

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners Meeting was held virtually in a Zoom Meeting Room on Tuesday, May 19, 2020. The public was provided call in information for the purpose of listening, watching, 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 Tom Costigan, Bart Eckhart and Bonnie Johnson, Doug Abbott, Dale Benson and one unknown caller where in attendance by phone or video.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

President Graves announced the following Special Meetings

The Commissioners of Oxford held a special meeting April 10, 2020 at 1:30 pm for the purpose of holding a Closed Session to discuss public security including implementation of an emergency plan and to obtain legal advice regarding a real estate matter.

The Commissioners of Oxford held a special meeting on May 4, 2020 at 1:30 pm for the purpose of holding a Closed Session to discuss public security including implementation of an emergency plan.

The Commissioners of Oxford held a special meeting on May 12, 2020 at 10 am for the purpose of holding a Closed Session to discuss public security including implementation of an emergency plan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The review of the April 14, 2020 meeting minutes where deferred until the next meeting.

DISBURSEMENTS

Report of Disbursements for the months of February, March and April were provided to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Commissioner Graves motioned to approve the reports and file for audit, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Water/Wastewater Supervisor Delude gave a brief update for Public Works, brush and bulk pickups were done on schedule, new tasks include sanitizing of park entrance gates and other areas of community use, daily emptying of trashcans, and hand sanitizer at the portable toilets. Currently water fountains are still off, but mowing of park areas has started. Continuing to stagger crews and working early in the day to reduce interaction, although due to outside contact, two of members of the crew were out for a period of time. The water confidence report will be distributed soon. President Graves complimented the crew on doing a good job considering the current circumstances.

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, providing compliance checks, and keeping signage and closed areas posted, all while practicing social distancing and taking proper precautions. Chief has been checking in on homebound residents to make sure they were okay and offering assistance if needed. Commissioner Pepe commended the Chief and his officers for their handling of the current issues and the keeping of all residents safe. Commissioner Fronk commented that having spoken with one of the officers, he understands that the new reduced speed limit outside of the town boundaries has reduced the speeding coming into to town, which the Chief confirmed that it has slowed down through the spring and hopes it continues into the summer months. Lewis reported that the new 'this is

your speed' signs had been received and that Officer Philips has set up a webinar, but was unsure if it would be possible to actually have the main sign working in time for the holiday weekend. Chief said that we had requested the county equipment in hopes of using that for the holiday, while they were getting the new equipment ready.

FIRE COMPANY

Lewis reported information sent to her by Chief Norbury, which stated that calls have been unusually light for both fire and EMS, responders continue with added precaution and N95 mask for calls. He added that we have been fortunate the Covid19 cases have been low locally, and to please stay safe and keep your distance.

GUEST

Lewis introduced TAYC Commodore Doug Abbott to the meeting, stating he had requested to consult with the Commissioners on behalf of the Yacht Club in reference to the annual 4th of July celebration and Fireworks. Abbott thanked the Commissioners for the partnership that has existed for all these years for the Oxford Fire Works and appreciated the opportunity to speak with them now. He explained that in order to minimize financial loss, they will need to notify the fireworks operator of their intentions by June 1st. TYAC understands that there is a possibility that they would need to keep people on their property at a minimum, but they were also concerned with exposure to the town's staff if the event was to take place. Lewis stated that under the current Governor's Order the gathering could not take place, acknowledging that there was always a possibility that the order could be lifted by July, but realistically the virus would still pose a danger of spread in any large gathering, especially considering the volume of people who normally come to the town for the fireworks. All Commissioners expressed their concerns with the issues with allowing a large volume of people into the congested streets for an event of this nature, the absolute inability to keep social distancing of 6' and acknowledged that the cautious steps the town has taken up to this point have proven effective and dropping our guard at this time would not be wise. Abbott explained that the club was fully behind this line of thinking, agreed with the concerns expressed, along with having their own limitations and will stand with the Commissioners on their decision. All were in agreement that cancelation of the Fireworks for 2020 was in the best interest of the town, its citizens, and the membership of the club.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Graves opened the public hearing on Ordinance 2002 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD ADOPTING A GENERAL/ENTERPRISE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2020 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021, AND ESTABLISHING A TAX RATE OF \$.3047 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED REAL PROPERTY VALUE, for which written comments had been solicited online prior to the meeting and for which no written comments were received. Lewis briefed the Commissioners on the relevant items presented at the previous meeting, mainly due to COVID19 reduced income is anticipated for intergovernmental revenues for the year by at least 25%. She stated that the budget as presented is for operational expenses, including contributions to local groups as it is part of their operational revenues, and for projects that are grant funded and already underway, with the exception of needed paving following the completion of the WWTP and some consideration for annual personnel salary increases. No new capital improvements were being entertained at this time. Commissioner Fronk motioned to adopt Ordinance 2002, AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD ADOPTING A GENERAL/ENTERPRISE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2020 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021, AND ESTABLISHING A TAX RATE OF \$.3047 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED REAL PROPERTY VALUE, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion. Commissioner Pepe inquired for clarification on a few line items, which Lewis detailed. After discussion a vote was called, all were in favor and the motion carried. Lewis reminded the Commissioners, as she had stated at the last meeting, it would be necessary to revise this budget once the state had reopened and the actual economic impacts could be accessed. There were no comments in reference to the budget from those in attendance virtually.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Attorney Ryan stated the Commissioners had been forwarded the results of the RFP for Construction Mgmt and Inspection Services for the Oxford Morris Street Water Main Project, along with analysis, prior to the meeting and read the monetary results aloud: GMB \$128,600, Rauch Engineering: \$174,000, and RK&K \$75,057. She stated that upon close inspection she found all three firms were qualified, but she felt GMB and RK&K had a little more experience in the water main arena and that RK&K demonstrated experience in CIPP techniques, which the other two had not. Lewis stated that as this project includes lining of the water pipes, any experience with CIPP (Cast In Place Piping) would be relevant. The need to upgrade this line has existed for many years, but the conditions, known and unknown, under the state road have always hindered any real consideration of laying new pipes. The fairly new technique of lining water pipes, in combination with MDE's award of a 2 million dollar low interest loan, with 50% loan forgiveness, is what has made it possible to consider this project. Ryan continued that with the monetary discrepancies in the quotes, she did a thorough investigation of the details of each quote to assure nothing had been left out. She felt that although RK&K had not identified some travel expenses, that even after taking that into consideration and assigning a dollar value to the expenses, the RK&K quote was still the lowest by an estimated \$30,000. Pepe expressed that in reviewing the quotes he found that GMB provided a very detailed cost estimate allowing for a better review and understanding of the quote. Fronk expressed that the RFP requested that the quote be inclusive of all costs associated and Lyndsey has tested the results, and even with familiarity with GMB, RK&K price is still substantially less. Lewis expressed a preference to make a determination this evening in order to keep the project moving forward as the contractor has already been chosen, adding that she was comfortable with either of the two low bidders; she felt that either would be able to get the job completed. Delude said he had experience with both bidders, was very familiar with GMB, but was also aware that RK&K had successfully managed a project in his town of residence. Ryan stated that when looking at the qualifications prior to knowing the costs, she too felt that GMB had a strong proposal, but that RK&K proposals met the qualifications and that they were the only one bringing CIPP experience to the project. Based on the discussion, Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the RK&K proposal contingent upon approval and funding by MDE, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Lewis present an amended budget for FY 2020 to address the loss in intergovernmental revenues for the last third of the year due to COVID19, the resulting Stay at Home order and the closing of businesses. She stated the in April, she had informed department heads that all previously approved purchases that had not already been made were put on hold and only necessary expenditures were approved for the remainder of the year. Ordinance 2003, AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD AMENDING GENERAL AND ENTERPRISE BUDGET ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE 1906 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2019 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 TO ADJUST CERTAIN LINE ITEMS AND TO RE-APPROPRIATE CERTAIN FUNDS was revised to include the reduced revenues and reduced expenses. Operational cost and grant funded projects already underway remained in the budget. She stated that in nearly every category the revenues and expenses were reduced based on what was known at this time, with the exception of Real Property Tax, which increased due to half year construction and grant funded projects underway. She did note there was a minor increase in the uniforms category as this the first time in a while we have been fully staffed and vehicle maintenance due to rehab of two vehicles. Lewis stated that the budget is about \$300,000 less than originally approved. After discussion, Commissioner Fronk motioned to introduce AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD AMENDING GENERAL AND ENTERPRISE BUDGET ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE 1906 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2019 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 TO ADJUST CERTAIN LINE ITEMS AND TO RE-APPROPRIATE CERTAIN FUNDS, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. A public hearing was scheduled for June 9, 2020 at the Commissioners Regular Meeting to be held virtually at 6 pm.

Commission President Graves recommended that the Commissioners consider the appointment of a new Commission President for the month of July as proposed in the Town Charter, acknowledging that due to Covid19, the election has been postponed until September 15, 2020, but there was no reason not to move forward with the appointment of the next President per the Charter. Lewis stated she had spoken with the Clerk of the Court and she would make herself available to swear in a new President, per the Charter requirement, on the front lawn of the courthouse considering the building was not currently open to the public. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve Commissioner Pepe for President for FY 2021, Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Commissioner Pepe will make arrangements with the Clerk to take his oath.

ATTORNEY

Ryan presented an amendment to the current Oxford Morris Street Water Main Owner Engineer contract held by GMB, explaining that MDE requires the current contractor provide the Design Services required for the construction phase of the project. The provided amendment, which was negotiated by Lewis and Ryan with GMB, is for \$ 33,650. Lewis explained that the Design Services Contractor (GMB) and the Construction Manager (RK&K) work together in overseeing the construction contractor. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the amended Owner Engineer contract to include Design Services for a cost of \$33,650, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Ryan updated the Commissioners on the issue of the unclaimed trailers at the Strand Beach, stating that if not removed by June 7, 2020, the town would proceed with taking ownership.

ADMINISTRATOR

Lewis stated that she had received a request from the River Keepers, who provided beach testing last summer at no cost, for a financial investment in the testing. The cost would be \$40 per test for 16 samplings over the summer. The Commissioners were generally in favor, but would also like to know if data could be provided at the end of the season, which Lewis stated she would look into.

Talbot Interfaith had sent a letter asking, considering the current economic conditions, would the town consider a donation to support their operations. Commissioner Fronk stated he had never heard any negative comments regarding their operations and agreed that at this time the support was needed. Commissioner Pepe stated that as a town we are all very fortunate and able to offer support. All were in agreement with donating \$500 from the current budget.

Lewis stated that although she was going to provide a more detailed explanation of the cost proposal for surveillance equipment of public areas, she felt considering the current economic situation, she was not comfortable proposing that we move forward with this type of capital improvement. It could be reviewed in the fall and considered for next spring once there was more confidence in the budget revenues.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

No additional comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

All participants were given the opportunity to speak. Commissioner Pepe thanked those who had joined the meeting for taking the time to participate.

With no further business, Commissioner Graves 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