

Our future plans are to continue to enhance our recruitment efforts anyway we can; we are look more now for laterals because I think it is much better if we get laterals in here right now because of the cost to send someone through the academy, buying all their equipment and the next thing you know a year or two lateral they are gone, they go to larger departments for more money, different benefits, etc. We will

provide the best service possible to our citizens and we are going to enhance our community involvement as we always do; we are going to keep Thurmont safe and we will sufficiently staff the department which may require additional personnel but that is something we will look at down the road as far as annexations and so forth. One thing that I would ask the citizens, calls for service we want the citizens to call 911 for emergencies and call the non-emergency number 301-600-2071. If they see criminal activity please call those numbers and not the Mayor, Commissioners, Jim or anyone else because what happens by the time it gets down to us the criminal activity or incident is gone, we won't get there in time. It is too much of a delayed response so please call those numbers and our dispatcher will dispatch us right away and we will get their quicker and hopefully catch the individuals involved in the act. I want to thank the Board of Commissioners, the Town staff and the citizens for all the support you have given us."

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Commissioner Buehrer:

- I wish everybody a happy holiday and more importantly a healthy one. Please follow Governor Hogan's rules, wear a mask, keep the proper distance and be respectful for one another. Hopefully by spring we will be able to look in the mirror and say we made it.

Commissioner Hooper:

- I also wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe Christmas
- Christmas in Thurmont: The Holiday Christmas Display did have three more dates that would have been available for viewing but it looks like they will be cancelling tomorrow due to snow that is supposed to arrive but you will also be able to go on Saturday, December 19th from 10-4 and Wednesday, December 23rd from 5-9 p.m. It is located at the Thurmont Plaza at 224 N. Church St. There was a nice article in the paper about the train display. You must wear a mask covering both nose and mouth when visiting the display keeping it on the entire time. Please social distance by complying with all markers they have in place. I want to thank everyone who participated in the map stamping and the winners were picked here at the Town Office Thursday, December 10th and the winners have been notified. I want to thank the following businesses that donated prizes for the Christmas in Thurmont: Town: Baker Tree Service, Beautiful U Salon and Spa, Catoctin Wildlife Preserve, Cousins Ace Hardware, Criswell Chevrolet, Hillside Turkey Farm, Hobbs Hardware, In-Town Barber, Med-One Pharmacy, Ole Mink Recreational Resort, Rocky's, Seven Dragonfly Studio, Eyler Stables and Flea Market, Thurmont Kountry Kitchen, Thurmont Main Street Center, Thurmont Regional Library, Tracy's House of Hair, and Wait, What Sauce Company. We hope that everybody patronizes these businesses because they continue to support the things we do here in Town.
- Utility Bills: I am getting calls and even the mailman is being asked why they haven't received their bills yet.
 - Jim Humerick responded "we have had some conversations with the postmaster here in Thurmont who has been trying to help us out. The service center in Baltimore is a chaotic mess right now they have a lot of people not coming to work due to the COVID fears, they have increased business because of the holiday stuff going on right now. I understand there are trucks backed up out into the street waiting to get in to unload, trucks can't get in to load up because the streets are blocked with trucks, it is just a mess.

The postmaster here in Thurmont has been working with us as best he can to get down there and try to get things taken care of. We had a meeting the other day with our electric consultant to make sure we are not violating any public service commission guidelines and we are not as long as we are not forcing people to pay for a bill they haven't gotten yet which we certainly aren't doing. We are just trying to get through it. People are concerned that they are going to get last month's bill the day before they get this month's bill and we are going to work with them on that if that were to happen; we always try to work with people and there are all types of agencies out there to help people out and we will probably bend over backwards more than we have in the past just to help people get through this whole chaotic mess. I wish I had a better report for you but we are doing the best we can. We just want to make sure once this all get resolved our customers aren't taking the blunt of it and I think we are doing a pretty good job making sure of that.

- o Commissioner Buehrer suggested to everyone that you already know when your bill is due, be sure to set that money aside to take care of that when the proper paperwork comes so when the next bill comes you are not looking at double, you are only looking at one bill.
- o Mayor Kinnaird stated that residents can come to the Town Office to pay their bills, too.

Commissioner Hamrick:

- I brought this subject up years ago when I first became a Commissioner and that is electronic billing. I think we really need to revisit that. I think people need to have the option of either a paper bill or an electronic bill.
 - o Jim Humerick responded "you would need to speak to Linda and actually in response to this most recent chaos we have started looking into that a lot more seriously.
- Just a reminder about the Thurmont Business Bucks; they are available for sale at the Town Office. This is a program where you can buy Business Bucks in increments of \$5, \$10, and \$20 values that you can spend at 30 Thurmont locations year around, it is not just limited to the Christmas season but that way it keeps the money local and you can't spend it anywhere else but here in Thurmont. I would encourage everyone to buy some Business Bucks. I wish everyone a blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year.
- I want to thank Thurmont as it has risen above all the political decisiveness. There are people on both sides of the spectrum in this Town obviously but you don't see it or hear it; we get along, we still operate as a Town and as a community together. I just applaud the citizens of Thurmont for having your own personal opinions whether it is some of the hot topics of politics or the civil unrest arena, but I just thank how respectful our citizens are to one another.

Commissioner Burns:

- I took Mr. Slavonic, Under Secretary of the Navy, on a visit to the Town Office before going to Camp David last Friday along with a Navy Captain, and his Chief of Staff. They looked at all our pictures, I told him this is where the Mayor and Board meet, and they talked to the girls at the front desk; so, I had an opportunity to tell him about our Town and give him some history of the Town. The young lady at the front desk were as nice as they could be.

