

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
DECEMBER 17, 2007
7:00 P.M.

TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Duke Shannahan
Fletcher Fosque
Kathyanne Runniger

George Miles
Kay Wescott
Maphis Oswald

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bruce Paone, Mayor
Susan D. Scott, Town Mgr.
David Rowan, Town Atty.
Vera Bruton
Mike Carpenter
Dr. Arthur T. Carter
Holly Evans
Valena Gibb

Karen Simpson, Admin. Asst.
Bryon Heaster, Police Chief
Kris LaMontagne
Anne Nock
Cynthia Walton
Chuck Wheat
Shirley Zamora

- I. Mayor Paone called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., after which the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation were recited.
- II. Consideration of November 26, 2007 Minutes. Councilman Miles made the motion to approve the November 26, 2007 minutes, Councilman Shannahan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- III. Public Comment. Vera Bruton of the Refreshment Committee thanked her helpers, Sheila Spelman and Gerard Landreth, for their untiring efforts at the gazebo after the Christmas Parade last Saturday evening. She also thanked the Town for the use of its benches.

Shirley Zamora asked about the progress of the real estate signs, noting that several are on public property. She thought the worst offenders were Coldwell Banker/Harbour Realty and Mason-Davis Co., Inc.

Councilman Fosque advised that the Planning Commission would look at “off-premise signs”.

- IV. Jamestown 2007 Update. Cynthia Walton, Chairman of the Onancock 2007 Citizens Team regarding America’s 400th birthday, presented a final report to Council. She presented the Town with a \$4,500 check, representing the balance from their fundraising efforts after all bills were paid, in hopes that a crucial legacy of their 2007 efforts can be achieved by creating a permanent visitors’ center at the wharf – perhaps on the ground floor of Hopkins Brothers Store -- designed so visitors can learn of the Town’s proud history. Council was strongly urged to sequester these funds. The committee believes that cooperative volunteer effort would man the center, and possibly it might generate funds to make it self-sustaining by the sale of Onancock-oriented souvenirs.

Dr. Arthur T. Carter, who spearheaded the liaison with the Jamestown 2007 Foundation, and Holly Evans presented the Town with a one-of-a-kind Jamestown 2007 flag emblematic of the committee’s efforts. On behalf of the Town, Mayor Paone profusely thanked the committee.

- V. Police Department. Police Chief Bryon Heaster made two (2) points: 1) A new police officer was hired – Bryan Keith Greer. He will be attending the Police Academy in March for 16 weeks. 2) The Town has applied to Rural Development for a grant to buy new police vehicles. Hopefully it will be granted in the spring. The 1999 vehicle has approximately 135,000 mi. on it, the 2003 has 86,000 mi., the 2006 has 26,000 mi. and the 1994 has 71,000 mi. The Town Manager advised that a notification of intent will be published in the local newspaper regarding applying for a combined car loan/grant. Disposition of the older police cars will be the decision of Council, whether auctioned or sold.
- VI. Mayor’s Report. The Mayor felt the parade went off wonderfully. He thought everybody did a good job – that Karen and Susan did a great organization job. He suggested offering a stipend to local school bands to be in the parade next year. Mayor Paone informed the gathering that about 50 thank you letters were sent out to residents who decorated their homes for Christmas. He reminded Council to keep in their minds about allowing police officers to drive their patrol cars home when working a several-day shift.

- VII. Town Manager's Report. i. Correspondence: As responsible party for the Onancock School, Friends of Onancock School has printed a notice to interested parties and application for use of space at the school. Preference will be given to existing users where possible.
- ii. e-mail from Barbara Schwenk of A-NPDC advising of important broadband meeting on December 21st from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm to hear a presentation from I-Town Communications on their services and to review the route and make final decisions regarding the fiber backbone spurs for Cape Charles, Onancock and Chincoteague.
- iii. Amendment to Personnel Manual re a formal/written return to work policy. If this is adopted by December 31st, the Town qualifies for a 5% decrease in insurance premium next year. Councilman Miles made a motion to adopt the return to work policy amending the Personnel Manual, Councilman Shannahan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- iv. Regarding the ground water withdrawal permit, the Town needs to adopt a mitigation plan and a water conservation and management plan. DEQ will advertise the required public notice at our expense, then 30 days public response will be allowed. Following public notice and public participation procedures, DEQ will prepare the final ground water withdrawal permit. After discussion, Councilman Miles made a motion to adopt the Mitigation Plan and the Water Conservation and Management Plan, Councilman Shannahan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- v. December activities: Town Hall is closed December 24 & 25 and January 1.

- VIII. Mayor and Council Comments. Councilwoman Oswald felt that the Wharf Report was poorly done - hard to read and understand. The Town Manager will advise the Harbormaster to clearly report only the dollar figures and total number of boats by day, with monthly totals. She also did not understand why and disagreed with giving Town employees bonuses.

Councilman Fosque again asked about the Onancock Landing progress. The Town Manager can ask the engineer to decrease the funds by letting someone else put in the bid documents. She has completed one-half of the environmental report. These items need to be given to VDOT for their review. She will contact Hunter McCardle to speed up this process. Outsourcing documents might expedite the project.

Councilman Shannahan noted that John Verrill of the E.S. Historical Society has accepted a new job in Manassas, VA. He suggested sending John a letter of appreciation. He also complimented the Town Manager and Karen Simpson for assisting in the publication of a great article/pictures about the parade in the Virginian Pilot.

Councilman Miles and Councilwoman Runniger wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Councilwoman Wescott commented that some residents have negative feelings about signs in Town, particularly the ones on Mike Morgan's property next to the old Carey's Car Care. Discussion followed about signs. Councilwoman Wescott brought up that the purple martin houses should be put up at the end of February at the wharf. Houses cost \$94 each and poles cost \$73 each plus total shipping of \$75-\$100 for three houses, or approximately \$200 per person donation. Chuck Wheat will donate one. Faye Ralston will help Kay clean the houses every February. Other possible donators could be Rotary Club, ANEC, OBS and Lowes.

Anne Nock and Chuck Wheat are working toward a welcome center at the wharf. A couple of Town merchants have agreed to have "specials" offered there to visitors. He said the Town should have a "tourist-oriented information shrine" to help Town businesses.

IX. At 8:00 p.m., Councilman Miles made a motion to go into Executive Session under Virginia Code 2.2-3705.1(8), appraisals and cost estimates of real property subject to a proposed purchase, sale or lease prior to the completion of such purchase, sale or lease for the purpose of the recent acquisition of the BB&T property, Councilman Shannahan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Councilwoman Runniger recused herself from the Executive Session.

At 8:55 p.m., Councilman Miles made the motion to come out of Executive Session, Councilman Shannahan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Councilman Miles certified that only matters as prescribed above were discussed, Councilman Shannahan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Councilman Fosque made a motion to hire Coldwell Banker/Harbour Realty to sell the BB&T property, Councilman Miles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Councilman Shannahan recused himself from this vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Susan D. Scott
Town Manager

Bruce Paone
Mayor