

**Onley Town Council  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Minutes of September 6, 2023  
Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

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

Staff Present: Carl Bundick, Town Attorney  
E. J. Long, Chief of Police, OPD  
Susan Rillo, Town Manager  
Jamy 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 Councilwoman Hill.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Rillo asked to add under **Old Business**, item **C. VDOT Resolutions for Badger Lane & E. Main Street**. She also asked to add under **McMath Park Commission**, item **B2. Adopt McMath Park Commission By-Laws**.

Mr. Ferguson asked to add under **New Business**, item **B. Discussion of a part-time or full-time fifth police officer**.

**Motion: To adopt the agenda with the changes by Kate Hill and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call**

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

**November 7, 2023, General Election Candidate(s)**

Mayor Finney introduced Talia Taylor, candidate for Accomack County Clerk of Court. Ms. Taylor spoke about her qualifications for the position and her plans for the office, if elected. She concluded by asking everyone for their vote and thanking them for their time.

**Old Business**

Ms. Rillo made the following recommendations for town committees: **(1)** dissolve the Town Office Renovation Committee; **(2)** keep the McMath Park Commission, Public Works Street Sweeper Committee and Public Works Garage Committee. Mr. Corbin asked Council to consider re-instating the Public Works Committee and having the street sweeper and garage project fall under that committee. Mr. Lang agreed. Council decided against that with most Council Members saying that they feel there is no need for a Public Works Committee now that we have a permanent Town Manager and handling Public Works matters fall under her job description/duties. Mr. Ferguson suggested forming a Town Office Building Committee. Mayor Finney asked him to wait until after we have made some headway on

**Onley Town Council  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Minutes of September 6, 2023**

**Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

the Public Works Garage Project, adding that we need to focus on one (larger) project at a time. Mr. Ferguson agreed to wait.

Mr. Zember asked if we should consider re-instating the Community Spirit Committee. Ms. Rillo said that she does not recommend re-instating the Community Spirit Committee.

**Motion: To dissolve the Town Office Renovation Committee by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Kate Hill. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Ms. Rillo presented Council with the estimate of \$71,840.00 from Branscome for the repair of the driveways at the Lighthouse Ministry Thrift Store property. She added that the post office is planning to make their own repairs to their entrance so she thinks we should hold off on that project.

At this time, Council decided against moving forward with the sidewalk project. They will decide later how they want to reallocate the \$75,000.00 in ARPA funds that were set aside for the project.

Ms. Rillo asked Council to adopt two resolutions for speed studies on Badger Lane and E. Main Street for the addition of the speed reduction signs. Copies available upon request.

**Motion: To adopt the Speed Study Resolution on Badger Lane by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Motion: To adopt the Speed Study Resolution on E. Main Street by Kate Hill and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

#### **New Business**

**Motion: To issue an RFP for the 2022-2023 audit 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

Mr. Ferguson asked Council to allow Ms. Rillo and Chief Long to research the possibility of adding a fifth part-time or full-time officer. He feels that it will help with coverage and allow the Chief to devote more time to his administrative duties. He added that he believes that we have the resources. Mayor Finney asked how Council wants to proceed, reminding everyone that we just discussed this a few months ago (during a budget workshop) and the cost for a full-time officer was about \$140,000.00. Chief Long and Ms. Rillo spoke in favor of adding a fifth officer. Mayor Finney polled Council, asking their decision about hiring a **full-time** officer: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- no; Ferguson- yes; Hill – no; Lang– no; Zember - no. He then asked their decision about hiring a **part-time** officer: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- no; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– no; Zember - yes.

**Motion: To research the costs of adding a part-time police officer by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- no; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– no; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Mr. Lang asked to go on record stating that he would like another police officer, but he does not think we can afford it.

#### **Commission/Committee Reports**

**Planning Commission** – Mr. Corbin reported that they continue to review the document. Ms. Custis asked if the document he is referring to is the ordinance revision that was sent to Planning Commission last month. Mr. Corbin said that was also reviewed along with the Comprehensive Plan. Neither document has not been sent back to Council at this time.

**McMath Park Commission**- Ms. Custis reported that she and Ms. Rillo have completed the McMath Park Commission By-Laws and will be presenting them tonight. She said they do not have enough members

**Onley Town Council  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Minutes of September 6, 2023**

**Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

to have a meeting. Mayor Finney asked if there is any interest. Ms. Rillo stated that several people have expressed interest but have not submitted a letter. She said Melissa Taylor has submitted a letter but has not been appointed. Mr. Bloxom suggested changing the by-laws to reduce the number of people on the Commission. Ms. Custis stated that she is not in favor of that because she doesn't feel three people are enough to make a Commission, she further added that she feels we need an odd number of people to avoid a deadlock on matters. Mr. Bloxom said that he feels the Commission needs to start making some plans for the holiday season and they can't even meet, they are running short of time. Mr. Lang said that he will serve. Ms. Custis said, according to the by-laws, only one Council person can serve. Mayor Finney asked why the by-laws can't be changed, since they haven't been adopted yet. Ms. Custis once again stated that she disagrees with changing the by-laws. Mr. Lang said that his wife will serve.

**Motion: To appoint Melissa Taylor and Brandy Lang\* (\*contingent upon a request letter from Ms. Lang) to the McMath Park Commission by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Motion: To adopt the McMath Park Commission By-Laws by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Kate Hill.**

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

**Street Sweeper Committee** – Ms. Rillo reported they have not met. Mr. Corbin said he has some information but will hold it until next month.

**Public Works Garage Committee** – Ms. Rillo reported they have not met. Mr. Lang reported that he and Mayor Finney have discussed some ideas. Mayor Finney said they need to have an official meeting and come back to Council next month.

### **Department Reports**

#### **Police Report**

Chief Long gave his written monthly report to Council for review. He said that Jim Patterson has declined to give an estimate on replacing the windows and he suggested that we contact Lowes since the windows are different sizes. He reported that he and Ms. Rillo met with a representative from Patrol PC's about the eTicket system. Ms. Rillo has the quote, and they will be moving forward with that project. The speed sign solar panels have not arrived, but he has reached out to the company and expects them very soon. Officer Sacks will be attending General Instructor school in October and Chief Long will be attending the second installment of the FBI/LEEDA training next week. Mr. Lang asked Chief Long how he plans to justify the fifth officer. Chief Long responded that he plans to put numbers together using trends for call volume. Mr. Lang asked how he thinks sharing a patrol car will affect morale. Chief Long said he does not recommend sharing vehicles. Mr. Lang continued to ask questions about the fifth officer. Mayor Finney asked Mr. Lang to table this conversation until it comes up at next month's meeting, adding that we should have all the information we need at that time for a full discussion.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Salazar gave her Treasurer's Report. A copy is available upon request. She reported that one of the five delinquent taxpayers submitted to James Elliott has paid in full. Mr. Elliott has compiled an ad for the newspaper advertising tax sales of the other four properties. She is unsure when the ad will run. She is still waiting for approval from DMV for the Registration Withholding Program. She reported one business currently has delinquent meals tax, but she has started the collection process.

