Town Government Report

By Rande Davis

The December 6 town meeting had a light schedule with no key issues voted on. Instead the commissioners used the time to discuss issues concerning the Poolesville School Cluster and county legislation that may affect the town.

Commissioner Jerry Klubokowski, who is the commission liaison for the Poolesville School Cluster, provided the commissioners with an overall review of the status of school issues noting that Dr. Weast, superintendant of MCPS, in proclaiming the Monocacy Elementary School will remain open for the foreseeable future rejected two key proposals offered to strengthen the long term potential for the school. Those proposals was the so-called zero option suggesting the county reduce the minimum school population requirements for schools within the Agricultural Reserve and/or to allow students from outside the cluster to transfer to Monocacy Elementary.

Klubokowski raised the warning flag of complacency by residents in that diligent monitoring of decisions pending or made regarding all the schools within the cluster is more needed now than ever due to real concerns of declining enrollment. He noted the high school only meets the county standard because six hundred students from down county in various magnet programs are enrolled at the high school. The current low enrollment and anticipated declining enrollment for John Poole Middle School also threatens the future of this facility, according to Klobukowski, unless residents remain involved and active with the Board of Education.

Commission president, Eddie Kuhlman, updated his fellow commissioners on pending county legislation that may negatively impact the town. One proposed piece of legislation, MC1011 would have allowed the charging of bus fees for students traveling outside the school district and for extracurricular activities. Mr. Kuhlman reported this bill did not move forward.

The other bill, MC1111, would give MCPS autonomy in making infrastructure decisions on school facilities without requiring approval from legislative bodies of townships or their planning commissions. Apparently the impetus of this legislation came from Rockville rejecting MCPS decision to bring in portables. The bill would have to obtain state approval.

At the suggestion of state delegate Brian Feldman, the commissioners decided to provide a position paper objecting to the proposal to the state legislature prior to opening day in January.

The commissioners awarded a proclamation of appreciation to Eagle Scout Brad Ragazinsky of Troop 496 for his work in assisting young children of clients of WUMCO with birthday packages as his Eagle project.

The commissioners scheduled work sessions to prepare for upcoming budget sessions. As there is no pending or urgent matters pending the commissioners voted to cancel the December 20 meeting and set the next meeting for January 10 which will be the annual State of the Town Report.