

**COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**March 14, 2017**

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on March 14, 2017. Commission President Gordon Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Graves, Commissioner Carole Abruzzese, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Chief Patrick Maxwell, and Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis. Several citizens were also in attendance.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Fronk made a motion to approve the minutes of February 14, 2017 as revised and distributed, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fronk to file the reported disbursements for January 2017 for audit, Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

President Graves stated that on March 6, 2017 at 10 a.m., the Commissioners convened a closed session to receive legal advice regarding contractual issues that could compromise the negotiations or contract of a bid. Those present were Commissioners Abruzzese, Graves and Fronk, Clerk Lewis, and Attorney Booth. A written statement setting forth the vote of the Commissioners and the topics that were discussed will be filed within the minutes book of the Commissioner meetings.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Superintendent Delude was out on sick leave. Clerk Lewis gave a brief report stating that everything has been running along smoothly and that the public works crew has been working on projects geared towards getting ready for Oxford.

**POLICE REPORT**

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

- 111 – Property and patrol checks
- 25 – Police Information/Service calls
- 1 – Noise Complaint
- 6 – Alarm Calls
- 1 – Death Investigation
- 1 – Assist other Police Agency
- 3 - Assist the Fire Department
- 3 – Check the Welfare

Chief Maxwell reported that the Oxford Police Department arrested a man wanted by the Sheriff's Department and Easton Police Department for outstanding criminal warrants for a variety of crimes. Chief Maxwell mentioned that he is interested in developing a program to assist residents with keeping important information readily available for emergency responders and providing the police department with good emergency contact information. He will consult with the town attorney on the best method for accomplishing this and get back to the Commissioners.

## **BID OPENING – TILGHMAN STREET PARKING AREA PAVING**

The following bids were received for Bid #17-03 – Town of Oxford Tilghman Street Parking Lot Paving: Bramble Inc: \$28,880, Delmarva Paving: \$26,945, Ewing Inc.: \$21,859. Lewis asked the Commissioners to allow her to look over the bids and to do a cost comparison and get back to them at the next meeting. She added that the town will have grant assistance available to do this work.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

The Commissioners reviewed the MEWS design bids. President Graves spoke stating that the fact that the Commissioners have deliberated for several months was evidence of the fact this has been a difficult decision to make and that after thorough review of submittals from seven well qualified applicants, he would like to recommend that the Commissioners award the bid to VMA, Voith and Mactavish Architects LLP. In doing so, he wanted to point out a couple of matters for his fellow Commissioners to consider. As part of their submission to the town, Mr. Mactavish mentioned that after design, as part of Phase 4, his firm would like an exclusive option to acquire the property for the town and to proceed with the project as the developer. President Graves added that he was comfortable with awarding the bid for the first three phases, but that he was not comfortable in providing an exclusive option at this time and that although the Commissioners intend to entertain proposals down the road, he did not believe they were comfortable giving an exclusive option this evening, or as part of this contract. In addition, he stated that the Commissioners had some concerns with the appropriate timing for construction drawings and that he would like to see the contract agreement drafted to ensure that the Commissioners give the go ahead or green light to proceed with the Final Design phase (Phase 3) before that phase gets underway. Administrator Lewis asked to discuss a few things prior to a motion being made. She stated that after reviewing the original proposal vs the supplemental letter, she thought it important that the motion include the fact that not only did the Commissioners want to drop Phase 3a and 4 from the proposal, but that it should also include some items mentioned in Phase 2 of the original proposal having to do with Concept and Development steps and the number of town meetings. Commissioner Fronk agreed that the Commissioners want to see a viable concept and have it confirmed by a market that there would be an interest in it before the construction drawings are started. All three Commissioners agreed that it was a hard decision to make as to who to award the bid to as all seven applicants could have done an excellent job. President Graves stated that with all these considerations, he moved that the Commissioners accept the proposal submitted by VMA, dated November, 2016, as modified by the supplemental letter dated January 24, 2017, for the amount of \$75,000 and that the Commissioners direct the Town Attorney to draft an agreement for these services that is mutually acceptable to VMA and the Commissioners. Furthermore, this agreement should include Phase 2 Concept and Design Development and Meeting Attendance as found in the original submittal and should include the previously discussed stipulations regarding approval for starting of Phase 3 and exclusion of Phase 3A and Phase 4. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abruzzese, who asked if there would be any time constraints in the agreement. Clerk Lewis responded that in the draft negotiation the Commissioners will have the opportunity to decide if they want time frames in it or not. The motion was then unanimously carried with all in favor.

Clerk Lewis gave a brief update of the Tilghman Street parking lot project. She stated she had been working with the DNR on the finishing up of the ramp project. An additional \$12,000 in grant funding has been received which will cover the extra work on and around the ramp that had already been done. DNR has committed to supplying additional funding from the upcoming cycle to assist the town with paving costs and moving of the electric pole currently located in the middle of the parking lot.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None presented.

## **LETTERS AND REQUESTS**

A letter was received from the Oxford Library thanking the Commissioners for their monetary support.

A letter was received from Karen Hayman, recently retired employee with the US Department of Commerce (Cooperative Oxford Laboratory) thanking Chief Maxwell and the Oxford Police Department for the fingerprint services they provided the Oxford Lab during her employment.

Lewis reported that she had received an email from Enviro-Sports Productions, Inc. asking for approval of the June 17, 2017 date to hold the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Oxford-Bellevue Swim, which included their Certificate of Liability Insurance. All commissioners were in favor.

Lewis reminded the Commissioners that the Talbot Co. Economic Development group will be holding a listening session as part of their strategic plan update at the Oxford Community Center on April 6 at 8 am. President Graves stated he would be attending that session and added that he would be attending the OBA meeting the day before this event and would remind the association to be sure to come.

Lewis informed the Commissioners that she had met with Lisa MacDougal, Dan Zimbelman, and Katie Schroeder to discuss their request to hold a hospice fundraiser, featuring a block party with music and alcohol, on town property on June 3<sup>rd</sup> similar to the same event they held last year in front of Oxford Inn. The event will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. with the street closed off in front of the restaurant and meeting all the same criteria as last year's successful event, including restrictions regarding alcohol consumption per county requirements. The Commissioners were all in favor of the request.

## **CLERK COMMENTS**

Lewis reported that she was working on submitting requests for the façade/interior/exterior mini grant program. The program currently has \$20,000 from 2016 that is earmarked for several projects and was recently awarded an additional \$50,000 to continue the grant program. Discussions have been held with the owner of the Pier Street property concerning needed exterior work as well as with Doc's Sunset Grill owners regarding kitchen renovations. On the Park (Oxford Mercantile) also has a project on the table with earmarked funds awaiting final design approval from Oxford boards. Lewis stated that she had previously notified OBA members of the revolving grant funds and has been reaching out to individual businesses to discuss needs. The Oxford Mercantile Group has been in a waiting pattern for a while because these awards require MHT review and she could not proceed until their final plans had approved. She also explained that a few businesses had expressed an interest in interior funding, which prompt the change with this years application. So the funding can now be used for exterior and interior improvements, but as before all projects must receive MHT approval in order to be processed.

Lewis also reminded the Commissioners that the grant for the audio tour had been resubmitted this past week and that it had received letters of support from the county and our state elected officials.

Lewis informed the Commissioners that work has begun on the FY 2018 budget, including working with the police and public works departments regarding their needs. She anticipates bring a draft before the Commissioners in April, with a public hearing in May and the anticipated request for approval at the May 23 meeting. Lewis stated she was also working on the sewer rates, as part of the budget update for USDA for the WWTP and would also be bringing this before the Commissioners in May.

Lewis added she would be proposing an update to the fee schedule, and was anticipating an increase for the capacity charge for connection to the Water and Sewer system for new hookups to approximately \$10,000. This would not apply to existing lots already paying into the water system; they would pay the lesser fee of \$3000. USDA has recommended this increase considering the 11.5 million dollar project the town is undertaking. There will be more discussion on this in the future.

With regards to the WWTP construction, the final packet that was required by USDA went out on Friday, March 10 and MDE has their information already.

Public Works was scheduled to start painting the main offices at the end of the week and Lewis expects the front door will be locked for two of the days to allow for work to be done in the front areas. Phone and email communications will still be available.

Lewis reminded the Commissioners to start thinking about the parade on Oxford Day and their mode of transportation as she will need to submit something to the committee.

The Critical Areas Commission has accepted the amendment that the town has approved and submitted, with some minor changes that she will have the attorney make. Once the amended ordinance is approved, it will need to go to the CAC to finalize the changes, but the actual relevant information is approved and is part of the town's program.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

The Commissioners thanked Lewis for her annual recommendations with regards to fiscal responsibility regarding water/sewer rates, acknowledging the difficulties of annual increases but pointing out the major issues currently in the news in towns were rates did not keep up with the cost of operations nor prepare for future needs and improvements.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Local resident and owner of Oxford Mercantile inquired as to the grant opportunities for her current project. Lewis stated that she was currently on the list of projects, she had been waiting for final design approval and would be resubmitting to MHT. She suggested that the owner meet with her privately to go over the specific information needed.

Peter Dunbar asked if there would be any problem with the AARP doing taxes when the office is closed for painting, and for which he was assured there would be none.

There being no further business, Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to close the meeting, Commissioner Fronk seconded, all were in favor, and the meeting was closed at 6:45 pm.