

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2023

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the Oxford Commissioners meeting room on Tuesday, June 27, 2023. Commission President Jimmy Jaramillo called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President James Jaramillo, Commissioner Brian Wells, Commissioner Tom Costigan, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Other department heads were attending MML training. Approximately 50 people were in attendance and another 10 virtually.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wells motioned to approve the minutes of June 13, 2023 as distributed, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the May Disbursements and file them for audit, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Manager Lewis provide Supervisor Matt Ozman's report. Public works investigated one report of water leak that turned out to be ground water. Soccer goals have been delivered, but they are awaiting anchors. The posts for Kids Camp archery have been set. Public Works responded to another sewer line issue and where able to jet out the line. They assisted the Firehouse with Rummage Sale pickup. The Oxford Water Quality Report for the calendar year 2022 will be mailed this week and is currently available online, and Public Works is pleased to report that the town's drinking water meets current enforceable Federal and State requirements.

POLICE REPORT

Attorney Ryan provided an update on the hiring process stating the two certified officers have been hired pending Md Police Training and Correctional Commission Re-certification, with anticipation that both will be available to be sworn in at the end of July. Ryan read the call report for the prior two weeks which are attached to these minutes.

FIRE COMPANY

Tim Kearns gave an update from the Fire Company, noting they just had a vehicle extrication drill and have an air-pac service drill coming up. The Rummage sale went well. Breakfast will be on the second Sunday. A special thanks was given to Blue Point Hospitality for the gift cards that were provided to emergency service responders throughout the county, noting the participation of Oxford Business Members, Doc's Sunset Grill and the Treasure Chest. Auxiliary Carnival will be held on June 15th at Dugout Park with plenty of kid's events from 11 2. Fireworks will be Monday July 3rd, please be careful.

OATH OF OFFICE

President Jaramillo stated that at the end of the prior week, Commissioner Wells notified the town that he would be resigning from his position as Commissioner effective June 27, 2023. Jaramillo thanked Wells for his service to the town and for his leadership and gave him the floor. Commissioner Wells stated that, as many already knew, his house was for sale for personal reasons and was now under contract, and as they were unable to find a smaller home available in Oxford, they had placed a contract on a house in Easton which would be closing soon. Wells thanked everyone he had worked with at the town, Commissioners and staff, adding that it had been a great

learning experience. He also thanked those who had put him in office. He wished everyone the best of luck, including the newly elected Commissioner and whomever would end up taking his place, after which he stepped down from his seat.

President Jaramillo stated that Oxford Charter Section C5-15 instructs the remaining Commissioners, in the case of a vacancy, to appoint someone to fill that vacancy until the next regular scheduled election. Jaramillo stated that in the recent election there were two candidates with over 400 votes cast, there was a winner, and also a second place with 42% of the vote. Jaramillo felt that it was only appropriate to nominate the runner up representing 42% of the vote, Susan Delean-Botkin. Commissioner Costigan seconded the nomination, both voted in favor, and the motion carried. President Jaramillo requested Ms. Botkin come forward if she was willing to accept the nomination, after which he issued the Oath of Office to the newly appointed Commissioner. There were several members of the audience who expressed disappointment and left the meeting.

President Jaramillo issued the Oath of Office to previously appointed Parks and Rec Board member Cecelia Coder. It was noted other recently appointed members would remain on the Oath list until they are available.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion regarding the previously introduced proposition to install an audio/video streaming equipment in the meeting room. Lewis stated that there was a desire to have live meetings and the ability to view them at a later date, and that she had provided information at the last meeting about Town Hall Streams, which is a live stream platform that also provides equipment for the service and will work with the town's local IT provider to set up the system. At the prior meeting Lewis was instructed to do further research. Lewis provided the Commissioners a brief listing of what other local governments were utilizing to stream meetings and included estimated cost for those services, and also noted that the products mentioned at the prior town meeting were online software platforms, but did not provide equipment or services for streaming. She noted that these full-service platforms provide other municipal service modules, and although there may be some consideration in the future, it would be best to await the completion of the current Water Improvement Project, which will require such software before looking at these products. With regards to equipment, larger local governments are utilizing expensive equipment and IT staff to operate the equipment during the meetings. She stated the product the town was looking at would be a single camera, with microphones at the front table, and a stand-alone microphone for public comment, and a simple on and off switch at a cost of \$2000, which includes maintenance of the products, a monthly streaming fee of \$150, and the cost to wire the building for the equipment, bringing the estimated total cost to between \$5000 and \$6000, which would come from the Townhall Building Capital Improvement line item in the FY 2024 Budget. She added that following public questions, she had confirmed that the town could download the videos and would retain the rights to said videos, and noted Town Hall Streams was currently the states designated contractor for streaming services. Commissioner Costigan felt the of the products available the THS product represented the best quality at the most reasonable pricing, and motioned to move forward. Commissioner Delean-Botkin seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis requested the Commissioners follow up on the naming of the old ballfield following the prior meeting discussion, stating the after the request for public input, the name Dugout Park was the winning name, with the second suggestion of Volunteer Memorial Park, Commission Wells had suggested at the end of the last meeting that Dugout Memorial Park might be appropriate. Commissioner Costigan motioned to name the park "Dugout Memorial Park", Commissioner Delean-Botkin seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis stated that she had been requested to research options to handle increasing safety concerns with all the activity in the Historic Commercial/Town Park area. She reminded the Commissioners that the town had been requesting assistance from State Highway for multiple improvements over the last several years, including the implementation of crosswalks, but there appears to be a long waiting period for the crosswalks. She approached a local contractor the town had utilized in the past for waterline/street paving work with questions regarding the

installation of ADA landings and expanding the shoulder on the Town Park side of the street, and they had provided a suggested plan for improving the area. Their suggestion was to move the existing curb, which is in bad shape now, in as far as the existing sidewalk thereby widening the shoulder, re-lay the existing brick sidewalk incorporating an ADA landing directly across from the clock, place an ADA landing in front of the clock, and add a faux brick crosswalk between the two. The quotes provided were \$ 28,997 for the expansion of the shoulder and new curbing, \$15,528 to relay the brick sidewalk, and \$7600 for a thermal overlay crosswalk (as found in front of the OCC). The total cost for the project would be \$52,445. She also asked them to look at the cement sidewalk further north of the park, which is a tripping hazard and for which a good solution to level the thick cement sections has not been found. They suggested that with the mobilization for the initial work, it would make sense to remove the cement sidewalk completely and extend the brick sidewalk at the 4' width across this area while they were here, with a cost of \$ 13,600. She was submitting the recommendation for consideration as an emergency request, as it is not envisioned in the current operational budget and would be considered a capital improvement from prior year funding. She considers the need to be an emergency and waiting to have designs done in order to put out an RFP for competitive bids would likely place the project into fall. As an emergency expense, the contract could start the work immediately, as they were in between jobs for the next two weeks. It would expand the shoulder sufficiently park a pickup truck. She stated that she had worked with the state when the initial striping was even closer to the curb and was able to get it further away, but still not enough to park larger vehicles. She noted that with installation of a crosswalk, the town could install signage on either side of the road identifying a pedestrian crossing, directing people to an area that is fairly open and presents the best visibility. Attorney Ryan added that as the Charter has a procurement policy of competitive bidding for expenses over \$20,000, it would be necessary to create findings to determine it as an emergency need, an immediate and serious need that can't be met through normal procurement and is required to mitigate serious damage to public safety, health and/or welfare. President Jaramillo stated there has been numerous concerns with speeding and also children darting out into the street in this area. Commissioner Costigan agreed, stating that we only have to have one accident to realize that what is to be spent here would be money well spent. With a request for clarification, Ryan stated that normal procurement for over \$20,000 would require a competitive bid process, and in a situation with the finding of an emergency need this threshold could be exceeded, and there would be no cap on this threshold. Commissioner Costigan asked for clarification on the sidewalk funding. Lewis stated that there is \$10,000 in the operational budget for sidewalk repairs, which is spent annually to improve the sidewalks along Historic Morris Street as the area with the most pedestrian traffic, with the plan of improving a section each year. This money could be used towards the \$13,600 repair in front of the church as a normal operational expenditure, thereby only requiring approval for the \$3600 overage, which again would be beneficial to do at the same time as the larger project because of equipment mobilization for removal of the cement, and that was the reason she was including the additional work in front of the church. The Town Park is an emergency need, but it also presents the ability to continue with the needed improvement in front of the church at a reasonable rate with the bulk of the funding coming from already budgeted funds making the most sense financially and for safety's sake. With \$10,000 coming from operational budget the cost, the total emergency funding needed would be \$ 55,735. The effort would likely take several days. Commissioner Costigan motion to proceed on an emergency basis, Commissioner Delean-Botkin found that there was an immediate and serious need that cannot be met through normal procurement, which is required to avoid or mitigate serious damage to public health, safety and welfare, and lastly that it could be detrimental to the town to wait 60 to 90 days to go through the procurement process, and seconded the motion to proceed, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Manager Lewis stated that **Resolution 2303 - Updating the Town of Oxford Employee Manual** was a minor text amendment recommended by the town's accounting firm to clarify that at retirement 'age' for certain retirement benefits, the employee must in fact be retiring from the Town of Oxford. This was of course the assumption, and their recommendation was to make it clear. The new language would read *in red*: Enrollment in the plan will be

