



2017 State of the Town Address

Mayor

Brian L. Jones

Vice Mayor

Rosalie Kuechler

Council members

Tim Edwards

Beth Andrews

Brian Nesspor

Introduction:

The State of the Town is an overview of our Town's accomplishments in 2016 and the beginning of 2017. I want to take the time to recap the progress we have made and address projects and initiatives that the Mayor and Council will focus on this year and beyond.

First, I would like to say that it continues to be a privilege and honor to be your Mayor and I look forward to continuing to serve you and leading my hometown, the Town of Rock Hall.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the Vice Mayor and fellow Councilmembers. Vice Mayor Rosalie Kuechler, Councilmember Brian Nesspor, past Councilmembers Butch Price and Jack Jester. These individuals have helped mold the town into the outstanding community that we are.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge and once again congratulate our newly elected Councilmembers Tim Edwards and Beth Andrews. I look forward to seeing what we accomplish together in the future.

I would like to now take a moment to recognize and thank our entire staff – Administration, Streets Department, Water and Sewer Departments, the Police Department, Maintenance Staff and Grant Writer. These individuals are the backbone of the town and are essential to ensuring the town runs smoothly on a day to day basis.

Community Spirit:

The Council and I established the Rock Hall Community Spirit Award in 2015.

The Community Spirit Award is awarded each month at the regular Mayor and Council meeting which is held every 2nd Thursday of each month.

The Rock Hall Community Spirit Award is a brilliant way of saying thanks – thanks to those people who go that extra mile to make everyone's lives better; thanks to those people who put themselves at risk to protect us; and thanks to those people who do everything in their power to make Rock Hall, Maryland such a great place to live.

These amazing citizens come from all walks of life from schoolchildren to senior citizens and from the public/uniform services to volunteers but they all have one thing in common. That is their incredible selflessness.

So it is only right that the Mayor and Council, Town Staff, along with our citizens, reward these outstanding individuals and groups who show outstanding commitment and dedication to community service.

We would like to congratulate all the Spirit Award recipients for the past year. A full list of the Spirit Award Recipients can be found on the Town's website.

Financial Status:

The Town of Rock Hall's overall financial situation is stable. The Town has a minimal unrestricted reserve compared to prior years, a well-established "core services" philosophy, and a modest amount of debt and an excellent track record of fiscal responsibility.

The Town's property tax rate is one of the lowest in the state. The size of the municipal staff is significantly smaller than other municipalities of comparable population, in part due to the Town's extensive use of private contractors.

Municipal buildings such as the Town Hall, Public Works shops and the Wastewater Treatment plants are adequate to support existing staffing and service levels. The Town enjoys an experienced, well-trained and stable workforce.

While the current financial environment is very challenging, the Town is well positioned to weather the economic storm.

(Report from Clerk-Treasurer)

Fiscal Year 2017 Budget vs. Actual Highlights - As of 4/26/17

General Fund:

General Fund Income:

Miscellaneous Revenue is up due to:

- unexpected employee health insurance premium refunds
- Workers Compensation Audit refund
- FEMA Snow Storm Reimbursement
- Working Waterfront Grant
- Main Street Fundraising Events

Special Events has doubled what was budgeted

State Income Tax is up due to Prior Year State Audit Discrepancies

Anticipating Transportation Fares will collect more than expected due to the new van being in operation this season.

General Fund Expenses:

Admin:

- Legal Expenses have increased mainly due to Ordinances & Resolutions
- Board of Appeals Expenses are up
- Municipal Building Operating Expenses are down (no furnace repairs)
- Municipal Building Fuel is down approximately \$9,000 (new systems)
- We may experience a slight increase in Municipal Building Electric because of the new heating/air conditioning system

Public Safety:

- Police Patrol Overtime is over budget approximately \$2,000
- Police Patrol Gasoline is down approximately \$3,400
- Drug Prevention Program expenses are \$2,600 under budget

Transportation:

- Transportation Maintenance is up due to the purchase of new van

Streets:

- Tools/Maintenance is over budget due to replacement of bucket truck
- Vehicle Expenses are up due to unexpected repairs on one of the trucks
- Capital Expenses Street repairs is over budget due to needed street repairs

Tourism:

- Special Events Expense is over budget due to the overwhelming popularity of events

Utilities Fund:

Utilities Fund Income:

Miscellaneous Revenue is up due to:

- unexpected employee health insurance premium refunds
- Workers Compensation Audit refund
- FEMA Snow Storm Reimbursement

Water & Sewer Connections are up; we had 2 hookups this year and only budgeted for 1

Utilities Expenses:

Sewer:

- Sewer Maintenance/Repairs are down approximately \$15,500
- Sewer Gasoline/Diesel is down \$1,100

Water:

- Water Gasoline/Diesel is \$1,800 overbudget
- Water Maintenance/Repairs is \$40,000 over budget due to start of Catholic Avenue Project.

Pumping Stations:

- Maintenance/Repairs is \$20,000 under budget
- Pumping Stations Electric is \$8,400 under budget

Previous Year Comparison:

Total Budget:

Total income is up \$94,000

Total Expenses are up \$15,000

Infrastructure:

I would now like to talk about the Town's infrastructure.

After 3 years in the making, the town finally saw the completion of the 2.6 million dollar clarifier project which included replacing an unrepairable clarifier, new generator, and relocation of the entire chemical room with all new chemical pumps.

This project was completed as a result of strong collaboration and teamwork from the elected officials, town manager, staff, contractors, and engineers. We wish to thank everyone for their involvement.

A project started in mid 2016 is now ready to go out to bid by the end of this month. This project also called "the Catholic Ave" project has an estimated cost of 1.1 million dollars. It involves the replacement of the water main on Catholic Ave along with the demo of the old water clarifier. It will also include all new sidewalks on both sides of the street, all new water meters and a total overlay of blacktop on the street itself.

The most important part of this project is also the addition of a new well which is capable of supplying the entire town with drinking water during the Town's peak season.

The Mayor and Council approved a proposal to replace the old boiler heating system in the Municipal Building with a new heating and air conditioning system. This project employed local contractors in the area and provided the necessary upgrades to bring the town hall up to an energy efficient standard. The estimated cost of this project was \$70,000. The project was completed on time and on budget. Staff members report a more comfortable temperature leveled environment.

The town completed a project that replaced the old barb wired fence around the water plant and installed a new white vinyl fencing to improve the overall appearance and safety of the area.

We recently completed road repairs and paving on several streets including, Beach Rd, Walnut St, Haven Rd, and portions of Bayside Ave.

In addition to the recently completed road repairs, the beach parking lot was expanded and a new drainage system installed. This project was also completed using local contractors and helps to accommodate parking for the popular beach destination during the busy summer season.

We also continue to replace existing street signs in accordance with the new federal guidelines.

Lastly, our town staff takes great pride in making our town look good for our residents and visitors. On top of helping with all the projects listed above, they maintain a very large amount of landscaping and greenscaping throughout the town. They are always prepared for any upcoming events.

We are very proud the progress we have made over the past year in regards to infrastructure improvements.

Communication:

The Town of Rock Hall launched its newly redesigned website in March of 2015. The visitors page (rockhallmd.com) contains everything a tourist to the town would need, such as a business directory, upcoming events, how to navigate the town, the history of Rock Hall and links to a webcam showing Rock Hall Harbor.

The government page (rockhallmd.gov) was designed with the citizens in mind. The site contains features such as email alerts for meeting dates, a listing of the municipal staff and a calendar that lists not only town activities, but also when town services like trash pickup will occur and when bills are due.

The new website remains very intuitive and provides anyone coming here with all the information they need to really take advantage of all aspects of Rock Hall.

From the period of July 1st, 2016 to May 10, 2017, the town website received 201,125 pageviews, 72,861 sessions with 67.3% being new visitors and 32.7% being returning visitors. Of those sessions, 27.5% are persons of the age of 18-24, 33.5% are persons of the age of 25-34. 54% being men, 45% being women. These stats are encouraging and reflect that Rock Hall is attracting the

younger generation perhaps young families looking for opportunities or family trips to visit.

In addition to the website, the Town continues to have a strong presence on Social Media such as Facebook, twitter and instagram. These advertising and marketing tools are key for the promotion of the town.

Finally, I am very excited to announce that the Town of Rock Hall implemented a cost effective way to provide online streaming of Town Utilities Board, Workshop and Regular Mayor and Council Meetings. This allows our citizens that can't make the meetings remain engaged in the town government as well as the many part time residents this gives them the ability to keep up with the latest happenings in the town.

We have made remarkable progress over the past year with advancing the Town's technology infrastructure and overall interaction with the Town Government and its citizens. I am very pleased with the progress we have made.

In the future, we hope to expand our website further and give the residents the availability to pay their bills online through the government page.

Public Safety:

The Mayor and Town Council remain committed to fighting the ongoing drug problem and continued to fund the Anti-Drug program (RHAD) here in the town.

In 2016 and earlier this year, the RHAD committee held a series of community safety and drug awareness events. These events were held here at the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company. We listened to citizens concerns and ideas on how to fight this ongoing problem as well as brought in motivational speakers to address audience members.

I urge the Town Council to keep this funding available for this program.

Our vision for Rock Hall is a healthy, vibrant and substance-abuse free community that supports the positive development of our youth to become strong, engaged and healthy adults.

Our mission is to engage the community in working together to promote a positive, and drug-free lifestyle for our youth and families.

As a team and even a community we need to continue to evaluate and see the RHAD program evolve, develop strategies which should include:

Enhancing awareness

Providing support

Reducing Access

Changing consequences

Modifying/changing policies

The fact of the matter is young lives continue to be lost due to this on-going problem and until we stand up as a community together, unfortunately, we will not see the results we've hoped for.

In 2016 the Rock Hall Police Department logged 5,384 calls for service. The majority of those calls were for patrol checks, stationary speed enforcement, school patrols, bank checks, suspicious persons, special assignments, and unlocking vehicles.

A total of 48 criminal investigations, down by 13 from the previous report. Of those investigations conducted they include 13 thefts, 4 assaults, 6 burglaries, and various other offenses.

104 arrests were made, down by 42 from the previous report. Of those arrests, they include 33 arrests for traffic related offenses, 13 for assault, 9 for malicious destruction of property, 6 warrants for other agencies, 5 arrests for burglary, 4 for CDS, 4 arrests for failure to obey a lawful police order, 2 for armed robbery and home invasion, 2 for disorderly conduct and 1 handgun violation.

Both criminal investigations and arrests are down compared to the previous years report.

A big thank you to our Police Department and all our officers for their dedicated service to the Town of Rock Hall and ensuring our safety on a daily basis.

For the past 2 years, the town has increased funding to the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company as a continuing commitment to public safety, this year, I am proposing to the council the largest donation yet. The Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company just signed a contract to purchase a new truck, the first time this has happened in

20 years. It will take a community effort to help fund this huge by most needed piece of equipment.

The Town of Rock Hall and the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company will continue to provide the fireworks show.

A strong fundraising campaign has kicked off. All donations made to the Rock Hall Fireworks Fund or the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company will be tax deductible and the Fireworks Committee will present a full accounting of receipts and disbursements as soon as practical after the conclusion of the 4th of July event to the Town of Rock Hall and the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company.

It is anticipated that any surplus from the event will be used by the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company to reduce the mortgage debt, to acquire needed new equipment, and to support the normal operating expenses of the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company.

The 2017 4th of July Fireworks extravaganza is scheduled for July 3rd, 2017 and will be displayed over the Rock Hall harbor with a scheduled start time of 9:00 PM.



The Town of Rock Hall
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To: Mayor Brian Jones
From: Chief Steven Moore
Re: 2016 Consolidated Police Report

Rock Hall Police Department
2016 Summary

In 2016 the Rock Hall Police Department logged a total of 5,384 calls for service. Among those calls were 2,683 requested patrol checks of businesses and residences, 277 school patrols, 239 bank checks, 166 foot patrols, 120 stationary speed enforcement assignments, 70 assists of other agencies, 58 requests to unlock vehicles, 50 alarms, 39 special assignments, 25 motor vehicle accidents, 25 requests to check the welfare of citizens, 21 emergency 911 hang up calls, 17 suspicious person calls, and 12 unwanted subjects.

In 2016 the Rock Hall Police Department conducted 48 investigations. Among those were 13 theft investigations, 6 burglary investigations, 5 DUI investigations, 4 suicidal subject investigations, 4 assault investigations, 3 malicious destruction of property investigations, 2 unattended death investigations, and 1 home invasion.

In 2016 the Rock Hall Police Department logged 104 arrests. Among those were 33 arrests for traffic related offenses, 13 for assault, 9 for malicious destruction of property, 6 warrants for other agencies, 5 arrests for burglary, 4 for CDS, 4 arrests for failure to obey a lawful police order, 2 for armed robbery and home invasion, 2 for disorderly conduct, and 1 handgun violation.


Chief Steven W. Moore
Rock Hall Police Department

Economy:

Over the past year the Town closely looked at special events and the impact they have on our town as well as the benefits they bring. Recognizing the importance and the economic impact these have on our community. The Council made significant progress in updating the language in the code regarding how the town handles special events in the future.

Our goal is to be appealing and preserve our small town charm, while making enhancements that will continue to attract visitors and new economic development.

We are very grateful for the many volunteers that come forward to help with these events. Volunteerism is a vitally important part of how Rock Hall is able to operate on a daily basis and ensure these events are successful. The Town is proud to support grassroots efforts.

As we celebrate our events in town, you probably can't help but notice something new is happening on Main Street on Friday nights. With the support and financial backing of the Town.

The Town of Rock Hall launched a new event on Fridays, from May to September, called "Festive Fridays on Main".

The event, featuring live entertainment, included something of interest for the whole family, including some Main Street merchants keeping their doors open for business. Some of the special festive Fridays included a Carnival Night, Public Safety Night, Christmas in July and movie nights. In addition, cruise nights were integrated into this exciting initiative.

This event will once again take place every Friday for 2017 summer. We encourage everyone in the community, and visitors alike, to support and participate in this event, and to help get this event off to a successful start.

The Town has a very strong relationship with the GRHBA and looks to increase funding to this organization to assist with marketing and promoting our town. I ask the Council to support an increase in that budget line item for fiscal year 2018.

Programs:

Main Street

The Town successfully obtained the Main Street Affiliate designation. Sponsored by the Maryland Department of Housing and Development, the program is designed to help smaller towns and communities develop downtown revitalization strategies. The program mainly means additional resource and technical support for outside agencies.

Participation in this program is key to help us transform our Main Street and downtown district by tapping into the assets that make them special using tested principles established by the National Main Street Center.

On 2 separate occasions, staff from this department visited and toured Rock Hall. They met with local business owners and offered suggestions and advice on how to improve Main Street's image. A full technical report will be issued and available in the near future.

I urge the Council to stay open minded and be creative as we approach the budget workshops and adopt a budget that continues to include a line item for the Main Street Program. Let's keep this as a priority.

Of course, this program and other programs would not be accessible by the town if the town was not designated as a Sustainable Community!

Sustainable Community

The Town of Rock Hall also completed and finalized this designation, by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), as a Sustainable Community.

Rock Hall joins the ranks of cities and towns throughout Maryland that enjoy this status, including our neighboring communities of Chestertown, Betterton and Millington. A Sustainable Community Designation (SCD) is a "threshold requirement" for eligibility to apply for a wide variety of DHCD programs aimed at strengthening communities.

Specifically, available funds target needs such as: business retention and expansion, streetscape improvements, increased homeownership and home rehabilitation, and land acquisition.

In 2016, I am pleased to report that the Town of Rock Hall was successful in obtaining grant funding for 2 of the applications submitted for DHCD funding.

\$35,000 for streetscape improvements, the town plans to start work shortly on Main Street to repair sidewalks, plant trees, install benches and place additional trash receptacles.

\$50,000 for a facade improvement project designated to improve the Rueben Rodney Building and Oyster Court buildings. This project will be more extensive and improve the overall structure and appearance of this area on Main Street.

Rock Hall looks forward to pursuing a wide variety of State funding opportunities for fiscal year 2018 as well.

HEAL Program

Our Wellness Committee was established in 2015 to help Rock Hall continue to develop and implement future HEAL policies. This year the HEAL committee sponsored a Health Fair at the Rock Hall Firehouse. This event brought in many local residents and visitors and was very

informational. I would like to thank them for all the hard work put into that event.

Waterfront

The Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan was completed and adopted in early 2017. After an extensive collaborative public planning process involving meetings of the Rock Hall Waterfront Committee (RHWC), a public “visioning” meeting in August 2016, a community survey, and a two-day public community workshop in October 2016 to develop and expand upon the initial ideas. The resulting final plan was adopted by the Mayor and Council.

The plan includes recommendations focusing on three areas that emerged from the public outreach efforts:

- Preserving and maintaining opportunities for water dependent businesses

- Enhancing the waterfront to attract more visitors while preserving working waterfront assets
- Managing the waterfront to increase economic activity through heritage- and nature-based tourism and improving linkages to Rock Hall's Main Street and nearby attractions

We will now move forward with implementing some of the ideas associated with this plan.

Goals for 2017:

There will be several projects and initiatives that we focus on this year that will have a future impact on Rock Hall.

The Catholic Ave project will better the quality of water for the residents on that street.

Continue to maintain and replace old equipment ultimately improving the Town's infrastructure.

We will work closely local and state representatives to improve our economy, expand our main street program.

Apply for additional resources such as community legacy funding

Continue to work towards a drug-free community.

Work to implement strategies and plans associated with and consistent to the Working Waterfront Masterplan

Closing:

As it has been since the beginning, Rock Hall's success as a community continues to rest on the shoulders of each person who calls Rock Hall home.

Today's Rock Hall has been shaped by the intentions of those who came before us, and our destiny will be delivered by those who are involved, invested, and inconsolably positive about what we will accomplish together.

I am grateful every day to play a small role in helping keep Rock Hall great, and I thank all of you for joining me in this calling. Although Rock Hall may experience difficulties and challenges in the coming year, In my opinion we are in a far better position than many of the majority municipalities in our region, state, and nation.

And so in this New Year, I challenge each of you to be intentional about Rock Hall -- about keeping each other happy and safe, about making life easier and better, about sharing our time and our talents, and about enjoying each day with an appreciation for all that we've been given.

In conclusion, I'd like to direct everyone's attention to the monitors for a very short presentation, as we go through

the presentation please pay attention to the lyrics of the song, I chose this song because I thought the lyrics are very powerful.

I hereby request the Council approve this State of Town Address and ask that this fulfil my obligation set forth by Section 404 of the Charter for the Town of Rock Hall, Maryland.

Thank You