

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners Meeting was held virtually in a Zoom Meeting Room on Tuesday, October 13, 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 town website. President Pepe called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President John Pepe, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Newly elected Commissioner James Jaramillo, Police Chief Pat Maxwell, Public Works Supervisor Scott Delude, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Citizens Skip Case, Julie Wells, Art Murr, Bonnie Richards, Carol Abruzzese, and Tom Bixler were in attendance by phone or video.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the September 22, 2020 meeting minutes, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

The Commissioners held a Closed Session on September 25th at 2 pm for personnel discussion, legal advice regarding a real estate matter, and for the purpose of discussing public security including implementation of an emergency plan.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Water/Wastewater Supervisor Delude gave a brief update for Public Works: The water valve in front of the fire department has been replaced and temporarily patched. There was a water leak on Stewart St. The Counting House has been set at the Causeway. The Morris Street Water Main project is moving forward, with cold weather coming there is a plan to utilize concrete warming blankets to cover the above ground water lines while the underground pipe is re-lined. PW will be doing sewer line smoke testing in the near future. Leaf pickup has started on Wednesdays through mid-December.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Patrick Maxwell gave a brief update for the Police Department: There was a hit and run with \$4000 worth of damage and an arrest. There was a search warrant requested by US Marshall for an individual, who was not located in Oxford. The recent regattas went off with no issues and only a few traffic violations. There where routine calls and patrol checks, and assistance to the Sheriff's department. Commissioner Pepe stated a letter had been received from a visitor thanking the town office and the Chief for assisting in the recovery of his wallet, which he had lost while in town.

FIRE COMPANY

Fire Report for the period Sept 23 thru Oct 13. Fire/Rescue: 9 calls : 2 in our first-due area, 7 mutual aid including 2 building fires in Easton and 5 cancelations en-route; 133 miles traveled; 53 member responses; 21.5 hours worked. Medical: 7 calls: 4 patients transported, 1 patient transferred to County EMS, 2 citizen assists; 123 miles traveled; 29 member responses; 26 hours worked.

Last year units from fire companies across Talbot County proved they could come together to draft and maintain a 1000+ gallons/min rural water supply during a 2-day training class run by GBW Associates. This year we are going to be working with the same group to hone our skills at moving high volumes of water long distances (thousands of feet) during a "relay pumping" drill. The fire company held a successful drive-thru Chicken BBQ last weekend. Our next planned fund-raising event will be a Seafood Dinner on November 13, details to be announced.

PRESENTATION

Warren Edwards from Talbot County Roads Department spoke with the Commissioners regarding the County's Repurposing Center located in the St Michaels area. He presented pictures of the current operation, which has been operating under a temporary permit issued by the County, and is currently seeking a permanent permit for the Roads Department to continue the operation. The center accepts products from construction and roadwork like asphalt, stone, and brick, along with wood and brush. The products are sorted, manipulated, and repurposed as compost, pine mulch, top soil, pressed concrete, and millings. They were successful with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the demolition material received from the recent school demolition, which they turned around and sold back to the contractor for paving. The site is an old spoils site of which they use a portion of the acreage. The town would be able to dispose of materials at the location and would be able to acquire recycle product at a discount. Currently a small annual participation fee is being considered which would provide stickers for the town vehicles, after which there would be a small tipping fee. Following discussion, the Commissioners looked favorably on the project and agreed to provide a letter of support for the permanent permit for the Center.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Attorney Ryan announced the Bids received in response to the MEWS RFP for Construction Drawings: Fisher Architecture LLC \$41,250, Voith & Mactavish Architecture LLP \$ 77,800, and Rauch Inc. \$199,560. Ryan stated with the large variation in bids and also the higher than anticipated bid amounts, she was recommending the Commissioners hold a joint meeting with the bidders to assure that all understood the project and town's anticipations, so all had the opportunity to bid on the exact work the town needs. After discussion it was determined that bidders would be invited to a zoom meeting as a group to hear from the Town and be given the opportunity to ask questions and following the meeting all would be given the opportunity to revise their bid should they choose to.