**Onley Town Council  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Minutes of September 6, 2023**

**Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

**Motion: To pay the August 2023 payables by Kate Hill and seconded by Bill Ferguson. 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 has met with Branscome for estimates on sidewalks. She has researched town committees. She is working with Mr. Bundick on the antenna tower lease with ES Communications. They are trying to determine a fair value for the use of the pole. Mr. Bundick will reach out to LGA for their opinions on this matter. They are also working on the matter of people living in a building zoned for business. There will be two “Watch for Children” signs installed on Badger Lane. She has sent two grass letters, two inoperable vehicle letters and one building permit has been issued. She met with Chris Isdell about the placement of the speed reduction signs. Once the solar panels arrive, we can install the one sign on Pennsylvania Avenue. The new mower has been delivered but the old Ferris mower still needs to be repaired. Brian Kromer was unable to work on it since we cannot deliver it to him. Tim Wilson will be taking over that repair. Adam Simpson has installed the pump at the park fountain, and it should be running next week. Mr. Corbin asked how we handle towing inoperable vehicles. Ms. Rillo referred him to Ms. Salazar, who explained the process. Mr. Corbin asked how to get someone on the towing list. Ms. Salazar said you just need to make Ms. Rillo aware of the vehicle and location. Mr. Corbin asked how we are cutting the grass on the railroad tracks. Ms. Salazar said we have sprayed the grass in the past, but not recently. She added that the property owner/grass should comply with the grass ordinance, just like everyone else. Council asked Ms. Rillo to contact the property owner, Canonie – Atlantic, and ask them to take care of the tall grass. Mr. Corbin suggested that we buy some tarps to cover the new Public Works equipment until we get the building. He asked about the caution lights on the truck. Ms. Rillo said we are waiting for a quote from Eric Nottingham. Mr. Corbin thought that seems excessive, adding that we do not have all those lights on the current truck. He recommended that we purchase the same lights that we use on the current truck. They meet requirements and are much less expensive. Mr. Corbin and Mr. Lang both recommended that Percy drive the new truck with air conditioning, to stay cool in the heat.

**Attorney’s Report**

Mr. Bundick apologized for being unavailable for some of the month due to a health matter. He is working on a zoning issue with Ms. Rillo, the ES Communication contract, and Alpine Nutrition’s delinquent tax collection.

**Consideration of Minutes**

**Motion: To adopt the minutes of the August 7, 2023, Public Hearing & Regular Meeting by Kate Hill and seconded by Woody Zember. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Motion: To adopt the minutes of the August 16, 2023, Special Meeting by Woody Zember and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – abstain; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

**Public Comments**

Billye D. Custis said the public works man has done a great job on a section near the railroad that has been neglected for years. She would like to see the yard sale signs on utility poles removed, adding that they are a zoning violation, and some have been up for weeks. She feels the windows in the police office should have been replaced during the renovation and now it is too late. They should be left as they are

**Onley Town Council  
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**Onley Town Office, 25308 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA**

now. In the matter of the pole on our property, several other towns had them paid for, so she recommended that Ms. Rillo and Mr. Bundick research that. Lastly, she feels that before we put Chief Long through researching a fifth officer, we need to know where the money is going to come from in the long term. She said that sharing a patrol car will not work, it's just not practical and we do not want to hire someone and then let them go in a year or two if we can't afford to keep them.

Toni Nelson signed up but did not wish to speak.

Chief Long asked to note that anyone that puts up a sign in their yard that is facing traffic, needs to get approval from VDOT. He added that anyone who has a sign now and did not get VDOT's permission, is in violation.

Ms. Rillo also said that residents will need to petition the county offices to have signs such as the "Watch for Children" sign installed by VDOT.

John Dennis expressed concern about Johnson grass growing near the Edward's property over by the old tank yard. Ms. Rillo said that she often calls the property owner/realtor about that grass.

**Council Comments**

Mr. Corbin said he feels that we are making some progress on a lot of different things. He commended Percy for doing a great job. He warned the Garage Building Committee that acquiring permits for the building is a time-consuming process.

Mr. Lang said that we have a lot going on and he feels that before we start adding new things, we need to accomplish some of the current things that have been in the works. He suggested that we talk with Mike McCluskey about the construction of the new garage.

Mr. Bloxom thanked everyone for coming. He wished everyone a good school year.

Ms. Hill thanked everyone for coming tonight. She agreed with Mr. Lang that we need to complete some of the things that we have started, and she feels that means utilizing the committees. She encouraged the committees to start meeting now that they have enough members.

Mr. Zember thanked everyone for coming. He agreed that the committees should do the work and present it to the Council, adding that the Council needs to trust them and limit how much we question.

Mr. Ferguson thanked everyone. He said that we are working well together, and a lot is getting done.

Mayor Finney thanked Ms. Rillo for her hard work. He thanked Mr. Bundick, the Council and everyone for attending the meeting.

**Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn (7:42pm) by Kate Hill and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote:** Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully submitted,



Jamye Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer



Henry E. Finney, Mayor