

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT
OF THE EMERALD ISLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FRIDAY – JANUARY 25, 2002 – 8:00 A.M. – HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK**

Mayor Art Schools called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. Present were Mayor Schools, Commissioners Dick Eckhardt, Emily Farmer, Pat McElraft, Dorothy “Doje” Marks and Floyd Messer, Town Manager Frank Rush, Town Clerk Carolyn Custy , Alesia Sanderson, and Assistant Town Manager Georgia Overman.

The purpose of the retreat was to discuss items for planning for the Town in the upcoming year and years to come

Board Operating Procedures – The board had previously reviewed the Suggested Board Operating procedures prepared by Mayor Schools, based on information obtained from the Institute of Government. Everyone agreed that public comments were very important and to be encouraged. There was discussion on whether the comments should be made at the beginning or the end of the meeting. It was decided that the major public comment period should be at the beginning of the meeting, but that comments should also be allowed at the end.

Report from Town Manager – Mitsy Overman presented a lot of financial information, which pointed out, that the town is in good financial condition. The Town Manager then reported that his preliminary budget projection indicated the need for a 5-6 cent tax increase. The major reasons for the increase were the anticipated drop in sales tax revenue, increased funding for rescue squad, inability to use occupancy taxes in general fund, inflationary increases, and that \$300,000 of reserve money was used to balance the prior year budget, and no reserve would be used in the upcoming budget. The Manager, Mayor, and Commissioners all agreed that we needed to work hard on developing a budget that does not include a tax increase. Mr. Rush reported that he is concerned about the significant increases that the town has experienced in healthcare costs over the years. He is obtaining quotes from other carriers, and will possibly be looking at a higher deductible, in hopes of controlling cost. In addition, quotes will be obtained including the Commissioners and excluding the Commissioners. Mr. Rush also presented long-range capital requests from the departments. Everyone agreed that we needed to start a 5 capital budget, but also didn’t see much hope of incorporating any items into the upcoming budget.

Beach Nourishment Question and Answer Sheet –Mayor Schools went through the question and answer sheet item by item, and encouraged discussion on any items that were of concern to any Commissioner. Revisions were made as appropriate and a copy of the final question and answer sheet is attached.

Public Comment – The following citizens made comments in regards to the Nourishment Question and Answer sheet: Mr. Lee Lipsitz, Mr. Jerry Huml, Mrs. Julia Wax, and Mr. Bill Reist. The Commissioners considered their comments in finalizing the Question and Answer Sheet.

The Board went into a short closed session to discuss personnel at 12:30 P.M.

The meeting was recessed at 1:00 P.M. to reconvene on Monday, January 28, 2002 to follow immediately after the conclusion of a Joint Meeting between the Town Board and Planning Board that is scheduled to begin at 10:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn K. Custy, CMC