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Lewis updated the Commissioners on the Town's FEMA CRS status, stating the town entered the program effective October of 2019 and that it was in fact already time for the annual recertification, which she completed timely. She also noted that due to two different laws regulating the Federal Floodplain Insurance over the years and changing the system from a subsidized rate to a risk based rate, residents were now seeing additional increases in their current rates, including the preferred risk policies. The 15% discount the CRS program offers will help to offset some of these increases for those living within the Special Flood Hazard Area. She stated the recertification had two requirements, which included notification to those in the Floodplain and reporting to the Commission. The brochure from the prior year was updated with new information and active links for the web version, a paper copy of which was mailed at the beginning of the month. She also presented a progress report demonstrating the action items identified in the Talbot County Hazardous Mitigation Plan, explaining that as the Town addresses their action items it is updated on a report that is submitted annually to the CRS program. The report contained the historic response to each action and the updated 2020 response, thereby tracking progress for someone reading the report. The town has addressed many of the action items in the last two years and will continue to work on improvements.

Lewis stated that a proposed application to the DHCD Community Legacy Grant program for construction funds for the MEWS was due on October 15th and in working on this application she would like to include two items, a resolution of the Commissioners approving submittal of the application and also a vote of the Commissioners to identify the incorporation of construction funding into the upcoming General Budget revisions. She reminded the Commissioners, that due to COVID, they passed a skeleton budget in the spring with the intention of revising to incorporate anticipated incomes and expenses once things were more settled, and she will be presenting a revised FY 2021 Budget in November. She stated in developing the application she had settled on rough cost of \$530,000 and was requesting assistance of \$200,000 in grant funding, which was demonstrated on budget request notice

presented to the Commissioners. After discussion of the potential cost of refurbishing the interior and the potential cost of adding the two lower wings on the back side, and the potential loan needs, it was determined that the request to incorporate the conservative \$530,000 into the budget for the purpose of this application was acceptable, with the understanding, depending on construction cost, the town's loan commitment may be higher. Commissioner Fronk motioned to acknowledge the request of incorporating the line item expenses and offsetting revenues of \$530,000 on the notice dated October 13, 2020 into the Budget Amendment scheduled to be reviewed in November, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried. Resolution 2013 approving a MD DHCD State Revitalization Program Application requesting \$200,000 in grant funding for the purpose of final interior finishing/construction, rear addition, and landscape/parking site work for the historic mixed-use property located at 103-105 South Morris Street, known as the MEWS, for mixed-use redevelopment, was presented to the Commissioners for consideration. Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the resolution as presented, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was approved.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

A letter was received from the Oxford Community Center requesting additional financial assistance in the FY 2021 Budget in order to assist in offsetting their cost and lack of funding due to COVID. Lewis stated that no action was required at this time, she was providing the letter for review prior to the November Budget discussion.

ADMINISTRATOR

Lewis presented a prepared poster for Halloween with COVID safe recommendations for residents and trick or treaters, which after discussion, the Commissioners approved for publication online and for posting within town.

Lewis reminded the Commissioners it was time for Hanks Christmas Tree preparation and, with the health concerns this year, there may be a need for additional volunteers. The current committee will first look at their abilities and will be letting the town know if the town staff could be of assistance.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Ryan provided an update on the abandoned boats currently stored at the town's old ballfield and has been working with DNR to obtain titles to the property. Ryan and Lewis are still working on an application to USDA for funding for additional Water System infrastructure. Ryan requested a close session for legal advice prior to the to be scheduled meeting with the MEWS Bidders.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

New Commissioner Jaramillo stated he was happy to be onboard and that he appreciated the informative introduction provided by the Town Administrator.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bonnie Richards, speaking on behalf of the Oxford Community Center, applauded Liza Ledford's outreach to the Commissioners and appreciate their consideration of the OCC request in their budget review.

Being no further business, Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to close the meeting at 7:40 pm, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

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