

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2021

The Commissioners Meeting was held Virtually in a Zoom Meeting room on September 14, 2021. With recent increase in COVID cases locally, all town meetings switched to a virtual setting temporarily as a precautionary measure. The public was invited to participate in the virtual meeting. This information was posted on the town bulletin board and the town website. President Gordon Fronk called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting virtually were Commission President Gordon Fronk, Commissioner James Jaramillo, Commissioner Brian Wells, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, Public Works WW Superintendent Matt Ozman, Police Chief Patrick Maxwell, and Planning Officer Maria Brophy. Citizens Julie Wells and Phyllis Rambo were also in attendance.

President Fronk provided his reflections on the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and requested a moment of silence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the August 24, 2021 meeting minutes, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve and file the August disbursements for audit, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Matt Ozman provided the following report: Public Works repaired water service line on Tilghman Street. MDE, RK&K and GMB were in for final walk through on the Water Main Project on North and South Morris Street. Public Works has obtained parts and pipe and are preparing to install a new water service line and fire suppression line for the Mew's project. That work is to be scheduled around the contractors and will be done in stages over the next 2 weeks. The recent tropical storm left minimal damage to the town with mainly a small amount of flooding and many tree limbs down. Public Works spent several days picking up tree limbs around town and did several brush pickups for residents. Public Works had one after hour call in the past 2 weeks due to a fallen down branch in the roadway on the corner of West Division and West Street which was caused by wind from the tropical storm. A sink hole on West Division and South Morris has been investigated by the State Highway Administration; they have submitted the paperwork for a permit to replace the culvert pipe. SHA has temporarily installed a steel plate over the affected area. Public Works has removed a small dingy/vessel from Market Street dock, as it appears to have been abandoned. If anyone knows the owners of this vessel, please contact the Town Office. It is safe and sound at the Public Works building. Public Works has planted 4 donated trees around the dog park area. Commissioner Wells complimented Public Works on their efficient pick up of all the brush resulting from storm damage.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell reported that we did experience some minor tidal flooding during the remnants of the recent tropical storm. There was a hit and run causing damage to a residents fencing, but no available evidence on local cameras. He reminded citizens of the increase in phone and email scams and recommended caution, additionally reminded citizens if you see something suspicious, please call. The upcoming car rally was discussed.

FIRE COMPANY

Lewis presented the following Fire Company Report as provided by Graham Norbury for the period 8/25/21 – 9/14/21. Fire/Rescue: 5 calls (1 automatic alarm in first-due, 4 mutual-aid canceled during response), 38 miles

traveled, 4.5 hrs. worked, 21 member responses. Medical: 8 calls (4 patients transported, 1 citizen assist, 1 medical alarm, 2 stand-bys for Talbot DES), 85 miles traveled, 36.5 hrs. worked, 28 member responses.

Oxford call volumes have been fairly light which is not unexpected at this time of year. Local hospital resources including Easton, Dorchester, and Queen Anne continue to be stretched at or beyond capacity due to staffing challenges and volume of COVID patients. Medical patients may see extended wait-times upon arrival at these facilities.

The breakfast and rummage sale events originally planned for September have been postponed due to rising County and State COVID positivity rates. We are watching the situation and will make a decision regarding October events in the next couple of weeks.

Lewis also provided additional details on COVID, with this week's numbers being the highest we have seen in this new wave. The County has noted that breakthrough cases are running 25% to 35%. There has been increased use of masks in stores throughout the county. Both local hospitals remain on Red most of the time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Lewis presented Resolution 2117 Oxford 2022 Adverse Weather Emergency Operations Plan, updating the 2007 Plan. She stated drafts were distributed to the Commissioners at the prior meeting, along with being provided to our liaison at the Talbot County Emergency Services, the Oxford Fire Company Chief, Oxford Police Chief and Public Works Superintendents. She received positive comments from TCES and Oxford Fire. Commissioner Fronk motioned to introduce Resolution 2117, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, and the Resolution was introduced. The draft has also been placed on the website and final vote on the Resolution will be put off until the next Commissioner meeting.

As an update on the ARPA funds and projects, Lewis stated that she attended additional training on the use of the funds on this date. The Federal Government has not finalized their Final Rule, but it has been said entities should follow it as currently drafted. She is moving forward with processing of RFPs for the two previously identified projects, water meter replacement and stormwater engineering and construction, and will continue to follow provided information. Additionally, she did send a request to the State as to the suitability of the two proposed projects and will provide any responses.

The USDA grant request for funding for the Public Works vehicle and the Police vehicle was awarded and work has been on the acquisition process.

NEW BUSINESS

None presented.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

As a reminder the OCC will be holding their 5K/1 Mile Race Day on October 23 at 9 am.

ATTORNEY

Not in attendance.

TOWN MANAGER

Oxford Parks and Recreation has planned some COVID safe outdoor activities for Halloween, October 31st, which will include a Trunk or Treat at the Causeway Parking Lot at 5:30 pm for candy distribution, a costume contest, and then proceeding with Trick or Treating on Morris Street.

Recommendations for an Oxford Community Resilience Committee was provided to the Commissioners. Lewis stated that originally the discussions had centered around 'sea-level rise' impacts, but while gathering the information she became aware that the more appropriate approach may be Resilience and Sustainability of the

Community as a whole, including climate change, economic factors, and public infrastructure. The CRC would be provided all documents associated with the Town's efforts in these areas in an online library or drop-box, along with other State and Federal studies that are beneficial. Their responsibility would be the review of the existing documents, some knowledge of past, current and future projects, and who would basically act as keepers of the information, so that the work transfers from administration to administration, and the work continues to build on prior accomplishments. At this time, she is asking for a review of the approach and will follow up with recommendations for the committee structure.

Lewis provided the Commissioners with a list of board members whose terms were due for reappointment. Board of Zoning Appeals: Susan Delean-Botkin, Sarah Ramsey. Port Wardens: Tom Campbell, Bob Hyberg. Historic District Commission: Jennifer Stanley, Tom Costigan, Julie Wells. Planning Commission: Stephen Mroczek. Parks n Rec: Connie Greenhawk, Karen Livingston, Mike Young. Commissioner Wells motioned to approve the recommended reappointments, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Lewis stated the office was currently going through the annual FEMA CRS compliance review.

Following a very busy summer for construction permits, staff is going to modify the submittal schedule for building permits in order to allow for appropriate internal review, reasonable scheduling, and volunteer member review. Lewis noted that the current seven days before a meeting deadline was just not functional, referencing the 14 applications that were reviewed by the HDC the evening before. The new schedule will require submittal two weeks in advance of each of these meetings. She noted that the Zoning Ordinance is silent on submittal times for the Planning Commission, but does have some language suggesting 7 days in advance of scheduling for the HDC, for which she will be recommending a text amendment in the future.

Lewis requested a closed session for consideration of acquisition of property and to discuss a matter of public safety.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Wells and his wife attended the Naval Academy Sailing Squadron NASS Party, and found the ceremony to be very moving and appreciated the ability to attend. Fronk noted there were 95 boats in attendance and it was an amazing view. Commissioner Jaramillo attended the unveiling of the Frederick Douglas Mural in Easton on September 5th, which was funded by a Rochester, NY couple, and found the ceremony to be very rewarding.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nothing presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Along with the previously mentioned events, the Oxford Library will hold their outdoor book sale on Market Street on September 25th. President Fronk noted that the Holy Trinity Christmas sale would also be held outside this year.

With no further business, Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to adjourn the meeting into closed session for consideration of acquisition of property and to discuss a matter of public safety, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned in to closed session at 7:15 pm. Following the closed session, Commissioner Wells motioned to close the regular meeting, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting closed at 7:35 pm.

Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager