

Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting
August 24, 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, Joshua Bundick and Fletcher Fosque were present. Councilmember John Morgan arrived at 7:02 PM and Councilmember Sandra Fox was absent. A majority of members were present and a quorum was established.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Consideration and Approval of the Meeting Minutes from the July 27th, 2015:

Mayor Jones asked if there were any corrections, changes or additions to the meeting minutes from the July 27th, 2015 meeting.

With none, Councilmember Byrd made a motion to approve the minutes se submitted. Councilmember Bundick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

A. Pricing methodology for fuel at the wharf:

Mayor Jones shared that a pricing scheme had been devised for gas at the wharf but had not yet been adopted by Town Council. The methodology is as follows; the customer is charged \$.50 on top of the cash price and then another 3% for credit card purchases.

Councilmember Byrd made a motion to adopt the methodology for pricing gas and diesel products at the town wharf as outlined in staff's recommendation in this memorandum. Councilmember Bundick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

B. Accomack Community Band:

Mr. Bobby Isdell, Accomack Community Band, asked Town Council for their approval to hold their annual haunted house this year at the Old Onancock High School. Mr. Isdell explained to Council that this is their request for a variance to Town Ordinance 16-9; Relating to Halloween, which states that Halloween activities may only occur on Halloween, must end by 8 PM, and no one over 13 years of age may participate. Mr. Isdell shared that they have a verbal agreement in place with the Accomack County Sheriff's Department for a deputy to onsite. There will also be volunteers to assist with maintaining crowd control and, in the past, the Onancock Police Department also made it a priority to patrol the area more frequently during the event.

Mayor Jones asked what the average attendance of the event is nightly. Mr. Isdell shared that on average they have 200 people go through the Haunted House and that last year, on the last evening, they had over 400 attendees.

Mayor Jones asked if Council grants the variance for the Accomack Community Band so that they may hold their annual Haunted House event at the Old Onancock High School. All were in verbal agreement.

C. BZA Appointments:

Mayor Jones explained that the Town is required to have a Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) which is a quasi-judicial committee, appointed by the Accomack County Circuit Court. The purpose of the BZA is to hear Landowner appeals to the Town's Zoning Ordinances. Town Council has been asked to get a list of potential names together for the Circuit Court Judge. Mr. Lawton shared that the Board needs to be reconstituted quickly since the Town currently has one request for a variance that needs to be heard.

Councilmember Krause made a motion to request the appointment of Mr. Caleb Fowler, Ms. Carolyn Richardson, Ms. Maphis Oswald, Mr. Tom Reinerth and Mr. Duke Shanahan for a four year term on the BZA. Councilmember Bundick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment:

Mr. Rick Turner, Onancock Street, asked for clarification regarding the rental spaces at the Town Wharf. Mr. Turner had heard that long term rentals were no longer available at the wharf.

Mayor Jones shared that this issue is discussed yearly at the Waterfront Committee Meetings and that the previous revenue from yearly rentals was not in the Town's best interested to continue. Mayor Jones encouraged Mr. Turner to come to the Waterfront Committee Meetings since he is positive that this issue will be discussed again for the next season.

Mrs. Janet Fosque, Market Street, expressed her concern for landowners allowing short term rentals in Town. Mrs. Fosque feels that it violates Town Code and needs to be corrected.

Mayor Jones shared that he was not certain that it is a violation but that the Town Staff and the Planning Commission could look into the issue further.

Planning Commission:

No Meeting.

Marketing Committee:

Councilmember Morgan shared that the meeting was centered around Mrs. Fosque's presentation on updating the Town's Christmas Decorations.

Mrs. Fosque asked Town Council if the purchase of the brackets for the banners could come from another line item in the budget so that the Christmas Decorations Committee would have more funds available to purchase the skyline that will go on Market Street and Marshall Street. Also, Mrs. Fosque mentioned that the brackets would be up year-round so the Town will be able to purchase season appropriate banners for times other than for the Christmas Season.

Town Council agreed to allow the purchase to be taken from another budget line item other than Christmas Decorations (107068.6015).

Mrs. Fosque continued on to share that with the Marketing Committee's help they were able to nail down a slogan for the Holiday Banners, "Season's Greetings".

Personnel Committee:

No meeting

Waterfront Committee:

Councilmember Byrd shared that the Committee met on August 11th. Councilmember Byrd shared that the gas tanks at the Wharf are finally up and running and sales have been great. There had been a small issue with the hoses on the tank but they have since been repaired and all is working as it should. Councilmember Byrd explained that the Town will need to purchase some additional signage for the dingy sock as well as to remind residents and visitors that parking trailers on the grass is not permitted. Councilmember Byrd also shared that Mrs. Jean DiDanielle has recently become the new Harbormaster Assistant.

Councilmember Bundick asked if there have been any issues with cars parking in the trailer parking designated spots. Councilmember Byrd confirmed that there has been some issues and that the Harbormaster has been working with the Onancock Police Department in correcting that issue.

Christmas Committee:

Councilmember Krause thanked Mrs. Fosque for all of her work on the Christmas Decorations Committee. Councilmember Krause also thanked Town Council for allowing the purchase of the brackets to come from another line item in the budget so that they would have the funds needed to purchase the skyline.

Mayor's Report:

No report.

Town Manager's Report:

Taxes: Mr. Lawton shared that Town staff has made several attempts to collect on certain tax delinquencies in Town without success although overall collections are up. Mr. Lawton wanted to alert Council to the issue because it may take further more severe action get certain businesses into compliance. Several instances our correspondences are being ignored. Decal notifications were a success. Utility collections processes are in place and working well.

Unison: Mr. Lawton shared that this Company would like to purchase the current leases on the water tower and share a portion of any future leases. AT&T, a current leaser, has the option to deescalate the cost of their rent based on a number factors such as traffic flow. There is a concern that they will do this again in the future. Unison is offering the Town \$268,000 to take over the leases on the water tower. That money can go a long way especially for matches to potential grant monies. Mr. Lawton explained that they see the water tower as the future of telecommunications. Mr. Lawton also suggested that Town Council contact Mr. Wilson Hogan, Unison, for any questions or clarifications they might want.

Mayor Jones further explained that Unison will actively look for others companies who may want to rent space on the water tower and the Town would get 60% for the lease but Unison will manage it.

Councilmember Fosque mentioned that the Town would be foregoing \$30,000 in annual revenue if the Town allowed Unison to take over the water tower leases. Councilmember Fosque is concerned that the Town may not be able to cover that loss of annual revenue.

Mr. Lawton explained that the initial payment of \$268,000 from Unison should cover about ten years of that "lost" revenue.

Mayor Jones explained that the offer from Unison is not on a time constraint and that Council will have time to review and take action as they see fit within Council's timeframe.

Road Issues: Mr. Lawton shared that Town staff recently got quotes for repairing three town owned roads, the cheapest being \$40,000. The Town is starting to see more infrastructural issues with Town owned roads. Mr. Lawton further explained that there are also substructure issues with the roads. Town staff has started to look into using concrete for patching the roads.

Mayor Jones asked if the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will take over roads that have been patched with concrete.

Mr. Lawton shared that it will have to be of a certain quality for VDOT to take it over. Mr. Lawton also shared that the Town roads are deteriorating so much that vehicles are starting to become damaged on these declining roads. Mr. Lawton explained that concrete would be more of a long-term Band-Aid.

Overgrowth in Town: Mr. Lawton shared that recently some landowners in Town were sent notices, requesting that their overgrowth be taken care of before the Town steps in. To date, all who received notices were receptive to fixing the problem. Most called to verify where the issues were in their yards.

Watermen Slips: Mr. Lawton shared that through his conversation with Preston Smith that the only concern they have is with how many slips are reserved for transient boaters. According to Preston Smith if a rental lasts longer than 15 days it is no longer considered transient. The three boat slips reserved for the watermen was actually a Town request when drafting the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG). Mr. Lawton explained that the only obligation the Town has to BIG is that 15 slips are reserved for transient boaters.

Mayor and Town Council Comments:

Councilmember Krause shared that she was glad to hear that the overgrown trees and bushes in Town will be taken care.

Councilmember Byrd encouraged the audience to attend the next Waterfront Committee. The Committee is open to all ideas on how to proceed with slip rentals in the coming years.


Closed Session, if necessary:

None required.

Adjourn:

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.



Russell Jones, Mayor



Lisa Weeks, Deputy Clerk