

Onley Town Council
Regular Monthly Meeting
Minutes of August 5, 2024
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
Jamye Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer

Call to Order

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

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Lang gave the invocation. Mr. Zember led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Ferguson asked to add under New Business, item#7B. Dry Hydrant Water Supply.

Mr. Corbin asked to add under New Business, item #7C. Discussion of Route 179 Modifications.

Motion: To adopt the agenda with the additions by Daniel Bloxom and seconded by Brian Corbin. Roll

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

Commission/Committee Reports

Planning Commission – Mr. Corbin presented Council with a draft copy of the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the new document has been reduced from thirty-three pages to fifteen pages. He feels that it is ready to be adopted by Council. Mr. Bundick recommended that the A-NPDC review it. Council agreed and said they would like to review it as well. Mr. Bundick will get a copy to the A-NPDC. They will re-visit at next month’s meeting. He told Council that several months ago, the Planning Commission asked Council to allow them to work on the creation of an emergency action plan. At that time, Council did not give them an answer. He asked for Council to decide since the Commission has started working on the plan. Ms. Salazar reported that (at the request of Ms. Rillo) she reached out to VRSA and asked their thoughts about the inception of our own EAP. She said that they do recommend that we have one and they also provided numerous templates for us to use to help with the creation of the plan. Lastly, they recommend that we work congruently with Accomack County. Ms. Salazar reminded Council that we do have a Hazard Mitigation Plan that may also be a good resource. Council agreed that the Planning Commission shall work on an EAP.

Billye D. Custis asked that several changes be made to the Comprehensive Plan referring to medical facilities. Ms. Rillo recommended that any requested changes be sent (via email) to Deborah Bliss, Planning Commission Chairperson.

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Motion: To have the Planning Commission continue to work on the Emergency Action Plan in conjunction with Accomack County 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

Public Works Garage Committee – Ms. Rillo asked Norman Pitt to join her at the table while they opened the two bids received. She explained that Mr. Pitt will be reviewing the bids tonight to make sure they are complete and acceptable so that Council can act tonight and accept one of the bids since we have a deadline of mid-October for taking receipt of the building. The first bid opened was from JHP Construction in the amount of \$59,200.00. The second bid opened was from Beauchamp Construction in the amount of \$88,618.00. After some discussion about the difference in the bids, Mr. Pitt and Ms. Rillo explained that the disparity may be because Beauchamp asked about the need for u-drains at the front of the overhead doors which means the grade of the floor will be changed allowing for a 6' apron at the entrance of the building requiring approximately three extra yards of concrete. They have included that additional cost in their bid. Mayor Finney stated that everyone needs to have the same information and bid on the same thing. Council asked Ms. Rillo to reach out to JHP Construction and make sure they are aware of the change, making sure they have the same information that was provided to Beauchamp Construction. Council will come back to decide at a later date.

Old Business

Mr. Bundick asked Council how they wish to proceed with the request (from Ms. Rillo) to adopt an ordinance prohibiting weapons on town-owned property. Mr. Corbin, Mr. Bloxom, Mr. Lang and Mr. Ferguson all stated that they were not in favor of pursuing any such ordinance. Council decided to drop the matter.

Chief Long presented Council with a new estimate for the in-car camera system. He explained that the estimates that he presented at the last few meetings have expired. The difference is the old estimate had taxes that needed to be removed, and the five-year payment structure has changed. He stated that Council did not need to act on this matter since the bottom line did not change, but he wanted to make them aware of the change to the five-year payment structure.

New Business

Chief Long presented Council with two options for the purchase of a fifth patrol vehicle. He added that the time frame for getting a vehicle is unknown – it could possible be as early as October or not until early 2025. He did find one 2023 vehicle that is available at this time and currently on hold waiting for approval to purchase it.

Motion: To purchase the 2023 Ford Police Interceptor at a cost of \$43,644.19 by Rodney Lang and seconded by Kate Hill. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Chief Long presented an estimate from Nottingham & Sons LLC in the amount of \$12,357.75 for the upfit of the new vehicle. Mr. Lang said he feels that amount is high, and we may want to start soliciting bids. Mr. Corbin asked why we aren't bidding it out since our procurement policy states that we should. Chief Long stated that this is how we have always done this. He believes that the only other company that does this is Sheehy Ford, and they are generally much higher. Ms. Salazar agreed that we have always done it this way, but we typically get three estimates rather than soliciting bids for the sake of time. Mr. Bundick thinks it should be put out for bids. Mr. Corbin stated that he is not sure that we should have purchased the vehicle since it wasn't put out for bid. Ms. Salazar stated that according to our procurement policy, if we are purchasing an item at the state contract price, we do not have to send

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it out for bids. She also explained to Council the difference in advertising for bids and getting estimates since there seemed to be some confusion.

Motion: To send out the upfit of the 2023 Ford Police Interceptor for bids by Rodney Lang and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Chief Long presented Council with an estimate for the in-car computer needed in the new vehicle in the amount of \$10,500.93. Ms. Salazar asked Chief Long how he plans to pay for this. Chief Long suggested that we use funds from the E-Ticket line item. Ms. Salazar said that the \$30,000.00 budgeted is already spent on the software for the four computers that we have already purchased. Ms. Salazar suggested using the Law Enforcement or Equipment Expense line items. Ms. Lang asked Chief Long if this system will also need software. Chief Long said that it will. Mr. Lang asked him to get the cost for that as well so we can purchase what we need all at once. Mr. Corbin expressed his concern again that none of this was put out for bids. Chief Long explained that this is the vendor that we have used for this system, and we are just adding this computer to the current system.

Chief Long presented Council with an estimate to purchase a weapon for \$1,267.95. Mr. Corbin said he is not voting to purchase anything that has not been put out on bids. Mr. Zember agreed. Chief Long said that he is buying from the manufacturer, and we will not get a lower price. He also noted that we need a specific weapon (due to officer's training), and this is it. Council asked Mr. Bundick if we could even advertise for bids on weapons. Mr. Bundick will need to research it and get back to Ms. Salazar with his answer. Council asked Chief Long to check with three local gun stores and get estimates.

Motion: To have Chief Long obtain estimates from three local vendors for the purchase of the weapon 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

Mr. Corbin said that we are still eliminating the bid process, and he feels that is a violation of our policy. Chief Long stated that he does not believe that we can put a weapon out for bid. Council will wait for Mr. Bundick's decision.

Motion: Pending our attorney's review, we solicit bids for the exact same weapons platform that we already have issued to our police officers for a long weapon 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

Chief Long presented Council with an estimate for a body camera and taser for the fifth officer in the amount of \$4,867.86. There was another discussion about where the money is coming from for the purchase. Ms. Salazar suggested Equipment Expense or Law Enforcement Expense. Chief Long stated that this is something that needs to be purchased immediately since Officer Barringer cannot work without it and is currently using the Chief's.

Motion: To purchase the body camera and taser for the fifth officer at a cost of \$4,867.86 by Rodney Lang and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - no. MOTION PASSED

Chief Long gave his police report at this time.

Mr. Ferguson said that he has assumed the President's duties at Tasley Fire Company, and it has been brought to his attention that the Chief met with ISO, an insurance representative, and the Town of Onley has no fire suppression availability now that the fire hydrant by the railroad track is not working. He suggested that we investigate federal grants to tap into the well that is there or install a new well that is slow fed by that well into a hydrant. He feels that this will help to lower our homeowner's insurance rates. Mayor Finney said that even when the Onley Fire Company was in service, our homeowner's insurance lists Onancock as our fire company. Billye D. Custis agreed with Mayor Finney.

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Council asked Ms. Rillo to research the matter and report back to them.

Mr. Corbin reported that there are once again plans to reduce Route 179 (Market Street) from three lanes to two and implement a bike lane. He reminded Council that they have always voted against that when it has been brought up in the past. He advised everyone of a meeting about this matter on August 21, 2024, at 6:30 in the Accomack BOS Chambers. Council asked Ms. Rillo to attend and voice their opposition to this project. Mr. Corbin said it will be good if Council Members and residents attend the meeting as well.

Department Reports

Police Report

Chief Long presented Council with his written report. He also gave them a copy of the Pennsylvania Avenue speed sign data. Mayor Finney asked if we had heard anything from Ms. Evans, who resides on Pennsylvania Avenue. Chief Long reported that Sgt. Coulter spoke with Mr. Evans recently and he complimented him on doing a fine job.

Mr. Corbin asked if there is any interest from anyone in purchasing the additional speed signs. Ms. Rillo will report on that later.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Salazar asked if there were any questions about her written report. Mr. Zember asked if we are making money. Ms. Salazar responded that we are, and she gave a quick summary of the budget.

Motion: To pay the July 2024 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's Report

Ms. Rillo reported that she has received some complaints from Arlene Evans, who resides on Pennsylvania Avenue. Ms. Evans is concerned about the following: the speed sign reports, the lack of coverage on her street as well as other side streets in town, she would like the town to change the speed limit for every road in town to 25mph and she feels that the town should pay for our own speed studies. Ms. Rillo reported to Council that there is a good possibility that East Main Street's speed limit will be raised to 30mph. She said that Onley Road's speed limit will be increased to 35mph.

Ms. Evans also asked how many businesses in town are using a pump and haul agreement. Ms. Rillo reported that there are none. Lastly, on this matter, Ms. Rillo said that we do try to give her personal attention and we always try to keep everyone happy, but we cannot have one person dictate how we run the town.

The Town of Accomack is interested in purchasing the two additional speed signs so we are waiting to hear from them. The truck cap was sold for \$350.00. The pond liner at the park is torn so she has ordered repair tape. There has been an inquiry about re-building a structure that burned down a few months ago. She reported that she has told them they cannot rebuild a structure without a special use permit due to our zoning ordinance. Lastly, she has been shopping for new holiday decorations. She also asked Council if they want to have a Christmas tree for the pole decoration. Several Council members said they would like the Christmas tree decorations, while one expressed concern noting this could be a "Pandora's Box". She also has concerns about where they will be stored and how they will be delivered, noting the need for a loading dock and a forklift. Billye D. Custis suggested that Ms. Rillo contact Chaney and ask if they can take delivery of the items for us, noting that T&W Block has done so in the past. She presented Council with two options for a park Christmas tree. Mayor Finney suggested that she put this

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information in writing so everyone can review it and make an informed decision at next month's meeting. Mr. Lang asked if she could tell VDOT that we do want some of our street speed limits set at 25mph. He also said we may need to do our own speed studies. Ms. Rillo told him that we will still need to go through VDOT to change speed limits. Mayor Finney stated that the streets belong to VDOT. At this time, John Dennis suggested that the U.S. flags be removed from the poles due to the impending storm. Mr. Bloxom asked when we are having the National Night Out event. Chief Long said it will be in October.

Attorney's Report

Mr. Bundick reported that it has been a quiet month.

Consideration of Minutes

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the June 27, 2024, Special Meeting by Brian Corbin and seconded by Bill Ferguson. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – abstain; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the July 1, 2024, Regular Monthly Meeting by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – abstain; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Public Comments

Billye D. Custis asked the difference between the 2023 and 2025 vehicle. Chief Long said about \$5,000.00. Ms. Custis said for two years that is not a bad price. She stated that our homeowner's insurance companies use Onancock Fire Company as our provider. She agrees with Mr. Corbin that everyone that can attend the Route 179 meeting should be there. Lastly, she stated that the train station has a pump and haul agreement. Ms. Rillo said that she checked with the Health Department, and they did not find one.

Toni Nelson asked if the chicken issues have been resolved and if chickens are still allowed. Mayor Finney said that they are allowed with a permit and strict regulations, but he doesn't believe that there are many left in town.

Jason Campbell said that he has observed plenty of police coverage and running traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Council Comments

Ms. Hill apologized for missing some meetings lately but explained that she has some health issues. She will see what she can do in the matter of our forklift issues. She thanked everyone.

Mr. Lang said that he is disheartened to hear about the speed limit being raised and would like it to be 25mph on all streets. He thinks safety for our citizens is a priority. He also wants us to start pinching pennies and making tighter and better decisions.

Mr. Bloxom said that he feels we are making progress, but he does wish we were a little more prepared at times.

Mr. Corbin said he is happy that there was a lot of discussion because that means we are really thinking about things before decisions are made.

Mr. Zember thanked everyone for coming. He feels we had a good meeting and got a lot accomplished. He thinks we should send out for bids on quite a bit of things. He is in favor of lowering the speed limit anywhere that is possible. He would like to see us move forward with building a new town office.

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Mr. Ferguson thanked everyone for doing a good job. He agreed with Mr. Zember that we cannot forget the need for a new town office. Lastly, he would like to see us make our position about the speed limits in town clear to VDOT by writing a letter or a resolution.

Mayor Finney said that he wishes we had not cut the budget so sharply because here we are in the second month of the fiscal year worrying about paying for things.

Closed Session

Motion: To go into closed session (7:58pm) 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 the Onley Police Department, specifically related to discussion of an incident involving a Police Officer employed by the Onley Police Department; discussion or consideration of matters pertaining to General Government, specifically related to an evaluation of the Town Manager by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Daniel Bloxom. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

Open Session & Certification of Closed Session

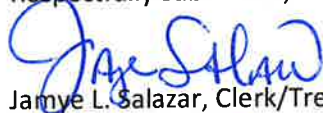
Motion: To return to open session (8:49pm) by Bill Ferguson and seconded by Rodney Lang. Roll Call Vote: Bloxom -yes; Corbin- yes; Ferguson- yes; Hill – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes. MOTION PASSED

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 – yes; Lang– yes; Zember - yes.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn (8:50pm) 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

Respectfully submitted,


Jamye L. Salazar, Clerk/Treasurer


Henry E. Finney, Mayor