available to employees who have 30 years of employment with the Town of Oxford *at the time of retirement from the Town of Oxford*, or who have 10 years of employment with the Town of Oxford and have reached the age of 62 *at the time of retirement from the Town of Oxford*. Commissioner Delean-Botkin motioned to approve Resolution 2303 amending Section 3.17 Employee Retirement Plan with the text as shown in red, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Regarding **Resolution 2306 - Authorizing Participation in the Local Government Investment Pool**, Lewis stated that in prior meetings during discussions regarding financial investment she had mentioned the accountants had recommended Maryland Local Government Investment Pool as an option for future investments and that the first step would be an authorization and application to participate. This would not require an investment at this time and would just be a first step in setting the town up as a member of this pool. Lewis reiterated that with 8 million dollars of construction projects over the next 12 months, having liquid funds was necessary to avoid costly borrowing at this time, but as the projects are completed the town would have the opportunity to invest funds. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve Resolution 2306 Authorizing Participation in the Local Government Investment Pool, Commissioner Delean-Botkin seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

Commissioner Costigan read an email to the Commissioners of Oxford from Rich Leggett, owner of the Scottish Creamery and the Social, who wished to share some feedback with them. "The power outage last night was quite a stressful event for The Scottish Highland Creamery -- especially since I am out of town. Cheryl and Matt (from Public Works) were incredible partners to my team and were generous in offering to let us plug in our freezers at Public Works. Their efforts saved us from losing our most vulnerable inventory. I am not an expert in local government matters but I am an expert in accountability and customer service. Cheryl and Matt should be recognized for going above and beyond on both counts. We are fortunate to have them. These are the little things that the average resident may not be aware of but should be.

ATTORNEY

Ryan provided an update on the Water Improvement Project stating that the engineer agreement has been executed and submitted to USDA for their approval and we are working some of the other requirements of USDA. An engineering kickoff with USDA and the town's engineering firm GMB will be scheduled in the near future.

TOWN MANAGER

Lewis stated that the Historic District Commission was down two members and at this time she was requesting that Terry Sullivan be moved from the alternate position to a commissioner. Additionally, she stated that she would be placing a notice that there were openings on the Historic District Commission in the newsletter. Anyone that had submitted their name previously would remain on the list of interested residents. Commissioner Delean-Botkin motioned to move Terry Sullivan from alternate to commissioner on the HDC, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis explained that all town employees currently participate in the State of Maryland "Employee Retirement Program" but that the Maryland State Retirement Agency also offers a "Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System" which is a desired program for recruitment and retention of Police Officers. The first step in consideration of switching the town's police officers into this program would be a request for an actuary to be done. At this time, she was requesting to send a letter to MSRA asking for the actuary to be performed, noting that it is a long process and would not anticipate actually being able to move the officer to LEOPS before FY 2025. The cost of an actuary study was in this year's budget. The cost can range from \$3000 to \$8000, but with the size of our department the assumption is that it will be on the low end. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve a letter to MSRA to request an actuary to participate in LEOPS, Commissioner Delean-Botkin seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kids Camp June 26 – 7/28 - watch for children on bikes; July 3rd – Tred Avon Yacht Club Fireworks; July 4th – Parks n Rec Kids Parade; Office will be closed July 3rd and 4th; Informational Meeting to Discuss the Charter Amendment – July 14, 2023 at 6 pm at the OCC; Charter Amendment Referendum Election – July 18, 2023 from 8 am to 8 pm.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Delean-Botkin stated she was very happy to be here and will work with the Commissioners and the people of the town to make sure Oxford is as wonderful a town as Oxford should be, and she certainly hopes that when people have new ideas that everyone can sit down and talk about them.

Commissioner Costigan wished to thank the members of the Election Board for their work on the town's first 8 am to 8 pm election, which they members handled efficiently and effectively with a job well done.

President Jaramillo gave parting words as this will be his last town meeting having reached the end of his term. He stated that his service has been an honor of a lifetime, reminiscing of his childhood in Oxford. He said that he was disappointed in the current division in town and some of the behavior tonight, he did not want to remember Oxford this way, and that he appreciated those that did stay tonight even if they did not agree with the decisions of the Commissioners, but it showed that they do really care about the town. He made a personal plea to the Commissioner Elect that she assists in healing the town when she takes office on July 11th, because he was struggling to recognize the town he had moved to in 1996. He extended his final thank you to all.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Jaramillo stated that he was very proud of his son. Philip Dietz suggest the Commissioners consider having the meeting minutes out in a draft form prior to approval and that he feels the agenda needs to have further clarity on topics. Others thank both Brian Wells and Jimmy Jaramillo for their service. Warren Davis stated he had heard rumors of a resignation to happen at this meeting and he was surprised that it did happen considering the pending Charter Amendment petition and provide options that could have been taken instead and found the procedure that took place to be unfortunate.

With no further business, Commissioner Costigan motion to adjourn the regular meeting, Commissioner Delean-Botkin seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager



*Oxford Police Department
 101 Market Street
 P.O. Box 339
 Oxford, Maryland 21654
 “Maryland’s First Port”*

Eric M. Kellner, Chief of Police

Reporting Period: 6/26/23 – 7/9/23

| REPORTS | RP | YTD | ARRESTS | RP | YTD |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Theft | 0 | 5 | Drug Arrests | 0 | 0 |
| Animal Complaint | 0 | 2 | DUI Arrests | 0 | 0 |
| Harassment | 1 | 3 | On-View Arrests | 0 | 0 |
| Fraud / ID Theft | 0 | 1 | Warrant Arrests | 1 | 1 |
| Assault | 0 | 1 | Criminal Summons | 0 | 1 |
| Domestic | 0 | 1 | Juvenile Referrals | 0 | 1 |
| Accident Report | 0 | 2 | Other Arrests | 0 | 0 |
| Suspicious Conditions | 1 | 4 | Total Arrests | 1 | 3 |
| Found/Lost Property | 2 | 13 | | | |
| Other | 1 | 4 | | | |
| Total Reports | 4 | 35 | | | |
| CALLS FOR SERVICE | RP | YTD | COMMUNITY POLICING | RP | YTD |
| Alarm | 1 | 13 | Property Checks | 46 | 595 |
| Animal Complaints | 3 | 18 | Special Events | 1 | 13 |
| Check Welfare | 0 | 2 | Foot Patrol | 2 | 48 |
| Suspicious Condition | 2 | 7 | Bike Patrol | 1 | 17 |
| 911 – Hang-up | 0 | 1 | | | |
| Trespassing | 1 | 3 | ASSISTS | RP | YTD |
| Liquor Law Violation | 0 | 1 | Other PD | 0 | 5 |
| Noise Complaint | 0 | 1 | Fire/EMS | 1 | 16 |
| Parking Violation | 4 | 17 | Other Agency | 0 | 0 |
| Suspicious Person | 2 | 5 | | | |
| Suspicious Vehicle | 0 | 5 | ENFORCEMENT | RP | YTD |
| Verbal Dispute | 0 | 2 | Parking Citations | 6 | 12 |
| Found Property | 2 | 12 | Traffic Stops | 12 | 86 |
| Motor Vehicle Collision | 0 | 5 | Traffic Citations | 0 | 1 |
| Traffic Complaint | 2 | 8 | Traffic Warnings | 13 | 87 |
| Harassment | 1 | 3 | PC Searches | 0 | 0 |
| Rogue and Vagabond | 0 | 4 | Criminal Citations | 0 | 0 |
| Misc. Calls | 9 | 26 | Civil Citations | 0 | 0 |
| Total Calls | 26 | 134 | | | |
| TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS | RP | YTD | TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS | RP | YTD |
| Speeding | 6 | 65 | Cell Phone Violation | 0 | 2 |
| Stop Sign | 5 | 9 | Other Violation | 2 | 7 |
| Driving w/o License | 0 | 2 | Equipment Violation | 0 | 4 |