

Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting – Virtual
December 21, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fosque called the virtual meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and roll was called. Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Councilmembers Robert Bloxom, Joy Marino, Catherine Krause, Ray Burger and Maphis Oswald were present. Councilmember Thelma Gillespie was absent. A majority of members were present, and a quorum was established.

Consideration and Approval of the Meeting Minutes from:

- November 23, 2020 Regular Town Council Meeting
- November 30, 2020 Public Hearing

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

Councilmember Marino stated that on page three on the November 23, 2020 minutes her comment about budgeting slip reservations for the wharf, the numbers appear to be backwards. Mr. Spuck said that he would look into this matter and modify the minutes to accurately reflect her question.

Councilmember Oswald shared that on page one the word “nefarious” was used and since that was not the word she used she would like it amended to say, “health & safety”.

Councilmember Oswald made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Councilmember Marino seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

- a. Resolution to Name Town Attorney: Mr. Spuck explained that Mr. Custis resigned from his post as town attorney in September but had agreed to stay on in a limited capacity until a replacement could be found. Ms. Rachel Kellam has applied for the position and has been interviewed by the Mayor and Town Manager. Mr. Spuck continued, stating that council would need to adopt a formal resolution for her to become the town’s new attorney.

Councilmember Oswald asked if council would have any input into replacing the town attorney. Mayor Fosque explained that she was the only applicant. Councilmember Oswald asked if the new town attorney is being hired on a full-time basis or as needed. Mr. Spuck stated that she would be used as needed.

Councilmember Bloxom shared with council some of Ms. Kellam’s virtues, having worked with her on other boards in the community.

Councilmember Oswald asked what the process is for hiring a new attorney. Mayor Fosque shared that very few attorneys in Accomack County are interested in this kind of work.

Councilmember Bloxom read the resolution to appoint Ms. Rachel Kellam as the new town attorney. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion. No additional discussion was had, and the motion carried five to zero.

- b. Resolution to Accept Donation of Real Property: Mr. Spuck explained that the carnival grounds, which was owned by the Onancock Volunteer Fire Department (OVFD), has been sold. Mr. Spuck then introduced Mr. John Custis to further explain this agenda item.

Mr. Custis thanked Town Council for allowing him to serve as Town Attorney for so many years, stating that he loves this town. Mr. Custis continued, stating that the property has been sold to a group of investors and builders who are excited to develop the land for single-family homes. Part of the sale of the property was a donation of 6.5 acres of land to the town. Mr. Custis shared that the OVFD was instrumental in securing the land donation for the town and should be thanked for those efforts.

Councilmember Oswald thanked Mr. Custis for his years of service to the town. Councilmember Oswald expressed her excitement for the land donation, stating that this will be another great asset of the town.

Mayor Fosque asked if this matter needed to be noticed in the local newspaper. Mr. Spuck explained that it already had been. Mr. Spuck explained that council needs to adopt a resolution to accept the land donation.

Mr. Spuck read the revised resolution aloud for council to consider. Councilmember Oswald made a motion to accept the resolution as read. Councilmember Krause seconded the motion.

Councilmember Oswald asked why there was no value listed for the gift of donation. Mr. Spuck explained that the recipient cannot assign value to a gift, only the donor.

With no additional discussion, the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment:

Ms. Sandra Scher, Jefferson Street, asked what the town plans on doing with the donated land. Mr. Spuck shared that the tentative plan is to turn it into a dog park. Ms. Scher asked if the homes will be single-family. Mr. Spuck stated that they would and that they will fit into the community beautifully. They are projected to be completed within 18-24 months.

Committee Reports:

- a. HRSD, Robert Bloxom: Councilmember Bloxom shared that they have not met but that Mr. Spuck will have an update in his Town Manager report.
- b. Waterfront Committee, Robert Bloxom: No meeting
- c. Planning Commission, Robert Bloxom: No meeting.

- d. Personnel Committee, Catherine Krause: No meeting.
- e. Strategic Planning, Fletcher Fosque: No meeting

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Fosque thanked the Onancock Business and Civic Association (OBCA) for the Believe! driving tour. The tour was incredible and well received by the community. Mr. Spuck shared that approximately 1,000 people participated in the tour.

Mayor Fosque encouraged everyone to have a safe holiday.

Town Manager's Report:

Mr. Spuck shared that Town Hall is currently closed to the public and only full-time employees are allowed access. An employee has been in direct contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 so the office will remain closed to the public until after the New Year. Mr. Spuck further explained that staff will work remotely as needed. A mask policy has also been instituted and all employees have been interviewed and feel safe with these protocols. The affected employee will follow the return-to-work protocols outlined in the Town's Infectious Disease Plan adopted by Town Council.

The town is currently under contract with CDBG for Small Business Recovery Assistance Grant. The town has submitted the business grant application to CDBG for approval prior to them being released to town businesses. Town staff are working closely with the Onancock Main Street representatives on developing a communication plan, zoom trainings and workshops, to assist businesses with their applications. A community spark plug has been identified to be a part of the management team. Applications will be ready to send out after January 1st. Mr. Spuck shared that the town has a year to expend the funds.

CARES Act grants have been fully expended. The town received two allocations from the CARES Act, both in the amount of \$106,333. The reimbursement request will be sent to Accomack County tomorrow. Town staff was very excited about being able to help some of our struggling utility customers with the utility subsidy, about 40 customers received the subsidy. The town also distributed more than \$50,000 in business grants during though the second CARES Act allocation. Mr. Spuck also thanked the Accomack County staff for working with us and sharing their expertise through this process.

Mr. Spuck shared that the town has been awarded approximately \$21,000 for those current utility customers who have accounts that are in arrears in excess of 60 days during the pandemic. Mr. Spuck shared with council that Mrs. Lisa Fiege has down a fantastic job reaching out to those account holders.

Mr. Spuck shared that all FEMA grant reimbursements have been submitted to them today.

Mr. Spuck shared that the town has met all of the requirements for VMRC for the boat ramp project. A public notice will be going out shortly. The Army Corp of Engineers is next in line to approve the project.

Mr. Spuck shared that he recently spoke with Mr. Ted Henifin with HRSD. They are currently working on securing a VRA loan for the pipeline portion of the project. Part of that loan may help payoff the town's debt. Mr. Spuck will be meeting with their HR Director to discuss how the transfer of staff will work.

Councilmember Oswald stated that in the town budget some staff wages are allocated to different departments. Will that change with the transfer of the plant? Mr. Spuck stated that it would.

Mr. Spuck explained that in an effort to increase the town's communications with the residents, email and texting services have been put in place. Mr. Spuck encouraged council to test the texting system, 757-302-3900, to help iron out the system which has not yet been released to the public yet. This system will give residents instant feedback, day or night, and should be a good customer service tool.

Mr. Spuck thanked OBCA and Councilmember Oswald for all of their hard work with getting the Believe! driving tour setup as well as the trees at Ker Place. Mrs. Kim Moore and others did a wonderful job with making the season bright!

Mr. Spuck thanked OVFD for their commitment to the town. Mr. Spuck shared that Santa will be making one final trip through town on Tuesday, December 22, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. with the help of the OVFD. Santa will be picking up all the Santa letters on his way back out of town.

Mr. Spuck also thanked Elfie and Santa for their contribution in making this holiday season so bright!

Mr. Spuck shared that he will be finalizing the newsletter shortly. And wished everyone a safe happy holiday!

Council Comments:

Councilmember Bloxom thanked Mayor and Mrs. Fosque for their help with getting the Samuel Outlaw Blacksmith Shop decorated for the holidays.

Councilmember Krause, Marino and Burger shared that the town looks beautiful for the holidays.

Councilmember Oswald thanked all of that participated in the Believe! driving tour as well as those that helped decorate trees at Ker Place. Everyone did a wonderful job!

Mayor Fosque asked everyone to shop locally, help keep our businesses open during the winter months.

Closed Session, if needed:

None was needed.

Adjourn:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Fletcher Fosque, Mayor



Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk