

Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting
July 24, 2017
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 Robert Bloxom, Catherine Krause, T. Lee Byrd, Ray Burger, 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 the Regular Town Council Minutes from the June 26, 2017 Meeting:

Mayor Jones asked if there were any changes, corrections or additions to the minutes as submitted.

Councilmember Krause asked that Pete Laylor's name be corrected in the May minutes. All agreed.

Without further comment, Councilmember Bundick made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Councilmember Byrd seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

- a. Resolution of Support for Grant Application for the Catherine Grey Estates Preserve – Town Manager William Kerbin and Mr. Jim McGowan, Nature Conservancy: Mr. Kerbin explained that the Nature Conservancy is asking for the town's support in their grant application which would allow them to purchase and preserve land on the north side of the Onancock Creek.

Mr. McGowan explained to council that the Nature Conservancy is applying for a Virginia Land Conversation Grant which would affect the property on Grey Drive at the end of Poplar Cove. The Nature Conservancy is interested in protecting the land, wildlife and marsh migration on this property. The Nature Conservancy will also add trails and a kayak launch to the property. Mr. McGowan further explained that part of the grant application process is that the Nature Conservancy provides a Resolution of support from a locality. The Town of Onancock is the closest locality to the land.

Councilmember Bundick asked if an easement would be placed on the property. Mr. McGowan confirmed that it would, further explaining that once they become owners of the property the Nature Conservancy plans to sit down with the town to discuss best public access.

Mayor Jones asked if there was any walkable beach in that area. Mr. McGowan shared that it is only walkable at low tide. Mayor Jones asked if there will be any restrictions on boaters tying up and walking around. Mr. McGowan stated that it would be allowed.

Mayor Jones asked if there was any public comment on this issue.

Mr. Anthony LoFaso, Kerr Street, asked if the town was being asked to grant any financial support for the project. Mr. McGowan explained that the town is only being asked for a Resolution of Support.

Councilmember Krause read the Resolution aloud. Councilmember Fosque seconded the Resolution of Support. All verbally agreed to the town's Resolution of Support.

- b. Main Street Conference Report – Councilmember Catherine Krause: Councilmember Krause shared that she recently attended a Main Street conference in Winchester, VA on behalf of the town. She thanked the town for the honor and privilege of being able to utilize town funds for this type of education. Councilmember Krause shared that the conversation was geared towards the revitalization of downtowns. The millennials are changing the face of shopping, malls have become a thing of the past. Millennials want to live downtown and have experiences that come from specialized stores. The projection is that in the next five years 20% of malls will either be torn down or repurposed. Councilmember Krause continued stating that the foundational premise was that anyone can throw a party or festival but the main street initiative is about strong economic development giving the millennials the experiences they are after. Councilmember Krause shared that in Winchester, VA, the downtown jewelry shop offers you games, coffee bar and couches to relax on while getting your watch battery replaced. Councilmember Krause stressed that businesses do not want a singular focus, selling a product is no longer all there is to retail services. Councilmember Krause cited another example of a main street revitalization in St. Paul, VA, population just over 700. In the 1990's this town's coal industry faded away and along with it the vibrancy of their downtown. A group of ladies got together in an effort to save their town. They received a grant and hired a consultant which helped them come up with a strategic plan to save the town. This group has stuck to their guns and their strategic plan and turned things around for St. Paul, VA. They won the Business Innovation Award. Councilmember Krause explained that the catalyst for a project such as this will need to come from the citizenry with local government support.
- c. Reappointment of Planning Commission Members: Bill Bagwell; Fletcher Fosque; Judith Grier; Buck Walters; and, Ridgeway Dunton – Town Manager William Kerbin: Mr. Kerbin explained that some of the Planning Commission members' terms have expired and council needs to reappoint them.

Councilmember Byrd made a motion to reappoint the following members of the Town of Onancock Planning Commission for a term of four years: Bill Bagwell, Judith Grier, Fletcher Fosque, Ridgeway Dunton and Buck Walters. Councilmember Bundick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Councilmember Fosque shared that his term on Planning Commission runs with his council seat but that he may resign from Planning Commission in the near future since he has been on for so long.

- d. Friends of Onancock School Report – Ms. Carol Tunstall, Friends of Onancock School: Ms. Carol Tunstall, Friends of Onancock School, gave an update. Recently, their board had some additional organizational development discussions as well as welcomed new board members. Ms. Joani Donohoe has been promoted to the Executive Director of the Friends of Onancock School board. Ms. Tunstall thanked Councilmember Krause for her contribution as the council representative. The board has devised a strategic plan with four goal areas: continue to improve the building and open space of the Historic Onancock School; ensure sufficient income to cover operational expenses and to increase contingency/capital funds; increase the usage of

the building space and open space; and, develop the FOS/HOS "Brand". The engineer recommendations have also been prioritized and high priority items have already been addressed. Ms. Tunstall also shared their financial highlights as well as their fundraising efforts.

Councilmember Fosque asked for the long-term plan for the shop building. Ms. Tunstall shared that the board is still discussing this issue and that the projected cost for disposal of the building was \$15,000 to \$20,000. Ms. Donohoe mentioned that those numbers did include discounts from Accomack County for the tipping fees.

- e. Preliminary review of FY17 Number – Town Manager William Kerbin: Mr. Kerbin reviewed the preliminary end of FY17 budget. Mr. Kerbin explained that the water and sewer shortfall was not as much as previously anticipated. Instead of \$137,000 transfer from general revenue it appears that only \$52,000 will need to be transferred.

