

## Onley Town Council Minutes of February 11, 2019

VIRGINIA: At a Regular Monthly Meeting of the Onley Town Council held at the Onley Baptist Church, 25501 W. Main Street, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of February A.D., 2019:

Council Members Present:     Matt Hart, Mayor  
  Ned Finney, Vice Mayor  
  Billye D. Custis  
  Claudia Harmon  
  Rose Pierson - Absent  
  Susan Rillo  
  Woody Zember

Staff Present:                     Jamye Salazar, Town Manager  
  Rachel Kellam, Attorney  
  Melissa Taylor, Clerk

### Call to Order

Mayor Hart called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

### Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Ned Finney and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ned Finney.

### Adoption of Agenda

**Motion:** To adopted the agenda as stated by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Susan Rillo.

**Roll Call Vote:** Zember-yes; Rillo-yes; Harmon-yes; Pierson-absent; Custis-yes; Finney-yes.

**MOTION PASSED**

### Property at 25571 East Main Street / New Town Office (options)

Mayor Hart opened by asking Vice Mayor Finney to take the lead on the New Town Building. Mr. Finney responded that at this time nothing should be done until the completion of forming the Building Committee. Mr. Hart stated he has several things he would like to discuss before the committee is set up. He said he wants to hear everyone's input in order to get the direction the Council would like to take the committee. Mr. Hart said the plans prepared by GMB have already been sent out once for bids. It is his opinion that the town has two options to pick from 1. send out the current plans for re-bid; & 2. a downscaled version of the building. Mr. Finney responded if you change the current building plans you will have to begin the whole process over. Mr. Hart replied he is proposing (his opinion) to keep the existing building plans and send those exact plans back out on bid and also work on another set of plans that would be a downsized version (from 55x55/3025 sq. ft to 50x50/2500 sq. ft). Mr. Finney noted to make those changes you will need to have an architect draw up a different set of plans. Mr. Hart responded he understands that new plans will need to be done, but noted these additional plans could be an item for the Building Committee to work towards. Mr. Hart stated he would like to see the size of the new building be between 2300 - 2500 square foot and it would be just as functional as the current building plans. He would also like to have prices on two separate size buildings (current plans and downscale version) and have options to choose from depending on the overall cost.

### Discussion between Council and Public:

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Mr. Finney stated that \$115,000.00 has already been spent on the current building plans and to change or to get another set of plans; this money would just be thrown away.

Mr. Hart stated he understands Mr. Finney's concern that the town has already spent \$115,000.00.

Ms. Rillo asked how long has it has taken to get the current set of plans, roughly ten years. Mr. Finney also stated ten years. Ms. Rillo then asked how long it would take to get an additional set of plans for the smaller building which will need to be drawn up by an architect.

Mr. Hart responded he thought the Town overpaid for the services for the current set of plans. Mr. Hart stated that he believes the Council could find someone local to draw up different plans (smaller scale building) for a much lower price.

Ms. Custis asked if to put the current building plans out on bid again, would the town have to sign another contract with GMB? Ms. Salazar responded "No". Ms. Custis stated she thought that it was discussed previously to explore every option for a new town hall.

Mr. Hart noted he feels that the Council is married to the current plans if building new. He said he wasn't in agreement. Mr. Hart stated he wasn't in favor of building new with receiving only one bid for a million dollars with the current plans from GMB.

Ms. Rillo stated she would agree with an additional set of plans if the process could be expedited and meet all building code requirements.

Mr. Finney stated you would have to hire someone to oversee the process if you're not going to hire GMB. Mr. Hart said he doesn't think GMB should touch another thing.

Ms. Rillo asked if the plans that were drawn up previously by Mr. Higgins were available. No answer was given.

Mr. Hart corrected Mr. Finney stating that the town isn't going to change the current plans completed by GMB, but incorporate another set of plans (smaller building size) and have them both go out for bid at the same time to have two options to choose from. He stated some of the money already spent could be used towards another building.

Mr. Finney said to start a new set of plans would be starting from scratch. He noted you would need a new architect, new engineer, and new set of stamped plans then everything would have to go out for bids again, three bids.

Mr. Hart stated he would never approve of the current building; noting it is too big and cost too much money. He said for him to be in favor, it will need to be downsized, that is his only option on the table.

Mr. Zember asked what the cost would be for a new set of plans. Ms. Kellam responded that a new company would submit a new contract package just as GMB had done which would include that information. Ms. Salazar stated a separate company would not be able to use the set of plans provided by GMB. Mr. Zember asked if there were ways to cut cost with interior changes (i.e., carpet) of the current building plans. Mr. Finney stated that is correct, and that is work for the Building Committee.

Ms. Custis stated that listening from the audience as a town resident she thought Council voted on an amount they wanted to spend on the building. That figure was never addressed with GMB, according to

conversation today with Ms. Salazar. She stated if the previous Council had a set amount they agreed upon, and not to go over, why wasn't that amount given to GMB, noting Council already had the answer before the bids came back. Ms. Custis indicated that at this point Council should agree on a budgeted amount and work from there. Mr. Hart agreed with Ms. Custis to set an estimated amount tonight before getting too far ahead.

Mr. Gardner asked that we have permission to speak from the floor. Mayor Hart granted permission.

Mr. Dennis stated with the contract and the set of plans that have been drawn up; you can't alter anything in that set of plans. He then asked Ms. Kellam to clarify. Ms. Kellam responded not unless there are specifics in the contract that say you can alter. Mr. Dennis stated that plans couldn't be changed unless by the original company. He said that during an inspection the project plan has to be specific or someone will be held accountable, most likely GMB, because they drew up the plans.

Mr. Gardner stated that Harry Parker with Beracah Homes could build a nice office for \$500,000.00, more or less. He noted he spoke with Mr. Parker four years ago when serving on Council and was given that price. Mr. Hart stated this option should be researched and considered by the building committee. Mr. Hart stated he doesn't want the committee to be one track minded and only focused on this one town hall. He replied it is beautiful and wishes the town could afford it, but one million dollars plus is too much money to spend.

Mr. Dennis asked for a breakdown on prices for the building and groundwork on the current bid. Mr. Finney stated it was a lumped sum figure; there was no breakdown. Ms. Custis address some figures she located on the bid but the data appeared to be incorrect.

Mr. Hart polled Council Members for a Town Hall budget amount  
Turn Key / With a town population of 500 people:

Mr. Zember asked what the cost of the bid received was. Ms. Salazar responded \$1,070,000.00 (building) with additional cost for the well & septic, and that amount doesn't include \$117,000.00 for the set of plans. Ms. Kellam stated per GMB (who can't be held liable) the way the plans were drawn up, they estimated the building cost should be between \$650,000.00-\$850,000.00. Ms. Kellam responded because the bid received was a million plus doesn't mean it was a legitimate bid. Ms. Salazar replied per GMB recommendation not to accept the bid; one reason was the price came in too high.

Mr. Finney noted he spoke Bruce Herbert with Accomack County who talked to a commercial contractor indicating the price for a commercial building is roughly \$250.00 a square foot. This estimate did not include landscaping. Mr. Hart and Mr. Finney noted on the bid received the square footage cost was around \$350.00 which included landscaping.

Ms. Harmon asked which year GMB provided the set of figures, estimate building cost. Ms. Kellam responded the end of 2017. Mr. Finney responded he thought it was 2016. Ms. Kellam replied the work began with GMB in 2016, but the timeframe of the bid process was 2017. Ms. Harmon asked at that time were the plans finalized and did all the Council agree to the \$650,000.00 - \$850,000.00. Mr. Hart responded the initial discussion was during the previous term, and they budgeted \$300,000.00 - \$500,000.00. Mr. Gardner replied \$400,000.00 was the building budget six years ago. Mr. Hart stated he doesn't remember discussing a building budget during the last term.

Mr. Hart stated this is an estimated amount that you would feel comfortable spending and voting on:

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Mr. Zember - \$850,000.00 (not to exceed)

Ms. Rillo - \$650,000.00 - \$850,000.00

later during the meeting changed figure to \$750,000.00 for averaging purposes

Ms. Harmon - \$700,000.00

Ms. Custis - \$650,00.00

Mr. Finney - \$800,000.00's

Mr. Finney stated you would need to deduct off the top figure \$114,000.00 for GMB and \$45,000.00 Bundick's Well & Pump. Mr. Finney said to start with another building; the Council will have to start from scratch and hire a company to oversee the process. Mr. Hart responded he never voted for this building; he felt they were putting the cart before the horse. Mr. Hart stated he would agree to send the current building plans back out on bid but also wants to look into modular options, noting again he wants Council to have two options. Mr. Hart said he has spoken with many taxpayers and they are not in favor of spending that kind of money on a town hall.

Ms. Harmon asked if looking into a modular building as Mr. Gardner spoke of the town would need three bids from different manufactured home companies. Ms. Kellam responded the town would send out the bid. The town could receive no bids or ten bids. Ms. Rillo stated the town would provide the information and the companies bid on the project. Mr. Finney said the modular building would have a crawl space, it wouldn't be a concrete floor. Mr. Zember stated the difference between the two different structures are two sections being put together (modular) versus a stick-built building. Ms. Custis said modular companies complete commercial plans per Harry Parker many years ago. Ms. Harmon has concerns with what has already been spent is added to that figure provided. Ms. Custis said her thoughts on that is that money is gone because it has already been spent.

Mr. Finney responded to the figure given Ms. Custis. He said to take \$200,000.00 off of the top of that figure, and you are back to \$400,000.00, that is not realistic. Mr. Hart responded this is money being spent in the future, not money that has already been spent. Ms. Custis said again that money is already gone; it has been spent. Mr. Zember noted Council hadn't done anything right on this building so far. Mr. Hart asked thoughts between a stick built building and modular building. Ms. Custis responded with a previous conversation between herself and Harry Parker; they (Barach Homes) have the personnel to provide stamped plans and a faster building process. Ms. Custis said she also likes a crawl space. She stated she thinks with the prices she has heard, that they would be able to build with site work for \$600,000.00.

Mr. Hart said with the figures given by Council Members the average is between \$750,000.00 - \$800,000.00. Mr. Hart stated Ms. Pierson is absent tonight, but with a conversation with her today, she said she wanted to be as conservative as possible. Ms. Custis stated per conversation with Ms. Pierson; she would like every option explored. Mr. Gardner responded at 3,000 square feet at \$250.00 equals \$750,000.00. Mr. Gardner suggested cutting the meeting room in half.

Ms. Harmon said as a resident in the audience Mr. Bliss had suggested a different alternative. Ms. Harmon said the Council has discussed stick built and modular home and asked what Mr. Bliss's suggestion was. Several people responded a metal building. Ms. Harmon asked if that would be another option. Mr. Hart replied he doesn't want anything on a concrete slab for several reasons: flooding, hard to heat, difficult to change plumbing and walls. Mr. Hart stated the proposed building is on a concrete slab.

Mr. Daffin said his thought is to look for a price per square foot, not a dollar figure to build the building.

Mr. Hart polled Council Members for total square footage for the new town office:

Mr. Zember - at least 2400 sq. ft.

Ms. Rillo - 3025 sq. ft. (building for the future)

Ms. Harmon – Uncertain

later allowed Mr. Hart to provide the figure

Ms. Custis - 2500 sq. ft.

Mr. Finney - 3025 sq. ft.

Mr. Hart - 2500 sq. ft. (Ms. Harmon's)

Mr. Hart said with the figures given by Council Members the average building size is roughly 2,800 square foot, with an average price of \$267.85 per square foot.

Ms. Kellam stated this project has to be government approved. She noted all companies doing the work on the building would have to have all proper licensure. Ms. Salazar responded all licensure information would need to be verified. Ms. Kellam said GMB is a very qualified and replicable company that has overseen construction on several large buildings in our community.

Mr. Zember went on record stating he doesn't want his figures to be held accountable because there is a lot more research to be done.

Ms. Rillo responded this price is only building cost and doesn't include the site work.

Ms. Kellam responded the town would need to hire another engineer or architect to draw up plans for a 2,800 square foot building. Mr. Hart responded not necessarily if going with the option of a modular company they can handle the plans. Ms. Rillo replied that the town would need three bids, and each company would have to have the capability to engineer their plans.

Mr. Hart stated he would like the Building Committee to retain a local engineer (staying away from GMB if possible) to draw up a new set of plans.

Mr. Hart said (everyone agrees) that the building budget is \$750,000.00 and the square foot average is 2,800. This information will be given to the Building Committee for a starting point. Ms. Rillo asked Mr. Hart if his figure was included in the square footage average on Council Comments. She said if this information is going to the committee as Council recommendations then Mr. Hart's figures should not be included as Mayor, but Ms. Pierson's figures should be included. Mr. Hart responded Ms. Pierson had expressed to him about being conservative, but we can get a definite number from Ms. Pierson. Mr. Hart stated he feels 2,500 square foot is very conservative. Ms. Harmon said that bothers her, that we can assume a figure for Ms. Pierson. Mr. Hart said he could take his number out of the equation if that is the concern. Ms. Harmon responded that isn't the concern. The concern is that Ms. Pierson only spoke with Mr. Hart and Ms. Custis but not to the rest of the Council to voice her interests. Ms. Gordy stated that is how Accomack County Supervisors handle the same situation. In the absence of a Supervisor, the Chairman would bring the message back to the fellow Supervisors. Ms. Custis noted Ms. Pierson gave her permission to speak in her absences. Ms. Harmon replied that the statement should have been said in the beginning that Ms. Pierson has given Mr. Hart and Ms. Custis permission to speak

on her behalf. Ms. Custis spoke to her character "that is the kind of person I am, I would not have said what she thought if she had not said that". Ms. Harmon replied she believes that. Mr. Finney asked Ms. Custis if Ms. Pierson gave any figures. Ms. Custis stated Ms. Pierson did not provide any figures but did say she wanted every option explored and as conservative as possible. Ms. Kellam responded this matter could be brought back up at the next meeting for discussion.

**Public Comments:**

Mr. Gomez said he is in support of a new building. He noted he has attended several Council meetings and heard discussion about a new building over and over again. Mr. Gomez said the new building should be self-sustainable and perhaps bring in some revenue which will help offset the cost of the building.

Mr. Hart polled Council about renting the meeting room in the new town office to the public:

Ms. Gordy stated she would never rent out a town office. She said it is a town office; it isn't there to make money, that is just ridiculous. Ms. Gordy asked do you hear of any other towns renting out their office. Ms. Gordy stated she previously had the responsibility of renting the Women's Club. She said it is a significant liability renting out; i.e., lots of cleaning and many broken items. Mr. Hart stated he would be agreeable to rent the town building out on a case to case bases. Mr. Gardner asked for Ms. Kellam to repeat her response. Ms. Kellam said "you can't pick and choose". He said with the proposed park that will be an area for the public to be able to use.

Mr. Zember - No opinion

Ms. Rillo - Yes (for a service to town residents / baby shower)

Ms. Harmon – No

Ms. Custis – No

Mr. Finney – No

Mr. Gardner recommended that the Building Committee be the Town Council. Mr. Hart agrees.

Mr. Dennis agrees with the price that the Council set. He noted there would be an additional \$100,000.00 on top of the price for a septic system and to furnish the building.

Mr. Hart thanked everyone for their input on the building discussion. He said once he gets clarification from Ms. Pierson what her idea is for the square footage and building budget that will provide an accurate estimate. Mr. Hart said then that information could be turned over to the Building Committee as a starting point.

**George N. McMath Town Park**

Mr. Hart presented a copy of the proposed town park drawing. Mr. Hart opened stating he received a call from Elizabeth (George McMath daughter) about her interest in donating six lots to the town for a park named after her father. He asked Elizabeth to provide a sketch of their vision so he could present to the Council. The drawing presented tonight is the sketch provided by Elizabeth. Mr. Hart said this drawing could be modified.

Mr. Hart polled Council about the proposed park drawing and changes they would make:

Mr. Zember stated he likes the plans. He has some additional questions but could be answered later; one question being what type of low wall. The only changes he would recommend is the basketball

court. He said the basketball court changes the whole appearance of the park. Mr. Zember suggested replacing the basketball court with small playground equipment. Mr. Zember said until he received more detailed information he can't elaborate further, but the general diagram is very nice. Mr. Zember noted his opinion the basketball court is wasted space and could cause the town some hardships and problems. He would like to replace the basketball court with playground equipment.

Ms. Rillo stated she agrees with everything Mr. Zember presented.

Ms. Harmon stated she agrees with Mr. Zember and Ms. Rillo. Ms. Harmon said she has questions about the low wall.

Mr. Hart stated he had no input in the drawing.

Ms. Custis agrees with everything that has been said. Ms. Custis replied if the committee and Council should agree, the playground equipment needs to be for "small" children. Ms. Custis noted concern about parking.

Mr. Zember asked if the drawing included all six lots. Mr. Hart responded there was no indication on that; they provided the sketch, and the committee could work on the details.

Mr. Finney agrees to remove the basketball court. He noted there should be a budget for this project.

Ms. Gordy stated there doesn't appear to be a lot on the drawing for children. She noted she is interested in getting the young people an area to play and keep them from playing in the streets. Ms. Gordy said the park seems to be geared more towards the older age groups. She asked to please consider incorporating something for the young kids in the park.

Mr. Daffin spoke being the adjacent property owner. He loves the idea of naming a park after George McMath. Mr. Daffin noted some concerns: parking, bathroom expense (above ground septic system or fix holding tank system), and flooding. He stated "he is all for a park and will walk that park twice a week picking up trash as long as it is happy meal boxes and McDonald's cups, but if I start picking up beer bottles and beer cans and all that from what's going to be playing basketball; it's not a park it's some place for adults to come play basketball." Mr. Daffin said he loves the idea of the park and the sketch is very well laid out except for one corner. He noted he turned in a letter of interest to serve on the Park Committee.

Mr. Gomez said he would like to see a play area for children instead of the basketball court.

Mr. Gardner said he likes the basketball court. He mentioned the basketball court that was once in town where all races played many games a day and everyone had fun. He agrees on no alcohol no drugs stating that is why we have law enforcement in this town; to enforce the law. Mr. Gardner said he is for the basketball court with proper supervision. Mr. Gardner said the kids in the age group of 10-13 need something to do besides playing in the street.

Ms. Gordy said again that she would like to see more things for the children. She said she is glad the town is going to get a park.

Mr. Dennis spoke on parking. He said parking could be on the east side, one row of parking the length of the lot. Mr. Dennis said the park would need a fence to prevent vandalism.

Mr. Hart polled Council Members for a Park budget amount:

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Mr. Gomez said that the town should at least spend the assessed value of the lots that are being donated. Mr. Hart responded according to AccoMap the assessed value is \$24,000.00 per lot and there are six lots.

Mr. Hart stated he isn't holding Council to the budget figures they are providing on the park or the building projects. He would like to have an idea of the budget amount on these two projects as a starting point for the committees.

Mr. Hart provided the Council what his budget amount would be \$250,000.00 - \$300,000.00 to start and add towards in the future.

Mr. Zember: He would be unable to provide a figure not knowing any details of sizes or costs.

Unable to provide a figure for three reasons:

1. How much will be spent on the new building
2. Depends on the committee
3. Depends on George McMath feelings added a fourth
4. Not knowing the cost of items or dimensions of the pavilion

After much discussion and Mr. Hart asking for the amount to get an average figure

Mr. Zember - \$120,000.00

Ms. Rillo - \$75,000.00 - \$100,000.00 initially

Changed during conversation to get an average amount to \$100,000.00

Ms. Harmon - \$150,000.00

Ms. Custis - \$150,000.00

Mr. Finney - \$150,000.00

Ms. Harmon asked if it was possible to sell bricks in his honor. Mr. Custis also commented on donating benches. Mr. Hart responded yes with some additional fundraisers.

Mr. Hart stated the average for tonight is around \$140,000.00 which doesn't include Ms. Pierson's figure. Mr. Hart said once Ms. Pierson's amount is added that will set the initial budget for the Park Committee. Mr. Hart noted at this point there should be a letter drawn up and sent to Elizabeth stating the budgeted amount and the changes agreed by Council. He hopes that the MacMath's will be agreeable with the amount and changes. Ms. Kellam responded a portion of the initial money would need to be allocated for hiring an engineer. Mr. Hart stated this would be a task for the Park Committee.

**Public Comments:**

Mr. Gardener complimented Council on the demeanor of the meeting.

**Adjourn**


**Motion: To adjourn at 8:13 pm by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Ned Finney.**

**Roll Call Vote: Zember-yes; Rillo-yes; Harmon-yes; Pierson-absent; Custis-yes; Finney-yes.**

**MOTION PASSED**



Respectfully submitted,



Melissa Taylor  
Clerk



Matthew D. Hart  
Mayor