

ONANCOCK TOWN COUNCIL WORK
SESSION AND MEETING
DECEMBER 15, 2008
6:30 P.M.

TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Fletcher Fosque
Travis Bradley
Kris LaMontagne

George Miles
Kathyanne Runninger
Maphis Oswald

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bruce Paone, Mayor
Sandy Manter, Interim Town Mgr.
David Allen, OVFD Bd. Trustee

Karen Simpson, Admin. Asst.
Davis Mason, OVFD Treas.
Terry Payne, OVFD

Pres.

Vera Bruton
Helen Bunch
Bill & Mary Burnham
Richard Cole
Valena Gibb
Dave Krause
Charles Landis

Dean & Jani Savannah
Alan Silverman
Mike Truitt, OVFD Chief
Bill Tweedie
William Wood
Shirley Zamora

- I. Work Session – Onancock Volunteer Fire Department (hereinafter OVFD). Mike Truitt, Fire Chief (hereinafter “Chief”), referred to the letter given to Council regarding the items the Fire Department requested be discussed: 1) The future of the Fire Dept. within the limits of the Town; 2) The Town deeding the firehouse and property back to OVFD; 3) The Town developing a budget line item for the OVFD; and 4) Funding for OVFD, i.e., donations, fire tax, etc. The members of OVFD that are in attendance would like to discuss any issues Town Council may have and to educate Council on how the OVFD is run and how they do business. Chief offered a brief history of the OVFD from the late 70’s when they applied for a HUD grant through the Town for a new building on Pine Street, which is now owned by the Town. The OVFD bought the land - the Town did not put any money toward the purchase or building. The advantage to OVFD

ownership would be having capital for long-term planning and an asset for capital improvements. Maintenance would be

easier, rather than having to ask for money each time something needs to be repaired. In the OVFD charter, if it dissolves, the assets revert to the Town. It is unsettling that the Town can sell off any part of the property used by OVFD as they see fit. Chief assured Council that they were not interested in leaving Onancock, nor selling the property. Councilman LaMontagne mentioned that HUD would have to release the Town in order to deed the property to OVFD. Chief reiterated that OVFD would need a line item in the Town's annual budget for maintenance of the building and the functioning of the fire department (capital expenditures, equipment and building upkeep). Chief explained that if the proper number of people manned the station, it would cost \$840,000 a year for personnel and expenses of a paid fire department. Councilwoman Oswald brought up the idea of outsourcing OVFD to Onley (if the departments combined) as a means of income. The same regarding Tasley. OVFD bills for services, but only have a 50% collection rate. Chief thought Accomack County might agree to consolidation of administrative forces at some time. He apprised Council that the Town had said its contribution would be \$15,000 a year, including the electric bill. Only \$6,000 has been sent this year. OVFD asked for the dollar amount of insurance carried on the property. Councilwoman Oswald asked exactly what the annual figure is that the Town has given OVFD, is there a line item in the budget for them, and what HUD's agreement is regarding a transfer of the property and the original grant close out date. OVFD needs to work up a budget on what they need to present to Council. Councilwoman Oswald volunteered to be on a committee to work with a couple of members of OVFD, the Town Manager and another councilperson.

Councilman Fosque made the motion to close the work session at 7:14 p.m., Councilman Miles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously

- II. Mayor Paone called the regular Town Council Meeting to order at 7:20 p.m., after which the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation were recited.
- III. Consideration of Minutes from November 24, 2008 Council Meeting. Councilman Miles made the motion to waive the reading of the minutes, Councilman Fosque seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Councilman Miles made the motion to accept and approve the November 24, 2008 Council minutes, Councilwoman Runniger seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- IV. Public Comment. Helen Bunch wondered how the public was notified of the change in date of December's Town Council meeting. She was informed that the required notices were done.

Alan Silverman suggested that the Town website be updated.

- V. Legal Counsel. A&N Electric requested a right-of-way down Hartman Avenue from the Town in order to run power lines to the water tower for AT&T's antenna. Councilman Miles made a motion to authorize the Interim Town Manager to sign the A&N Electric Cooperative electric line easement to the water tower, Councilman Bradley seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- VI. Onancock Business and Civic Association. Bill Burnham announced the opening of a Welcome Center in the front room of 38 Market Street next to Corner Bakery. The OBCA would like to draw more attention to it by hanging a banner from the adjacent power pole replacing the Town's seasonal banner. The design will have a skipjack in the background with "Welcome" in the foreground to be done by Onancock Canvas, which is donating the material. OBCA will pay the balance of the cost. Councilman Miles made a motion to grant OBCA the authority to hang a "Welcome" banner in place of the Town's seasonal banner adjacent to 38 Market Street, Councilman LaMontagne seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mary Burnham reported on the OBCA's pet-friendly efforts, which is promoting Onancock as a pet-friendly destination. Pet waste bag dispensers are stationed around Town, rack cards have been printed, press releases accomplished, a page on Virginia.gov.org, and \$850d have been expended to date for a pet/flower catalog on sale for \$15. Welcome packets will be available at the Harbormaster's office for boaters.

- VII. Citizens Advisory Group on Onancock Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Interim Town Manager (hereafter Manter) had submitted to Council a memorandum introducing an upgrade analysis and report on the wastewater treatment plant from the Task Force, a letter from Galway Bay Corporation delineating executed purchase orders regarding the plant, a sheet from the contract showing terms under which the Town may terminate the contract, an e-mail from Douglas Fredericks of CDM re costs and risks associated with canceling the project, and an update of operations and maintenance costs from Kraig Schenkelberg of CDM. The Task Force would like to schedule a work session with the Council. Council needs to take the time to find the problem and exactly what the projected deficit is, then to see what options are

available to close the gap. Manter has a meeting with two members of the Utility Cost Committee on Wednesday to discuss the issues and try and find the problem. Manter needs to identify and look at options to the solution. Councilwoman Oswald asked how much it will cost to put on the brakes. All the answers need to be put on the table from an assessment that everyone understands. Manter suggested the following process to address the problem:

1. Find the problem and understand fully (need to know the projected deficit).
2. Alternatives to closing the gap - the least risky solutions by:
 - a. reduce operating costs, b. reduce debt service by either rescaling the plant or any costs that can be scaled back without reducing the plant.

3. Searching for additional revenues, such as STAG grant or nutrient exchange program for 2011.
4. Use of cash reserves as an option to reduce deficit.

No one can tell Manter what it will cost to reengineer this project and build something different; therefore she is looking for less expensive and less risky solutions. Pinning down the potential deficit has so far been a difficult thing to do. A lengthy discussion followed. A suggestion was made to meet with the Board of Supervisors to remind them the Town is interested in a mutual cooperation. Councilman LaMontagne made a motion to schedule a Council work session for January 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m., Councilman Miles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

VIII. Personnel Committee Report. Councilman LaMontagne made a motion to protect and control the access to the Town employees' personnel records until such time as a comprehensive custodial plan for the records can be developed and adopted by the Town Council in the form of a revised Personnel Manual, or in a separate document, and that access to Town employees' personnel records be restricted to the employees' supervisor, the Town Manager and the Personnel Committee as a group, but not to the committee members individually. Councilwoman Runniger seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. As background, Councilman LaMontagne explained that Christmas paid Holidays are usually given on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This year the day after Christmas falls on a Friday, therefore, Councilman LaMontagne made a motion to make an exception this year to the Personnel Manual and make the Christmas paid holidays start at 12:00 p.m. Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and December 26th, Councilman Miles seconded the motion, and it passed by a majority of the vote. The vote was 5-1.

AYES: Councilmen Miles, Bradley, LaMontagne and Fosque and Councilwoman Runniger

NAY: Councilwoman Oswald

IX. Mayor's Report. NONE

X. Town Manager's Report. i. Optional coverage to COBRA: Anthem offers a "90-Day Continuation" option to employees of insured groups with Anthem KeyCare. More information will be delivered to Town employees. ii. Parade update. There are 41 applications at this point. Hard time finding convertibles for Council members to ride in. Councilman Fosque offered his Town Car to be used. Councilwoman Runniger and Councilmen Fosque, Miles and Bradley will be in the parade. iii. Correspondence: a) letter from William Schab requesting written assurance regarding sewer availability for his property containing 10 commercial acres and 45 residential acres with multi-family housing being the best use of the property; b) letter from Student David Henderson requesting a \$50 donation for his trip as a student ambassador to Australia; c) Flyer re Harvest Festival on October 7, 2009; d) copy of letter from David Rowan to Dr. Wm. H.

Town Council Minutes

- 5 -

December 15, 2008

Turner re request for copy of Town's liability insurance policy; e) Hampton Roads article re fiber-optic project bringing fast Internet to the Eastern Shore and f) letter from A.T. Nielsen re his support of expansion of the sewage treatment plant.

XI. Mayor and Town Council Comments. Councilman Miles reminded Counsel not to forget construction of the eastern Kerr Street sidewalk. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, as did Councilwoman Runniger and Councilman Bradley.

Councilman LaMontagne commended OBCA for spending a lot of money in Town. The OBCA Board of Directors is putting together a budget and wishes to discuss with Council what projects OBCA can partner with the Town on. He wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

Councilwoman Oswald thanked the Task Force for their efforts regarding the sewer treatment plant. She doesn't want to bite the bullet until all facets have been examined. If the outcome stays the same, at least Council has done its job. Regarding Onancock Landing, she advised that VDOT is waiting for a \$750 fee from the structural engineer to proceed. There is contention about who owes this money. Construction funds will be released when this fee is paid. Councilman Fosque made a motion for the Town to pay the \$750.00 fee to VDOT. Councilman Miles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Councilman Fosque asked the Town Attorney about the status of draft restrictive covenants for the lot sale next to the Roseland Theater. Mr. Rowan said he will get together with the Town Manager on this matter.

Councilman Miles made a motion to appoint Councilwoman Oswald and Councilman Fosque to the Task Force to work with the Onancock Volunteer Fire Department. Councilman Fosque seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Paone wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy, more prosperous and calmer New Year.

Councilman Miles made the motion to adjourn, Councilwoman Runniger seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Sandy Manter
Interim Town Manager

Bruce Paone
Mayor

Attachments:

Check Register
Wharf Report
Police Report

Plant Report