

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2016

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on June 14, 2016. Commission President Gordon Fronk called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

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

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Graves made a motion to approve the minutes of May 24 and 26, 2016 as distributed, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Abruzzese to file the reported disbursements for May 2016 for audit, Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

President Fronk announced an Executive Session had been held prior to the regular meeting at 5 pm to discuss personnel matters. Commissioners Graves and Abruzzese, along with Attorney Booth and Administrator Lewis were present at the meeting. A written statement setting forth the vote of the Commissioners and the topics discussed will be filed within the minute's book of the Commissioner meetings.

PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent Delude presented the public works report as follows:

- There was a water leak at Hells Half Acre that was most likely caused by heavy vehicles utilizing the driveway, and which was repaired and put back into service with no significant impact to customers.
- One of the sewer lift pumps at Bachelors Point failed and after being pulled, it was discovered that a screwdriver had become wedged in the pump. A back up pump was installed and the damaged one has been sent for repair.
- There was a sewer backup at Tilghman and Norton Streets that was caused by a 4-foot reflector rod that had become lodged in the system. The obstruction was cleared and the sewer is flowing great.
- Two public works employees attended training at Chestertown College for water/wastewater short course instruction last week, which provides 40 hours of classroom instruction for certification credits and included a test at the end, in which the more experienced employee was successful. The second employee will have the opportunity to retest with additional training.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell presented the police report, which consisted of the following:

- 10 - Police Information & Services
- 50 - Patrol Checks
- 4 - Assist the Fire Department
- 2 - Suspicious Vehicles
- 2 - Accidents (no injuries)
- 2 - Animal Complaints
- 1 - Check the Welfare
- 1 - Civil Complaint (estate related)

Chief Maxwell reminded residents to report any suspicious activity and to be aware of potential scams.

OXFORD FIRE COMPANY REPORT

Administrator Lewis read aloud the report for the period May 12 to June 9 2016 as provided by David Baker, Secretary Oxford Fire Company. During this 4 week period there were 9 Fire calls: 1 was the Bob Evans fire in Easton; 1 was a medical assist; 1 was an extrication in Cookes Hope; and 1 was a false automatic alarm in Oxford. On Sunday May 22, Oxford took Truck 23 to a Talbot County wide fire drill at Johnson Logging north of Easton for a heavy rescue extrication drill involving logs on cars, stuck through cars, logging trucks on their side, etc.; it was a good realistic drill. Search for Johnson Logging on Facebook for pictures. During the same period there were 11 Medical calls: 8 calls with patient transported to Easton Memorial, 1 refusal, and 2 fire assist. There were 56 personnel participating with 40.4 personnel hours and 166 miles traveled. On June 2nd Talbot County Sheriff Gamble discussed opiate usage on the Eastern Shore. The Auxiliary Rummage Sale was held on Saturday, June 4 and the Auxiliary thanks all the donors and purchasers that made the sale a success. The Fire Company served about 260 breakfasts on June 12, and the company thanks all who attended. The next breakfast will be Sunday, July 10 from 8:00 to 11:00 AM.

GUESTS

Joe Fisher and Michael Valliant were present representing the Oxford Community Center to provide an update on activities at the Community Center. OCC is a private non-profit who must raise their operating funds annually and they appreciate the Town's financial support, which is utilized for operating expenses. Valliant explained that OCC was able to retire the debt incurred for renovations in 2016 and moving forward the intention is to maintain the facilities through operating funds to avoid the need for major renovations in the future. Fisher summarized the type of programs currently offered along with the extended benefits to the community from such programs. He reminded the Commissioners of the impending startup of Kid's Camp in a few weeks along with other annual summer programs. He concluded by thanking the Commissioners and the citizens for their support. The Commissioners thanked Fisher and Valliant for sharing the information at their meeting and applauded their efforts and contribution to the success of the OCC, along with the efforts of the OCC staff.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Lewis updated the Commissioners on the status of the Bids previously received for the construction of the Tilghman Street Boat Ramp, which as previously shared, came in higher than the currently available grant funding. At this time, the available funding is \$301,088, including the recently awarded \$50,000 in the Governors FY17 budget. The town has already committed \$26,098 of those funds for design. The original bid from the lowest bidder was \$346,825 presented by Mertech Marine Division, which after negotiation was lowered to \$323,975 if the project could be moved to fall. Lewis suggested the Commissioners take the action of awarding the bid at this time to preserve the start date of September with Mertech, with the understanding that the Commissioners may need to approve covering the estimated funding shortage of \$48,985 from savings unless further grant money was awarded in the fall. She explained that after several years of effort it would be a shame to miss the window of opportunity to make the much needed improvement or to have to start over with a new bidding process when we were so close to construction now. Per our permit, the work in the water needs to be completed prior to November 15, which makes the September start date crucial, with an estimated total construction timeline of 90 days. Commissioner Abruzzese approved award of the project to Mertech Marine with the understanding that any gap in funding currently estimated to be \$49,985 would come from the town's general reserves unless additional grant funding is received. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was approved.

Lewis stated that the bids received for the RFP for replacing the HVAC units in the Community Building were opened on May 24, 2016, with the following results: HVAC Service Group, Lennox Equipment, with 2 bids \$53,000 and \$57,838; Comfort Plus Inc., Carrier Equipment, with bid of \$66,760; and AERO Energy, Carrier/Mitsubishi, with bid of \$67,550. Lewis stated that she had reviewed with Delude and at this time they are acknowledging the second lowest bid of \$57,838 as a possibility, but also realize it is very new technology, which can become a problem. She recommended contacting the bidders to gain some history on the proposed equipment and vendors, the available service plans and annual cost to try to assist in determining which product is the best fit for our needs. The commissioners approved a motion to accept a bid up to a negotiated amount of \$65,000 if Lewis felt she was able to reach an appropriate balance between product, efficiency, and warranty, assuring longevity of the product.

Commissioner Abruzzese reintroduced the topic of signage at The Strand, which had been originally discussed in 2015. Chief Maxwell expressed concerns over traffic issues during the holiday weekend, suggesting the no parking signs be changed to ones identifying no stopping, standing or parking to address the issue of people stopping and parking in the grass to load or unload, etc. which is a main contributor to the congestion and safety issues. If visitors would continue to the parking lot a few feet down the road before exiting their cars, it would eliminate a lot of the problems and he feels clearer signage would assist the police in that effort. Strategically placing similar size signs, at a lower height, with the additional language, turned to face the approaching the driver should provide visitors with clear instructions. Lewis stated she would order the signs and would expect to have them up prior to July 4. The possibility of permanently curbing that side of the road has been mentioned as a means to prevent drivers from pulling up on the grass, with an estimated cost of \$10,000, but it was decided to hold off on this type of mitigation for now, although it was suggested that an opinion on curbing be solicited from the HDC. The Commissioner were in favor of placing the green beach sign with regulations at the beach if it if necessary, but expressed their opinion that less is better when it comes to signs.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 1613 adopting an Updated Employee Manual was presented, with the draft of the manual having been submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting for their review and consideration. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve Resolution 1613 adopting the Oxford Employee Manual, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

LETTERS AND REQUESTS

A request to hold the 28th Annual Cardboard Boat Races for Special Olympics was received from Skipper Marquess, with all Commissioners expressing their approval for the event. The Commissioners will be entering the race with a boat currently being prepared by the Public Works Department.

Lewis reiterated the receipt of a letter identifying the additional \$50,000 DNR grant funding in the State's FY 2017 budget, as previously mentioned.

Fronk read a letter from the Charcot-Marie-Tooth Association, thanking the town for their support of the 2016 CMTA Oxford Biathlon and expressing their appreciation for the assistance provided by Chief Maxwell and his officers in both the planning and execution of the event.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Booth stated that she had received an updated Conditions of Grant Award from the MDE, reminding the Commissioners that they had signed a similar document in the past, and was recommending that the Commissioners approve signing the updated version to continue to preserve their right to the identified grant funds for the upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. All were in favor of signing the agreement. Booth added that there have been some increase to the percentage of grant funds available, but until construction bids came in and we had a firm cost for construction, we would not know exactly how much grant funding we would receive, although any additional grant funding will assist us with any cost overage. We are still waiting for final approval of the 100% design from MDE so that it can be put out to bid. The RFP for Construction Management and Inspection is currently out and bids will be presented at the Commissioners next meeting on July 12, 2016. Booth stated that although the anticipated start of the project has been pushed to the fall, it is in MDE's hands and is not being viewed as a delay.

Booth stated she was still anticipating closing on the MEWS purchase in the month of June.

Booth added that after discussions with Lewis, she would like to request an executive session this evening for legal advice regarding code enforcement and the retention of a business in town.

ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER

Lewis stated that with regards to the Façade Grant Program she is requesting approval of the second applicant's project. Mystery Loves Company would like to resurface the historic exterior cement entry steps with a total cost of \$2280. Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to accept the application providing grant funding for a

portion of the cost to repair the steps for Mystery Loves Company, Commissioners Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the project was approved. Lewis stated she was working with several other businesses on projects, and with the anticipation of utilizing the remaining funds for these projects, she is looking at submitting a second request to replenish the original \$50,000 grant funds received, with the intent to identify façade improvements to the MEWS as a possible project. Commissioner Graves approved submitting a request for additional funding from the DHCD Legacy Program to continue the façade program, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis presented a Budget Adjustment, correcting an error made during the FY 2016 budget amendment process. She explained that two items had inadvertently been left off the amended budget, items that had already been acquired and for which funds had already been spent. She was requesting acknowledgement of the capital expenditures for Public Works equipment and approval to amend the budget to reflect the items removed in error. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the Budget Adjustment, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the adjustment was approved.

Lewis reminded the Commissioners that there was to be a work session with the contracted planner, Chris Jakubiak, the Commissioners, the OBA and the Historic Commercial Workgroup on June 16, 2016 to discuss talking points that would be provided prior to the meeting in the development of the plan.

Lewis requested a few minutes in executive session to complete discussion regarding personnel matters.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Graves announced that Howard Lapp had received a lifetime achievement award from the Oxford Museum for his artistic contributions documenting the life, times and personnel of Oxford.

President Fronk updated all on the impending visit from the young British sailors and stated that the Young Oxford sailors had reached their funding goals and were preparing for their visit to the Port of Wells.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Peter Dunbar expressed some concerns with regards to the construction of curbing along The Strand and stated that he would be more in favor of using temporary parking curbs that could be moved. Lewis stated that it was a possible solution that she, Delude and Maxwell were investigating as a trial.

Dunbar also informed the Commissioners that Jake Day of Salisbury had provided a very nice presentation regarding Salisbury's recent rebranding and improvements to their community.

Commissioner Fronk added that at the recent County Municipal Quarterly Meeting, Talbot County Emergency and the Talbot Firemen's Association reported on their recruitment and retention efforts for volunteers, along with their concerns for the future of full volunteer services. Additionally the Talbot County Council members expressed their concerns with the current limits placed on County revenues by the longtime cap on the real property tax, compounded by the continuing reduction in income revenues, stating that it is going to be necessary to talk about lifting the cap on real property tax.

Fronk announced that there would be no meeting on June 28 and the next meeting will be on July 12.

There being no further business Commissioner Fronk made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and to go into executive session for personnel matters, code enforcement, and retention of a business, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded motion, all were in favor, and the meeting closed at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Administrator - Clerk/Treasurer

"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".