

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners Meeting was held virtually in a Zoom Meeting Room on Tuesday, June 9, 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 6:06 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 Art Murr, Sandi Pepe, and Dale Benson were in attendance by phone or video.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

President Graves announced the following Special Meetings

The Commissioners of Oxford held a special meeting May 22, 2020 at 6 pm for the purpose of holding a Closed Session to discuss public security including implementation of an emergency plan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Gordon Fronk motioned to approve the April 14, 2020 meeting minutes, John Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Gordon Fronk motioned to approve the May 19, 2020 meeting minutes, John Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Water/Wastewater Supervisor Delude gave a brief update for Public Works, the 'this is your speed signs' have been installed and are working; there was a water leak on the Stand near the marina, water was restored, but will be waiting on parts for final repair; rehab maintenance was performed on the Market Street Docks; and the fencing around the Causeway dumpsters, which was damaged during a storm, has been replaced. Delude also explained that the wastewater is currently being introduced into the new wastewater system, which will take a few days to fill and then processing will begin.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Patrick Maxwell gave a brief update for the Police Department, stating that Steve O'Donnell, on behalf of the Charcot-Marie-Tooth Association, along with his son, completed a symbolic triathlon in Town with assistance from the department. Due to COVID their annual event was canceled, but Mr. O'Donnell's efforts allowed virtual participation to continue their fund raising. Maxwell stated he would be assisting a moving resident with shipping containers that would require a temporary closing of Market Street. With the help of Public Works and Officer Philips the 'this is your speed signs' are up, programmed and after some minor adjustments working well and it is apparent the early warning is slowing traffic. Maxwell expressed some concerns with the public being less than cordial in response to officers, mostly visitors to the town, but the officers are remaining professional and calm and understanding that many people are on edge due to the recently lifted stay at home order and other current events.

FIRE COMPANY

Lewis reported information sent to her by Chief Norbury: All stats cover the period May 20, 2020 – June 9, 2020. Fire/Rescue: Just 5 calls received, only one of which was in our first-due area. We responded to 3 water incidents, 1 house fire in Easton and 1 automatic fire alarm in Oxford, 83 miles traveled, 35 member responses, 22 hours worked. Medical: 9 calls : 5 patients transported, 3 citizen assists, 1 standby for Talbot County DES, 117 miles traveled, 37 member responses, 38 hours worked. In addition to fire, rescue and medical calls we also held a very successful Chicken BBQ this past Saturday. The weather was beautiful, cars were lined up, and we served over 250 carryout meals. A big thank you to Amick Farms for donating the chicken! We are tentatively planning a repeat even in August.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Graves opened the public hearing for 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. Lewis explained amendments were made to include the reduced revenues and reduced expenses due to COVID impacts to the 4th quarter, noting all revisions had been covered at a previous meeting, summarizing that the anticipated income from intergovernmental agencies for the 4th quarter was removed, and after informing departments to reduce any expenditures they could, budgeted expenses above necessary operational expenses were removed. An opportunity was given to each participating citizen for comments. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Graves inquired as to any Commissioner discussion in regards to 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, Commissioner Pepe noted that the Fireworks were still in the budget and Lewis stated that this was the payment to the TYAC in July of 2019. Although the FY 2021 Budget has already been approved, the Fireworks expense for July 2020 would be removed when the new budget was reviewed near the end of 2020. Commissioners Fronk and Graves stated they were satisfied with the budget as presented. Commissioner Pepe motioned to approve Ordinance 2003 amending the General and Enterprise Budget, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None presented.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

Lewis stated that she had received a request from the OBA, stating the Avalon Foundation was planning a downsized version of the annual Plein Air Easton this year, with COVID restrictions in place. Oxford would have painters, who would be spread out over a three day period, and as in the past would be awarding winners with a cash prize. The OBA was requesting sponsorship of the event with \$1000 for the artist awards as the town has provided before. Lewis stated she had left a little money in the contribution line item for this or similar events. Commissioner Fronk approved the contribution of \$1000 to the Oxford Plein Air, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

ATTORNEY

Ryan stated that the waiting period for the notice served for the three boat/trailers abandoned at the Strand Parking Lot had passed. She was preparing the paperwork and once completed she would forward to the DNR in order for the town to take possession and remove.

Concerning the funding for the Morris Street Water Main project Ryan stated that the procurement package has been submitted to MD WQFA for review and then forwarding to the Board of Public Works.

Commissioner Graves told Lyndsey the Commissioners were very pleased with her handling of the efforts to maintain the Oxford Coast Guard Station, including her well-written response to their public comments request, noting her efforts were instrumental in having the Coast Guard change their minds and keep the station open. Ryan thanked the Commissioners and commended the large public response received from the citizens, bringing attention to the concern.

ADMINISTRATOR

Lewis stated that she had provided local businesses and non-profits with information regarding the Talbot County CareAct Grant Funding opportunity and offered her support if it was needed, sending the information to all members of the OBA. Sandi Pepe, the town's representative on the Talbot County Economic Development Commission, provided additional information regarding the funding and recommended applications be submitted sooner than later.

Lewis reminded the Commissioners that through the Strand Design Project, the National Wildlife Federation was preparing a grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in coordination with the Town for supplemental construction funds. Currently letters of support were being solicited from local entities in support of the grant application, which would include a letter from the Commissioners.

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

President Graves stated that he was recommended Commissioner Pepe take over the presidency of the Commissioners of Oxford, Commissioner Fronk approved the recommendation, and Commissioner Pepe will take over as President at the next town meeting.

Commissioner Pepe inquired as to whether the ventilation fan on top of the Main Street Pump Station was going to be painted. Lewis explained that improvements to the building and the fencing were not part of the current construction project, but were improvements that were going to be made after the contractors had finished their project.

Commissioner Fronk raised concerns that had been presented to him concerning the public's use of beaches and docks in Terrapin Cove and large crowds over the weekend. Lewis stated that below mean high water was considered property of the State and available to the public, but that lands above mean high water and the private docks were not open to the public. The street ends had been open as one of the recreational reopening stages, but if the concerns were lack of public distancing, they may have been opened too soon. It was suggested we could try signage to let people know where the private property started after receiving further legal interpretation.

Commissioner Fronk stated that Holy Trinity was going to have their first outdoor meeting with appropriate social distancing, marked areas for participants, and ushers to assist those attending. In order to better protect those attending the service would be in the front of the church were more room is available.

Lewis stated she had been in communication with both the OCC and the TAYC regarding how best to approach reopening on a much smaller scale once the Governor gives the go ahead, and she was appreciative of the effort everyone was putting out to do the best thing for Oxford residents.

President Graves stated it had been a pleasure to preside over the Commission meetings. Commissioner Fronk thanked him for his service.

PUBLIC COMMENT

All participants were given the opportunity to speak. Sandi Pepe mentioned that she had not received the final word on the FY2021 Budget and that she was aware that the Fire Company had submitted for additional funds for their Boat replacement, but everything was currently in a holding pattern and she remains optimistic..

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 6:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer