

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD

Regular Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2021

The Commissioners Meeting was held in person in the Commissioners Meeting room located in the Oxford Community Services Building located at 101 Market Street on June 22, 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this was the first in person meeting since March 2020, and the opportunity for citizens to view the meeting within a Zoom Meeting Room was also available. This information was posted on the town bulletin board and the town website. President John Pepe called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President John Pepe, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Commissioner James Jaramillo, Public Works WW Superintendent Matt Ozman, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Multiple residents attended in person and a few participated virtually. Police Chief Pat Maxwell was out of town.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the June 8, 2021 meeting minutes, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

REPORT OF DISBURSEMENTS

Commissioner Fronk motioned to file reported disbursements for audit, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Wastewater Superintendent Matt Ozman presented an update for Public Works. Public works placed Dunbar's bench in the County Park on June 14th, 2021, for the dedication ceremony. Suez has completed water tower inspections, nothing to report towers are in working order. Warranty inspection on the wastewater plant to take place this week, this inspection is to make sure punch list items and follow up work has been completed. GMB, Pact and the Public works will be onsite for the inspection. Barkers will be in to touch up a few more spots along the edges of North and South Morris with stone before project closeout and to deliver the spare hydrant parts and tools that are owed to the Town under the contract. Monthly inspections and routine maintenance of all shop equipment and vehicles have been completed by public works. Replaced one hydraulic hose on the small GMC dump truck. Replaced running lights and emergency lights on the large international dump truck. Also had to replace a bad DEF fluid sensor on the Case Backhoe this work was completed under warranty by GT Mid Atlantic (Certified Dealer).

POLICE REPORT

None presented

FIRE COMPANY

None presented

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Maria Brophy, who was participating virtually, was introduced as the new Town Planner. Maria will be providing planning services, acting as the planning officer for permits, and providing support for the Town Manager as needed.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing for Ordinance 2107 Amending the FY 2021 General and Enterprise Budget was opened. A brief explanation was provided. No public comments were received.

The Public Hearing for Ordinance 2108 FY 2022 Tax Rate and General and Enterprise Budget was opened. A brief explanation was provided, with discussion of an increase to the Constant Yield Tax Rate as provided by the state and the use of reserve funding for capital improvements. No public comments were received.

The Public Hearing for Ordinance 2109 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for FY 2022 was opened. A brief explanation was provided, noting there was no increase in 2021. No public comments were received.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve Ordinance 2107 Amending the FY 2021 General and Enterprise Budget, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve Ordinance 2108 – FY 2022 adopting the Tax Rate and General and Enterprise Budget, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve Ordinance 2109 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for FY 2022, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis provided the Commissioners with the final language for the Water's Edge Museum's UNESCO signage to mark the Middle Passage, which will be on display for the installation of the sign on the fourth of July. Lewis reminded the Commissioners the intent is for the sign to eventually be placed at a location near the port of entry in July of 2022 marking the 300 year anniversary of the last slave ship to port in Oxford. She explained that the sign is currently on wheels to allow for this event, as the permit for the one-year temporary placement is pending. Commissioners reviewed the signage language and acknowledge the appropriateness of the temporary portability of the signage. Lewis requested that the Police Department be able to close Mill Street for the event on the 4th to allow for parking. Permission was granted as long as there was sufficient space to allow for emergency vehicles on one side of the street and that there be a path for pedestrian crossing between the beach and Tilghman docks. Commissioner Fronk motioned to close Mill Street on July 4th from 2 pm to 6 pm, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Lewis stated that she was still in communication with the Pickleball players regarding their prior request to the Commissioners, but had nothing new to present at this time, other than she does intent to apply in the next round of the state's Parks and Playground funding opportunity. Discussion was held regarding the current use of the courts and the possibility of removing the half courts. Lewis stated the plan for the grant application would include removal of the side posts, repaving and a new fence.

NEW BUSINESS

Lewis presented Resolution 2111 Amending the Employee Manual to include the recently passed federal holiday, Juneteenth National Independence Day. The amendment will also change the administrative title from Town Administrator to Town Manager. Commissioner Fronk motion to approve Resolution 2111, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the approval, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Attorney Ryan presented Ordinance 2113 repealing and reenacting the Forest Conservation Ordinance, explaining that changes had been made over time, along with recent state requirements and this would reduce the actions into one standalone ordinance that is in line with the state model ordinance. Commissioner Fronk motioned to introduce Ordinance 2113, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. A public hearing was scheduled for July 27, 2021 at 6 pm at the regular commissioners meeting.

Lewis requested approval to sign documents associated with the acceptance of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds/American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), stating that it was necessary to accept the funding by a vote of the Commissioners. Commissioner Jaramillo motion for the town to accept funding from the ARPA and for the town manager to sign associated documents to request and process the grant funds, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis provided a copy of Resolution 2113 to the Commissioners for their consideration. She stated that in researching the best opportunity to continue to support the revitalization of the Historic Commercial District she would like the commissioner to support an application to the DHCD requesting funding to acquire property near the district for passive parking. She stated with their approval she would still need to investigate potential parcels and speak with property owners, but was seeking their approval before

taking any further steps. As parking was a topic of conversation during the MEWS design approvals and has been mentioned by other business owners in the area, she felt that being able to add some available off-street parking nearby would provide some relief to the on-street parking currently utilized and often filled during busy weekends. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve Resolution 2113, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commission President John Pepe, stepped down as President, and motioned to accept Commissioner Fronk as the incoming president. Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

Several letters were received from Talbot County requesting appointments on County Boards, including Talbot County Economic Development, Talbot County Tourism, and Talbot County Parks and Recreation. Sandi Pepe, who has served as the Town's representative on the Economic Development Board, has stepped down after serving the town well in this position. After discussion, Commissioner Fronk motioned to have Commissioner Jaramillo serve as the Town's representative on the Economic Development Commission, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Lewis asked that Judy Bixler's service on the Talbot County Tourism Board continue. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve Judy Bixler as the town's representative on the Tourism Board, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. Lewis stated she would come back to the commission in regards to the Parks and Rec position as she had not had time to speak with Kim Kearns.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Ryan presented Ordinance 2114, an ordinance to increase the Annual Commissioners Salary from \$2000 to \$3000, as requested by Commissioner John Pepe at a prior meeting. Ryan explained that any approved increase would not apply during the terms of the now sitting Commissioners and the first Commissioner to receive an increase would be the person elected in June of 2022. Following discussion Commissioner Fronk motioned to introduce Ordinance 2114, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. A public hearing for the ordinance will be held on July 27, 2021 at 6 pm at the regular commissioners meeting.

TOWN MANAGER

Lewis stated that following the resignation of Planning Commissioner Jim Reed, who will be moving from Oxford, she would like to recommend moving Norman Bell from the Appeals Board to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to place Norman Bell on the Planning Commission, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. Lewis also made the recommendation of inviting John Pepe to serve on the Appeals Board in Norman's place, stating she would bring the recommendation to the next town meeting. Commissioner Fronk administered the oath of office to Norman Bell for his appointment on the Planning Commission.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Jaramillo thanked exiting Commissioner John Pepe for his guidance since come on the commission and his appreciation of having the opportunity to serve with him. Commissioner Fronk expressed his gratitude to Pepe for his service and also for the great working relationship that had developed over the last few years. Pepe thanked both Commissioners for the kind words.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brian Wells thanked the citizens for coming out to vote in the election and stated he appreciated the vote of confidence, and was looking forward to serving the town. Captain Bixler thanked all the Commissioners for their service, especially over the last year, and wished all the best going forward. Virtually, Dale Benson, stated the John had served well on the Port Wardens and will be good addition to the Board of Appeals.

With no further comments the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.