

**Onley Town Council
Regular Monthly Meeting
Minutes of March 4, 2024
Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

Council Members Present: Bill Ferguson, Vice-Mayor
Daniel Bloxom
Brian Corbin
Kate Hill
Rodney Lang
Woody Zember

Council Members Absent: Ned Finney, Mayor

Staff Present: Carl Bundick, Town Attorney
E. J. Long, Chief of Police, OPD
Susan Rillo, Town Manager
Jamye Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer

Call to Order

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

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

Councilman Corbin gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

Councilman Corbin asked to add item **8B. In-car camera system for PD** to the agenda.

Motion: To adopt the agenda (with the addition) by Kate Hill and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call

Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Presentation – Eastern Shore Rails to Trails

Vice-Mayor Ferguson introduced Ron Wolff, Executive Director, Eastern Shore Rails to Trails. Mr. Wolff gave Council an update on the status of the project. He noted that the trail will run from Cape Charles to Hallwood. The cost (from VDOT) to build the trail is 1.5 million dollars per mile. The trail is divided into four sections, two sections are fully funded through grant money and two sections are currently unfunded. He also spoke about future tourism and economic development. Mr. Wolff responded to questions about security and maintenance along the trail by saying that they are working on several different options to have in place once the trail opens. The completion date for the first section in Cape Charles is 2026. He did not have an answer to when the rails on East Main Street will be removed. Lastly, he stated that if HRSD has issues along the trail, they are responsible for the repairs.

Commission/Committee Reports

Planning Commission – Ms. Salazar reported that Ms. Bliss emailed her earlier today to report that they did not have a quorum in February, so there was no meeting. Mr. Corbin said that he and Tom Cherry both attended since they were not told the meeting was canceled. He asked that Council consider allowing them to be paid for their time. Council agreed (one time only) but asked Mr. Corbin to instruct the Planning Commission to make a better effort at communicating in the future.

Motion: To pay Brian Corbin and Tom Cherry for their attendance at the non-meeting of the Planning Commission (one time only) by Kate Hill and Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom-yes; Corbin- abstain; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

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McMath Park Commission- Melissa Taylor reported that they have scheduled an egg hunt at the park on March 23 at 11:00am with a rain date of March 24 at 2:00pm. She asked that each Council member take two fliers to post as well as attend the egg hunt if possible. The committee has discussed and revised park rules but have decided to table that until they can have Council review them. They are finalizing their budget for additional playground equipment. Councilman Bloxom is trying to get someone who submitted a previous proposal to come and give a presentation. They have discussed an artificial Christmas tree at the park and will be including that in their budget. They plan to create a list of park maintenance tasks to be presented monthly. There are issues with the pond that they will be working on at the March meeting. Their next meeting is March 11th at 5:45pm at the park. There was a small discussion initiated by Councilman Lang about the standing water at the park. Ms. Rillo said that has been an issue for everyone in town due to the amount of rain. She said that we are on the VDOT list to address the problem.

Public Works Garage Committee – Ms. Rillo said that she has four bids on commercial garage buildings. She expressed concern about the setbacks for the new town office building based on our zoning requirements. She explained that if we build the garage, we need to be sure to leave room for the new town office building. There was much discussion about this matter.

Motion: To authorize Ms. Rillo to proceed with getting the bid package together to pursue the building that was shown earlier at Boss Buildings by Brian Corbin and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom-no; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED
Mr. Corbin asked Ms. Rillo to email the bid package information to the Council as soon as she completes it. She agreed.

Old Business

Vice-Mayor Ferguson asked if Council would like to make a motion to discuss Donations since the topic has been tabled. Ms. Salazar stated that we have received profit and loss statements from two organizations that have asked for a donation.

Motion: To take the topic of Donations off the table by Kate Hill and Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom-yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Salazar stated that she has received profit and loss statements from ORA and CALL. She passed those around for Council’s review and added that both organizations are operating in the black.

Motion: To donate \$5,000.00 to ORA with the stipulation that Town residents receive half off their membership by Brian Corbin and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin-yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Motion: To donate \$2,000.00 to CALL by Daniel Bloxom and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Rillo asked Council for guidance with purchasing new holiday lights and decorations. She gave Council an account of what we have, what does and does not work, and what we need to purchase.

Motion: To authorize Ms. Rillo to spend \$9,200.00 on Holiday decorations (whatever is necessary and what she thinks looks good) by Brian Corbin and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom - yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

New Business

Mr. Ferguson suggested that when we set a date for the 2024-2025 Budget Workshop, we also add the town garage discussion to the agenda. Council agreed.

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Motion: To meet on March 26, 2024, at 6:00pm for the 2024-2025 Budget Workshop & PW Garage Discussion by Brian Corbin and seconded by Kate Hill. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Mr. Corbin stated that he was just made aware that the police patrol vehicles do not have in-car camera systems. He asked if the other Council members were aware of this. He also asked Chief Long when they were removed. Chief Long stated that our vehicles have not had working cameras for years and that none were placed in the new vehicles when they were purchased. He stated that they do have body cameras.

Motion: To authorize Chief Long to research the matter of in-car camera systems along with pricing and have it ready for next month’s meeting by Brian Corbin and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Department Reports

Police Report

Chief Long gave his written report to Council for review. He noted that he also included an estimate for a trailer to carry the speed reduction signs. He told Council that the Town of Painter has expressed interest in purchasing two of our speed reduction signs. Ms. Rillo recommended that Council sell them at a lower price to recoup some of our money. Mr. Corbin asked Chief Long to check with VDOT before purchasing the trailer or anything else involving the signs. He also asked for VDOT’s decision to be in writing. Chief Long said there has been an issue with the in-car computers. He explained that the VA Supreme Court has implemented requirements that we have to meet, and it could be up to 10-12 months before we are able to use the system. He does not think it will be that long since he has already met many of their requirements. He said we have been approved for a \$2,900.00 LOLE grant to purchase equipment. He plans to purchase breathalyzers once the funds are received.

Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Salazar asked if there were any questions about her financial report. She added that there is one business that is two months delinquent on meals tax, and she has agreed to a payment plan with a second business that is three months behind on meals tax. The first payment is due March 20th. Lastly, she has received a list of things to get together for the 2022-2023 audit and she has started working on that, although she currently does not have a date for the audit. Mr. Corbin pointed out that on the ARPA budget, the Police Department and Public Works have both overspent the amount that was allocated to them. He does not understand how that happened without Council’s knowledge. He added that he also has concerns that the procurement ordinance is not being followed, pointing out the expense for ads in the Eastern Shore Post that totaled \$1,260.00 and appeared to be broken into two payments to circumvent the ordinance requirements. He said this is the second batch of ads that total more than \$1,000.00. He reminded everyone that anything over \$1,000.00 should be approved by Council. Lastly, he said that he feels that the whole deal with the expensive advertising through the Chamber of Commerce should have been approved by Council. Ms. Rillo said that Council was made aware of that months ago and in the matter of the invoices, they were separate ads but billed together. Mr. Lang said that Accomack County will be reimbursing us the funds. Mr. Corbin said he will not change his mind about this matter and reiterated that no matter the circumstances, purchases over \$1,000.00 need to be approved by the Council in advance, not after the fact.

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Motion: To pay the February 2024 payables by Kate Hill and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Town Manager/Zoning Report

Ms. Rillo reported that she sent a property maintenance letter to a homeowner on W. Main Street. She has been working on the garage, the holiday lights, and meeting with the McMath Park Committee. She also attends the Rails to Trails meeting once a month. She continues to work on the recall issue with our new Bobcat mower. She has arranged with Chief Long for our Public Works employee to use the Police Department’s bathroom facilities. Mr. Lang asked her to find out when the new speed limit on E. Main Street will be in effect.

Attorney’s Report

Mr. Bundick reported that he is working on some zoning issues that will be coming before the Council very soon.

Consideration of Minutes

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the February 5, 2024, Regular Monthly Meeting by Brian Corbin and seconded by Kate Hill. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Public Comments

Billye D. Custis suggested that the Planning Commission change their by-laws to reflect how pay for meetings without a quorum is handled. As far as the flooding at the park, the town has been promised by VDOT for a long time that they would help. She said they did finally do something to the ditches, but it did not help. *Ms. Custis was quoted incorrectly. This statement will be corrected and adopted at the May 6, 2024, meeting to read: “She said they finally did something to the ditches, and it did help”. She added that when you have as much rain as we have had in the last couple of days, water is going to stand. She feels that we need to know where the new town office building is going to go on the lot before we put up a garage and possibly will not have room for a town office. She likes the idea of one building for both.

Jason Campbell said the National Night Out is not being hosted by the ACSO. He thinks it will be great for the town to host it. He spoke in favor of in-car cameras, sharing a story of how having one saved him from a bad situation at his current job. He thanked Council for the ORA donation that allows for a discounted membership for residents.

John Dennis said that the camper shell that was removed from the new Public Works truck is four feet on his property and he is not responsible for any damage. Ms. Rillo said that she was unaware of that, and she will have it removed from his property tomorrow.

Council Comments

Mr. Corbin said this was a great meeting, we accomplished some things. He thanked Chief Long for being proactive on getting the trailer for the speed signs. He is pleased that the Town Council gave Ms. Rillo the green light on the garage building and holiday lights. Mr. Zember thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

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Ms. Hill thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She said that she was hesitant about the in-car cameras but after Mr. Campbell's comments, she is re-considering. She is pleased that so many things are happening at the park. She thanked the employees for doing a good job.

Mr. Bloxom thanked everyone for coming. He is hopeful that some things will be done at the park very soon. He also said that while he appreciates everyone's input, he wishes they would not wait until the meeting to speak up about things – it helps us to be better prepared if we have some notice.

Mr. Lang thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He agrees with Ms. Custis' comment about the town hall/garage. He believes that we can scale the buildings back, so they are not so large. He added that if we were to do a combination building, we would be increasing the liability by having gasoline in a building attached to the town hall. He is concerned about the public works equipment sitting out in the open. He wants to get a garage built to protect our investment. He would like to see some new equipment at the park for children. He expressed concern about the one-hour parking on E. Main Street in front of the Haitian market.

Ms. Hill said she would like to know more about the projected housing project coming to the outskirts of town. She is concerned about how it will affect our Police Department. The Accomack County Planning Commission is having a public hearing next week and she encouraged everyone to attend or voice their opinion in some fashion.

Mr. Ferguson thanked everyone. He apologized for letting everyone speak a little longer than usual, but he wanted everyone to have a say in matters.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn (8:07pm) by Kate Hill and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,



Jamye L. Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer