

**COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**January 10, 2023**

The Commissioners Meeting was held in person at 101 Market Street on January 10, 2023. Virtual viewing was also available. This information was posted on the town bulletin board and the town website. Commissioner Brian Wells called the meeting to order at 6 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PRESENT**

Attending the meeting were Commissioner Brian Wells and Commissioner Tom Costigan, along with Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, Police Chief Pat Maxwell, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. There were a few members of the public present. Commission President James Jaramillo attended virtually, as did Public Works Super Matt Ozman, Town Planner Maria Brophy, and a member of the public.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND DISBURSEMENTS**

Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the December 13, 2022 meeting minutes, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Matt Ozman's report was submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting and will be attached here. It was noted leaf pickup was over and any remaining leaves can be put out with regular brush pickup. There is also some emergency work being done on a collapsed culvert on Banks Street.

**POLICE REPORT**

Chief Maxwell's report was submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting and will be attached here. The report identified 5 parking tickets issued during the prior period, which included the holidays. It was noted that, as part of the Talbot County Sheriff's Toy Drive, the Chief provided the previously mentioned toys to Rev Garcia Prada for distribution to 64 of their young members.

**FIRE COMPANY**

Lewis read the Fire Company report submitted by Chief Norbury. Easton VFD will be holding a post-incident review of the Thanksgiving residential structure fire on Peach Orchard Rd tonight, on which Oxford was the second engine to arrive on scene. For the period Oct 26 thru Dec 12: Fire/Rescue: 15 calls : 3 first-due and 12 mutual-aid including responses to 4 working fires, 314 miles traveled, 103 member responses, and 130 hours worked. Medical: 10 calls : 9 patients transported, 1 patient refusal, 201 miles traveled, 37 member responses, and 44 hours worked. Area hospitals presently have busy emergency rooms, but in talking with an ER doctor it seems most of their patients are coming in with non-covid respiratory issues such as RSV and Influenza. Don't take this to mean that COVID is no longer a concern; there is plenty out there, but symptoms have mostly been less severe and not required hospitalization. Thank you to all who attended our recent Breakfast with Santa. Next breakfast will be held on February 12, 2023. Oxford Fire Company recently re-elected Graham Norbury to serve as Chief for 2023. Elections for Line Officers and Administrative positions will be held on January 12.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

The Public Hearing for ORDINANCE 2216 – Amending the Process for Appealing a Decision or Determination made by the Planning Commission or Historic District Commission was opened. It was noted to the Commissioners that they had been provided comments from David Poe of the Appeals Board and Dick Deerin of the Historic District Commission prior to the meeting. Both Poe and Deerin noted they were attending this evening to speak on behalf of themselves as individuals. Poe offered commentary regarding his research on appeals processes per Maryland law and the desire to reduce opportunities for appeal, stating that he felt an administrated procedure for the Appeals Board would be helpful for this reason. Ryan stated following her previous exchange with Poe, she felt that the Appeals Board could create an administrative procedure going forward. Deerin stated he was concerned following the most recent appeal of an HDC decision and felt that an appeals process which reviewed the record as created at the HDC to determine if the process was properly followed was appropriate, not a de novo process as was required at this past appeal due to the lack of clarification in the code. He also requested a more expedited process to reduce the timeline residents must wait for appeals to be received and processed. Following discussion, Lyndsey agreed that the timeline for the appeals process could be clarified within this ordinance. Additional conversation regarding the ability for the applicant to act on their permit and the rights of the aggrieved to appeal a decision took place, following which Ryan recommended that a 60-day requirement for the individual Boards to respond and transmit their record after notice of appeal be incorporated into the draft ordinance. Additionally, she felt that the Board of Appeals could establish their own process following the already identified standards found in the Oxford Zoning Code. The public hearing was closed.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

President Jaramillo noted that as he was attending virtually, although he would be participating in conversations, he would not be voting on decisions.

With regards to ORDINANCE 2216 – Amending the Process for Appealing a Decision or Determination made by the Planning Commission or Historic District Commission, Ryan recommended that a 60-day requirement for the individual Boards to respond after notice of appeal be incorporated into the draft ordinance. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve Ordinance 2216 with the inclusion of additional 60 day provision as discussed, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, both were in favor and the motion carried. Ryan will revise the document to include the edit.

Lewis provided final results from the Shoreline Improvement Bid reviews and the recommendation from those reviewing the two bids submitted, which included consulting staff from National Wildlife Federation and DNR staff. Lewis explained the results as provided, noting that the lower bidder provided a quote inclusive of all phases of the project as advertised and the higher bidder did not bid on the non-coastal phases, noting that when looking at the total price this should be one of the elements taken into consideration. Additionally, both bidders submitted credentials and past experience. Lewis noted the package submitted by Underwood & Associates was the most inclusive of the work to be done, had more depth of personnel, extensive environmental experience, especially with shoreline work within the water, not just along the shoreline, and as noted the lower bid. It was also noted that Underwood & Associates had previously won the award for the design phase following an extensive review of their abilities and

multiple meetings. Based on this discovery, Lewis requested approval to move forward with negotiation of an agreeable contract with Underwood and Associates that will allow for the completion of the desired projects utilizing the combination of funding commitments, including contracted support from NWF for assistance with project management and project monitoring within the available funding. Lewis noted that there were multiple pots of grant money being utilized to achieve this project, including federal funding which requires a match. She currently felt that with the combination of the funding received to date, including matching funds from the State, the Town's obligation would be around \$300,000, reminding the Commissioners one of the purposes of starting the Stormwater Management Shoreline Protection Utility was to be able to provide seed money to be utilized to support grant funds. Lewis noted that the Pier Street-Riverview stormwater project is a similar effort, with the design to be funded with the received ARPA funds. Jaramillo expressed his support for this project and the Underwood bid, as supported by their experience, but noted that he would not be voting. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the request to allow staff to move forward with negotiation of an agreeable contract with Underwood and Associates that will allow for the completion of the desired projects utilizing the combination of funding commitments, including contracted support from NWF for assistance with project management and project monitoring within the available funding, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, both were in favor and the motion carried. Lewis additionally requested approval for the President to sign the resulting contract and for Lewis to be able to sign all proceeding documents. A motion to authorized the President to sign all necessary contracting documents and for Lewis to sign additional project documents was presented by Commissioner Costigan, seconded by Commissioner Wells, with both in favor, and the motion carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

President Jaramillo noted that Maryland's new Governor, Wes Moore, would be sworn into office on January 11, 2023, along with the new legislators, wishing them the best of luck, as much of their work can affect the town, including the consideration of the Speed Camera Legislation the town will be resubmitting to Senator Mautz.

Lewis stated she had met with representatives from Talbot County Emergency Services to discuss locations of two new standalone AED units to be placed outside and accessible to the public. The first would be on the backside of the town building near the restrooms and the second, in coordination with Capt. Bixler, will be placed at the Ferry Dock. These two units will provide availability of the units in two areas of town where we currently do not have units. There is potential for funding to offset some of the cost of the units, which Talbot County Emergency Services is looking into.

#### **LETTERS AND REQUESTS**

Lewis noted the Oxford Day committee had reached out, Oxford Day would officially be on April 22, 2023, and they were requesting the Commissioners acknowledge and approve the event. Jaramillo supported the request, but would refrain from voting approval due to his virtual attendance. Wells motioned to approve the use of the roads and parks for this purpose, Costigan seconded the motion, both were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **ATTORNEY**

No additional comment.

## **TOWN MANAGER**

No additional comments

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The office will be closed January 16, 2023 for Martin Luther King Day. The next Commissioners Meeting will be on January 24, 2023.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Costigan acknowledged the recent loss of two beloved town residents, Ellen Anderson and Berry Passano, and wished to thank them for their contributions to the town. Commissioners Wells and Jaramillo echoed the sentiment.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None presented.

With no further business, Commission President Jaramillo requested to close the meeting and go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion to close the regular meeting and go into closed session at 6:55 pm. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned into closed session.

Following the close session, Commissioner Costigan motioned to close the regular meeting, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, and the meeting was closed at 6:58 pm.

Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager

*"In accordance with Section 10-508(d) of the State Government Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, a written statement of the closed session is attached to the official minutes of the Commissioners of Oxford and maintained in the minute book in the Town Office."*