

**COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**April 14, 2020**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners Meeting was held virtually in a Zoom Meeting Room on Tuesday, April 14, 2020. The public was provided call in information for the purpose of listening and participating in the meeting, notice of which was posted on the bulletin board and the website. President Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Graves, Commissioner John Pepe, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Police Chief Pat Maxwell, Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Citizens Tim and Nora Drayton, Ron and Ann Walker, Denise and Art Murr, and Dale Benson where in attendance by phone.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the minutes of March 10, 2020, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

**DISBURSEMENTS**

Lewis stated that although she did not send out the March Disbursement report yet, but she wanted to go over the current procedure for disbursements: she is preparing checks for disbursement, forwarding a report of the disbursements to the Commissioners for review and upon receiving approval from at least one Commissioner, placing the payments in the mail.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Water/Wastewater Supervisor Delude gave a brief update for Public Works, there have been a few water leaks, brush was picked up today and mowing is underway; the staff is working shifts and staggered hours to reduce possible impacts from the virus.

**POLICE REPORT**

Chief Patrick Maxwell gave a brief update for the Police Department, stating that they have been active, answering questions, and monitoring closed facilities, while practicing social distancing and taking proper precautions. Commissioner Pepe asked the Chief to assist the Marina operators with some issues regarding recreational boat owners accessing the marinas, which although open as essential, are closed to recreational boaters per the Governor's order.

**FIRE COMPANY**

The report, as prepared by Graham Norbury, was read by Lewis and attached here.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Administrator Lewis provided the Commissioners with the most recent designs for the green infrastructure improvements for the Stand Beach areas, including the parking lot near the marina, areas

between the F-Dock and the TAYC, and areas at Strand West Beach and Sandaway Lodge. The design still involves marshy islands just off the Strand Beach, protecting the beach, which will then be replenished and include new grasses to the east and west ends of the Strand Beach. Lewis explained that there was an opportunity to apply to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for additional grant funds and she was reviewing these designs with the Commissioner in advance of that submittal. The hope is to match the estimated \$1,000,000 in funds that the town intends to request by application from Maryland's DNR Chesapeake and Coastal Grant Program. She explained that the initial estimates for the beach work is around \$2,000,000 and if the town was able to access additional funds from a second source it would go a long way to getting us to construction. There was discussion of the elements of the design including the idea of placing tiling in the parking lot allowing for tidal movement without impacting the parking lot. Lewis noted that the some elements where to be done in cooperation with the Yacht Club and the Sandaway, along with two neighboring private owners in order to better protect the whole of the north shorelines for the town.

Lewis stated that in prior meetings there had been discussions in regards to the acquisition of surveillance cameras for some town owned parcels and that she was still investigating options and cost.

Lewis stated that official notice had been received from FEMA stating the town has been entered into the Community Rating System as a Class 7, the best you can do at entry. As of May 1, 2020, anyone applying or renewing a FEMA flood insurance policy in the Flood Hazard Area would receive a 15% discount on their policy.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Lyndsey discussed with the Commissioners the updated version of the State of Emergency Declaration dated April 14, 2020 in response to Covid-19, which had been provided to the Commissioners by email. The revised version includes current closures and processes, including the closure of the certain public buildings and areas, enforcement of the Governor's Stay at Home order, and includes extension of building permits, the ability to issue administrative Historic District permits, suspension of public meetings and other necessary elements to address the current situation and meet the requirements of the Governor's Order. After discussion Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the signing of the Emergency Declaration, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Ordinance 2002 FY 2021 General/Enterprise Budget and Tax Rate was presented to the Commissioners by the Administrator who explained that due to the current pandemic, there would be multiple impacts to the anticipated budget, including loss of income tax revenues, highway user revenues, and accommodations taxes. She was proposing a 25% decrease in these areas, based on lost revenues for the first quarter. The budget was being proposed with no increase to Water and Sewer Rates, even though the town has annually increased the rates in the past, Lewis stated that considering the financial impacts to the citizens at this time it would be inappropriate to increase these rates. Revenues did include Grant income for projects that were already underway. Regarding expenditures, the budget includes all necessary operational expenditures and expenditures for projects already underway, but did not include any capital expenditures or improvements. Contributions to local organizations are still in the budget as these entities depend on this funding for operations. Paving of JL Thompson and Riverview is an exception as this is work to be done once the Wastewater Treatment Plant is completed and will be necessary in this fiscal year. Because this was a much tailored down budget to meet the needs based on the expected revenues, she had removed the line item for Depreciation, as it was not a cash expense. Lastly, she stated that funds remained in the budget to allow for consideration of annual

personnel salary increases, adding that as Oxford employees had remained on the front line during these unprecedented times, it seemed appropriate to at least leave that option in the budget. The FY 2021 minimal budget is within a few thousand dollars of balancing, with the insignificant difference coming from reserve funds. Lewis said that clearly it would be necessary to revisit and revise the budget in the fall, at a time that optimistically removes some of the current uncertainties. After discussion, Commissioner Fronk motion to introduce Ordinance 2002 Adopting a General Budget and Enterprise Budget for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motioned, all were in favor, and the motion passed. A virtual Public Hearing was scheduled on May 19, 2020 at 6 pm during the regular Commissioners meeting on the same date.

Attorney Ryan provided Resolution 2004, A Resolution of the Commissioners of Oxford for the Purpose of Amending the Oxford Town Charter to Provide for the Postponement of a Town Election in the Event of a State of Emergency or a Catastrophic Health Emergency, explaining that the Governor's Order has allowed for changes to municipal charters for the sole purpose of authorizing the postponement of elections. Commissioner Pepe motioned to approve Resolution 2004 as presented, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, after discussion a vote was called, all were in favor, and the resolution was approved.

Ryan presented Resolution 2005, A Resolution of the Commissioners of Oxford Postponing the June 16, 2020 Election until September 15, 2020 Due to the Event of the State of Emergency and Catastrophic Health Emergency. After discussion of the election process scheduled for June and concerns regarding the health risks for staff, volunteers, and voters, Commissioner Pepe motioned to approve Resolution 2005 as presented, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the resolution was approved.

#### **LETTERS AND REQUEST**

Lewis noted that Oxford Day for 2020 had been canceled.

#### **ATTORNEY**

Ryan stated that numerous letters had been submitted in support of maintaining the US Coast Guard Station Oxford, including from elected officials and local citizens, adding that there were at least 79 letters recorded on the online submittal website and there had been newspaper coverage.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR**

Lewis stated that there would be a revision to the current FY 2019 General and Enterprise Budget to incorporate the anticipated revenue losses, which she intends to present at the May 19, 2020 meeting.

As an update on the Oxford Central Park improvements, Lewis stated while waiting to hear on a potential grant for planting of the park, work would commence on shaping and stabilizing of the remaining dirt from the Causeway Ponds in preparation of the fall plantings.

Lewis stated that although town buildings are closed to the public, all employees were working in the background and all operations continued. The employees have had virtual meetings to discuss necessary health safety requirements and open communications would continue through this health emergency.

The Department of Housing and Community Development has accepted the town's recent resubmittal of the Oxford Sustainable Community Plan, which is required every 5 years in order to stay in the

program. This allows the town to continue several grant opportunities including the Mini-Grant Program, which will be receiving an additional \$40,000 this year.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENT**

No additional comments.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

All participants were given the opportunity to speak.

The Murrs said they were happy to hear everyone was well. Art thanked Lewis for communications prior to the meeting to clear up some questions and added he was aware of the continued push to send letters in response of the Coast Guard closing and it was possible many more would be received.

With no further business, Commissioner Pepe made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer