

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2018

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on July 10, 2018. Commission President Gordon Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Graves, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Commissioner John Pepe, Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude, Police Chief Patrick Maxwell, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Brynja Booth.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gordon Fronk motioned to adopt the minutes of June 26, 2018 as distributed. Commissioner John Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Superintendent Delude reported the following:

- Public Works dealt with a sewer main failure at the corner of Mill and Tilghman Streets a couple of weeks ago. A bad section of terra cotta piping was replaced with plastic and the system was soon up and running. Mr. Rooter was called in to drain the backed up sewer that could not flow because of the problem which aided in allowing public works to fix the repair.
- Verizon will be working on the water tower on Tilghman Street for the next couple of weeks to install new transformers.
- The bio-swale project has started in the area of the dog park down to the pincushion area heading into town. There will be times when the dog park will be shut down for dirt moving and construction.
- The Public Works crew put down 20 tons of stone as The Strand parking lot and also at the tennis court parking lot to fill in the settling that had caused ponding during the recent storms.
- Parts have been ordered for the generator at the Banks Street lifting station and the crew is expecting to make those repairs in the coming week. The cost of repair will be about \$6,000.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell reported the following:

- 1 – Found property
- 2 – Domestic (mother and son both times/social services involved)
- 1 – Trespass (person gone on arrival)
- 3 - Parking Complaints (Tickets Issued)
- 4 - Assist the Fire Department
- 20 - Police information-service
- 2 – Alarm calls
- 1 - Suspicious Person (ID & moved on)
- 14 - Patrol Checks
- 2 - Check the Welfare

Chief Maxwell reported that the fireworks went off without any major incidents and that the crowds were down this year, possibly due to the excessive heat. Chief Maxwell also reported that he has been challenged to participate in a law enforcement lip sync contest.

OATH OF OFFICE

Commissioner Pepe motioned to nominate Commissioner Gordon Fronk to serve as Commission President for the next year, Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. Kathy Duval from the Talbot County Clerk's office issued the oath of office to new President Gordon Fronk. President Fronk followed by issuing the oath of office to newly elected Commissioner Pepe after his successful run for a full term as Commissioner, having been appointed to Carole Abruzzese's seat in January.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion took place regarding the Employee Premium Only Cafeteria Plan for employee deferred benefits. Administrator Lewis explained that the federal government requires the town to adopt a plan annually to offer tax deferred benefits to their employees. The town participates in the Maryland State Retirement program, but also offers an additional retirement plans and health reimbursement accounts to the employees. In order to provide tax deferred benefits, a federally approved document needs to be in hand. A motion was made by President Fronk to approve the plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe and unanimously carried.

President Fronk provided an update on the MEWS project, stating that Lewis and he, along with architect Cameron McTavish, met with the Department of Housing and Community Development to tour the building and discuss the grant funding request. Administrator Lewis noted that the State Historic Commission has not reviewed the newest proposal yet. She stated that the DHCD has informed her that there was a large amount of applications for grant funding this round and not enough money to go around for everyone, adding that she had requested \$200,000 but that the DHCD asked if it were possible for the town to request a lesser amount of money. Lewis stated that her thought was that it would take \$200,000 to do the project but that she had set aside some funds in this year's budget and that some consideration should be made to request \$175,000 with the town adding \$25,000 of its own money to the project. The grant would allow the rebuilding of the foundation as it stands, the removal of the asbestos and lead paint, and taking the building back to its traditional exterior. The back non-historic sections will be demolished and the exterior finished to create a building in which potential investors could visualize future construction. The funding would be for the demolition, foundation, stabilization, and mitigation only. The State is looking to find out what would be the minimum amount the town could accept. Lewis asked the Commissioners if they would be willing to ask for \$175K instead of the original 200K. She noted that this would be the town's last application for this project and that the funds are necessary to be able to market the building. It is possible that the DHCD may say 200K is too much and just let the request go without any action. Lewis added that her instinct would be to try to get the lesser amount as the property is still worth over \$300,000 and the town currently has less than \$225,000 invested, an additional \$25,000 would still be less than the value of the land. The Commissioners were all open to asking for \$175,000. Commissioner Pepe made a motion to lower the request to \$175,000 on the grant for the stabilization of The Mews, the motion was seconded by President Fronk, all were in favor and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Pepe asked the status of numerous abandoned cars located on a side street which he saw as both a blight and safety hazard. Attorney Booth stated that the Town had commenced enforcement action to address the non-compliant vehicles.

LETTERS

President Fronk read a thank you letter from Joe Fisher on behalf of the Oxford Community Center thanking the Commissioners for the annual \$10,000 donation that they provided to the OCC.

Commissioner Graves read a thank you note from Thomas Alspach on behalf of the Tred Avon Yacht Club thanking the town for their donation towards the annual fireworks display.

Commissioner Pepe read aloud a thank you note from John Sutton on behalf of Camp Sunshine thanking everyone for their hard work in raising money for the camp. This was accompanied by a letter from a young person who had benefited from going to Camp Sunshine and thanked the participants for donating to such a wonderful, worthy cause.

CLERK COMMENTS

Lewis reported on multiple construction projects currently taking place. Other projects in the works include the installation of bridge to connect the OCC to the Oxford Fire Company and the possibility of creating a new community park in the ballpark area that would allow for bocce ball, volleyball, and other recreational activities.

The town dog park and parking lot will not be usable while the stormwater project is taking place. Those particular areas were experiencing sinking areas with pooling of water and dirt that has been removed for stormwater retention is being used to level out these low-lying areas, after which sod will be incorporated. Restoration of the community garden areas will be post growing season.

The accountants will be coming in soon to do their yearly review as well as FEMA.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Graves stated that he appreciated the efforts of Commissioner Pepe and Captain Tom Bixler for their Herculean efforts in putting the ferry back together in the extreme heat that the town has been experiencing. Captain Bixler, in turn, thanked the community for their kindness in helping with the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Captain Bixler stated there will be a ferry party soon!

There being no further business, Commissioner Fronk motioned to adjourn the meeting and go into a closed session for two potential litigation matters, a property maintenance-code enforcement matter and personnel matters, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, and the meeting was closed at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Town 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".