



2020 State of the Town Address  
Mayor Howard Long

2020 was a challenging year. As an organization, I am proud to say we made the best of it. In what has been a down year for many other government agencies, we saw an unusually uncrowded agenda and seized the opportunity to focus on improving operations and completing numerous capital improvement projects. When the fog of this pandemic lifts, and our residents and visitors are again able to enjoy the Town's beautiful public parks and facilities, we hope they'll be proud and happy to see we stayed busy and committed to the interests of the Town.

Here at Town Hall, Staff and Officials continued tackling our long-standing infrastructure issues, addressing the barriers to land development, and creating a new policy perspective focused on the future of the Town. We stayed true to our motto and continued to move further away from "the way we've always done it," and closer to "the way we do it now." With dedicated Staff, Officials, and Volunteers, we are confident we can accomplish any goal.

With that said, it cannot be expressed strongly enough how thankful we are to our Town Officials and Volunteers for the effort and time they put into the Town. We rely greatly on their guidance and leadership, and we share with them the following successful programs and projects, from the past year:

- In 2020, the search for water loss continued. With 30-40% loss for over 20-years, and the detriment that presents for growth and land development, we understand that correcting this issue is one of Boonsboro's top priorities. Using ultrasonic meter technology demoed from a vendor, we conducted several system tests. We founded the "Water Loss Task Force" with the help of dedicated volunteers and completed an in-depth audit of our software systems and data logging processes. Finally, we completed the first phase of our residential meter replacement program and removed all the obsolete "touchpad" meters. Staff and Officials are more focused than ever on fixing the issue of excessive water loss, once and for all. Over the first two quarters of fiscal year 2021, we are proud to say that with a more careful accounting of usage, water loss dropped from an average of 32% down to 25%, thereby correcting the loss by approximately 3.4 million gallons, when compared to Q1 and Q2 of last fiscal year. Based on what we've learned from the ultrasonic system tests, data audits, and through the steady, hard work of staff, officials, and volunteers, we feel strongly that we're on the verge of a big breakthrough.
- We're happy to have a new Town Planner on staff, Mrs. Reiley Stanley. She's made an almost-immediate impact and we're excited to see what she can do, once she's had more time to settle-in and adjust. At the Police Department, we hired a new officer, Mr. Ryan Christman. Ryan is an excellent addition to the Police Department and the Town is lucky to have him as an employee. BPD continues to provide excellent community policing and public safety service to the Town. We're very proud of our Police Department and congratulate them on receiving a \$27,000 grant to purchase a license plate scanner. Congrats also on the resourceful purchase of three used police cruisers. Hundreds of motorists pass through our Town, every day, traveling back-&-forth from Hagerstown and Frederick. These tools are essential for good community policing.
- As we did in 2019, Officials and Staff again worked diligently with consultants and contractors to improve the Town's Annual Financial Report. After years of numerous and recurring findings, we improved in

FY2019 to two findings, and in FY2020, we had ZERO findings! We're proud of our Staff and Officials for earning our first clean audit, in many years, and this is a big step toward "the way we do it now."

- Using DNR Program Open Space grant funding, we worked extensively in Shafer Park. In the older section, both parking lots and the walking paths were repaved. We also installed a new section of walking path, connecting the older section to the newer section, using eco-friendly pervious asphalt. We removed an old farm fencerow, in the newer section, and planted over-150 trees in the low-lying floodplain, near the creek. Finally, we replaced the roofs on numerous park pavilions and the public works shop. Grant funding for these projects totaled over \$300,000 and paid for approximately 90% of the total cost.
- Working with our State Delegation, we received a \$25,000 grant to expand parking for visitors to Shafer Park. Local business owners, H and H Investments, partnered with the Town to allow the use of their parking lot, off of Park Drive, to parkgoers on evenings and weekends. Graciously, the Washington County Construction & Engineering Department donated labor and equipment, allowing the Town to leverage our \$25,000 grant award for construction materials, to pave the parking lot behind Boonsboro Community Life Center, at 28 N. Main Street, using eco-friendly pervious asphalt. In total, the project cost the Town roughly \$3,000 and will be invaluable amenity to parkgoers, during the Shafer Park's numerous, popular outdoor events. Thanks again to Washington County and our State Representatives for helping to make this project a reality!
- Good governance and administration have been particularly challenging, during the pandemic. We're proud to say we took a proactive approach, early on, to the Coronavirus Pandemic, and so far, we have effectively mitigated outbreaks and ensured a safe workplace for Staff, Officials, and Volunteers. Using OSHA and CDC guidelines, we developed a response and preparedness plan suited particularly for our level of exposure and we sanitize all Town Buildings, monthly. To mitigate the cost of a proactive approach, we were careful to begin COVID-related cost-tracking and have so far received close to \$70,000 in CARES Act reimbursements. Thank you very much to our community members for your patience and understanding, during a difficult year.
- In the vein of Health & Safety, the Town was generously awarded \$7,500 in grant funding, from the Nora Roberts Foundation, to purchase and install automated external defibrillators and bleeding control kits, for all Town Buildings. We're blessed to have lifesaving equipment available to our staff and community members, and this is big addition to the Town's growing safety & risk culture.
- Capital improvement and maintenance continued, in earnest, on the Town's aging water and sewer infrastructure. 1) We received \$153,000 in matching funds, through the Appalachian Regional Commission Local Infrastructure Grant Program, to complete Phase-2 of Sewer Main Rehabilitation Project. By the end of January 2021, 1.5 miles of particularly leaky sewer main will be lined and reduce inflow-&-infiltration by 10-25%. 2) Under Park Drive, another area where hundreds of thousands of gallons of ground water leaks into our wastewater pipes every year, we used \$32,000 in ARC matching funds to replace an old terracotta sewer main. 3) The Wastewater Hydraulic Model is nearing completion. This is another big step to a better understanding of our utility systems, becoming less reactive, and will be an invaluable tool for planning & development. 4) By participating in Washington County's Annual Chemical Procurement, the Town will save more than \$35,000 a year, on the purchase of chemicals used to treat water and sewer. 5) Recently, Town Staff identified the extreme erosion of a streambank as a potential structural hazard to the Town's Route 34 Wastewater Pump Station, located directly adjacent to the stream. The Town partnered with the State Highway Administration to stabilize the bank and secure our wastewater infrastructure. As a dual benefit, the completed project will earn the Town 13% of its MS4 impervious area mitigation 5-year requirement. 6) Lastly, the Town submitted a full grant application to ARC, for matching funds, to design and purchase a sludge dewatering facility at the wastewater treatment plant. If the \$325,000 in matching

funds are awarded, a dewatering facility will reduce operating costs by over \$120,000 a year. The dewatering facility is also crucial for the increased capacity that comes with the future land development, we expect in 10-15 years.

- In October 2019, Staff discovered a bypass leak in the Keedysville Springhouse Weir Wall that threatened to take a vital water source offline. As we faced the possibility of losing 40% of our water, and the public health emergency resulting from a water shortage, Staff quickly plugged the hole with sandbags, and we got to work. By promptly ushering the project through design, permitting, and procurement, we completed the repair and a complete renovation of the weir wall and weir pool, with long-lasting results. Given the emergency nature of the project, we looked for financing while design and construction was already in progress. Big thanks to the Washington County – Hagerstown Industrial Foundation for issuing the Town a 1-year, no interest bridge loan! This allowed us the time and opportunity to pursue financing and we're working with the Maryland Department of the Environment to secure low-interest loan for the project.
- In July of 2020, with the help of dedicated volunteers, we successfully completed an election cycle, under difficult circumstances: albeit, with a small hiccup.
- To leverage the Park Drive Sewer Replacement Project, we opted to mill and asphalt-overlay a few Town roads, that were most in need of repaving. Center Street, McKeldin Drive, and Park Drive were all identified to be in poor condition and have been resurfaced.
- In November, two electric vehicle charging stations were installed in the Town Hall Parking Lot, using grant funding from Potomac Edison's EV Driven Grant Program. The EV Charging Stations are available to residents and motorists passing through town, and they are pay-per-use.

Moving forward into 2021, we will continue working on capital improvements, infrastructure repairs and maintenance, economic development, growth, public safety, and all the other functions that help make Boonsboro such a great place to live. However, as we continue-on with the day-to-day, we'll also strive to become less reactive and more future-oriented. Better management and planning allow our residents to be more involved and invested and reassures them their tax dollars are well-invested.

Speaking of our residents, Staff and Officials would like to thank all our generous community members and businesses for their kind donations and volunteerism. For those of you hit hard by the pandemic and economic concerns, we wish you a better 2021 and we're here to help in any way we can. The sense of community you all engender is our motivation and drive to do a good job. Boonsboro is an awesome community and we'll be better than ever, in 2021!