Mayor Jones mentioned that once again the town did well in general fund revenue but fell short on water and sewer revenue.

Councilmember Krause asked about the wharf's trending numbers. Councilmember Byrd shared that he expects to have real numbers to present at the next council meeting.

Public Comment:

Mr. Anthony LoFaso, Kerr Street, mentioned that he was on vacation in June therefore was not here for the budget meetings that discussed water and sewer rate increases. Mr. LoFaso expressed his concern for the new rate increase since council just increased rates last year by changing the minimum from 5,000 gallons to 3,000 gallons, stating that new minimum should have been 3,500 gallons when the town moved to bi-monthly billing. Mr. LoFaso asked about the town servicing the new hospital's water and sewer. Mayor Jones explained that the town is only servicing the water to the hospital directly. The sewer services to the hospital are being provided by Accomack County. Mr. LoFaso asked if the hospital was getting a better rate than town residents. Mayor Jones explained that the hospital is billed the same rates as town residents. Mr. LoFaso asked about other avenues of revenue enhancers such as increasing the number of tickets given out by the police department and going after those individuals without decals. Mr. LoFaso also mentioned that he has heard that there are several businesses in town that do not have current business licenses, can the town go after that money to help with the revenue shortfalls. Mayor Jones stated that the town is in the process of going after those businesses that are not currently in compliance and that traffic tickets go to the state first and then to the town. The town only gets a portion of the actual fine. Mayor Jones also stated that while these items will certainly be helpful to the revenue shortfalls they will not be enough to overcome the debt service on the sewer plant which is creating the largest deficit in town.

Mr. Adam James, Onancock Volunteer Fire Department, stated that he wanted to give council an update. First, Mr. James thanked council for their continued support of the department. The Town of Onley's Volunteer Fire Department is now out of service which has significantly increased the number of calls that the Onancock Volunteer Fire Department are responding to. Mr. James also shared that the department will be listing the carnival grounds for sale in the near future. Mr. James continued with his update stating that they will be mapping the coordinates of all of the hydrants in town with the efforts of the town staff and an eagle scout that recently joined the department. These hydrants will also be tested for water flow and then repainted. Mr. James also mentioned that on Saturday, August 5th the fire department will be hosting its first ever Croaker Tournament out of the Onancock Wharf. Mr. James

finished by mentioning the declining revenue the department is currently experiencing. Since the hospital is so close to their service area they are not able to get a line started in a patient prior to their arrival at the hospital which is cutting their profits in half. Also, the billable mileage is significantly less than when the hospital was in Nassawadox.

Mr. Haydon Rochester, King Street, asked Mr. James if they planned on asking the Town of Onley for additional revenue since Accomack County voted to close their Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. James stated that the revenues that were going to that company will be evenly divided among all fire departments in Accomack County.

Mr. Alan Silverman, Parker Street, thanked Mr. Kerbin for his efforts in getting 49 Market Street cleaned up. Mr. Silverman suggested that the town may not have strong enough nuisance ordinances on the books to assist when issues such as these arise.

Planning Commission Report:

Councilmember Fosque shared that the Planning Commission is continuing its work on the town's Comprehensive Plan. The commission is making significant progress but that it will be still be a few more months until the document is ready for council's approval.

Waterfront Committee Meeting Report:

Councilmember Byrd shared that there was no July meeting but that the waterfront is moving in the right direction. This year's revenues are currently exceeding last years by \$10,000, with fuel sales up 30%. Councilmember Byrd also shared that the town now has the permits in place to move forward with the floating dock project this winter.

Personnel Committee Report:

No Meeting.

Holiday Committee Report:

No meeting.

Mayor's Report:

None.

Town Manager's Report:

Mr. Kerbin presented the following report to council:

- Mr. Kerbin and Mr. Bryan Horton met with Lt. Gant from the National Guard to discuss assisting the town with various projects. Projects such as resurfacing streets, the rehabilitation of the Samuel Outlaw Building and the clearing of brush and debris from the police firing range.
- Mr. Kerbin shared that he will be reaching out to local businesses in an effort to create a comprehensive business directory for the Christmas Homes Tour. Mr. Kerbin is also asking businesses what type of assistance they would like to see from the town.
- Mr. Kerbin attended a Wallops Island Regional Alliance meeting on July 11, 2017.
- Mr. Kerbin attended the Samuel Outlaw Board meeting on July 19, 2017. The board has created a fundraising committee and a building and grounds committee.
- Mr. Kerbin attended an Eastern Shore Preparedness Coalition meeting on July 20, 2017. The group focused on planning for natural and manmade disasters on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Closed Session, if needed:

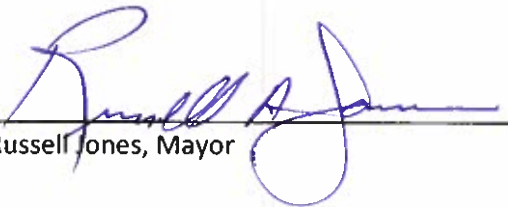
None.

Adjourn:

Councilmember Krause mentioned that a telephone pole was replaced on Market Street and that it does not look very nice. Councilmember Krause asked Mr. Kerbin to check into this issue.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.



Russell Jones, Mayor



Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk