

**COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**April 23, 2019**

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on April 23, 2019. Commission President Gordon Fronk called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Fronk, Commissioner Gordon Graves, Commissioner John Pepe, Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Pepe motioned to adopt the minutes of April 9, 2019 as distributed. Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

**REPORT OF DISBURSEMENTS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Pepe to approve and file for audit the disbursements for the month of March 2019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Public Works Superintendent Delude reported the following:

- The tennis wind nets are up for the summer and in full use.
- The Causeway Park walking track has been rehabbed with 40 tons of sand dust and sprayed for the upcoming season, with minor deviation from the old path to accommodate the new bio-swale.
- A new contact that was placed in Well #2 three weeks did not hold, so a new slow start system was added to the well controls, allowing for offsite start and stop at an estimated cost of \$2000.
- A small tire-changing machine was purchased for mower and small trucks. It was estimated that \$1200 was spent a year on tire repairs and this machine at \$1200 should pay for itself in the first year.
- The Oxford Day list is posted and everyone is working on getting the town looking good.
- The Humvee is cleaned, top removed and is ready for the parade.

**POLICE REPORT**

Oxford Police Chief Patrick Maxwell reported the following:

- 2 – Assist the fire department
- 20 - Patrol checks
- 17 – Police Information, service
- 1 – Check the welfare
- 2 – Suspicious vehicles
- 2 - Parking complaints
- 2 - Suspicious persons
- 1 - Harassment

Chief Maxwell commented on a suspicious person who had been stopped in town by Lt Thomas. There had also been some of the normal start of the season parking issues at the Strand over the past weekend and Maxwell was working with Public Works to incorporate additional signage and parking curbs.

The Easter Egg Hunt had been well attended and was an enjoyable time. Chief said the department was gearing up for Oxford Day, assistance was expected from the Sheriff's Department, and he had been coordinating with Delude regarding traffic control. Again this year, Fred Fredrick would be lending courtesy vans, which Maxwell would pick up on Friday.

**FIRE COMPANY**

Chief Graham Norbury gave a brief report stating that since the last meeting there had been 3 fire calls (1 in Oxford and 2 canceled), 32 miles traveled, and 32 member responses. There were 6 ambulance calls, 20 man-hours and 21 miles traveled. Norbury stated that the department was also preparing for Oxford Day and would again be preparing food at the Causeway.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Resolution 1904 updating the Police Manual, which was previously provided to the Commissioners by Attorney Ryan, was read by President Fronk. After a brief explanation of the process to date by Ryan, the Commissioners requested additional time to finish reviewing the manual. Chief Maxwell stated he was about 60% through the manual. The Resolution and adoption of the manual was tabled until the next meeting.

Lewis presented the Commissioners with a Letter of Support for the Delmarva Resource Conservation and Development and Chesapeake Bay Foundation grant application to the DNR Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, stating that this was the project she had presented a draft Memo of Understanding for at the prior Commissioners Meeting. The proposal was a coordinated effort including Easton, Salisbury, Cambridge, and Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties. Oxford would benefit from award of the grant with funding to construct a bio-retention pond at the new park, formerly the ballpark, and improvements to the remaining Pier Street ditch along the Community Parking Area. Lewis told the Commissioners, in reference to a prior question regarding the MOU, that the language in question was a commitment by the town to prepare and submit the necessary documentation to request funding payments from the State as the work proceeded. She also explained that Oxford's commitment included \$5000 for engineering of the potential bio-retention pond at the park and \$5000 in in-kind work, and that she would be requesting funding to begin this design later this evening. This commitment is identified in the Letter of Support. In lieu of completed design for the application, she had provided construction and cost information for two similar prior projects, which the grant preparer would be using to estimate cost and at this time, she did not know the amount that would be requested. She explained that her request for design funding would be \$12,000 based on the estimate she had received from the engineer currently working on the Causeway Bio Retention, but as that effort would be for the whole park, she had only identified \$5000 for this letter. Commissioner Graves motioned to move forward with support for this project, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Lewis stated the letter could be signed tonight, but she would be signing the MOU on behalf of the Commissioners at a later date, as they were circulating one agreement to be signed by all governments participating.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Administrator Lewis presented the Commissioners with adopting ordinances, along with draft budgets to be reviewed: Ordinance 1905 - Amending the FY 2019 Budget; Ordinance 1906 - Adopting the FY 2020 Budget and Tax Rate; and Ordinance 1906 - Setting FY 2020 Water and Sewer Rates.

She briefed the Commissioners on the revisions to the FY 2019 Budget, including changes due to Grant Funds expended or not expended, capital purchases not made, and line item adjustments based on the actual expenditures, noting that most substantial changes revolved around grant funded projects and several capital improvements that have been postponed to FY 2020. She also noted the line item for the \$12,000 in design funds she had previously mentioned. After discussion of the recommended revisions to the prior year budget, Lewis proceeded with review of the drafted FY 2020 Budget, including maintaining the prior year tax rate of .3047 per \$100 of assessed real property value, anticipated tax revenues and identified grant revenues. Recommended capital improvements for each department were reviewed, including funding for street paving following the completion of WWTP and Water Main replacement with paving on Mill Street, funding for replacement of a 1997 Public Works truck and funding for improvements to a portion of the Morris Street sidewalk as an ongoing project. Lewis stated that she has identified \$30,000 to start work on the new park, Central Park, adding that a grant application had been submitted for the park but it was unknown as to whether we would get that funding. Additional equipment included a Leaf Vacuum, which PW was considering, and attachments for the skid-steer, explaining that all items mentioned are on an active Capital Improvements Plan that goes out 25 years and contains practically all town equipment with scheduled replacement dates, along with desired future purchases.

Lewis stated that the recommended FY 2020 Budget included continuation of the annual 7% increase in Water and Sewer Rates, amounting to approximately \$6 per month, stating that she felt it was important to hold the real property tax rate at the prior year number in order to focus on reaching appropriate revenues in the Water and Sewer Utilities, especially considering future debt for the currently underway Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade and the upgrades to the Morris Street Water Main currently in development, along with the possibility of having to consider an alternative arsenic removal treatment system at some point.

Following discussion Commissioner Graves motioned to introduce Ordinance 1905 Amending the General and Enterprise Budget Adopted by Ordinance 1810 for FY 2019. President Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was passed. A Public Hearing was scheduled for May 14, 2019 at the regular Commissioner Meeting at 6 pm.

Commissioner Pepe motioned to introduce Ordinance 1906 Adopting a General Enterprise Budget for FY 2020 and setting the FY 2020 Tax Rate at .3047 per \$100 of Assessed Real Property Value. President Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed. A Public Hearing was scheduled for May 14, 2019 at 6 pm.

Commissioner Fronk motioned to introduce Ordinance 1907 Repealing Ordinance 1811 and setting new Water and Sewer Rates for FY 2020, the rates of which show a 7% increase. Fronk noted that the town had been increasing rates for seven years now in order to bring revenues up to a level to properly prepare for the both the Water and Sewer needs of the town and had we not been doing this, there

would have been a very large jump in rates to cover the operational cost and debt at the completion of the WWTP. Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **LETTERS AND REQUEST**

Commissioner Pepe provided additional information regarding the concerns for offshore drilling along the Atlantic Coast, including discovery of support against the practice from the Governor's office and State Departments. After discussion, the Commissioner expressed support for opposing offshore drilling as many other governments have done. At this time, the Commissioners will look for direction from the State as to how best to acknowledge their opposition.

Lewis provided the Commissioners with information regarding the termination of NOAA funding for the research program under which the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory operates as found in the currently proposed Federal Budget and the possible impacts to Oxford if this program was terminated, including closing of the DNR research laboratory and possible relocation of the Coast Guard if the Federal Government were to dispose of the property. The three departments provide nearly 60 jobs, making it the largest employer in town. The Commissioners were invited to the Lab the following week during DNR Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio's visit at which the topic would be addressed. Bunky Luffman from Andy Harris's office was present and stated Harris is aware of the concerns and is currently seeking information, reminding the Commissioners that a similar situation took place in a prior year regarding the Chesapeake Bay funding and State officials were able to bring sufficient attention to have it reinstated in the Federal Budget.

There was discussion regarding the Chesapeake Bay Crossing proposed work group and whether there was a desire to send a representative to participate. Interest on behalf the Commissioners of Oxford will be expressed and Lewis will provide dates for meetings when they are provided.

The Oxford Garden Club submitted a one-time request for a \$500 donation towards their upcoming function, which they only host every 19 years, and for which they provided information regarding their relationship with Oxford. Commissioner Graves motioned to approve the expenditure from the current year budget, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

#### **ATTORNEY**

Ryan requested a closed session for two pending litigation matters.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR**

Lewis requested time during the same closed session for personnel matters.

Lewis requested \$12,000 in funding from current year funds to begin design of Central Park as previously mentioned. Commissioner Fronk motion to approve the expenditure, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bunky Luffman stated he was attending on behalf of Senator Andy Harris's office as part of his initiative to attend local government meetings and let the local officials know that should they have any concerns, they should reach out to him. Commissioner Pepe expressed the town's appreciation for the Senator's support of the Commissioners concerns regarding the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory.

There was some further discussion regarding offshore drilling. Questions were asked regarding the status of the MEWs and President Fronk outlined the stabilization work currently taking place with grant funding. Lewis added that there has been some interest in future purchase and development of the building, but nothing firm yet.

There being no further business, President Fronk made a motion to adjourn and go into a closed session for legal advice regarding two litigation matters and discussion regarding personnel matters. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves, all were in favor and the motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer