

Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting – Budget Workshop
February 12, 2018
6:00 PM

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Jones opened the meeting at 6:00 PM. All council members were present.

Public Business:

Prior to the start of the budget workshop session Police Chief Eric Williams introduced Mr. Paul Meuli. Mr. Meuli is the town's recently hired police officer. Mr. Meuli has just finished the training academy and will graduate tomorrow, February 13, 2018.

Mayor Jones and Council welcomed Mr. Meuli to the town.

- a. **Budget Workshop:** Mayor Jones opened the budget workshop session, stating that this is not a normal council meeting with a public comment section although time permitting he would allow public comment.

Mr. Bryan Horton, Public Works Director, asked council if they had any questions regarding the street maintenance proposed expenditures. Councilmember Bundick asked if snow removal was a part of this department's budget. Mr. Horton stated snow removal does fall under this department. Councilmember Fosque asked about the chipper and dump truck, stating that to replace or repair these items is expensive. Councilmember Fosque stated that council should review the brush and limb pick-up policy, if that was not a town service then money for the chipper and dump truck would not be necessary. Councilmember Fosque asked Mr. Kerbin to do a study on the best way to proceed with this service; discontinue, limit, or contract the service out. Councilmember Fosque explained that it may be cheaper to hire it out once you start looking at the cost of the equipment and the amount of time it takes our staff to complete chipping each month.

The water and sewer expenditures were discussed next.

Mayor Jones asked Mr. Horton why Accomack County's sewage billings have been all over the place this fiscal year. Mr. Horton said that it could vary up and down without any constant. Councilmember Fosque shared his concern that the septage receiving program has been a financial disappointment to the town. Mr. Horton explained that the plant can only take so much flow a day which has contributed to part of the issue. There has also been some equipment failure. Mr. Horton explained septage receiving will be able to take more flow once the stars align. Mayor Jones asked if the town could budget for an anticipated revenue of \$25,000. Mr. Horton stated that he felt \$25,000 would be an over estimate for next fiscal year, asking that the projected revenue stay at \$15,000. Councilmember Bundick stated that except for the retirement increase, the proposed expenditures look similar to the current year.

Councilmember Byrd asked how often the membrane needs to be replaced. Mr. Horton said the membrane can last five to six years, sharing that the town's has lasted longer due to the quality of care. Mr. Horton said that this is something that only gets replaced when it fails. Councilmember Bundick asked why the lab fees were proposed at a decrease. Mr. Horton

stated that they have been doing a lot of testing through Wallops, requiring the town to have less on hand. Councilmember Bundick asked what type of expense the town can anticipate for the membrane replacement. Mr. Horton said that he was currently unsure but is waiting for a call back from the vendor. Councilmember Bundick suggested that council start funding the capital improvements line item for the plant. Mayor Jones agreed stating that capital improvement projects for the entire town need to start being funded as well. Council thanked Mr. Horton for presenting his department's budget.

Police Chief Eric Williams reviewed his proposed expenditures for fiscal year 2019. Chief Williams stated that his salary line item has decreased due to the retirement of an officer and that the replacement officer will come in at a lower salary. Councilmember Byrd asked if there was any grant funding for police training. Chief Williams stated that grant money for training is not available. Chief Williams explained that more grant opportunities are becoming available for police departments for items such as equipment, over-time, and body armor. These grants will usually fund about 50% of these expenditures. Chief Williams shared that he was able to secure grant funding for the new body cameras the officers are now wearing. Chief Williams shared that certain grants which will reimburse 50% of the town's over-time cost as well as our cost for vehicle maintenance and fuel fees. Councilmember Bundick asked why the hospitalization line item increased so drastically. Mrs. Fiege shared that in the current year's budget the town only funded hospitalization based on the departments need at the time. The problem the town ran into with that funding was that an officer that was not on the town's health insurance left and the new officer needed the insurance. The fifth officer was not part of the equation. Councilmember Krause asked what the schedule is for vehicle replacement. Chief Williams shared that the current schedule is to replace one vehicle every two years. This timeframe could be extended but not until all of the Dodge Chargers are replaced. Chief Williams did mention that the United States Department of Agriculture: Rural Development is announcing their desire to assist rural police departments with grant money for new vehicles (40%). Mayor and Town Council thanked Chief Williams for his time.

Mr. Kerbin review the summary of the proposed budget. One item that needs to be increased is the police department's salary line item, their holiday pay was not part of the initial proposal. The budget proposal assumed that the new full-time Harbormaster employee would be salaried at \$30,000. Councilmember Byrd and Bundick asked that the budget be adjusted to account for the higher end of the pay scale. Mrs. Fiege said that she would adjust it for an annual salary of \$35,000.

Councilmember Byrd shared that the expenditures needed to repave the wharf parking lot and ramp repairs are not currently in the budget. Mayor Jones and Councilmember Byrd will be going to the Virginia Port Authority to ask for grant money to assist with these projects. Councilmember Byrd stated that he will be coming to council soon to approve a rate increase for slip rentals.

Mr. Kerbin shared the list of future capital improvement projects, which were listed in order of importance. Councilmember Fosque mentioned that the water tower does not look good at the moment, asking if something can be done about that. Councilmember Krause asked that one of the goals be advancing the internet services in the town. Councilmember Krause shared that during the Christmas Homes tour this past December certain participants tried to buy tickets online from their phones in town and could not get a good enough signal. They had to go back

out to Four Corners before they could purchase the tickets. Councilmember Fosque mentioned that Town Manager Kerbin has sent Verizon a letter asking for them to review the service in town. Mr. Kerbin shared that Verizon is working on securing a location for a new tower. Councilmember Krause stressed that residents and visitors should be able to use their mobile devices when downtown. Councilmember Fosque stated that he did not feel that this was a function of local government. Councilmember Fosque stated that maybe the town could give incentives or a break on the part of the lease money that would come to the town to help entice Verizon to put their services on the Onancock water tower.

Mr. Kerbin also pointed out that the wharf's revenue and expenditures have been pulled out in its own spreadsheet so that council could review it side by side. Mayor Jones mentioned that the wharf made a profit this past season and that he believes that the revenues will continue to improve.

Councilmember Fosque asked about the flood insurance funding for the wharf. Councilmember Byrd shared that the town received a quote for flood insurance and it was too high. Mayor Jones and Councilmember Byrd shared that they felt it was better to be self-insured.

Councilmember Fosque asked when the BB&T bank loan will be complete. Mr. Kerbin stated that he was unsure at the moment but that he would look into and get back to council.

Mr. Kerbin shared that the proposed fiscal year 2019 budget, there are currently no salary increases. Mr. Kerbin stated that council may want to look into at least giving the employees a bonus. Mrs. Fiege shared that a \$500 per person bonus would cost the town \$7,000. Mrs. Fiege also briefly shared the additional numbers it would take to give a 3%, 2% and 1% increase. Mayor Jones suggested that council use their discretionary fund for a bonus. Councilmember Fosque suggested that the bonus be based on years of service. Council asked Mr. Kerbin to write up some option for them to review at the next budget meeting.

Mayor Jones asked if the public had any comments.

Mrs. Maphis Oswald, Sturgis Street, expressed her concern that the water department will not be able to fund its expenditures based on the proposed budget. Stating that the original loan documents required that sewer and water self-funded and independently of each other. Mrs. Oswald asked council to consider how best to cover the water deficit.

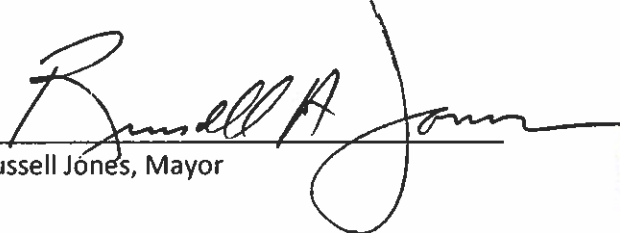
Mr. Matt Spuck, The Inn at Onancock, shared that in a previous conversation with Mr. Kerbin, he mentioned a concept of meshed Wi-Fi. Mr. Spuck suggested that council check it out. It could be the way to help with the town's internet problems. The cost is about \$3,000 and it offers an open platform to town guests.


Mrs. Oswald asked that council consider keeping the brush and limb service, stressing that it is a town service that is provided to the residents via their tax dollars. It is a nice benefit to living in Onancock.

Adjourn:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.


Russell Jones, Mayor


Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk