

Town of Onancock
Electronic Town Council Meeting
Thursday, May 28, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fletcher Fosque called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. Mayor Fosque and Councilmembers Robert Bloxom, Ray Burger, Catherine Krause, Joy Marino and Maphis Oswald 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.

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 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:

April 09, 2020 Town Council Special Meeting
April 10, 2020 Town Council Special Meeting
April 27, 2020 Town Council Regular Meeting
May 13, 2020 Town Council Special Meeting
May 14, 2020 Town Council Emergency Meeting

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

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to accept the minutes with one correction. Councilmember Bloxom stated that in the April 10, 2020 minutes he was referred to as Mayor, it should be Vice- Mayor with no other corrections. Councilmember Oswald seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

a. Public Hearing RZ01:20: Caleb and Lynne Fowler's Request for a Rezone at 58 Market Street – Lisa Fiege, Interim Town Manager

Mayor Fosque opened the Joint Public Hearing with the Town Council and the Onancock Planning Commission at 7:10 P.M.

Chairman Judith Grier opened the Planning Commission meeting at 7:10 P.M. Commission members Bill Bagwell, Robert Bloxom, Larry Frey, Judith Grier and Matt Spuck were present. Commission members Ridgway Dunton and Scott Schreiber were absent. Commission members were present electronically and a quorum was established.

Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege introduced Caleb and Lynn Fowler and stated their request to rezone their house at 58 Market Street from Business Downtown (B1) to Residential (R1A). She stated the house is contiguous to other properties that are zoned residential so the change would not be considered spot zoning. She also added the owners wanted to use it as a Homestay which is permitted in R1A with a special use permit. She stated the staff felt the request was positive and recommended the Council move forward with their request.

Caleb Fowler stated his family has thought about this a lot over the years and feels this change is in the best interest of their family and the Town and added the house will continue to be well maintained and hoped the Town would receive some tax revenue from it.

Councilmember Oswald asked if the house could be a Homestay in its' current zoning of B1. Interim Town Manager Fiege stated it could not.

Planning Commission member Bagwell stated that a positive about this proposal is that there are a lot of empty buildings which he feels are a problem and this addresses the issue and is a broader reason for approval.

Planning Commission Chairman Grier asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Commission member Bagwell made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Commission member Frey seconded the motion.

Mayor Fosque closed the Public Hearing for the Town Council.

The Joint Town Council and Planning Commission Public Hearing closed at 7:14 P.M.

Commission member Bloxom made a motion that it is the unanimous view of the Planning Commission that we recommend the rezoning of this parcel subject to the request of the Fowlers. Commission member Frey seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

b. Public Hearing SUP02:20: Caleb and Lynn Fowler's request for a Special use permit to Operate a Homestay at 58 Market Street – Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege

Mayor Fosque opened the Town Council Public hearing at 7:15 P.M.

Mayor Fosque asked if there was off street parking. Mr. Fowler responded yes.

Mayor Fosque then asked if they were intending to use the whole house as one Homestay. Mr. Fowler responded yes.

Mayor Fosque then asked how many guests maximum. Mrs. Fiege stated the application said one to nine guests. Mr. Fowler stated there were five bedrooms. It is a large house.

Mayor Fosque asked if there were any other comments.

Hearing no comments Mayor Fosque closed the Public Hearing at 7:18 P.M.

Mayor Fosque asked for a motion to approve the request.

Councilmember Krause made a motion to approve SUP 02:20 with the following condition: The owner is prohibited from renting out individual rooms within the dwelling. Councilmember Marino seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote.

c. Public Hearing on the Proposed FY2021 Tax Rate Increase – Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege

Mayor Fosque opened the Public Hearing at 7:20 P.M.

Mrs. Fiege stated that according to State Code the Town is required to have a Public Hearing on keeping the tax rate the same due to this year's increase (8.2%) in Accomack County's assessed value of real property, excluding additional assessments due to construction or improvements to property. The tax rate which would levy the same amount of real estate taxes as last year, when multiplied by the new assessed value of real estate, with the exclusions mentioned would be \$0.30 per \$100.00 of assessed value. She stated this rate will be known as the lowered tax rate. The Town of Onancock proposes to adopt the tax rate of \$0.32 per \$100.00 of assessed value that the Town has had for the last three years. The difference between the lowered tax rate and the proposed tax rate would be \$0.02 per \$100.00 or 8.2%. This difference will be known as the effective tax rate increase. Mrs. Fiege stated based on the proposed real property tax rate and changes in other revenues, the total budget of the Town of Onancock will exceed last years by 0.08%.

Councilmember Bloxom thanked Mrs. Fiege for her explanation and wanted residents to understand that this is not a tax rate increase but taxing on the new higher assessed values and most localities are doing this due to budget constraints.

Mayor Fosque asked if the property rate assessments went up for every property in Town. He stated he had some properties that did not change.

Mayor Fosque asked if there were any comments.

Mrs. Fiege received a comment via email from residents Kitty and Frank Hall of 14 Meadville Drive stating; "That it was not possible to critique the budget in detail without being able to ask questions including follow-ups to the responses. However, the Town is taking advantage of a, usually dubious, certainly imprecise, change in assessments to grab an 8.2% increase for its' budget revenue. The estimates for many budget categories have been changed because of the COVID - 19 situation but when it comes to taking money from the taxpayer, such as doubling the garbage tax for instance, there appears to be no sympathy, much less a concern, for the situation of the individual citizens. You may be able to justify each line item but an 8.2% increase, in these times, appears irresponsible. An 8% decrease would have seemed more appropriate."

Mayor Fosque asked if there were any comments.

Mayor Fosque closed the Public Hearing at 7:25 P.M. He reminded everyone that the Council would not be voting on the budget until the June 22, 2020 meeting.

d. Public Hearing on the proposed FY 2021 Budget – Interim Town Manager, Lisa Fiege

Mayor Fosque opened the Public Hearing at 7:26 P.M.

Mrs. Fiege stated that we would start with employment cost changes. There is no cost-of-living adjustment for staff in the FY 2021 Budget. There is a 4.8% increase to the cost of the Town's Health Insurance Premium. There is a 0.03% increase to the Town's Life Insurance Rate. There is a 2.37% decrease to the Town's VRS rate. There is a 2.01% increase in the Town's State Unemployment Rate. The following items were specifically reduced in the projected revenue for FY 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic: Tax Penalties, Local Sales Tax, Business License Tax Fee, Transient Occupancy Tax, Meals Tax, Traffic Fines, Boat Dockage Transient, and Wharf Gas Sales. We did a big chop to the budget, with expectations of some of them 35-40% of reduction in what we normally could expect in revenue in those line items. The real estate rate tax increase is going to increase our revenue by \$30,000 dollars if we keep the same tax rate. Utility Tax is expected to increase 9% in the budget that is in front of the council. Due to a re-classification of a payment the projected budgeted amount is too high, it will need to be brought back to \$55,000. Three expenditure line items have been identified to be reduced to account for this change. Our Bank Stock Tax expectation for FY 2021 was decreased by 9% due to the change of our bank in town and due to this change we are not sure what their deposits on hand will be, which is how they calculate what we receive annually from them. The Cellular Tax rate for FY 2021 was decreased 6% based on last year's actuals versus current year's actuals. The Trash Collection Fee expectation was increased 180% due to the requested change in what the town will be charging its residents for that service. It is currently \$4.00/month and we are asking that it be raised to \$8.00/month. Last fiscal year it was \$10.00/month. Even at \$10.00/month we are not collecting the actual costs for that service. Tax revenue is still subsidizing a portion of that. Building and Zoning Permits was increased 175% due to a council decision to increase the rate of special use permits and collect the cost for the advertising fees, as well as the initiation of a \$25 fee for all zoning permits. Currently the town does not charge for these zoning permits. Interest on Certificate & Accounts are expected to increase in FY 2021 due to the previous year's actuals. Last year the town moved all its investment accounts from SunTrust to interest-bearing accounts with VML investment pool. Wharf Grants is up, we have a projection to get money from the Virginia Port Authority for the boat ramp repair along with duckbill installation. We also applied for a grant from the Boating Infrastructure Grant for general maintenance as well as advertising. Then we also have a grant which is new for FY 2021 for plantings at the Samuel Outlaw Blacksmith Shop. These are the changes in revenue that were predicted for the coming year. Mrs. Fiege asked if there were any questions about the changes in revenue.

