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## Upper Marlboro ends 2010 fiscal year with another surplus

### Efforts to include town in War of 1812 celebrations also discussed in meeting

by Zoe Tillman | Staff Writer

Upper Marlboro ended fiscal 2010 with a budget surplus of \$173,980, marking the third year in a row the town has made more money than it has spent, despite cuts in state aid and a tough economy.

During the town's monthly meeting Tuesday evening, Stephen Sonnett, president of the town's Board of Commissioners, credited conservative budgeting and higher-than-expected income tax revenues as reasons for the surplus.

In fiscal 2010, which ended June 30, the town collected \$57,161 more in revenue than what was budgeted, and spent \$116,819 less than budgeted, according to the official audit prepared by Bridgett, Mock and Associates of Waldorf. The town ended fiscal 2009 with a surplus of more than \$200,000.

There was no discussion of the audit during the meeting, but town resident Tracy Stone said after the meeting he thought the surplus was a sign of "good management by the commissioners."

"They're quite frugal," he said. "They watch every expenditure closely."

The three-person board has yet to spend the fiscal 2009 surplus, although several thousand dollars were set aside for some capital improvement projects, such as removing structures the town no longer uses and renovating vacant lots. Discussion of what to do with the new surplus is expected to take place at future meetings.

Town Clerk David Williams spoke to residents during the meeting about the state and Prince George's County's preparations for the War of 1812 bicentennial celebration next year. He said he was worried that without a concerted push by residents to be included in any countywide historic tours or guides, south county might fail to benefit from the expected boost in tourism.

The town has several connections to the War of 1812, notably as home to Dr. William Beanes, whose actions against the British played a part in inspiring Francis Scott Key to write the "Star Spangled Banner." Beanes is buried in the town.

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"There's a great opportunity to get on board," said Williams, who noted that planning is already under way in Hyattsville, Bladensburg and other communities to the north. Sonnett said he hopes to create a town committee by the end of the year and collaborate with nearby communities.

Other items on Tuesday night's agenda included approval to purchase \$28,000 worth of new snow removal equipment — the town's existing equipment was woefully inadequate to handle the blizzards last year, Sonnett noted — and passage of a resolution drafted by the Maryland Municipal League that calls on the Maryland General Assembly to reinstate state funds to municipalities for highway repairs and police aid.

Those funds were cut last fall when state officials scaled down the budget, leaving many municipalities, including Upper Marlboro, scrambling to make up for the unexpected budget shortfall.

About a dozen residents attended the meeting, including Rafael Hylton, who ran unsuccessfully for Prince George's County sheriff this year and has since retired as a sergeant in the county's Office of the Sheriff. Hylton lives several hundred feet from Town Hall, but never had time to get involved in town affairs.

But now that he is retired, he said, "I want to see if I can help out."

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