

Onley Town Council
Special Meeting
April 20, 2020

Special Meeting of the Onley Town Council held at the Onley Baptist Church, 25501 W. Main Street, on the 20th day of April A.D., 2020:

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

Staff Present: Rachel Jamye Salazar, Town Manager
John Spivey, Chief of Police, OPD
Rachel Kellam, Attorney

Call to Order

Mayor Hart called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Mayor Hart noted that we are in compliance with Governor Northam's order of ten or less people in a meeting.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Billye D. Custis and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Woody Zember.

Adoption of Agenda

Mayor Hart asked that Council add item 4A. Public Comments to the agenda and remove item 8.5 Face Masks.

**Motion: To adopt the agenda with the two changes by Susan Rillo and seconded by Billye D. Custis. Roll Call Vote: Custis-yes; Finney-yes; Harmon-yes; Pierson-yes; Rillo- yes; Zember-no
MOTION PASSED**

Public Comments

Ms. Salazar read two statements. The first was from Richard F. Hall III/Four Corner Plaza LLC in favor of temporarily suspending meals tax. The second statement was from Bill Ferguson, a citizen of Onley in support of tax relief (meals tax, real estate, personal property and vehicle decal tax) for citizens and businesses. A copy of both statements will be attached to the original copy of the minutes.

Adoption of Resolution Declaring Local Emergency

**Motion: To adopt the Resolution Declaring Local Emergency by Rose Pierson and seconded by Susan Rillo. Roll Call Vote: Custis-yes; Finney-yes; Harmon-yes; Pierson-yes; Rillo- yes; Zember-yes
MOTION PASSED**

Onley Town Council
Special Meeting
April 20, 2020

Adoption of Ordinance to Effectuate Temporary Changes in Certain Deadlines and to Modify Public Hearing Practices and Procedures to Address Continuity of Operations Associated with Pandemic Disaster

Ms. Kellam explained that this ordinance and the next one will allow us to hold electronic meetings. It will also allow us to adjust other procedures as necessary to continue the day to day operations of the town if the procedures are consistent with the terms and conditions of the emergency ordinance.

Motion: To adopt an Ordinance to Effectuate Temporary Changes in Certain Deadlines and to Modify Public Hearing Practices and Procedures to Address Continuity of Operations

Associated with Pandemic Disaster by Susan Rillo and seconded by Rose Pierson. Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes

MOTION PASSED

Adoption of Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of Procedures for Electronic Public Meetings and Public Hearings to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Pandemic Disaster

Motion: To adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of Procedures for Electronic Public Meetings and Public Hearings to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Pandemic Disaster by Rose Pierson and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes MOTION PASSED

COVID-19 Relief Efforts for Businesses and Residents

Ms. Kellam explained that if Council wishes to suspend meals tax (even temporarily) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she needs to figure out the proper vehicle for doing so. She added that we can do an ordinance suspending the tax for a certain time period or we can repeal the tax altogether. She suggested that Council make a decision tonight and we can proceed with the actual steps at another time. Mayor Hart allowed each Council members three minutes to voice their opinion on suspending meals tax. Mr. Zember wants meals tax suspended for three months. Ms. Rillo agreed that the meals tax should be suspended for three months and the matter re-visited once the three months are over. Ms. Harmon disagreed with suspending meals tax stating that she feels there are other ways to help the citizens which would make a greater impact. Ms. Pierson agreed that meals tax should be suspended on a temporary basis. Ms. Custis agreed with Ms. Harmon stating that meals tax does not stop anyone from eating out and she does not feel that it will make a huge impact. She added that if we want to help businesses, it should be all businesses – not just restaurants. Mr. Finney is in favor of suspending meals tax for two months. He added that he would like the entire Town Council to give up their pay and split it between the businesses. Ms. Kellam said that the town cannot just give out money to the businesses, but it could be relinquished to go towards budget shortfalls which may be caused by the suspension of taxes. Mayor Hart would like to do a stimulus to all residents. Ms. Kellam said she would need to look into that. There was much discussion about this matter.

Onley Town Council
Special Meeting
April 20, 2020

Motion: To suspend the meals tax for a period of two months (May and June) and to be re-visited after that time by Woody Zember and seconded by Rose Pierson. Roll Call Vote: Custis–no; Finney–yes; Harmon–no; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes MOTION PASSED

In the matter of suspension of real estate and personal property tax, Ms. Kellam recommended that Council re-visit the matter in August since at this time, there are no real estate or personal property taxes due at this time. Mayor Hart asked about the possibility of changing the tax rate. Ms. Salazar stated that if Council wants to change the tax rate, they need to decide that now since we are getting ready to advertise and hold a public hearing on the 2020-2021 budget with the current tax rate as is. Ms. Kellam stated that the tax due date can be extended 90 days although she does not recommend that at this time. She also stated that being the tax rate is already so low, she does not recommend lowering it any more adding that the town still has to remain operational and that means employees and services that still need to be paid. Ms. Salazar agreed adding that she just wants Council to understand their options at this time. There was much discussion among the Council about this matter.

Motion: To re-visit the matter of real estate and personal property tax in August 2020 by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Ned Finney. Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes MOTION PASSED

Council started a discussion about the possibility of suspending the vehicle decal tax. Mayor Hart asked about the possibility of suspending it for the entire year. Ms. Salazar warned that should we suspend the decal tax for the year, the County may decide to charge it. We have asked about the possibility in the past and that's what we were told. Council asked her to check with the County again. Mayor Hart mentioned that the decal tax charge should begin to appear on our tax bills beginning this year. Ms. Salazar stated that she recently learned that may not happen just yet. She was recently told that due to so many changes within the County, it may take longer than expected.

Motion: To suspend the vehicle decal tax requirement until July 15, 2020 by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Susan Rillo. Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes MOTION PASSED

There was a discussion about how the town can show their appreciation for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motion: To authorize Ms. Salazar and Ms. Custis to spend up to \$2,000.00 on appreciation signs and banners by Rose Pierson and seconded by Susan Rillo. Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes MOTION PASSED

Equipment Purchase 2019 Dodge Durango

Chief Spivey submitted to Council a summary of the invoices for the equipment to outfit the 2019 Dodge Durango in the amount of 4,743.88 plus shipping. He explained that some of the equipment is more expensive since we could not get the Charger and we had to get the Durango. He added that the installation is \$1,100.00 and is included.

Onley Town Council
Special Meeting
April 20,2020

Motion: To purchase the equipment for the 2019 Dodge Durango in the amount of \$3,697.87 plus shipping and including \$1,100.00 for a total of \$4,800.00 plus shipping by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Susan Rillo. Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes MOTION PASSED

2020-2021 Budget Discussion

At this time, Mr. Zember had to leave the meeting.

Chief Spivey stated that after reviewing his numbers, he can cut \$25,100.00 from his budget expenditures. He stated that Ms. Salazar has suggested that he may need to wait on the purchase of another patrol car, that would save the town another \$28,144.00. He stated that he would prefer to keep the car in the budget.

Ms. Salazar said that she has also made changes to her budget and she has a written copy of the proposed changes. She added that she did not cut bonuses or pay increases since she was the only employee due for an increase and she didn't feel comfortable making that decision. She was able to cut \$33,050.00 from her budget. She stated that (along with Chief Spivey's changes) leaves us with a deficit of \$43,234.00 which is much better than the original shortage of \$101,000.00. Mayor Hart thanked both for the time spent on the budget as well making some deep cuts.

Ms. Harmon and Ms. Custis suggested several cuts to the revenue figures. Ms. Salazar stated that some cuts to revenue were already made due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Rillo asked about the possibility of eliminating Mayor and Council salaries. Mayor Hart said he is okay with doing that, but since the election is in November, is it okay to eliminate salaries for new Council Members taking over. He said he thinks we can cut our own terms but not for the term beginning January. Ms. Custis said that once you are in office, you cannot raise the salary for the term you are serving. Mayor Hart does not think we should make any changes that may affect new people to Council. Mr. Finney suggested cutting for next quarter and Mayor Hart agreed. Ms. Salazar explained that next quarter does not affect this budget. Council agreed to cut their salary for the first quarter of the 2020-2021 budget year.

Mayor Hart asked Ms. Kellam to investigate the possibility of a liquor and/or tobacco tax. Mayor Hart did not want to decide about cutting Council pay since Mr. Zember is not here to voice his opinion.

There was a discussion about the possibility of refunding BPOL fees. No decision was made.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 8:06 pm by Rose Pierson and seconded by Susan Rillo.

Roll Call Vote: Custis–yes; Finney–yes; Harmon–yes; Pierson–yes; Rillo- yes; Zember–yes

MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,


Jamye Salazar
Town Manager