Councilmember Krause asked Mrs. Fiege, in relation to the Local Sales Tax decrease of 35%, Business License Tax down 22%, and Transient Occupancy Tax down 47% how she came up with these metrics and if there are metrics out there to help with these calculations.

Mrs. Fiege stated that she sat down with Councilmembers Bloxom and Spuck and they looked at the month to month collections to determine where are the heavy months and which are the months where this pandemic might still be occurring and affect these line items. She stated that unfortunately there was no perfect science at this point for these predictions and was hopeful that they have under-anticipated what they will receive, in which case they will come back later and do a budget amendment. They did not want to over-anticipate and be in the hole later.

Councilmember Krause stated that it made sense and thanked Mrs. Fiege.

Councilmember Oswald, regarding the Transient Occupancy Tax and the Meals Tax, stated that these were passed easily due to their being a pass-through tax and asked Mrs. Fiege if we were on par with other areas regarding those two taxes.

Mrs. Fiege asked for clarification if councilmember Oswald was referring to what our rate was and stated that we are on par with other areas.

Councilmember Oswald asked for clarification if we were on par with other areas on the Shore or other areas in Virginia.

Mrs. Fiege confirmed that we were on par with other areas on the Shore. She stated that Onancock is at 5%, Onley is at 5%, Cape Charles is at 5%, Exmore is at 5%, and Accomack County she believes is also at 5%.

A message came in on Zoom chat from Kathy Williams stating; "I can tell you that tourists are returning, we had cancels for April & May, but we are booking for June & July."

Councilmember Oswald, regarding the trash collection fee, stated that the fee went from \$4 when we were making a concession to \$8 and now to \$16 and that the notes in the minutes stated that the fee was per month and asked for clarification if that rate was per billing cycle.

Mrs. Fiege stated that we are currently charging \$8.00 per billing cycle, which is \$4.00 per month and that she breaks it down because there are a few people in town paying the monthly trash rate since they are also billed monthly for water. It is \$8.00 per billing cycle if you live in a residential area, which will come to \$16.00 every other month.

Mrs. Fiege stated that for expenditures, in the executive department there was a decrease of 8%; 20% came from Community Promotion, which was reduced to make up for revenue shortfalls and keep it in line for the previous year's actuals. Tree board was also decreased by 50% to make up for revenue shortfalls. Mrs. Fiege stated that she spoke with the Chairman of the Tree Board and he stated he believed they would be able to accomplish their FY 2021 committee goals with the \$1,000 that is currently budgeted. The Legal & Professional department overall was decreased 22%. The Town Attorney was reduced 22%, which was the amount between last year's actual and current year actual. Consultants was also reduced 50%, though this budget amount is more than previous fiscal year's actuals. The Insurance FY 2021 expectation was increased 4%. The budget expectation exceeded actual renewal costs; the town can reduce this department's expected expenditures by almost \$2k to help cover the revenue short fall from the reclassification that came in under the utility tax. The Police Department's expectation was decreased 16%, which was partially due to benefit changes. Office Supplies for this department were increased for the purchase of a new laptop. Vehicle Fuel was reduced 15% bringing it closer to previous year's actuals. Uniforms & Body Armor was reduced 33% to make up for the revenue short fall and appears to be in line with current year expenditures. We added Animal Population Control line item for the coming fiscal year to help with animal control in town. New Police Vehicles is a line item that we fund annually and usually in the year's we are not purchasing a vehicle we leave this as a placeholder at 50%, but this year it was reduced to zero so that we could cover the revenue short fall. The Streets department expects an increase of 8%, partially due to the cost of electric which has gone up and partially due to the repair & maintenance for the road maintenance plan that we were supposed to be starting this fiscal year. The council had discussed not completing part of this repair & maintenance plan if we need to save money in FY 2021. Solid Waste has an expectation of

a 7% decrease. Money was removed that was scheduled for the chipper and vehicle fuel was also reduced, which brought it down to current year actuals. Buildings and Grounds was decreased 40%, largely due to a reduction of the repair & maintenance item due to revenue short falls which is keeping in line with previous years actuals. Parks has an expected increase of 53% due to plantings/landscaping, which is due to the landscaping grant that was secured for the Samuel Outlaw Blacksmith Shop. Wharf has a large expected increase of 72% due to the grant money that we will be getting, but we are still required to expend the funds which is why it is booked under the Wharf operational budget. Wharf Electric Service was reduced 13%, which brought it down to previous year's actuals. Wharf Janitorial will be decreased to \$1,000, which is in line with current year actuals. Repair/Maintenance was increased due to the large grant. Gas/Diesel was decreased 25% due to the reduction of sales due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Other Operating Supplies was increased to bring it to current actuals, but this was also another line item identified as being able to be reduced to cover revenue short falls from the utility tax. Capital Improvements was up due to the grants around the ramp project. The Christmas budget was reduced by 39%, with Christmas Decorations being reduced by 50%. Contingency was reduced by 31% to make up for revenue short falls. Debt Service was reduced by 21% due to the final payment being made on all vehicles in the current fiscal year.

Mrs. Fiege asked for questions on general revenue expenditures.

Councilmember Marino asked if it would be more helpful for the viewing audience to give a dollar amount of the increase or decrease instead of using percentages. She referenced that in some parts of the budget dollars are given, which she finds to be more valuable to see the before and after.

Mrs. Fiege stated that she sat down with Mr. Spuck before writing up the budget and they came up with a criteria; it had to be +/- 5% in either direction and a \$1,000 difference. While it might not be a lot of money, it is still a reduction of 50% for instance and Mrs. Fiege had no problem inputting the dollar amounts into the budget passage.

Councilmember Bloxom asked if, while not in the executive summary, the actuals are in the budget detail. He stated that he agreed with Councilmember Marino that for the formal presentation for approval that it would be preferred to attach dollar figures to those percentages in the executive summary.

Mrs. Fiege confirmed this can be done.

Mrs. Fiege moved on to Water/Sewer. The rate for water and sewer is expected to increase by 5%. Septage receiving was reduced by 33% due to the lack of septage billing. There has not been revenue for Septage in 3 ½ years, so this was reduced even further since it's not a realistic item to keep slated for revenue purposes. There is hope this will produce revenue in FY 2021. The Reserve for Capital Improvements for the water was funded at \$24,500 which will be set aside for the repainting of the water town inside and out. Plant and Collection System Repair/Maintenance was increased by 17% with the increase in water and sewer charges.

Councilmember Oswald asked for clarification on the Septage Receiving and since we have not had revenue for the last 3 years or so and why do we have a budget item for this and what is the anticipation around this.

Mrs. Fiege stated that when we did last bill for Septage we billed for 7 months and received over \$15,000 and this is where the budget has remained. She confirmed that we have not billed for this for some time and that this year's budget anticipation was \$5,000. She stated that they have hopes that they will be able to bill on it again and does not want to remove it from the budget but does not want the anticipated amount to be so inflated that it ruins the budget.

Councilmember Bloxom stated that the Sewer Steering Committed batted this around a lot and came to the conclusion that the town has not really marketed recently their ability to accept septage from some of the local water & sewer companies and if we were to aggressively market the fact that we can accept it, there is some possibility for revenue that we have not been able to receive, so I guess we would task our new Town Manager and Mrs. Fiege on finding that new revenue source again to the extent that it is available.

Councilmember Oswald stated that she recalled the anticipation was for this to be a big source of revenue.

Mayor Fosque stated that there were some problems with the plant and that the material was too contaminated and that the material was messing up his chemistry, which was one of the reasons the town cut back on it. He would need to connect with Mr. Bryan Horton on whether we can solve that problem or not.

Mrs. Fiege stated that part of the problem is that the equipment is aging and that we are not replacing \$300,000 worth of equipment and taking on additional flow causes him to run into some of those problems.

Councilmember Oswald asked if she was correct in her assessment that we have never made money from this and that the town did spend a significant amount of money on the equipment.

Mrs. Fiege stated that most of the money came from a USDA grant and that yes, this was supposed to be a revenue generator for the town to help with the debt.

Mayor Fosque stated that he supported the idea from Councilmember Bloxom about tasking the new manager with re-invigorating this project.

Councilmember Oswald stated she was all for this idea.

Councilmember Bloxom stated that it was the conclusion of the operation subcommittee that we did have capacity to accept some level of septage even given the technical constraints around the mix and the chemicals. It should be just about going back out and asking for this business again. Those local providers are now trucking that to Pocomoke or Snow Hill to get it processed so there is some benefit to the local companies using us if they know we are willing to accept it.

Mayor Fosque opened the floor for public comments at 7:45 P.M. He reminded everyone that this is just a public hearing and they are not voting on anything at this meeting and that voting would occur at the June 22, 2020 meeting.

Mayor Fosque closed the Public Hearing on the Budget at 7:46 P.M.

Councilmember Bloxom asked Mayor Fosque if we needed to take an action on the proposed tax rate increase as it is termed on the agenda.

Mayor Fosque stated that we would wait and complete all tasks in June since he assumed they would need to wait the same week on the tax rate as they are required with the budget. He did not want to take a vote if it would be illegal.

Mrs. Fiege stated she would follow up on the proper procedure.

Councilmember Bloxom commented to Mr. & Mrs. Hall, regarding their point on tax revenue increase, that it is fair to say that council was very sympathetic to that concern and it was their original intent prior to the COVID-19 crisis to essentially split the difference with the residents and to not take the benefit of all that increased assessment. For what it's worth he stated he was looking at his City of Virginia Beach tax bill which he has to pay tomorrow and his assessment went up 30% and they did not change the tax rate. A number of municipalities are going through the same thing. He can look out his window and see Mr. & Mrs. Hall's house so he expects they both will be impacted the same and it doesn't please him any more than it pleases them, but unfortunately these are trying times and he thinks this is the best decision for the town.

Mrs. Fiege stated that Kathy Williams commented via Zoom thanking the council for hosting the meeting on Zoom, as it allows more members of the public to participate.

Councilmember Oswald thanked Councilmember Bloxom for addressing Mr. Hall's comment since it seemed like a big thing and she felt it was important that he be answered.

e. Discussion and Adoption of the Resolution to Extend the Effective Date of Ordinance 01-20: An Emergency Ordinance of the Town Council to Effectuate Temporary Changes in Certain Deadlines and to Modify Public Meeting and Public Hearing Practices and Procedures to Address Continuity of Operations Associated with Pandemic Disaster – Interim Town Manager, Lisa Fiege

Mrs. Fiege stated this was the ordinance the Council adopted at the March 31, 2020 meeting allowing the Council to have electronic meetings and added the ordinance sunsets on May 31, 2020. She stated the State of Emergency is supposed to end on June 10, 2020 but if that date is extended this resolution will address any changes.

Mayor Fosque asked for a motion.

Councilmember Oswald made a motion to adopt the resolution to extend the effective date of ordinance 01-20. Councilmember Bloxom seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote.

f. Discussion and Possible Adoption of a Resolution to Further Suspend the Meals Tax Collection for June 2020 - Robert Bloxom, Councilmember

Mayor Fosque asked for a resolution from the Council.

Councilmember Bloxom stated this was his idea to discuss further suspending the collection of Meals Tax for the month of June 2020. He stated the restaurants he spoke with were appreciative of us suspending the tax for April and May of 2020. He added those with outside dining would be able to

open for in person dining at fifty percent capacity on Friday, May 29, 2020 which, is still a severe revenue impact, even more so to those restaurants without outside dining capacity. He felt it did not impact the Towns budget tremendously and thought it would be a nice concession to our local restaurants to suspend the collection of the meals tax for another month.

Councilmember Oswald asked if Councilmember Bloxom had any feedback from the restaurants as to whether it was good for them and whether they passed the savings on to their customers.

Councilmember Bloxom said he had spoken to three restaurants and said they were all appreciative and were passing it along to their clients and marketing it on their Facebook and Instagram accounts and stated it was require by law that if they collected the 5% Meals Tax they had to remit that tax to the Town.

Mrs. Fiege stated two businesses collected the 5% Meals Tax for the month of April and did remit the tax to the Town.

Business owner Terris Kennedy stated the suspension of the Meals Tax has indeed been a significant help to her restaurant, The Blarney Stone and they have promoted the Town, for the advantage suspending the tax brought them, to their customers.

Mayor Fosque wanted to know how much we collected in Meals Tax for the month of June 2019. Mrs. Fiege stated the Town collected \$18,935 for the month of June 2019.

Business owner Terris Kennedy stated off premise alcohol sales were not included in the Meals tax collection.

Mayor Fosque asked if on premise alcohol sales for outdoor dining would be included in the Meals tax collection.

Ms. Kennedy stated those sales would be subject to Meals tax collection.

More discussion followed comparing percentages of business revenue this year with last year.

Ms. Kennedy stated their numbers are way down.

Hearing no further discussion Mayor Fosque asked for a motion.

Councilmember Bloxom made a motion to suspend the Meals Tax collection for the month of June 2020. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Public Comment:

Business owner Ms. Terris Kennedy thanked the Council for the vote on the Meals tax.

Planning Commission Report: - Robert Bloxom, Councilmember

No meeting.

Waterfront Committee Report: - Robert Bloxom, Councilmember

No meeting – Councilmember Bloxom informed the Council that the Town was awarded the VPA grant for improvements to the boat ramp. He also stated the lot the Town is renting from Mr. Bagwell for overflow parking for the Wharf will be marked and striped this weekend.

Councilmember Oswald asked how bookings were going for the summer.

Councilmember Bloxom knew of eight or nine bookings for June but stated fuel sales were good.

Town resident Kathy Boyd, 5 Market Street asked if there was signage for the overflow parking.

Mrs. Fiege stated she would speak with the Police Chief Eric Williams about the signs.

Personnel Committee Report: - Catherine Krause, Councilmember

No meeting.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Fosque stated he had spoken to Councilmembers about possibly closing North Street to King Street for outside dining from 5:30 P.M. until 11:00 P.M. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday to provide outdoor space for those restaurants that do not have outdoor seating and asked if Councilmembers had any thoughts.

Councilmember Oswald had concerns about lighting and whether it was safe.

Mrs. Fiege stated the restaurants would have to provide lighting.

Councilmember Oswald stated she thought it was a wonderful idea and other businesses on the street expressed an interest in staying open as well.

Councilmember Krause stated she did some research online and found many places were doing the same thing from coast to coast. She felt we would find a lot of support from VDOT and the ABC. Discussion followed about alcohol consumption and ABC rules and the logistics of closing the street.

Business owner Terris Kennedy was concerned about how to accommodate Davinci's Italian Kitchen.

Mrs. Fiege stated a restaurant can utilize outdoor space within 100 feet from their property, it would not have to be contiguous. She added the Town could make space available in the Town parking lot if they wanted to participate.

Town Manager's Report:

Town Elections - Interim Town Manager Lisa Fiege congratulated Robert Bloxom, Ray Burger and Maphis Oswald on their reelection to Town Council and Fletcher Fosque to his reelection as Mayor following the May 19, 2020 elections.

Northeast Revitalization Project - Mrs. Fiege stated that on Wednesday May 20, 2020 She, Mayor Fosque and Councilmember Marino met with the Northeast Revitalization Project Management Team to review the proposed budget and to discuss next steps for the planning grant. She added that letters had been sent to property owners in the project area asking them to fill out an application if they are interested in participating in the project.

Councilmember Oswald asked who the other members of the Project Management Team are. Mrs. Fiege stated Bobby Wert and Eric Luchanskey from ANPDC and Clinton Strand, Teresa Kellam, Betty Savage, and Thelma Gillespie.

Road Diet – Mrs. Fiege stated ANPDC had reached out to her about the Road Diet. This was something Council had discussed previously and involves reducing the lanes coming into Onancock on Market Street from four lanes to three lanes making the middle lane a turn lane. Mr. Chris Isdell, from the Virginia Department of Transportation, gave a presentation to the Town Council in August of 2018. Mrs. Fiege was asked if the Town was still interested and if so, the Council needed to pass a resolution by June so the Town would be eligible for grant funding for the project.

Mayor Fosque asked Mrs. Fiege to get all the information together and share it with the Council members so it could be discussed at the June meeting.

CARES Act – Mrs. Fiege shared that Accomack County will be given \$2,819,446.00 from the CARES Act disbursements to be spent on COVID – 19 related expenses. Onancock will be allocated \$106,333.00 to utilize for non-budgeted COVID-19 expenses and / or to disburse to qualifying local businesses. She stated it is an allocation. It is a reimbursement process and must be applied for. Mrs. Fiege stated she had met with Mr. Spuck to discuss setting up a small business grant program to present to Council at the June Meeting. Mrs. Fiege stated she was waiting for Accomack County to put their guidelines and criteria together before determining what the Town will do. She added the money had to be spent by December 31, 2020 or it would have to be returned to the Federal government.

Councilmember Bloxom stated his understanding was that the money could not be used for lost revenue.

Discussion followed.

Historic Onancock School Grant – Mrs. Fiege shared that the Historic Onancock School was awarded \$50,000.00 from the Eastern Shore Community Foundation to install an ADA compliant elevator.

Mrs. Fiege stated the Town Office will be opening to the public on Monday June 08, 2020 and that chipping would begin on Monday June 01, 2020.

ABC Guidelines on Outdoor Dining Areas – Mrs. Fiege stated the ABC had released new outdoor dining guidelines for phase one of the Virginia Forward Plan. It is temporarily allowing establishments to expand their outside dining areas or in some cases create an outdoor dining space. Restaurants may utilize sidewalks, parking lots or streets. They do not need to own the space but they must have written approval from the owner of the property. Mrs. Fiege stated that licensed establishments do not need to be contiguous to the outdoor space but they do need to be within one hundred feet of it. She stated she had sent an email to Dale Pusey asking if he would be agreeable to a conversation about closing down North Street or Market Street. Mr. Pusey stated Cape Charles had requested to close their main

thoroughfare, Mason Avenue, but were told no since it was the main thoroughfare. Since they had parking spaces Cape Charles is now roping off the parking spaces on that street so that people can have tables and chairs for restaurants and still allow for social distancing for people walking on the sidewalks. If Mr. Bizzotto wanted to look at doing that on Market Street where we do have parking that is something we could look at. VDOT said they would entertain an application to close North Street making sure it is in line with what other areas are doing.

Commission member Frey commented that there is not sufficient parking in town as is and that we would be taking away additional parking with this venture for outdoor dining. He asked where people would park?

Mayor Fosque commented that there was sufficient parking behind the movie theater and some other areas.

Mrs. Fiege stated that she was thinking outside the box and wanted to make sure they had a response prepared for restaurant owners who may come to them with a request, since not all business owners are on North Street. If Davinci's wants to do something in the town parking lot, council would need to review that as well. Mallards as well, if they sought to expand their outdoor dining into the town parking lot. She stated that she did reach out to the town's insurance provider about liability issues and we are not the only locality looking at this.

Mayor Fosque stated that he needed a proposal from the council to go forward with closing North Street. A VDOT letter would need to be submitted by tomorrow morning.

Mrs. Fiege stated that to request a road closure is a permit process and she would get this in as soon as possible, but since the State Police need to sign off as well it may not be tomorrow.

Mayor Fosque asked the council if there were any problems with this and proposed Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night for these road closures.

Councilmember Marino asked how they permit 50% capacity.

Mayor Fosque stated that the town is not charged with enforcing that and that the Health Department is responsible for this.

Mrs. Fiege stated that each restaurant would need to clearly define their boundaries and may need to provide their own lighting if what we have is not sufficient. Anyone using public space would not be allowed to have outdoor entertainment as an addition to the dining but could use their own patio space for such entertainment.

Councilmember Oswald asked if a business has outdoor entertainment but doesn't have a restaurant could that happen. Her hope was that other businesses on that street could profit from this initiative as well.

Mayor Fosque said that social distancing would be important to maintain and that if crowds grew too large, it would need to be suspended. He suggested getting the ball rolling, get the permit, and see what happens.

Mayor Fosque stated that the next council meeting may be at the Onancock Fire House, where they can still maintain social distancing in an open-air space.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Marino asked if headway had been made on the hotspots.

Mrs. Fiege responded that we had not made progress, but that it was given approval and they are waiting for broadband installation. ESVBA installations have been slow.

Councilmember Krause had no comment.

Councilmember Burger had no comment.

Councilmember Bloxom wished Mayor Fosque a Happy Birthday.

Councilmember Oswald stated that she would like to get back to the recodification and that she does not want that all to be dumped in their lap at the same time. She wants to know where we are and when we will see something.

Mrs. Fiege responded that she has been playing phone tag with Mr. Custis and promised to have an update next month.

Closed Session:

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 8:35 P.M.



Fletcher Fosque, Mayor



Mariellen Mearsheimer, Deputy Clerk