

Town of Onancock
Town Council
March 23rd, 2015
7:00 PM

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and roll was called. Mayor Russell Jones and Councilmembers T. Lee Byrd, Catherine Krause, John Morgan, Sandra Fox, Joshua Bundick and Fletcher Fosque were present. All members were present and a quorum was established.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Consideration and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting on February 23rd, 2015:

Mayor Jones asked if there were corrections, changes, or additions to the February 23rd, 2015 meeting minutes.

With none, Councilmember Byrd made a motion to approve the February 23rd, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted. Councilmember Bundick seconded the motion. The motion passed my unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

- a. Claim filed by Donly Watkins for \$275.00 for damage done to his automobile while driving on a town road:

Town Manager Lawton explained to council that about a month ago Mr. Watkins was driving on a town road and claimed that when he hit a pothole on that road, Jackson Street, it damaged his vehicle's tire rim. Mr. Watkins has submitted a claim to council asking for a reimbursement of the money that was required to fix his vehicle. Mr. Watkins did not obtain an incident report from a police officer. Onancock Chief of Police, Eric Williams, feels that speed may have been a factor in the incident not just the condition of the road. Mr. Lawton feels that while the road does need some repair he does not believe that the town is negligible. Unfortunately, the recent weather conditions were not favorable for road repairs and the town does not have money in the budget for a complete road overhaul. Mr. Lawton stated that road repairs on town roads will have to be piecemealed. Mr. Lawton suggested that if council did decide to compensate Mr. Watkins for this issue, that they look at doing it as a credit to what he currently owes the town in past due personal property taxes which totals more than \$700 to date.

Councilmember Fox asked if Mr. Watkins submitted an invoice to the town. Mr. Lawton stated that copies of his receipts are included in the agenda packet. Councilmember Fox asked what the Virginia Department of Transportation would do in a scenario like this. Mr. Lawton shared that it is their policy not to repair vehicles that may have damage from a state road.

Mayor Jones asked Mr. Lawton if there has been any effort to repair the town roads in the past six months. Mr. Lawton shared that there has been some effort but that the current weather conditions are unfavorable for repairs of this kind.

Mr. Lawton recommended that council not approve Mr. Watkins request for reimbursing claiming that he feels it would create precedence for future claims.

Councilmember Morgan stated that crediting Mr. Watkins back personal property taxes is the same as writing him a check for the damages, either way the town losses money.

Councilmember Krause stated that she believes that the town has done its due diligence and it working towards correcting the problems with the town roads. Councilmember Krause expressed some concern that council has no proof that the damage was even from a pothole on Jackson Street.

Councilmember Bundick stated that there is a big difference between normal wear and tear and negligence.

Councilmember Byrd shared that since he learned of this claim he has been watching vehicles drive down Jackson Street and has noted that they all slow down when coming to the potholes or move around them.

Councilmember Bundick made a motion to deny the claim filed by Mr. Watkins in the amount of \$275.00. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- b. FY 16 Budget Presentation, G. Cabell Lawton, IV (document to be distributed at the meeting): Mr. Lawton presented council with a proposed balanced budget for fiscal year 2015-16 (FY16). There are a few issues in terms of revenue and how it is getting booked therefore some of those numbers will be getting adjusted shortly. Mr. Lawton stated that the town is in good financial shape for this time of year. Mr. Lawton explained that the proposed FY16 budget represents an increase in sewer rates which will increase revenues by \$100,000. That increase in sewer revenue will be bring down the general revenue contribution that the water and sewer departments have been receiving. Mr. Lawton shared that the current water and sewer collections have increased over the past year largely due to stricter policies on delinquencies. The proposed FY16 budget would only move \$44,000 of general fund monies to the water and sewer departments. Another increase in revenue would be for water and that is due to the hospital becoming a customer of the town. Another aspect of the proposed FY16 budget includes a 1% increase in pay for VRS Plan 1 employees; this is part of a four year arrangement. Some money has been budgeted for a cost of living pay increase for town employees. Another major change is that previously the town's street crew's salary and benefits were paid out of four separate department budgets, we have shifted that so that salary and benefits will come from one department budget. Also, currently the Office Manager, Lisa Weeks, has 50% of her salary and benefits paid through the water and sewer budgets. In an effort to save those departments some money we are proposing to move her out of those departments which means that 100% of her salary and benefits will be covered by the administration budget. The Accounts Receivable Clerk, Allison Hart, will continue to have 50% of her salary and benefits paid for through the water and sewer departments therefore more of those responsibilities will be shifted to her position. The proposed FY16 budget also includes revenue from the septage receiving facility but we have cut that projected revenue in half since currently we are not receiving the flow we initially thought we would. Overall, most of the expenditures are remaining the same. The budget must be adopted by June 30th, 2015 which means we will need a public hearing two weeks before our council meeting in June. Mr. Lawton also shared that if council would like we can schedule a work session before the public hearing to iron out any issues council would like.

Councilmember Fosque asked why the year-to-date on real property line item looked so high. Mr. Lawton explained that there has been some monies booked under that line item that were placed there inappropriately and staff is currently working on correcting it.

Councilmember Bundick asked if it would be possible to do away with the vehicle decals like Accomack County. Mr. Lawton explained that the town would need to bill twice a year to place the decal fee on the personal property tax bill which would mean that the town's tax rate as well as the budget would need to be in place earlier than June 30th.

Councilmember Byrd shared that the weather has been part of the reason why haulers have not been utilizing the town's septage receiving facility and that the current rate may also be causing an issue. Councilmember Byrd encouraged council to rethink the current rate to encourage haulers to utilize our system.

Councilmember Morgan asked if the council's next step in the budget process would be scheduling a work session. Councilmember Fosque asked if they could accomplish a work session during a regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Lawton affirmed that they could.

Mayor Jones asked council review the proposed FY16 budget so that they can discuss it further at the next council meeting.

Public Comment:

Ms. Nancy Peterson, 74 Kerr Street, asked if council would be looking into increasing the sewer rates for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Lawton shared that an increase has been proposed.

Planning Commission Report:

No report.

Marketing Committee Report:

No report.

Personnel Committee Report:

Mayor Jones shared that the committee has had its first meeting and they are looking into revising the Employee Manual which is their primary focus.

Waterfront Committee Report:

Mr. Lawton shared that there was a meeting on March 10th, 2015. Mr. Lawton shared that Mr. Charles Kelly would be returning as the town's harbormaster. Mr. Lawton explained to council that the biggest concern for the wharf at the moment is the finalization of the fuel tank. Accomack County Building and Zoning issued a stop work order citing no soil tests as an issue. Mr. Lawton explained that the town is working with a new person at Accomack County who is working with the town constructively to get us to the finish line. Mr. Lawton also shared that Mr. Kelly was looking into security cameras for the wharf and that Councilmember Fosque has been recently appointed to the Waterfront Committee. Mr. Lawton shared that the next Waterfront Committee meeting would be held April 14th, 2015.

Mayor's Report:

No report.

Town Manager's Report:

1. Mr. Lawton shared that on Wednesday the Accomack County Board of Supervisors held a meeting to discuss the construction of their own Wastewater Treatment Plant. Several groups of individuals stood up and spoke to the Supervisors encouraging them to work with the town for their wastewater needs as oppose to the constructing their own facility. The theme was cooperation not competition. Councilmember Bundick spoke on behalf of the town encouraging coordination with the town. The Board of Supervisors decided to draft an agreement to forward to the Onancock Town Council for approval for future services. Mr. Lawton stated that this was a step in the right direction. Mr. Lawton feels that a path has been made to move forward with the County.
2. In regards to the Wharf Gas Tanks, Mr. Lawton feels that some good progress has been made to meet their requirements laid out by Accomack County for the building permit approval. The town has received an estimate for engineering services which was \$3,200. The biggest concern is the ground beneath the proposed location of the tank. Mr. Lawton explained that he has written the Virginia Port Authority asking for an extension on the grant monies. Everything is ordered and ready to go; the only thing the town is waiting on is the building permit from Accomack County.

Councilmember Morgan asked what the fueling alternative will be for boaters until the town's tank is in place. Mr. Lawton explained that Mr. Kelly was in the process of discussing options with Pep-Up.

Councilmember Bundick suggested the rental of a portal tank. Mr. Kelly expressed some concern for the security risks that may be involved in having a portal tank on site. Mr. Lawton said that the town would still look into that as an option. Councilmember Fosque shared that it may be difficult get a permit for a portal tank.

Councilmember Bundick questioned whether the fuel sold from the alternative tank would be sales benefitting the town or Pep-Up. Mr. Lawton shared that that is an issue that town staff is working on.

3. Mr. Lawton also shared that the town's boat ramp is still in need of repair and that staff hopes to have a low tide in the next day or two so that they can pour the special concrete.
4. Mr. Lawton thanked council and town residents for their participation and support of the 2nd Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.
5. Mr. Lawton shared that the new town website has gone live. He encouraged council to check it out. Mr. Lawton explained that the online pay option is not live yet and it will not be until the bugs are worked out.
6. Mr. Lawton shared with council that there are some unused grant monies for the Septage Receiving Project. Close to \$32,000 which will go primarily to the plant for special paint and a

fair amount of equipment upgrades. Mr. Lawton thanked USDA-Rural Development for working with the town on projects such as these.

Mayor and Town Council Comments:

Councilmember Fosque asked if the town could start a Christmas Decorations Committee to discuss town decorations. The committee would review decoration purchases as well as direct town staff on where to place them. Mr. Lawton shared that council input would be greatly appreciate but that they would need to meet soon so that items could be ordered in time. Councilmembers Krause and Fox expressed interest in being on the committee.

Councilmember Fosque also shared that the Onancock Farmer's Market is in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) which will make the Farmer's Market eligible for grants. At some point the Onancock Farmer's Market will be coming to the town asking for a letter of support which will greatly help their ability to receive grant monies. Also, at some point down the road Farmer's Market would like to get a Resolution from the town stating that the town supports the Farmer's Market. Mayor Jones asked Councilmember Fosque if he would like to draft the Resolution for council's consideration. Mr. Lawton said that we would get the format over to Councilmember Fosque so he could work on getting the Resolution together.

Councilmember Bundick thanked everyone for supporting the town at the Accomack County Board of Supervisors meeting.

Councilmember Bundick also wanted to see if town staff had an opportunity to look into the prospect of acquiring a throw able life buoy. Councilmember Byrd verified that staff was looking into having one at the wharf and the kayak dock for full time safety measures.

Councilmember Bundick also wanted to thank town staff for their efforts during this fiscal year and he is encouraging council to remember that with the new proposed fiscal year budget when looking at possible pay increases.

Councilmember Fox thanks Nancy James and Lisa Weeks for their hard work on the St. Patrick's Day Parade, stating that she believed the parade to be a success.

Councilmember Krause asked if there was any way the town staff and council could positively interact with old and new businesses in town. Councilmember Krause would like to have a dialogue with these businesses to better understand the pros and cons of operating in town so that the town can continue to encourage new businesses to the area. Mr. Lawton explained that that has not been a traditional role the town has played although town staff welcomes businesses when they apply for their business licenses. Councilmember Fosque suggested that council be notified of new businesses in town via email so that they can personally welcome them to town.

Councilmember Byrd commended Councilmember Bundick on his efforts at the Accomack County Board of Supervisors meeting last Wednesday. Councilmember Byrd believes that Councilmembers Bundick's speech helped to sway some board members to vote to work with the town. Councilmember Byrd also feels that the town being proactive with a sewer rate change has helped the Board of Supervisors get on board with coming to an agreement with the town for wastewater treatment services.

Closed Session (Contract Negotiation, Personnel, and Consultation with Attorney):

Councilmember Morgan made a motion for Town Council to convene a Closed Meeting for the purpose of holding a discussion of the personnel, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended. Councilmember Fosque seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Town Council went into closed session at 8:20 PM.

Councilmember Morgan made a motion to reconvene Town Council in an Open Meeting, and that a roll call vote be taken and recorded on this motion so that each member who votes in favor shall, thereby, certify compliance with all of the matters identified in Section 2.2-3711 (D) of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended. Councilmember Byrd seconded the motion.

Councilmember Byrd	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / <input type="radio"/> No
Councilmember Krause	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / <input type="radio"/> No
Councilmember Morgan	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / <input type="radio"/> No
Councilmember Bundick	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / <input type="radio"/> No
Councilmember Fox	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / <input type="radio"/> No
Councilmember Fosque	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / <input type="radio"/> No

Town Council came out of closed session at 9:12 PM.

Adjourn:

Councilmember Byrd made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Fosque seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 PM.



Russell Jones, Mayor



Lisa Weeks, Deputy Clerk