

Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting
August 28, 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, T. Lee Byrd, Ray Burger and Fletcher Fosque were present. Councilmembers Catherine Krause and Joshua Bundick were absent. A majority of members were present and a quorum was established.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

*Please note that Councilmember T. Lee Byrd left the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Consideration and Approval of the Regular Town Council Meeting from July 24, 2017:

Mayor Jones asked for any changes, additions or corrections to the minutes as submitted.

With none, Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Councilmember Burger seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

- a. Special Use Permit Application, 04:17 – Clancy Herr and Tannis McLaughlin, 26 Ames Street – Mr. Kerbin explained that the special use permit is a request to operate a homestay at 26 Ames Street. Mr. Kerbin recommended approval of the permit. Mayor Jones asked if council had any comment.

Councilmember Byrd asked about off-street parking at that location. Mr. Gil York spoke on behalf of the applicants and shared that the driveway has plenty of room for guests to park. Mr. York also stated that the owners are aware of the off-street parking stipulation.

Councilmember Fosque explained that this item of business needs to be heard in a public hearing. Mayor Jones explained that they were currently in the public hearing section of this meeting. Mr. Kerbin shared that the special use permit was noticed in the Eastern Shore Post.

Mr. York shared that Mr. Herr, one of the applicants, owns other property on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Mr. Herr is already familiar with the area and loves it. Mr. York continued stating that Mr. Herr plans on utilizing the property for himself as well as an Airbnb rental.

Mayor Jones asked if the public had any comment on the matter. Ms. Nancy Arnold, Ames Street, shared that she is not against this use at that location but wants to make sure that the property will be managed. Stating that there is 25-feet between the properties and since she works from home wants to make sure that the owners are being responsible. Councilmember Fosque explained that there are certain controls outlined in the town code, one of which there must be a number on file at Town Hall for the responsible party that is accessible 24-hours a day. The applicants can also lose their permit if there are complaints made about their short-term renters.

Councilmember Byrd made a motion to approve special use permit 04:17. Councilmember Bloxom seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Councilmember Fosque asked Mr. Kerbin if there is a comprehensive list of all of the homestays in town which includes the pertinent contact numbers. Mr. Kerbin said that he would look into that.

- b. Hazardous Duty Enhanced Retirement Benefit – Town Manager, William Kerbin – Mr. Kerbin explained to council that they approved the Hazardous Duty expenditure for the current budget year. Part of the process to obtain the Hazardous Duty benefit is for the town to complete an actuarial study through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). Mr. Kerbin asked Mrs. Fiege to explain the study results further.

Mrs. Fiege reviewed the summary presented to council in the agenda packet. The current year expenditure will increase the town's retirement contribution \$52,898.22 if adopted in the September council meeting. Council budgeted \$42,000. Mrs. Fiege explained that every year VRS reviews employer accounts and acknowledges rate changes. While this happens annually, the rates are only changed every *other* year. The study assumed a current baseline rate of 8.77% which would have only been an initial increase the town's current retirement payout of \$42,000 but since the town was not in a rate setting year our actual current baseline is only at the 5.29% rate. This means more money will be required to jump to the 17.04% rate than was presented in the study. Next year is a rate setting year for the town and the town's rate will be increasing with or without the Hazardous Duty benefit but with the Hazardous Duty benefit it will raise the town's annual retirement payout to just over \$102,000 (this amount is based on the town's current payroll numbers). The reason for the town's significant increase in the employer rate is largely due to the immediate increase of the town's unfunded liability. Currently the town is 92% funded in its VRS account but once the Hazardous Duty benefit is adopted the town's account drops to only 84% funded.

Councilmember Fosque expressed his concern that these high retirement payouts are sinking localities everywhere.

Councilmember Bloxom asked if other towns on the Eastern Shore of Virginia have this benefit. Mayor Jones stated that Onancock was the last locality on the Shore without the benefit.

Councilmember Byrd stated that the town needs to adopt this benefit so that it can remain competitive with other employers in the area.

Councilmember Fosque suggested that council consider dropping the fifth member of the Police Department and then pay the remaining four officers more which should help make the town a more attractive employer. Better pay should also help with retention efforts.

Mayor Jones stated that council will need to find the additional \$12,000 needed to fund the benefit so that it can be adopted at the next council meeting.

Public Comment:

None.

Planning Commission Report:

No meeting.

Waterfront Committee Report:

Councilmember Byrd shared that the next meeting will be held September 12, 2017. Councilmember Byrd, Mayor Jones and Town Manager Kerbin recently reviewed the prints for the floating dock improvement project. Some adjustments were addressed and it will go out to bid shortly.

Councilmember Byrd shared that the Onancock Volunteer Fire Department's First Annual Croaker Tournament was a success. Councilmember Byrd also shared that the kayak race will be in September and Bill and Mary Burnham plan on hiring someone to assist with bathroom clean-up.

Personnel Committee Report:

No meeting.

Holiday Committee Report:

No meeting. Councilmember Fosque did update council on the historical banners which are currently at the printers. Ms. Eliza Askew was the artist and she did a tremendous job. Councilmember Fosque shared that committee has also purchased lights for the poles that are on Market Street going out of town. These lights will be LED. Councilmember Fosque asked that Mr. Kerbin get a letter of appreciation together for Ms. Eliza Askew.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jones shared that the Bagwell Bridge will be under construction this November. Mayor Jones stated that this a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) project and they are unsure of an end date. Mayor Jones also encouraged everyone to check out the town's new website. It has come a long way. Website visitors can now pay online and have the use of fillable forms. Mayor Jones continued to state that the homepage has a recent picture of Town Hall which is need of some maintenance. Mayor Jones thanked Mrs. Lisa Fiege and Mr. Bill Kerbin for their hard work on this project.

Councilmember Bloxom expressed his disappointment that the online bill pay had a convenience fee attached to it. Mrs. Fiege mentioned that there also a credit card fee when using the credit card machine in Town Hall and the convenience fee for the online bill pay was less than the fee to swipe your card at Town Hall.

Town Manager's Report:

Mr. Kerbin reported to council the following:

- Mr. Kerbin submitted a formal request to the National Guard to assist with various projects in town. If approved, the National Guard will provide assist with the labor. It could take up to 90-days before the town has been granted approval.
- Mr. Kerbin is continuing to reach out to businesses in town for the purposes of gathering information for a town business directory. This directory will be also be utilized by the Christmas Homes Tour.
- Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. is in the process of finalizing the specifications for the floating dock improvement project.

- The town has applied for a risk management grant from the VML Insurance Program for gun safes for the Police Department. If awarded the town will receive \$2,000 for this initiative. As part of the application process, the town has developed risk management policies which could help to lower the town's insurance premiums.
- Police Chief Williams, Public Director Horton and Mr. Kerbin are in the process of drafting an Emergency Management Plan for the town.
- The town has applied for a Tier 1 Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) to assist with the repair of the bathhouse, office and laundry room floors as well as to reseal and replace the roll-up door. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$63,000. The town is requesting \$43,000 from BIG and the town match would be about \$16,500. The town will not find out if the grant proposal has been approved until March 2018 and construction on the floors will not start until the end of the 2018 boating season.

Closed Session, if needed:

None needed.

Adjourn:

Councilmember Fosque asked if the town was still spraying for mosquitos. Councilmember Bloxom confirmed that he sees the fogger frequently first thing in the morning.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.



Russell Jones, Mayor



Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk