

Onley Town Council
Regular Monthly Meeting
Minutes of June 5, 2023
Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA

Council Members Present: Ned Finney, Mayor
Bill Ferguson, Vice-Mayor
Daniel Bloxom
Brian Corbin
Rodney Lang (arrived 6:47pm)

Council Members Absent: Kate Hill
Woody Zember

Staff Present: Carl Bundick, Town Attorney
E. Jesse 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

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

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Corbin noted that item 7A. will be presented by Susan Rillo.

Motion: To adopt the agenda noting the above change by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin.

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

MOTION PASSED

Presentation – The Honorable Jackie Phillips, Accomack County Board of Supervisors

Mr. Phillips reported on the following:

1. **911 Grant for Police Department Radio & Equipment** – One contract has been awarded, the second has a slight hiccup but it is being worked on. The completion date is December 2024.
2. **The Canonie Atlantic Railroad Property & Rail to Trail Project** – They may be willing to sell property (specifically the train station building) if there is interest. He noted that even with the implementation of the Rail to Trail project, there is room for the railroad to return in the future if there is ever a desire (and funds) to do that. He spoke about a VDOT study that recommends the addition of a trail head in Onley. That would include the installation of pavement, signage, and possibly electric car charging stations. He also noted that the Rail to Trail money is earmarked for that project – it cannot be used for anything else. If we don't move forward with the Rail to Trail project, the money will be given to someone else in another location.

Mr. Bundick asked Mr. Phillips to inquire (with the Canonie Board of Directors) about the possibility of the town purchasing or taking possession of the train station property and report back to Ms. Rillo. Mr. Corbin asked Mr. Phillips to research the VDOT/STARS project. Mr. Phillips was unfamiliar with that project but said he would do some investigating.

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Old Business

Ms. Rillo recommended that Council appoint a five member McMath Park Commission that encompasses park/playground issues, entertainment, community events, and decorating. She added that they should also handle any decorating around town (outside of the park). She asked that Council create guidelines for the Commission. Lastly, she asked Council to appoint Billye D. Custis as the Chairperson of the Committee. Ms. Custis suggested that when making appointments to the commission, Council stagger terms. She added that that she feels all committee meetings should be held at the town office. Mayor Finney reminded everyone that if they are on a committee, they must work together as a group – one person will not control everything.

Motion: To establish a McMath Park Commission to include a maximum of five members and all activities regarding the park will be regulated (by them) by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– absent; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Motion: To appoint Billye D. Custis as Chairperson of the McMath Park Commission by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– absent; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Mr. Bundick presented Council with a draft copy of the Ordinance for Parking in Fire Lanes and recommended that Council adopt it tonight. A copy is available upon request. There was a discussion about the dollar amount of penalties attached as well as the difference in Class 3 and Class 4 misdemeanors.

Motion: To adopt the Onley Ordinance to Regulate Parking in Fire Lanes by Brian Corbin and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– absent; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Mr. Bundick explained that the problem with the Domesticated Fowl Ordinance is that there is no mechanism for enforcement when people do not comply with the ordinance. Several Council members said they do not want to penalize the responsible people (by completely banning chickens). Mayor Finney suggested purchasing some traps and checking with Parksley Livestock for help. Council decided to continue to think about how to proceed. No action was taken at this time.

Mayor Finney reported that he has purchased a public works truck (\$21,088.75) and dump trailer (\$9,242.00) for a total of \$30,330.75. He noted that he was authorized to spend \$30,000.00 so he asked Council for a motion to approve the difference.

Motion: To approve the overage of \$330.75 for purchase of a truck and dump trailer by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– absent; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

At this time, Mr. Lang arrived.

Council asked Ms. Rillo to purchase a cover for the dump trailer.

Mr. Bloxom presented Council with a new estimate for the installation of three pieces of playground equipment at McMath Park in the amount of \$72,229.94. He added that the train will need to be moved to allow for the installation of the new equipment due to the location of the double gate and to allow for the space needed for swings. Ms. Custis stated that moving the train will be a big job and quite expensive and she is opposed to it. She also asked if any of this equipment or the train will encroach on the pavilion. Mr. Bloxom responded that it will not.

Motion: To spend \$72,229.94 for the purchase of new playground equipment by Daniel Bloxom and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

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Mayor Finney asked Council to decide and make a motion about giving a donation to the fire companies from ARPA funds. Ms. Rillo reminded Council that there are special reporting requirements for anything donated over \$50,000.00, although she is not aware of what the requirements are at this time. She added that whatever amount we give to them, they are limited to how they spend it, and we must make sure they adhere to those requirements. Council also discussed the possibility of using some of the undesignated ARPA funds to cover the cost of moving the train at the park.

Motion: To give the Onancock Fire Company a donation of \$60,000.00 from ARPA funds by Brian Corbin and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- abstain; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Motion: To give the Tasley Fire Company a donation of \$30,000.00 from ARPA funds by Brian Corbin and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- abstain; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Mr. Bundick asked that Council clarify their decision about Council Members and town employees using the ORA discount so that he may complete the agreement. Mr. Corbin said he feels that Council should not accept any town discounts to avoid the look of impropriety. Mr. Bloxom disagreed, stating that as taxpayers, he feels Council should be allowed the discount. Mr. Lang suggested several scenarios that may allow the use of the discount. Mr. Bundick stated that he does not recommend Council using the town discount.

Motion: To finalize the agreement with the ORA noting that the Mayor, Council Members and Town Employees will not receive the membership discount by Brian Corbin and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -abstain; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Salazar explained to Council that while they originally discussed holding a public hearing (about ARPA Funds re-allocation) at tonight’s meeting, the hearing will now be held in the new fiscal year to re-allocate the final amount.

New Business

Ms. Rillo said that at Mr. Corbin’s request, she has been researching how to keep our Public Works employee safe while working in town. She reviewed the OSHA and VOSH requirements with Council. She reported that we are following most recommendations, except when it comes to working on roadways. She asked if Council would like to remove street cleaning from Public Works duties. Councilmembers did not want to remove street cleaning and expressed concern about cleaning the storm drains. Ms. Rillo suggested that we research equipment that can be used as well as training for our employees. Council agreed.

Motion: To authorize the Town Manager to get quotes on required signage and equipment for street maintenance on East & West Main Street by Bill Ferguson.

There was more discussion about this matter. Mr. Ferguson said that he created SOP’s a while back for Public Works. He recommended that Ms. Rillo review them.

At this time, Mr. Ferguson amended the above motion to include a cap of \$10,000.00 to purchase the equipment needed for street maintenance (using ARPA funds). The motion was seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Commission/Committee Reports

Planning Commission -Mr. Corbin reported that they reviewed and corrected the section titled “Existing Conditions” at the last meeting.

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Police Department Renovation Committee -Chief Long reported that a substantial completion walkthrough happened this morning and the contractor fully expects to be finished by Friday. He said there is one broken window that will need to be repaired.

McMath Park Entertainment Committee – Mr. Ferguson reported that they have not met yet so they have not had a chance to visit the park and decide where the stage should be placed. Mayor Finney said he is worried there isn't enough space. Mr. Ferguson added that this project should probably fall under the McMath Park Commission projects.

Department Reports

Police Report & Schedule

Chief Long gave Council a copy of the monthly report and police schedule. He stated that there will be some changes made to handling the police work schedule. There have been reports of schedules being disseminated to the public – not necessarily ours but other towns. The issue is people are starting to do illegal things during the hours that they know there is no officer on duty. Therefore, the work schedule will no longer be given out in packets/folders, however, there will always be one at the office for review. He asked that no one photograph the schedule when reviewing it. Mayor Finney asked if he knew how the schedule was “getting out”. Chief Long responded that he did not know, and he is not sure that it has even happened with our schedule, but he knows it has happened in other places. He cited a specific incident that happened just this week at the town park within 30 minutes of our officer marking off duty. He also noted that (due to this incident) the park is once again locked at night. Mr. Bloxom asked if Council needs to leave the July schedule in the town office. Chief Long said yes. Mr. Lang suggested that the schedule be given to Council at the meeting, they review it while they are here, and give it back to the Chief when they leave.

Chief Long reported that the speed reduction signs have not been installed because we still have not gotten approval from VDOT. He reported the solar panels were not included and he is meeting with the local rep to resolve that issue. He is also still working with a representative on the e-ticket project.

Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Salazar gave her report. A copy is available upon request. She noted that we have received three of the five bank’s franchise tax payments.

Motion: To adopt the July 2023 police schedule by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll

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

Motion: To pay the May 2023 payables by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote:

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

Town Manager/Zoning Report

Ms. Rillo gave her report. A copy is available upon request.

Attorney’s Report

Mr. Bundick reported that he worked on the fire lane ordinance. He provided Council with a letter from James Elliott indicating that he has agreed to begin enforcement of delinquent tax payments. Mr. Elliott will also make us an additional plaintiff in a potential tax sale of a property here in town that is happening very soon.

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Consideration of Minutes

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the May 1, 2023, Regular Meeting & Public Hearings by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the May 8, 2023, Special Meeting by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Public Comments

Billye D. Custis thanked Council for the appointment to the Park Commission. She spoke about two shorebird nests that are located between the old town office and the Miller residence. She thought everyone might like to see them.

Council Comments

Mr. Corbin said he is happy that things are coming together. He stated that he got a nice compliment on the park last week from someone that comes from Bloxom to use it. Lastly, he said the police office looks great.

Mr. Lang said the dump trailer looks great, but we need to get a cover for it. He agreed that the police office looks good. He would like to see the speed reduction signs installed as soon as possible.

Mr. Bloxom thanked everyone for coming. He thanked Susan and said things are going well now that we have a Town Manager.

Mr. Ferguson thanked everyone and added that he was sorry to see Percy leave but we just need to buckle down and find another good employee.

Mayor Finney thanked everyone. He agreed with Mr. Corbin that everything seems to be coming together nicely.

Closed Session

Motion: To go into closed session (7:56pm) 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 and the Onley Police Department, specifically related to employee evaluations/salary changes; and discussion of personnel matters pertaining to Public Works, specifically related to the employee vacancy by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang.

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

Open Session & Certification of Closed Session

Motion: To return to open session (8:39m) by Daniel Bloxom and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. 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: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent.

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Motion: To hire Percy Smith to fill the Public Works vacancy at a rate of \$22.00 per hour providing there is a 30-day separation notice, and he is required to take any required OSHA safety training by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin.

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

Motion: To give a 7% COLA pay increase (effective July 1, 2023) to the Town Manager, Clerk/Treasurer and all Police Officers by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

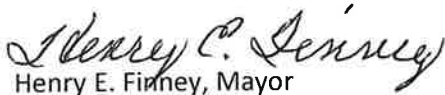
Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn (8:41pm) by Brian Corbin and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom - yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – absent; Lang– yes; Zember - absent. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,



Jamye Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer



Henry E. Finney, Mayor