

**Onley Town Council  
Public Hearing(s) & Regular Monthly Meeting  
Minutes of June 3, 2024  
Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

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

Council Members Absent: Kate Hill

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

**Call to Order**

Mayor Finney called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Adoption of Agenda**

**Motion: To adopt the agenda by Brian Corbin and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Public Hearing for Proposed 2024-2025 Budget**

Mayor Finney called the public hearing to order at 6:01pm. Ms. Salazar read the rules for public hearings. Ms. Salazar presented the proposed 2024-2025 budget noting that it is a balanced budget, it was properly advertised, and there is a real estate tax rate change.

Billye D. Custis read a statement indicating her disapproval of the way the budget process was handled. She stated that she is normally in favor of setting revenue lower and expenses higher, but she believes that a handful of revenue accounts could have been increased to make up the \$98,503.00 difference. She feels that Council should have spent more time on the budget to decrease the reserve to balance amount. They owe it to the citizens.

Deborah Bliss spoke against the adoption of the current proposed budget. She presented Council with a handout containing her and Ms. Custis's suggestions for a possible solution to the \$98,503.00 deficit. At this time, Ms. Salazar reported that the proposed amount for the communications tax was meant to be \$2,500.00 and was plugged in at \$250.00 but is not a significant factor. She added that is one of the adjustments that Ms. Bliss is proposing.

**Motion: To re-visit the proposed budget and really take a look at the suggestions being made by Ms. Bliss and Ms. Custis by Rodney Lang and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- no; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - no. MOTION PASSED

Mr. Ferguson asked Mr. Lang if he would be agreeable to rescinding the above motion, adopting the budget as is, and amending it within the next few months. Mr. Lang did not agree with that. Mr. Corbin stated that Ms. Custis said that she thinks revenue should be set lower, but this proposal is the opposite of that. Ms. Salazar stated that while changes can be made to the proposed budget, Council needs to act fast since we need to have the budget adopted before July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Motion: To send the budget (with the proposed changes) to Public Hearing by Rodney Lang and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- no; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - no. MOTION PASSED

Council scheduled the Public Hearing on June 20,2024 with a return date of June 27, 2024, to adopt.

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**Motion: To adjourn the public hearing (6:28pm) by Rodney Lang and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Public Hearing for the Re-appropriation of Balance of Funds Remaining – ARPA**

Mayor Finney called the public hearing to order at 6:28pm. Ms. Salazar presented the proposed ARPA budget re-appropriation. There were no public comments.

**Motion: To adjourn the public hearing (6:30pm) by Rodney Lang and Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Public Hearing for the Re-appropriation of Balance of Funds Remaining – George N. McMath Park**

Mayor Finney called the public hearing to order at 6:30pm. Ms. Salazar presented the proposed George N. McMath budget re-appropriation. Billye D. Custis asked that the funds remain a capital budget for a capital project.

**Motion: To adjourn the public hearing (6:32pm) by Bill Ferguson and Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Public Hearing for Re-appropriation of Funds Remaining for the Purpose of Building a New Town Hall**

Mayor Finney called the public hearing to order at 6:32pm. Ms. Salazar presented the proposed New Town Hall budget re-appropriation. Billye D. Custis thinks that the money needs to be left there and she feels that prices are increasing, and maybe more should be added.

**Motion: To adjourn the public hearing (6:33pm) by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Commission/Committee Reports**

**Planning Commission** – In the absence of Ms. Bliss, Mr. Corbin reported that they have started to discuss emergency planning for the town.

**Public Works Garage Committee** – Ms. Rillo reported that the permit process with Accomack County has been started but it is moving slowly. Mr. Pitt has helped to write the ad for bids for the construction of the concrete pad, roughed-in plumbing, and floor drains, along with a scope of work.

**Old Business**

Ms. Rillo has been doing some research and has found some other towns that have donation policies that we can use as a template. She added that under Virginia law, towns can only allocate funding to non-profit organizations that benefit the town. She would like to incorporate the following into a policy: which organizations have priority, we do not make donations to labor, social or political groups, we should ask that organizations seeking a donation submit their (one) request in writing along with proof of their 501C3 status, we will need to establish a deadline for submission – she suggested October 31<sup>st</sup>, approved donations will be distributed during the third quarter of the fiscal year if revenue has been received as predicted. Mr. Corbin would like to set a dollar amount for donations. He suggested \$250.00. Ms. Rillo suggested a cap of \$1,000.00 for smaller organizations. Council agreed to everything except setting amounts/caps and instead suggested it be discussed case by case once all requests are received.

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Ms. Rillo has received a \$50.00 offer for the Public Works truck camper shell. She has accepted the offer. If this sale does not happen, she plans to give it away for free to get rid of it.

**New Business**

No meeting date was set to adopt the budget since Council made the motion to amend the current proposed budget and a new public hearing will be held on June 20, 2024, with a return date of June 27, 2024.

Ms. Salazar reported that the Anthem employee health insurance renewal increased by 8.58%, noting that we budgeted for a 10% increase. She also presented Council with two options that would allow for a smaller rate increase but her recommendation was to continue the current policy, noting that the savings wouldn't be significant, and the current policy is much better than the alternatives.

**Motion: To accept the Clerk/Treasurer's recommendation to continue with the current Anthem employee insurance plan by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom - yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Rillo told Council that it is time to review the current Police Department pay scale. She said the current one was done in 2018. Council asked Ms. Rillo to contact surrounding towns and counties for their payroll information and then they will proceed with a review. Ms. Custis said she believes that this has been done since 2018. Ms. Rillo said that she has not found anything more recent.

Ms. Rillo reported that the mosquito sprayer may need to be replaced. It can be repaired at a cost of \$8,500.00 or we can purchase a new one for \$15,173.00. The current machine was purchased used and we have had it for about 15 years. She said that we can take the money from the Rainy-Day Fund to cover the cost since it is an urgent event that jeopardizes public safety. The fund currently has about \$417,000.00 and we are required to keep \$400,000.00 in the fund, therefore, we will not need to pay the money back to the fund.

**Motion: To purchase a new mosquito sprayer for \$15,173.00 using Rainy Day Funds by Brian Corbin and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Rillo asked if Council would be interested in entering into an agreement via MOU with the Town of Chincoteague for mosquito spraying. She explained that while our sprayer is down, we can use theirs, however, they can use ours when their sprayer is down. Council decided not to enter into an agreement via MOU with the Town of Chincoteague at this time.

Ms. Rillo reported to Council that she has been discussing (with BYO) the purchase of some new playground equipment for McMath Park. She gave Council a handout containing pricing and a diagram of the park. Her concern is that the location of the swings is the part of the park that floods. She asked Council's opinion about moving the swings. Mr. Lang and Mr. Bloxom suggested substituting the wheelchair swing for another piece of equipment. They feel that a wheelchair swing will be underutilized and may not be used properly. Mr. Ferguson reminded everyone that if we want to have events at the park, we need to leave plenty of green space in front of the pavilion. No decisions were made since Ms. Rillo stated that she's not purchasing anything at this time.

**Department Reports**

**Police Report**

Chief Long gave Council the Pennsylvania Avenue speed sign report. The mobile speed sign on East Main Street has been installed and he will check with Council next month to see where they would like it to go next. The ad for the police department vacancy is currently running and he has had two applicants

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apply. Mr. Corbin asked if Council could have some input about who is hired. Ms. Rillo stated that as the Town Manager, she will be interviewing and hiring, but she will keep Council updated. There is still some interest from other towns in purchasing the additional speed signs, but nothing is definite.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Salazar asked if there were any questions about her written report. There were no questions.

**Motion: To pay the May 2024 payables by Daniel Bloxom and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call**

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

Ms. Salazar reminded everyone that at Council's direction, she contacted the four banks in town to ask if they were interested in quoting us some rates for the money that will need to be moved from Shore United Bank. She stated that only PNC Bank and Taylor Bank responded. Shannon Lewis from Taylor Bank presented Council with some options (a copy will be attached to the minutes). Ms. Salazar reported that Ms. Rillo met with Wendy Lilliston and Toni Dwyer from PNC, and they quoted the following: 8 mos. CD – 4.75% and a money market account with a rate of 4.5%.

**Motion: To move \$500,000.00 into an 8mos. CD with a rate of 4.75% at PNC Bank and \$500,000.00 into a 12 mos. CD with a rate of 4.5% at Taylor Bank by Rodney Lang and seconded by Brian Corbin.**

**Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Town Manager/Zoning Report**

Ms. Rillo reported that the pond at the park has been drained and we continue to work on the pump, there is a broken light at the park and Jack Tarr has been contacted about the repair, and new U.S. flags have been installed around town. There is a new bill that has been signed by Gov. Younkin that will allow towns to set speed limits. She has contacted Chris Isdell from VDOT about the process for making that happen. Mr. Isdell responded that he does not have the information needed yet. He did say that he thinks a traffic engineering study will be needed prior to any changes being made.

**Attorney's Report**

Mr. Bundick reported that he has received a response from our short-term rental property owner indicating that she is not violating the ordinance, however, he does not feel he is getting straight answers or the answers that he is looking for. He has now asked her to specify the length of her current lease. She seems to think the thirty- day threshold was the consideration, but we have never had threshold because we don't have any ordinance on that particular issue. He has also worked on an ordinance for the park as well as the ORA agreement. Lastly, he thinks that Council made the right decision by not entering into an MOU with Chincoteague for mosquito spraying. Mr. Lang asked how things were going with the lady who wanted to rent the old coffee shop. Mr. Bundick said he thinks that may not be an issue any longer since it required the property owner to reach out to the town and that has not happened.

**Consideration of Minutes**

**Motion: To adopt the minutes of the May 6, 2024, Joint Public Hearing(s) & Regular Monthly Meeting by Brian Corbin and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes;

Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

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**Public Comments**

Billye D. Custis said it was a good meeting. She reminded Council that they have a VML handbook, and they should be using it. She didn't expect her budget recommendations to be accepted so quickly but she does appreciate it.

Shannon Lewis thanked Council for reaching out to her and allowing her to speak tonight.

**Council Comments**

Mr. Corbin had no comment.

Mr. Lang said that he likes it when we can disagree and yet still function as a Council. He said that he is planning to run for Town Council again.

Mr. Bloxom thanked everyone for coming and apologized for missing last month's meeting.

Mr. Zember thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He is very impressed with the U.S. flags, and he thinks we made a good decision by purchasing a new mosquito sprayer.

Mr. Ferguson thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He thanked Ms. Lewis for coming to the meeting. Lastly, he would like us to start working on building a new town office.

Mayor Finney thanked the employees. He said he thinks the police officers need a raise to keep up with the other departments in surrounding areas. He thanked his fellow Council Members. He is glad that the police department got the speed sign installed on East Main Street.

**Closed Session**

**Motion: To go into closed session (7:47pm) in accordance with Section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended for the purpose of Paragraph 1: Discussion or consideration of personnel matters pertaining to General Government, Public Works, and the Onley Police Department, specifically related to employee evaluations/salary changes by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes.  
**MOTION PASSED**

**Open Session & Certification of Closed Session**

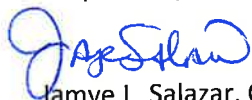
**Motion: To return to open session (8:19pm) by Rodney Lang and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. **MOTION PASSED**

A roll call vote was taken after reconvening in Open Session, at which time each member certified by his/her vote whether only the matters previously disclosed were discussed during Closed Session: **Roll Call Vote:** Finney – yes; Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes.

**Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn (8:21pm) by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom - yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. **MOTION PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,



Jamye L. Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer

Henry E. Finney, Mayor