

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2015

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on February 24, 2015. Commission President Carole Abruzzese called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President Carole Abruzzese, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Commissioner Gordon Graves, Town Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, Chief Patrick Maxwell, Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude, and Town Attorney Brynja Booth. Several citizens were in attendance.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fronk made a motion to approve the minutes of January 27, 2015 as drafted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves and unanimously carried.

The disbursements for the month of January 2015 were received. Commissioner Fronk made a motion to file the disbursements for audit, Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent Delude presented the maintenance report consisting of the following:

- The town received its new Public Works truck whose plow has already been tested in the past snow storm. Cost of the new truck was about \$45,000.
- Over the last 2 weeks the town has shut the water off to over 26 homes in Oxford for frozen or broken pipes. This occurred mostly on weekends or at night resulting in 27 overtime hours for the town's crew. The Public Works Department was helped in finding the meters in the snow by the blue lines that the public works team painted in front of homes on the streets last year. There was also a main line water leak on Bonfield Avenue on February 23 in which the road had to be taken up for repairs. The site will be repaved in the spring. Superintendent Delude asked if the Commissioners had heard any complaints about the blue lines that the town crew had painted throughout town to help in locating water/sewer lines. The Commissioners confirmed that they hadn't received any complaints and that the Public Works Department could continue that practice.
- On February 17, 2015, the Public Works Department plowed the snow in Oxford from midnight until 12 noon and accumulated no overtime as the crew had been staggered and only worked in 8 hour shifts.
- The other weather issue the town encountered was with water tower #2 in which the smaller water relay lines froze up which in turn set off the town's monitoring system. The department has since built an insulated cabinet inside tower #2 and added heat to fix any future problems. Last year the lines froze up once but this year it has been a daily occurrence because of the all the cold weather.
- One of the town dump trucks was put in the shop as the 4x4 was not working. It was found to need \$3,200 in repairs. The department was informed that the diesel truck needs to be ran at more than 25 mph in order to keep the turbo clean. As a result, that trucks will now be rotated when trips to Easton are necessary.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell presented the Police Report, which consisted of the following:

- 41 – police information/service
- 1 – check the welfare
- 1 – malicious destruction of property
- 6 – assist the fire department
- 2 – suspicious persons
- 7 – suspicious vehicles
- 3 – assist other police agencies

Chief Maxwell reported that the recent snow storm went off without any major incidents other than receiving phone calls for broken pipes. A beggar asking for money had been reported in town. The issue was resolved. The Oxford Police Dept. is investigating that leaflets recently left on some car windshields in town. Chief Maxwell also reminded those present to remember to report any suspicious activities.

OXFORD FIRE COMPANY REPORT

An informal report was given by Oxford Ladies Auxiliary member, Pamela Baker, for the period from February 5 to February 19, 2015 as follows: 7 fire calls , 6 ambulance calls with 6 patients transported, 22 personnel and 159.5 miles traveled.

The Fire Company thanked the patrons who attended the February monthly breakfast. The March breakfast will be 8 to 11 Sunday morning March 8th; OFC invites all to join them for breakfast.

The Oxford Ladies Auxiliary will be hosting a rummage sale on Saturday, February 28, 2015. Donations will be accepted Friday, February 27, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

GUESTS

Pamela Baker was present on behalf of the Oxford Day Committee. President Abruzzese presented her with a check in the amount of \$1000 for the committee, as a portion of their donation previously approved in the FY 15 budget. This April will mark the 21st anniversary of Oxford Day.

Judy Bixler was also present on behalf of the Oxford Business Association to receive their quarterly disbursement from the county's accommodations revenues. Mrs. Bixler explained that the quarterly funds they received were used to advertise and support tourism. The OBA works with the local Talbot County tourism office which allows the county to utilize matching funds and allows Oxford to participate in advertising and be linked to the Talbot County's tourism website. Mrs. Bixler explained that the OBA forwards a portion of the funds they receive from the town to the County. Administrator Lewis added that the OBA is given 30% of the quarterly accommodations tax disbursed by the county to the town.

Oxford-Bellevue Ferry Captain, Tom Bixler, reported that work was coming along at the pier replacement on the Bellevue side of ferry run despite the rough winter.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Abruzzese announced that Scotts United Methodist Church had a gathering on Sunday, February 22, to give thanks to the law enforcement agencies of Talbot County, including Oxford's own Police Chief, Patrick Maxwell. Chief Maxwell was presented with a certificate thanking him for making a difference in law enforcement in Talbot County.

President Abruzzese spoke to those present stating that the town had been accepted into the Maryland Sustainable Communities Program adding that Administrator Lewis had put together the most complete and detailed application that she had ever seen for Oxford's submittal to the program, stressing that she wanted the community to know that this was not just an employee doing her job but someone who genuinely loves Oxford very much and wants the community to thrive and be successful. Administrator Lewis thanked President Abruzzese for her kind, heartfelt words and went on to explain what this designation would mean for the town. Administrator Lewis stated she had spoken with a representative

to the Eastern Shore from the program regarding the issues the town would like to start with. The representative recommended two programs that are readily available for economic development. One is "Community Legacy" and the other is "Strategic Demolition Smart Growth." Though the Strategic Demolition Smart Growth program has the word "demolition" in it, it is actually a program through which funds can be acquired for property acquisition. In talking with the representative, Lewis stated she was looking at the downtown area with its vacant buildings to see what the possibilities are, as far as acquisition or assistance. She was told that if the town was looking to acquire something that was vacant and in bad shape, the recommendation would be a multi-year process, asking for acquisition funds the first year and following up in subsequent years with stabilization and engineering funds. The average award is about \$250,000 to an individual applicant but the town should ask for what it actually needs; the program distributes awards as they see appropriate. At any point in time, this could be done in combination with private investment funds. In March or April the program announces their next grant cycle with grants being awarded around October. The second program, "Community Legacy" allows for business investment funds, with one of the recommendations being a revolving grant program, where the town applies for an amount of money to be redistributed to businesses with a need, like façade repairs or sprinkler systems. The town would manage the award and distribution of small grant amounts, 10 to 20k. The town could reapply for additional funds in future application years. The legacy fund awards are up to \$100,000. The program wants to see that a community is assisting businesses to be successful and they consider that to be good economic development dollars spent. Lewis stated that the Town of Salisbury was awarded funds for a similar small business grant fund last year, but she does not have the details on the program yet, but would be looking into it. She added that in the next two months she would be submitting ideas to the Commissioners for direction in regards to the upcoming application announcement. Commissioner Fronk expressed interest in the commercial strip of town between the Oxford Museum and Oxford Market and questioned how the town could develop a plan that would have a coordinated effort to improve two the commercial buildings located in that strip. Administrator Lewis responded that while working in another community they had come up with a strategic plan for economic development in a particular area. If you have a comprehensive plan in place, people will be more likely to invest in it, as it gives investors the opportunity to see what possibilities exist, along with the added benefit when submitting grant applications, it demonstrates a vested interest in making improvements to the area in question. Administrator Lewis closed by saying the program is looking for three main things: 1) creation of reasonable rental apartments 2) opportunities for employment, and 3) ways of addressing environmental protection. She noted that she would begin work on the two programs explained and will bring it up for discussion at the next Commissioners meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Lewis reminded the Commissioners that Oxford had recently submitted a letter of interest in the Sustainable Maryland Certified Municipal Certification Program, explaining that is was just a certification, not a grant program. The first requirement to receive assistance in preparing the final application to the program is to pass a resolution stating the town's intent to participate in the program and designating an administrator, allowing for preparation of the necessary application. She is recommended participation in this program as it is looked upon favorably when applying for other grant programs. Commissioner Fronk made a motion introducing Resolution 1501 – A Resolution of the Commissioners of Oxford Supporting the Town of Oxford's Participation in the Sustainable Maryland Certified Municipal Certification Program authorizing Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator, to serve as the Town of Oxford agent for the Sustainable MD Certified Municipal Certification process and authorizing her to complete the municipal registration on behalf of the Town of Oxford. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves and unanimously carried with all in favor.

A discussion took place regarding traffic calming/speed reduction techniques as a result of a recent complaint involving the speed in which drivers enter and leave town. Administrator Lewis reported that she and Chief Maxwell had been discussing the problem and suggested to the Commissioners that the town borrow a car speed monitoring device from the Sheriff's office, as an awareness tool for those

entering or leaving town. It was agreed by all the Commissioners to give the monitoring device a try within the coming weeks.

ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Attorney Booth reported that she would be bringing in ordinances in the near future to update all the International Building Codes. New codes come out every three years, and the State of Maryland has recently adopted the 2015 building codes. Both she and Administrator Lewis are looking at revisions concerning construction noise and contractor hours making sure those things are consistent with the building codes. The Energy Code, Residential Code, Mechanical Code, Property Maintenance Code and Non-Residential Building Codes would all be addressed in the update. When these are adopted they will be tailored to meet the needs of Oxford and referenced in the town code. Administrator Lewis added that she had discovered there was International Building Code training available locally and that she was considering looking into that training for herself.

CLERK COMMENTS

Lewis stated there were two additional grant opportunities that would be open for application in March and April that she was investigating. The first being a Coastal Communities opportunity that could possibly help prepare the documentation necessary to apply to FEMA for Oxford's acceptance in the community rating system, which would work towards reductions in Oxford flood insurance premiums.

This second grant opportunity is through the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coast Trust Fund, for which a letter of intent to apply was previously approved and submitted. The letter of intent was to apply for funding for Living Shoreline and Stormwater improvements. Lewis will be meeting with a representative from the program this month to discuss the application.

Lewis stated that the final step in moving from the old computer system had been completed, after successfully relocating the Water billing software on the new computers. She would be working with the software company to set up the meter reading program on the computers. Lewis intends to begin the Budget process in April.

Lewis presented the Commissioners with a demonstration of the mapping results from the first phase of GMB inventory of the Stormwater infrastructure in Oxford, stating that they were looking at a static map, in reality it will be an interactive map that will contain layers of data regarding the infrastructure. Phase 2 of the engineering project proposes taking this data and begin to prioritize the necessary improvement projects that we should look at with an estimate of cost.

Lastly, she presented a draft of the parking plan for the boat landing, demonstrating trailer parking and a new drive pattern. The engineers and DNR representatives are working on the final plan.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

President Abruzzese introduced Jeanette Delude, Scott's wife, and the Town Manager of Greensboro who was in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

There being no further business, Commissioner Graves made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fronk and unanimously carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Lewis, Town Clerk

"In accordance with Section 10-508(d) of the State Government Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, a written statement of the closed session is attached to the official minutes of the Commissioners of Oxford and maintained in the minute book in the Town Office."