

**Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting
Monday January 23, 2023
7:00 PM**

1) Call to order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fletcher Fosque called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and roll was called. Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Councilmembers, Brandon Brockmeier, Ray Burger, Cindy Holdren, Joy Marino, Sarah Nock and Maphis Oswald were present. A quorum was established. Town Manager Matt Spuck and Town Clerk Debbie Caton were also present.

2) The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3) Amend the original agenda – Councilmember Nock moved to amend the agenda to allow for committee appointments. Councilmember Oswald seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6-0 vote.

4) Approve minutes from December 19, 2022 meeting: Councilmember Oswald moved to approve the minutes. Councilmember Nock seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 6-0 vote.

5) Council Action –

a) USDA Loan Resolution – Councilmember Oswald moved to adopt the USDA Loan Resolution as presented. Councilmember Holdren seconded. The motion passed with 6-0 vote.

6) Council Discussion

a) Onancock Main Street presentation – Janet Fosque, President of Onancock Main Street presented the annual updates which included accomplishments from 2022 and upcoming projects and goals for 2023. The full power point slides are included in the minutes.

b) Police presentation on staffing - Town Manager Spuck along with Chief Eric Williams presented research data comparing the cost difference with staffing four or five full time police officers.

i. Attracting officers – Are wages competitive to attract and retain officers? Town Manager Spuck shared wages comparisons from three neighboring towns and the Accomack County Sheriff’s office. The best way to compare wages was classifying by rank.

Rank	Wage Comparison
Pre-Academy (untrained)	Wages are competitive
Post Academy	\$4,000 - \$5000 raise/bonus upon graduation
Sergeants/Captains	Low by only \$2000 - \$5000
Chief	Wages are competitive

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ii. Lack of qualified candidates – Town Manager Spuck shared an article from CNN discussing the nationwide problem with finding qualified candidates. The issues seem to be two-fold with young people not applying because of the overall climate towards officers and retirements are exceptionally high and have increased by 44%. The Shore is no exception to these same issues with all agencies posting ads to hire.

iii. Retaining officers – Town Manager Spuck addressed what seems to be a retention problem - In the last 10 years the Town has lost 7 police officers. The reasons vary but include completely left the profession, moved out of the area, promotion, and financial reasons with high cost of payroll deduction for medical insurance. Town Manager Spuck does not think there is a retention problem.

iv. Cost of medical insurance – the cost of family medical insurance is forcing the type of officer we can hire. The full cost of dependent coverage is 100% subsidized by the employee.

v. Does having more officers reduce crime? - Town Manager Spuck presented statistics to support that if the town can staff five full time officers the crime rate is lower.

**** The overall recommendation is to staff 5 full time police officers. Other issues to work through would be to increase post academy wages and mid-level ranks. The town needs to look at restructuring the cost of medical insurance. Mayor Fosque asked for the FY 2024 budget process to show options for staffing four officers and five officers. ****

c) Town Plan – process to move forward with selected consultant – Town Manager Spuck will discuss the scope of work and price negotiations with Hill Studios. Hill Studios was unanimously chosen by Town Council in the selection process.

7) Public Comments

- Mayor Fosque read an apology letter from Ms. Sharon Haydon about the special use permit for at 50 Ames St.
- Rosemary Paparo – 9 Holly – she is a member of ad-hoc committee with Onancock Residents Group and reported positive feedback from previously held meetings with the Historic Onancock School regarding the pavilion.
- Priscilla Hart – 21 Market St – Ms. Hart asked is there a building contract between the Town and a builder for the pavilion? No contract is in place because Rick King is doing the building with his own money. Is there a conflict of interest because the Historic Onancock School lease requires two council members to be on the school’s board? Since the town owns the property; is there any liability for incidents?

8) Committee Appointments –

- Councilmember Burger resigned from the board of Historic Onancock School. Councilmember Oswald moved to appoint Councilmember Nock.

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Councilmember Marino seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

- Mayor Fosque resigned from the Planning Commission. The current statute requires that one member from Town Council serve on Planning Commission. Councilmember Brockmeier is currently on the board and expressed his desire to maintain this role. Councilmember Marino also expressed interest. Councilmember Oswald moved to appoint Councilmember Marino. Councilmember Marino seconded the motion. The motion was tabled until Town Manager Spuck gets clarity from Town attorney asking if two council members can be on the planning commission.

9) Committee Reports:

- a) Personnel Committee – Councilmember Marino resigned from the Personnel Committee. A new member will be appointed at the February 27, 2023 meeting. The January meeting had no items on the agenda.
- b) Planning Commission – Planning Commission did not meet in January because of New Year’s Day holiday.
- c) Waterfront Committee – Waterfront Committee did not meet because the Marina is closed for winter hiatus.

10) Mayor’s Report – Mayor Fosque gave updates from 2022. Some accomplishments are listed below.

- a) Bulkhead Project – the project is almost complete. This project was funded by grant money from the Virginia Port Authority and Boater’s Improvement.
- b) Security Cameras – security cameras are in the process of being installed. This project was funded by ARPA.
- c) Town Attorney –Hefty, Wiley and Gore was hired as the town attorney.
- d) Jackson St- Jackson St was resurfaced and repaved as part of the HRSD sale.
- e) Chandler Building – the Town purchased 38 Market St. Plans are being reviewed by an architect to convert the building to a welcome center and public restrooms.

11) Town Manager’s Report

- a) **Town Manager’s Report – in Council packet.**
- b) **Financial Report –** Councilmember Holdren asked what are the percentages we have to in each reserve fund and can the financial report reflect the status to date?

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12) Town Councilmember comments –

- Councilmember Burger – no comment.
- Councilmember Marino – While visiting the dog park, she was pleased with the traffic.
- Councilmember Holdren – she encouraged anyone interested to comment on Lynwood Lewis’ bill SP 1390 to the VA General Assembly. The bill would restrict the Town’s ability to enforce our ordinance for Short Term Rentals.
- Councilmember Oswald – she informed Onancock Main Street that Barbara Streisand also visited Onancock. The Northeast Project was once \$50,000 and was reduced to \$35,000. She would like the \$15,000 restored. Councilmember Oswald congratulated Councilmember Nock on her appointment to the HOS board. She encouraged Councilmember Nock to report back to the board with current happenings to prevent more stress and tension that was caused by the pavilion.
- Councilmember Nock – she asked for a line item in the budget to update the audio equipment in the Town Hall chambers.
- Councilmember Brockmeier – he thanked OMS for the window coverings at the Charlotte Hotel.

13) Closed session – not necessary.

14) Adjourn – Councilmember Holdren moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Nock seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 6-0 vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.



Mayor, Fletcher Fosque



Town Clerk, Debbie Caton