

Town of Onancock
Town Council Special Meeting
March 31, 2020
4:00 p.m.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fosque called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and roll was called. Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Councilmembers Robert Bloxom, Catherine Krause, Ray Burger, Maphis Oswald and Matt Spuck were present. Councilmember Joy Marino was absent but joined the meeting electronically after the Emergency Ordinance was adopted. A majority of members were present, and a quorum was established.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Fosque thanked council for attending the meeting amid concerns about the COVID-19 virus.

Public Business:

- a. Adoption of an Emergency Ordinance on Continuity of Government – Mayor Fletcher Fosque: Mayor Fosque deferred to Interim Town Manager, Lisa Fiege. Mrs. Fiege explained that this ordinance acknowledges the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread concern about public gatherings. Due to the concerns of this pandemic – this ordinance sets up the guidelines for council to hold and vote at electronic meetings while further outlining the appropriate means of creating public access and participation. This will allow the continuity of town government for the coming months. This ordinance sunsets 60-days after the date of effectiveness.

Council comment followed. One item of concern mentioned was that this pandemic may go on longer than the sunset date on the Ordinance. Councilmember Bloxom stated that they could always extend the sunset date in the May meeting if need be.

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to adopt the Emergency Ordinance on Continuity of Government. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- b. Adoption of a Resolution Adopting Procedures for Electronic Public Meetings and Public Hearings – Mayor Fletcher Fosque: Mayor Fosque deferred to Interim Town Manager, Lisa Fiege. Mrs. Fiege stated that the resolution authorizes and directs officers and staff to take reasonably necessary steps to implement continuity procedures and to develop any specific procedures applicable and appropriate for the Town of Onancock. This resolution remains in effect for the duration of the Emergency Ordinance.

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to approve the Resolution Adopting Procedures for Electronic Meetings and Public Hearings. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- c. Discussion of Extending the Business License Tax Due Date – Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege. Mrs. Fiege explained that per Town Code the business license tax is due April 30th. This resolution would extend the due date to June 30th.

Council discussion followed. Discussion centered around delaying the due date to help the businesses with their cash flow during these times.

Councilmember Burger made a motion to approve the Resolution to Extend the Business License Due Date. Councilmember Spuck seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- d. Discussion of Extending the Vehicle Decal Due date – Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege: Mrs. Fiege explained that per Town Code, the vehicle decals are due on windshields no later than April 15th. This resolution would extend that due date to June 30th in the hopes that the “Stay at Home” order ends on June 10th. That would give everyone 20-days to get into compliance at Town Hall. Mrs. Fiege also shared that the Onancock Police Department is not going to enforce this requirement until it’s reasonable to do so.

Councilmember Oswald made a motion to adopt the Resolution to Extend the Vehicle Decal Due Date. Councilmember Spuck seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- e. Discussion of the Meals Tax – Mayor Fletcher Fosque: Mayor Fosque explained that there were two proposals in front of council: one was to delay the due date for the meals tax submissions and the second one was to suspend the collections of the meals tax for April and May.

Council discussion followed. Some items discussed were creating a liability for the restaurants if council delayed the submission date; the 5% is paid by the customers and is minimal enough to not make much of a difference; and, that suspending the meals tax generates good will feelings that government is doing all that it can to assist during these times. Council also debated whether a 5% reduction in bill really would help to increase business for our restaurants.

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to adopt the Resolution to Suspend the Meals Tax Collection for April and May. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion. Councilmembers Bloxom, Marino, Krause, Burger and Spuck verbally approved the motion. Councilmember Oswald voted against the motion. The motion passed five to one.

Council continued their discussion of ways to assist Onancock residents during these COVID-19 times.

Councilmember Spuck suggested that council suspend penalties for water and sewer delinquencies for the next 60-days. Council discussion followed.

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to waive the late fees for the April and May billing cycles for water and sewer if customers contact Town Hall to set up a payment plan before the bill goes delinquent. Councilmember Oswald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Council asked Mrs. Fiege to get a public service announcement out to the local media so that everyone could be made aware of the actions that council took.

Mayor Fosque shared that the sign for supporting the essential workers of the Eastern Shore of Virginia would be up shortly.

Mayor Fosque also asked what council wanted to do about town manager interviews. Discussion centered about waiting and doing face-to-face interviews after the virus shutdowns dissipate. Mayor Fosque stated that he would check with Mr. Bill Whitley to see if that was feasible.

Adjourn:

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.



Fletcher Fosque, Mayor



Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk