



2021 State of the Town Address Mayor Howard Long

2021 was another challenging year. Again, I am proud to say we made the best of it. We were productive and continued to focus on improving our infrastructure, encouraging economic growth and development, and becoming a more responsible, effective, and future-oriented municipal government.

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. I'm so proud of our Staff, Officials, and Volunteers for everything they do. Our residents are lucky to have each and every one of them.

This is an exciting time for Boonsboro. With \$3.1 Million in American Rescue Plan Funds, and another \$3.5 Million anticipated in federal/state/county grants and budget requests, we have an opportunity to make a big impact, quickly. Usually, the numerous, larger-scale capital projects on our priority list would take years of planning and patience to complete, as time and money allows. Fortunately, and unfortunately, we have plenty of areas to focus our capital spending and some longer-term goals are suddenly now in our immediate reach. If we continue to work hard and be aggressive, in 5-years when our Rescue Plan funds must have been spent, we will be in an excellent position: more future-oriented, less reactive, less dependent on grant funds, more self-sufficient, and better public servants.

After a lot of hard work from officials, staff, and our wonderful volunteers, our "chickens are coming home to roost" and we're beginning to reap some of the rewards. Our 2021 successes are evident in the following planned, ongoing, and completed projects/programs:

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System MS4 Phase II Permit: At the beginning of 2021, the Town had restored 4.05 acres of the 29.62-acre 2025 requirement. On the October Progress Report to MDE, we reported another 10.4 restored acres completed: 1) The Route 34 Pump Station Streambank Stabilization Project repaired 130 linear feet of streambank, secured the unstable ground around our wastewater pump station, and earned the Town 3.9 restored acres. The project was completed, in February 2021, and about half the labor/equipment was provided by the State Highway Administration. 2) In December 2020, with \$21,600 in Program Open Space grant funding, we planted 150 native species trees, in Shafer Park, and removed an old farm fencerow. This project earned us 1.5 restored acres. 3) In October 2021, working with PE and the Park Board, we completed a \$17,000 (\$10k in grant funding), 500-tree planting project, on both private and public land. This project earned us 5 restored acres and satisfied our annual MDE public education and engagement requirements. Great projects like this tick a lot of boxes. We leveraged our awesome volunteer base to make a significant local environmental impact, we provided a new benefit/service to our wonderful residents, and we cost-effectively earned compliance credits towards our federal stormwater mandate.

For 2022, we have a couple more MS4 projects planned: 1) We partnered with the Washington County Soil Conservation District and working with their engineer, Ecotone, planning/design is underway to install a wetland area and 6 acres of reforestation, outside our Wastewater Treatment Plant. This project will be 100% grant funded and is expected to earn 28.85 restored acres. Using the Town's

contacts at Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, we were able to secure a matching contribution to complete the project's reforestation component. This will make a much more attractive grant application and increase the likelihood of funding. 2) Working with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and DNR, we were able to encumber reforestation grant funding, for a Spring 2022 planting. The project entails planting over-1,000 trees and will earn approximately 10 restored acres. This project is 100% grant funded and includes a 3-year maintenance plan for all plantings.

Human Resources / Safety & Risk: 1) We made a couple of good hires at Safety & Risk Manager (Ofc. Ryan Christman) and Water & Wastewater Operator Trainee (James Morton). 2) The Safety & Risk Committee remains active/engaged and we were able to complete safety/security projects at the WWTP and Route 34 Pump Station, a security assessment of Town Hall, added safety-related updates to the employee manual, and continued a productive relationship with our Chesapeake Employers Insurance Representative, Mike Malooly. 3) We updated our COVID Preparedness & Response Plan, quarterly, as new CDC, FEMA, MEMA, and OSHA info became available. Officer Christman has had an immediate impact as S&R Manager since his hiring in October. I expect the S&R Committee to be even more active/engaged, next year.

Water & Sewer: 1) We made significantly-more progress, discovering/understanding our water loss. Using ultrasonic meters, our water model, an electrical resistivity test, and a volunteer dive survey with the Frederick County Fire Department, we have confirmed a large leak at the reservoir. Every day, the reservoir leaks between 15,000 and 25,000 gallons of water (5.5 – 9 million, annually). Working with Senator Corderman, we identified a funding plan for a \$4.1 million replacement project, that includes \$3 million in federal/state/county grant funding. The replacement will also provide pressure-redundancy and replace a large section of the distribution system connected to it. The Preliminary Engineering Report was recently completed, and we're focused on selecting a tank technology, next. If all goes well, a vital part of water infrastructure will be replaced, by Spring 2023. 2) Phase-2 of the wastewater pipe lining project was completed, with 50% grant funding. Superintendent Shumaker reports a significant reduction in Inflow & Infiltration (I&I), during rain events. Using leftover grant funds (50% Town Match), we purchased a sewer camera, and we can begin investigating I&I, in house. 3) The Route 34 Pump Station Streambank Stabilization Project was completed. Public Works armored 130 linear feet of streambank, with equipment and labor from SHA, and secured a critical piece of our wastewater infrastructure, in the process. Awesome job, by Public Works! 4) After receiving \$325,000 in ARC grant funds, the WWTP Sludge Dewatering Project is in planning/design. Construction is expected to begin, Spring 2022. This project is expected to reduce operating expenses, by approximately \$130,000/year. 6) The Water and Wastewater Models are now complete. We now have a clear understanding of system capacities, capital planning, and future development. Recently, we amended the Town's APFO to allow for more comprehensive development mitigation plans. This will ensure the necessary improvements occur, both onsite and downstream from development. 7) The WWTP Chemical Storage Expansion Project was completed. We are now able to receive bulk deliveries of chemical coagulant, at the WWTP. We use approximately 140,000 lbs. of this chemical, annually. Purchasing in bulk will save the Town over \$30k/year. 8) With the completion of the Weir Wall Repair & Renovation Project, in February 2020, the Town was on the hook for \$100k to replace infrastructure that we don't own. In February 2021, the Town received a \$115,000 Bond Bill, sponsored by Delegate Wivell, to pay for engineering and construction. 9) With 50% grant funding from the US Army Corps of Engineers, we'll begin a physical inventory and condition assessment of the Town's water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure, later this month or early next year. This is the first big step towards creating Asset Management and Capital Improvement Programs. This will replace our current "when it breaks, fix it" approach, and improve planning, budgeting, transparency, reporting, and will make us more competitive for grant awards. 10) The Boonsboro Educational Complex uses approximately 1 million gallons / year of treated water to irrigate their sports fields. After a bumpy/lengthy start to this project,

the WCPS Director of Maintenance & Operations informs a well-drilling RFP will soon be published. 11) Our Wastewater Department again earned an operation and maintenance grant, from MDE, for exceptional treatment performance. The funds were used to purchase a trash pump, which will allow Public Works and Water/Sewer to address wastewater treatment and collection issues more quickly and effectively. Great job, Water & Sewer!

Shafer Park Projects: Using \$10,000 of leftover funding from previous Community Parks & Playgrounds and Program Open Space grants, we expanded the Tot Lot, installed a swing set, and replaced some of the broken playground equipment in the older sections of the park. Future plans / grant applications for the park include: 1) rehabbing/restoring the stone streambanks, bridges, and patio. 2) Completing Phase-4 of the Park Path Project. 3) Further rehab/replacement of older playground equipment. 4) Renovating the bathroom by the Scout Hut. 5) Installing exercise stations along the park paths.

EDC Revival: After the EDC lost almost all its members, Town Staff and Officials worked to recruit new volunteers and inject new life into the commission. The new EDC Volunteers are proactive and interested in promoting commerce and commercial development. Recently, they promoted and oversaw the very successful Food Truck Festival, which saw 1,500 – 2,000 visitors, despite the rainy day! They also have some exciting future projects they're working on: 1) AT Connector Trail, 2) Downtown Beautification Project, and 3) Sustainable Communities Designation.

License Plate Reader Grant: The Boonsboro Police Department applied for, and was awarded, a \$30,000 grant to purchase a license plate reader, through the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention. As we all know, Boonsboro is a thoroughfare, between Hagerstown and Frederick. A license plate reader is an important tool to have, for effective community policing.

FY2021 Financial Audit: Officials and Staff again worked diligently with consultants and contractors to improve the Town's Annual Financial Report process. After years of numerous and recurring findings, this fiscal year we only had one finding! We're proud of our Staff and Officials for their continued hard work!

Moving forward into 2022, 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. 2021 was a tough year for everyone. To all, we wish you a better 2022 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 continue working hard to keep it that way!