- Holiday Decorations Contest – they are being judged this week so we will be announcing those next Tuesday live here on Channel 99 at 7 p.m. and will also post the winners on Facebook as well.
- There sounds like there is some snow coming in tomorrow. We have met with Public Works Supervisors today and we have the plans pretty much laid out for how we hope things transpire tomorrow into tomorrow night and then Thursday morning. We did put something out to help us out, when people have off street parking available, we would like them to put their cars there so we can plow the streets without those types of obstacles to get around. I understand there are times when there is nothing available so we will work with that. We have been finding over the last few years that when we remind people it really does get about 75% of the cars off the street.
- In anticipation of our weather the trash contractor is going to be starting earlier tomorrow morning, so we sent another post out today asking folks to have their trash curbside tomorrow morning by 5 a.m.
 - Commissioner Burns suggested that, if possible, someone calls and says that their trash was not picked up even though it was out at 5 a.m. that we might be able to go around, if not too many, and pick it up and dispose of it for them instead of waiting another week. Jim Humerick stated that we do try to help her in that respect because sometimes it happens. He also stated that they had called the contractor and let him know of the comments that were put on Facebook asking for prayers and good wishes for the gentleman that got injured and the contractor really appreciate it.
- I will keep you gentlemen updated as we go through the next 24-36 hours. I don't anticipate any problems, as you know our staff has done this a million times and they are great at it. We had an all-hands-on deck Public Works meeting last week and for some of our newer employees who haven't been through any snow events since there were none last year we reminded them that we have very high expectations.

Mayor Kinnaird:

- This will be the last meeting of the year; our next Town meeting will be Tuesday, January 5, 2021. We will announce the winners of the Christmas Decorations Contest next Tuesday evening.
- The last day for curbside grass and leaf pickup will be December 28th.
- Town Office will be closed on the 24th and 25th and at noon on December 31st.
- Holiday Train Display will be available Saturday, December 19th and Wednesday, December 23rd. I want to thank the Frederick County Society of Model Engineers for coming up here and once again treating us to an amazing display. I hear a lot of comments about it. There was a fantastic article in Frederick News-Post.
- Last Sunday Santa Claus came for a drive through Town with Frosty and it was great event. I want to thank the Guardian Hose Company for providing the fire truck for Santa to ride on. The Town of Thurmont provided a vehicle for Frosty the Snowman to ride on. We had a police escort for about 75% of the time. DJ Shipp and his crew provided Christmas music. Unfortunately, we

missed a couple of streets as we had some issues not being able to get the truck down certain streets, I apologize for that, but those things happen. We had a great time.

- We are going to have some additional virtual meetings with Santa Claus. You can call me at 301-606-9458 to set up a schedule. It will be this coming Sunday, December 20th from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and there are still spots available.
- I hope everyone has an amazing and happy Christmas and a great New Year. Please follow the Governor's guidelines.
- I want to thank each of you guys for the year we had this year and I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Dick Lee, Resident – Marty I agree with you 95%, but the reason I brought up what I brought up is the other 5%. If we have a spot and I think Wes could probably tell you two or three he gets calls about regularly. If we do have a spot, I was just mentioning that was a good way to probably clear that up but I wasn't talking about...I started it because of what I thought about the Police Department. I think they are great guys and girls but I think we do have a couple of spots that it wouldn't hurt to enforce a little more efficiently.

- Commissioner Burns said he may have over reacted but I know historically we have had this when I was sitting in the middle chair and we would go out and do it. Residents don't understand that they maybe in one spot right now and then the cops are never there and in 2 seconds after they leave they turn doing something and a cop goes by four or five times or an hour later so they think they are not all over town that is not necessarily true, I am not saying it was always true, they just don't understand. Mayor Kinnaird said "I tell people we have two or three officers on duty and they can't be everywhere at the same time but please call either the emergency number or the nonemergency number and report it and ask for a police officer to show up and when the officer shows up they will take whatever action they can."

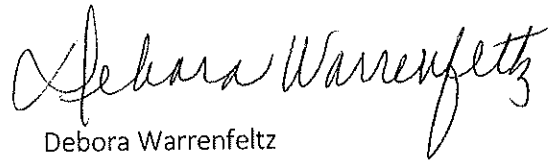
I have two questions are we going to do anymore COVID testing here? Moving trash up to 5 a.m. is that Wednesday or Thursday? Jim, please send Elizabeth an email if it will change something on Thursday.

- Mayor Kinnaird said "yes, every other Friday and the next one we think will be January, 9th, we haven't seen the updated schedule yet"
- Moving trash to 5 a.m. is Wednesday and they haven't said anything about Thursday.

MOTION: Mayor Kinnaird asked "any last calls up here? None, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Burns said "so moved." Commissioner Hooper second. Vote: 5-0-0, motion carried.

Without further discussion the regular meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Debora Warrenfeltz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Debora Warrenfeltz

**TOWN MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2020**

PLEASE SIGN IN
PLEASE PRINT

	NAME	THURMONT RESIDENT	
		YES	NO
1	DICK LEE	✓	
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TOWN OF THURMONT
CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION
December 8, 2020

TIME & PLACE: 8:45 P.M. – Mayor James F. Black Meeting Room, Thurmont Municipal Offices

PURPOSE: To discuss personnel

CITATION: General Provisions Article; subsection 3-305(b) (1)

PRESENT: Mayor Kinnaird
Commissioner Hamrick
Commissioner Hooper
Commissioner Burns
Commissioner Buehrer
CAO Humerick

At 8:45 PM in the Mayor James F. Black Meeting Room, John A. Kinnaird, Mayor of the Board of Commissioners asked for a motion to go into closed session to discuss personnel. Commissioner Burns made the motion to go into closed session and Commissioner Hamrick seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried. This action was taken pursuant to the General Provisions Article; subsection 3-305(b) (1).

A discussion was held regarding personnel and employee schedules.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.