

Town of Onancock  
Electronic Town Council Meeting  
Monday, April 27, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fosque called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Councilmembers Robert Bloxom, Ray Burger, Catherine Krause, Joy Marino, Maphis Oswald and Matt Spuck were present. All Councilmembers were present electronically and a quorum was established. Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege and Deputy Clerk Mariellen Mearsheimer were also in attendance electronically as was Town resident Karen Crockett.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Fosque stated the Council was having an electronic meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic and read the emergency ordinance concerning electronic meetings. He informed those attending electronically that the meeting was being recorded and was being streamed live on YouTube. He stated public comments could be emailed to him at [ffosque9@gmail.com](mailto:ffosque9@gmail.com) or by phone at 757-710-1995. He also stated that all votes would be by roll call and speakers should identify themselves by name.

Consideration and Approval of the Meeting Minutes for the Following Meetings:

February 24, 2020 Regular Town Council Meeting  
March 04, 2020 Town Council Special Meeting  
March 12, 2020 Town Council Special Meeting and Budget Workshop  
March 30, 2020 Town Council Special Meeting

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

*Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Councilmember Oswald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.*

Public Business:

a. Public Hearing SUP 02:20: Ms. Karen Crockett's Special Use Permit Request to Operate a Homestay at 6 Crescent Street (18A Ames Street) - Lisa Fiege, Interim Town Manager

Mayor Fosque opened the Public hearing.

Interim Town Manager Fiege introduced Ms. Karen Crockett and stated her request for a special use permit to operate a homestay for two to four guests at a time, at her cottage, at 18A Ames Street located next to her 6 Crescent Street home. Mrs. Fiege stated she has off street parking available and meets the minimum requirements for a homestay in that zone. Ms. Crockett stated the cottage was close to her home, would be good for the town, the neighborhood and tourism, she wants to rent by the week and stated it is already an established rental property. She also stated it is on a separate lot, has a one car garage and that she has the support of her neighbors.

Interim Town Manager Fiege read comments from property owners; one adjacent property owner wanted to be sure they were no more than four guests maximum at any one time, the property owners

next door at 18 Ames Street, Bill and Paulette Helin, have owned their home for nine years, spoke with Ms. Crockett and stated they were in favor as long as she respects their boundaries.

Mayor Fosque stated that the special use permit for the Homestay does not transfer to a new owner.

Mayor Fosque asked for Council comments.

Councilmember Marino stated there were three addresses and asked which one would be used for the special use permit. Ms. Crockett stated she discovered on her closing documents that the cottage was 1 Liberty Street, the Town of Onancock has it listed as 18A Ames Street and her home address is 6 Crescent Street. She added that there is another property in Town listed as 1 Liberty Street.

Councilmember Oswald suggested using 18A Ames Street for the time being since no other home is listed as 18A Ames Street.

Mayor Fosque closed the public hearing at 7:14 P.M. and asked for a motion to approve the special use permit.

*Councilmember Catherine Krause made a motion to approve a special use permit for a homestay at 1 Liberty Street. Councilmember Oswald seconded the motion.*

Mayor Fosque asked for discussion. He stated there were some concerns about on-street parking that might block the alley. Ms. Crockett stated that would not be a problem because there is plenty of parking spaces on the property.

*The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote of all Councilmembers.*

b. Northeast Revitalization Project Update – Joy Marino, Councilmember

Councilmember Marino read her report as follows: The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) has awarded the Town of Onancock \$40,000 dollars in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) planning grant funds to organize, plan and design a comprehensive community improvement grant for the Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization Project. Technical assistance will be provided by the Accomack Northampton Planning District Commission (ANPDC). To accept the grant the VDHCD requires the grantee, consultant and community leaders to conduct a Facilitated Planning Session (FSP) with our VDHCD community representative, Doug Ellis. The FPS was held electronically on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. The management team is working to finalize the planning grant project work plan and budget per VDHCD rules and regulations. The proposed work plan and budget was submitted on April 22, 2020. This grant is a pay for performance grant and requires finite detail and deliverables. ANPDC staff continues to work with Mr. Ellis on revising the work plan and budget to their specifications and anticipate the grant contract to be drafted the week of April 27, 2020. The Town will receive the grant agreement from VDHCD and at such time the technically assisted contract with the ANPDC will need to be executed as well. The Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization VDHCD project management team meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 P.M. The next scheduled meeting will be held electronically on May 20, 2020 unless the Governor's Executive order has been lifted then the meeting will be conducted in person at the Bethel AME Church.

There were no questions or discussion.

**c. Discussion of the FY2021 Town Budget – Fletcher Fosque, Mayor**

Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege updated the Council on revisions to the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget acknowledging the catastrophic potential loss of revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One proposal is the Town continue with the current real estate tax rate instead of giving a 2-cent reduction. Several line items in the General Fund Revenue that have been reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic include the local sales tax, business license tax, meals and transient occupancy taxes, traffic fines, wharf dockage fees, wharf electric fees and gasoline sales. Bank Stock tax and Communications tax revenues are less than expected but not due to COVID-19. The proposal includes an increase in cost for special use permits from \$125.00 to \$250.00 and a request to include the cost of advertising for the permit and a zoning application fee increase from no cost to \$25.00. Mrs. Fiege noted a proposed increase in trash revenue from \$4.00 a month to \$8.00 a month.

Councilmember Marino asked if the trash fee would go up by \$4.00 a month and wanted a more detailed explanation of the special use permits.

Mrs. Fiege stated the special use permit would go from \$125.00 to \$250.00 and confirmed the \$4.00 per month increase for trash.

Councilmember Oswald stated any advertising costs for the special use permits should be included in the cost of the permit.

Mayor Fosque agreed.

Interim Town Manager Fiege then reviewed the reductions in the General Fund Expenditures by department.

The Executive Department includes reductions in Tree Board funding by 50% and Community promotion by 20%.

The Administration Department includes reductions in office supplies, miscellaneous, advertising and travel. Office equipment was increased to fund a new laptop. Historic Onancock School's request was reduced from \$10,000.00 to \$7,500.00.

The Legal and Professional Services Department includes reductions to consultants by 50%. Insurance costs were expected to increase by 5%.

The Police Department reductions include overtime, supplies, uniforms and body armor, and vehicle fuel. A new police vehicle was deleted from the budget. Animal Control was created and funded at \$650.00. Office supplies was increased to fund a new laptop.

The Fire Department was not reduced and continues to be funded at 100%.

The Street Maintenance proposed reduction includes \$2,250.00 from other miscellaneous street repairs.

Councilmember Oswald asked if funding for this category could be put off until next year for a significant savings.

Mrs. Fiege stated the Town could look at pushing back these road repairs into a future year.

Mayor Fosque asked if anyone had driven down Jackson Street and stated the road condition was deplorable.

Councilmember Marino stated she biked on Jackson Street and it was the worst street in town. She stated the Town has talked about upgrading this road to VDOT standards for years and wants the funding for it to stay.

Mayor Fosque asked if the \$6,000.00 for the road surveys could be taken out of the budget proposal.

Councilmember Oswald stated the Town could keep the funding for Jackson Street and asked to get rid of funding in this category for nonessential expenditures.

Councilmember Spuck stated he was hoping to get the total number, in dollars, of the reductions made to the budget and how we got there.

Interim Town Manager Fiege stated it was approximately a \$200,000.00 reduction in total.

The Solid Waste Department was reduced by 25% for vehicle fuel.

The Buildings and Grounds Department's repair and maintenance line item was reduced by 68%.

Wharf salaries for part-time employees was reduced by 15%. Overtime was reduced by 80%. Janitorial supplies and the cost of fuel were also reduced.

The Christmas decoration budget was reduced by 50%.

Council Contingency funding was decreased from \$29,000.00 to \$20,000.00.

Water and sewer revenues were increased 5% from the current fiscal year.

Water expenses included \$24,500.00 towards repainting the water tower. Mrs. Fiege stated Plant Manager Bryan Horton got two quotes, each over \$210,000.00 to repaint the water tower inside and out. She also stated the cost to replace the water tower would be upwards of \$2,000,000.00.

The Sewer Department's Plant and Collection repair and maintenance was increased by 17%.

Employment cost include a 4.8% increase in health insurance, a .03% increase in the Town's life insurance rate, a 2.3% decrease in the Town's VRS rate and a 2.01% decrease in the Town's state unemployment tax rate.

Mayor Fosque asked if the unemployment tax rate is going to go up.

Councilmember Marino asked if this budget is a proposal. She stated in this dire economic time we need to consider giving the town residents a break and felt street repair should remain a priority.

Councilmember Krause thanked everyone for all the hard work that went into this budget.

Councilmember Bloxom stated Mrs. Fiege had done a lot of hard work coming up with the cuts for this budget. The group used the best collective minds to come up with something reasonable and stated the Council could come back mid-year, if necessary, but did not know where to find any more to cut.

Councilmember Burger stated it must have been hard to find \$200,000.00 to cut and thanked them for doing a good job.

Councilmember Oswald asked if there were any changes, due to the economy, could we do an amendment to the budget.

Mayor Fosque stated the budget had to be affected by more than 2%.

Councilmember Spuck asked for a final summary in written form for all the Councilmembers to review.

All Councilmembers agreed they were comfortable moving forward and that a final written summary was needed.

Mrs. Fiege stated we needed two separate public hearings with a seven to ten day waiting period. Her suggestion is that the public hearing for the changes to the tax rate be May 11, 2020 and the public hearing for the budget be at the regular Town meeting in May.

Public Comment:

None

Planning Commission Report: Robert Bloxom, Councilmember

No meeting.

Waterfront Committee Report: Robert Bloxom, Councilmember

No meeting. Councilmember Bloxom stated he asked Interim Town Manager Fiege to follow up with the Harbor Master Craig Tanner about the seven or eight Yacht Clubs that had made reservations and she found out there were no cancelations to date. Mrs. Fiege also stated that the Wharf was open for gas sales all day on Fridays until 4:00 P.M. on Saturdays and Sundays until noon and on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday by appointment. The Wharf is closed on Thursdays.

Personnel Committee Report: Catherine Krause, Councilmember

No meeting.

Mayor's Report: Fletcher Fosque, Mayor

None

Town Manager's Report: Lisa Fiege, Interim Town Manager

Interim Town Manager Fiege stated that she, Mayor Fosque, Councilmember Marino and other community members attended a meeting on April 15, 2020 with Bobbie Jo Wert (ANPDC) and Doug Ellis (VDHCD) for the Northeast Revitalization project to discuss the \$40,000.00 planning grant and how to get started. She added that the next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2020 at 6:00 P.M.

Mrs. Fiege stated the Town's insurance company, VRSA, has issued a credit toward our insurance premium due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They gave a 15% refund of the annual 2019-2020 automobile liability and general liability contributions which totaled \$818.00.

Mrs. Fiege stated Council needs to have a budget public hearing to discuss keeping the current real estate tax rate and proposed Monday May 11, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. She asked if anyone had a problem with that date. Hearing none; she stated she would get the notice in the Eastern Shore Post for Friday May 01, 2020.

Mrs. Fiege told Council they will need to have another budget public hearing separate from the above-mentioned public hearing and proposed Thursday May 28, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. and stated it would be part of the regular Town Council meeting. She noted the regular Town Council meeting had been moved to Thursday because of Memorial Day. She stated the notice would be in the Eastern Shore Post on Friday May 15, 2020

Mrs. Fiege informed the Council that new LED lights had been installed in the Council Chambers.

Mrs. Fiege gave the Council an update on the CARES Act. She shared that states can transfer payments to local governments provided the transfer to localities qualifies as a necessary expenditure incurred due to the public health emergency, unused funds must be returned by December 30, 2020, funds may be used to respond directly to the emergency as well as respond to second-order effects of the emergency, the expenditure must be necessary, funds may not be used to fill shortfalls in government revenue and funds may only be used to cover costs that were not accounted for in the budget. Mrs. Fiege stated that some items that we were purchasing this year that were not included in the budget were personal protection equipment (PPE) and masks for the police department, and cleaning supplies for Town Hall, the plant and for police vehicles. She also made inquiries about payroll and overtime and stated anything purchased between May 01, 2020 until the end of the year could be reimbursed so long as funds exist.

Mrs. Fiege had two more items not on her list, one concerned the US Census. She stated Accomack County was lagging in responses, so she added information on the Town website about the Census and encouraged residents to respond.

Mrs. Fiege informed the Council the Town elections have been moved out two weeks to Tuesday May 19, 2020. She stated she added information to the Town website about the upcoming election with information about contacting the Voter Registrar's office and shared some of the rules for in person voting such as; wearing a mask and gloves, bringing your own pen and physical distancing.

Mayor Fosque asked if the Voter Registrar was going ask the Town for help with crowd control.

Mrs. Fiege stated she spoke with the Police Chief Eric Williams and he said they would have someone there working.

Mayor Fosque asked if the Town could put out a sign coming into Town with information about the election and to encourage residents to vote by absentee ballot.

Mrs. Fiege stated the information was on our website, on Facebook, posted on the bulletin board in front of the Town Office and at the marina. OBCA also allowed the Town to post information on their bulletin board in front of the Post Office.

Mayor Fosque asked Interim Town Manager Fiege to comment on Town procedures and staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mrs. Fiege stated the office is closed to the public but she and Mariellen are working Monday through Friday 8:30 A.M. until 4:30 P.M. She stated the police department is following a normal schedule and the public works department is working with split shifts to ensure a healthy staff is available to work. Mrs. Fiege added the Town was absorbing the 4% fee for online bill pay for water and sewer. She stated payments may also be made through the mail or could be dropped off at the Town Office through the mail slot. She updated residents about the Town Council's vote to extend the due date for vehicle decals and business licenses until June 30, 2020.

Mayor Fosque stated the Town is following the Governor's guidelines until such a time as the State of Emergency is lifted.

Councilmember Oswald asked where we were on the town recodification process.

Mrs. Fiege stated; "It was off her radar at the moment but would contact Town Attorney John Custis."

Councilmember Oswald asked if it was possible to get the recodification piecemeal instead of all at one time.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Oswald stated we were doing this electronic meeting to stay safe and hoped everyone out there was doing everything they could to stay healthy and safe.

Councilmember Spuck wanted Mrs. Fiege to know she did a fantastic job on the budget presentation.

Mayor Fosque asked everyone to be extra vigilant about the virus, adding that physical distancing is important, don't go out unless you must and stay safe.

Closed Session: Discussion of Personnel (Town Manager Discussion)

None

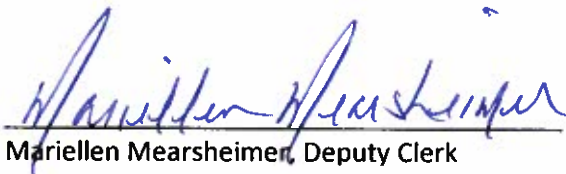
Adjourn:

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.



Fletcher Fosque, Mayor



Mariellen Mearsheimer, Deputy Clerk