

Onley Town Council
Emergency Meeting
Minutes of January 18, 2022
Onley Baptist Church, 25501 W. Main St., Onley VA

Council Members Present: Rose Pierson, Vice-Mayor
 Brian Corbin
 Billye D. Custis
 Bill Ferguson
 Claudia Harmon
 Woody Zember

Council Members Absent: Matt Hart, Mayor

Staff Present: Carl Bundick, Town Attorney
 Jamye Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer

Call to Order

Vice-Mayor Pierson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Councilwoman Custis and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Ferguson.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Pierson stated that there will be no changes made to the agenda tonight since we do not have the full Council in attendance (with the absence of Mayor Hart). She added that there will be no public comment as is our practice at special called meetings.

Motion: To adopt the agenda by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote:
Corbin- no; Custis-yes; Ferguson- yes; Harmon – yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Before he voted, Mr. Corbin asked why there is no public comment. Mr. Bundick explained that the agenda does not allow for public comment and the agenda cannot be modified due to the absence of Mayor Hart. He also noted that Vice-Mayor Pierson will be not voting tonight since she is chairing the meeting. Ms. Salazar stated that, following protocol, we have never had public comment at special called meetings but certainly exceptions can be made and if Council wishes to ask the public's opinion, that has been done in the past. Council agreed that is how they will proceed at tonight's meeting.

Discussion of New Town Office – Rental Space at Four Corner Plaza Inc.

Mr. Corbin asked to speak first as the Chair of the Building Committee. He stated that he plans to present a proposal for a new town hall at the February meeting. The builder is proposing a 60-80 day start from permit approval, and 3-5 months to complete. He held up a drawing of the proposed building and added that the builder is Delmarva Builders. He stated that he is not in favor of relocating the town hall to Four Corners since he feels that we will soon have a new building.

Ms. Pierson agreed and said she is not in favor of moving the town office to Four Corner Plaza.

Mr. Ferguson spoke against moving the town office to Four Corner Plaza. He feels that moving is a temporary fix to a permanent problem and that it will delay the start of building a new office.

Ms. Custis spoke in favor of moving the office to the plaza adding that not only do we need a place for Council to meet, but also the Town Committees and Commissions need meeting space. She added that

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we also need office space for our employees and storage. She does not feel that we can wait any longer to address these issues and added that she does not believe that we will have a building anytime soon. Mr. Zember stated that he is in favor of moving the office to Four Corners. He agreed that there is no way that we will have an office building up and functioning any time soon. Ms. Harmon spoke in favor of moving the town office to the plaza. She stated that while she appreciates the offer from several organizations to use their meeting space, none of them are within the town limits of Onley. She believes that we need the meeting space, as well as the office space and storage. She feels that the police department and the general government department need to be separate.

Council polled the citizens in attendance and asked for their opinions about the possible move to the plaza. Fred Gardner, Michelle Evans, and Rodney Lang spoke against the move. John Dennis, Debbie Bliss, and Richard and Arlene Evans spoke in favor of the move.

Ms. Custis asked Ms. Salazar for her opinion. Ms. Salazar spoke in favor of moving the town office. She agreed with the reasons that have already been mentioned and added that another issue is a dire need for privacy when discussing confidential matters. She told Council that just last week, she had to leave the office on one occasion so others could speak in private and sit in her car on another occasion to have a private work-related phone call. Lastly, she expressed concern about not being able to social distance from each other in the current office.

Mr. Bundick disclosed to Council that he is a tenant of Rick Hall, but he would have no issues reviewing the lease.

Several Council Members suggested using the \$52,000.00 CARES reimbursement funds to cover the expense of moving the town office to the plaza.

Motion: To have the attorney review the lease with Four Corners Inc. and if he finds it suitable, we enter into a two-year agreement to rent the office space (tentative March 1st) by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote: Corbin- no; Custis-yes; Ferguson- no; Harmon – yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Pierson told Council that she will follow up with them about the possibility of another meeting to discuss police department matters once she speaks with Mayor Hart.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 6:46pm by Billye D. Custis and seconded by Claudia Harmon.

Roll Call Vote: Corbin- yes; Custis-yes; Ferguson- yes; Harmon – yes; Zember - yes.

MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,



Jamye Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer



Matthew Hart, Mayor