

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2024
CHINCOTEAGUE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers

Council Members Present:

J. Arthur Leonard, Mayor
Christopher D. Bott, Vice Mayor
Denise P. Bowden, Councilwoman
William T. McComb, Jr., Councilman
Ellen W. Richardson, Councilwoman
K. Jay Savage, Councilman
Gene W. Taylor, Councilman

Council Members Absent:

Staff Present:

Mr. Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager
Mr. Tyler Greenley, Chief of Police
Mr. Wes Parks, Public Works Director

Call to Order

Mayor Leonard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Invocation

Councilman Taylor offered the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Leonard led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Mayor Leonard opened the floor for public comment.

- Ms. Donna Leonard, 6415 Leonard Lane, stated she enjoys serving on the RCEC. She expressed her displeasure with the new parking lot at Donald Leonard Park and plan for a split rail fence. She advised she asked for grass seed last fall. She commented further about kayakers being unable to pull their vehicle to the launch as opposed to parking and carrying their equipment. She asked who made this decision and advised she opposed it. She also brought up the discussion at the RCEC regarding a teenagers' hangout at Brianna's Park adding 4 saucers for them. She commented on the basketball court that was put in about a year ago. Ms. Leonard also advised she would like improvements to the waterfront across from the carnival grounds. She wants the Town to negotiate with the Fire Company to see if the shoreline could be enhanced. She suggested fill over the riprap. She also suggested that everyone listen to Mr. Chris Hines new talk regarding sea level rise at the north end of the Island. She also wants Council to worry about what's going to happen to the Causeway. She then addressed a public hazard near the turntable on north Main Street. She explained that there is a dock in need of repair before someone gets hurt or a child drowns.

- Mrs. Jane Knight, 8139 Seashell Drive, addressed Council regarding the passing of Mrs.

Jane Peake. She requested a resolution in her honor and memory. She listed all of the organizations that Mrs. Peake was a member of and the offices she held. She feels Council should recognize Mrs. Peake for her contributions to the community by way of a resolution.

Special Presentation

Mrs. Cynthia Wilder presented Vice Mayor Bott with a plaque in recognition for being an outstanding board member and President of the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce.

Vice Mayor Bott thanked the Chamber.

Chamber Executive Director Shotwell also thanked Vice Mayor Bott for being there for her over the years.

District 1 Supervisor Report

Supervisor Tarr reported they have been focusing on the 2 housing projects, one in northern Accomack and one in mid-Accomack which will bring 600 new residents. In May the Board approved to renew the special use permit. He advised there was also discussion about funding in the state budget for the purchase of farmland by Virginia Space outside the NASA gate. He also reported that the County, HRSD, and NASA are discussing HRSD taking over NASA's sewage treatment plant. They're about 2 years out and getting the MOU written. There have also been discussions regarding a childcare facility in the northern end of Accomack County. He feels it will happen soon. He stated that the Town was notified and Town Manager Tolbert advised he would sit on the board.

Supervisor Tarr also reported that the County approved another 3% raise for EMS which was the 2nd part of the compensation study.

Councilwoman Bowden asked about the Inlet Study funding. She mentioned Tangier asking and getting millions of dollars. She commented about the areas around the Island that are now gone. She asked for the County's help with this. She suggested hiring a lobbyist.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that thanks to Del. Bloxom the 50% match of funds were secured but the Corps has not funded this project. The Town wasn't able to use it and the money disappeared.

Supervisor Tarr stated that the County has been putting \$50,000 in the budget each year to help with this study.

Councilwoman Bowden stated that the Town needs to put pressure on the Corps.

Supervisor Tarr advised that the Corps was given \$26 million for dredging projects on the Shore.

Councilwoman Bowden stated he mentioned the state buying property for the rockets, but in the meantime the south end of Chincoteague is getting swallowed up. She doesn't want to wait any longer for the Town or County to put pressure where it needs to go. She feels something has to be done.

Supervisor Tarr stated he was going to call the Corps.

Town Manager Tolbert advised that Del. Bloxom secured the funds through the state legislature. He spoke with the Corps, and they didn't fund it. They've had a colonel and his delegation here showing him and explaining everything going on about a year and a half to 2 years ago to try to kickstart this whole process.

Councilwoman Bowden stated she's been on Council 8 years and has been dealing with this. She added that the study will take 3 years.

Councilman McComb mentioned the RocketLab and the land outside the gate at NASA. He stated that one of the things they're seeing just outside of Town limits past Queen Sound is all the parking along the Causeway during the events which is a hazard. He suggested finding a way to develop parking areas and a potential place to watch the launch. He suggested talking to the County about this as well.

Supervisor Tarr stated that the County is already meeting about this with NASA, Virginia Space and the Virginia State Police. He added that there is a committee. He commented that even with the Virginia State Police at the last launch there was no one there to move traffic.

Mayor Leonard stated that at the last launch when the Visitor's Center filled up they were parking on the side of the road, getting hung up in the ditches. They talked to NASA about expanding parking.

Councilwoman Bowden advised the next launch is 06/20/24.

Agenda Adoption

Vice Mayor Bott motioned, seconded by Councilman Savage to move item #11, "Consider Request for MOU" up in the meeting. Unanimously approved.

Consider Request for MOU

Town Manager Tolbert advised this is about approval of an MOU.

Mr. Tarr stated that it takes just over an hour and 10 minutes to spray the Town of Onley. He added that he would go to Onley and use the Town's equipment.

Town Manager Tolbert explained that Mr. Tarr does mosquito control for both towns. The MOU will anticipate all the requirements.

Town Manager Tolbert reported that on May 28th Ms. Susan Rillo, the Town Manager of Onley, requested that Council consider renting some of the Town's mosquito spraying equipment. He explained that the Town of Onley uses similar equipment and chemicals. They are experiencing critical issues with their sprayer and are investing in a new one, but they have no way of applying pesticides until their new gear arrives. She asked if the Town would be willing to rent one of the sprayers in the interim. The Town was recently in a similar situation, and it appears that both towns could benefit from an MOU that permits the use of each other's equipment. An

MOU would dictate the terms of use during an outage so that it would not affect the application schedule of the municipality providing the equipment. Ms. Rillo will ask Onley's attorney to draft an MOU pending affirmative votes by both councils. He feels this could be mutually beneficial.

Councilwoman Bowden about the compensation.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that there wouldn't be. He stated that each Town would be responsible for their own expenses. He added that each Town would pay for their own employees. The MOU would address the direct costs, fuel, materials, etc.

There was discussion about the schedule of spraying and Onley would get sprayed when Chincoteague wasn't spraying. They discussed the cost of the sprayer motor, which was \$2,500 - \$2,800 and a new sprayer is \$15,000. It's been 6 years since the Town bought a sprayer. The MOU wouldn't go on forever. Onley will be down for about another 10 days.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that they will have brand new equipment and the Town's equipment is 6 years old. Everyone's equipment breaks down every now and then. He added that if the Town has a breakdown and can't spray for a week or two, they could use Onley's equipment. He added that every MOU has an out clause. The MOU hasn't been written, this is to explore it, if so, Onley would draw up a draft. He added that Council will still get to see it and edit it. He also stated that if it's not approved, the Town could allow it to be rented.

Councilman Savage stated that the Town has two sprayers and Onley needs one.

Councilwoman Bowden feels that if they will have their equipment up in 10 days, by the time this goes through they won't need it, unless this is an open-ended MOU.

Town Manger Tolbert stated it could be done in a term where it would have to be renewed and if it doesn't work Council can end it.

Vice Mayor Bott motioned, seconded by Councilman Taylor to approve the creation of the MOU with the Town of Onley for mosquito control spraying. Unanimously approved.

Staff Reports

General Government

Town Manager Tolbert reported that they have received 2 additional quotes and several inquiries about the abandoned vessel project. The deadline to submit quotes was Wednesday, May 29th. There was an article in the Eastern Shore Post about a week ago which spurred interest. They have 4 quotes and 3 were qualified. He also reported that the ridership for the Trolley Service is up. Beginning May 4th at the Seafood Festival there were nearly 1,000 riders. He stated that Transportation Director King has been working with DRPT regarding the purchase of the surplus trolley by the Town. The value of the trolley has been established at \$40,000 of which DRPT will allow the Town to keep the first \$5,000 in the Trolley Capital Account. Of the remaining balance, the Town will have to pay 80%, bringing the total investment to \$28,000 for Pied Piper. Town Manager Tolbert stated that they expect to use this trolley for various events throughout

the year which do not qualify for DRPT funding expanding our services for the Center and community at large. The first event for the Town Trolley will hopefully be the Blueberry Festival in mid-July.

Town Manager Tolbert reported that VDOT has changed the programs on all 3 traffic lights to their summer, in-season, routines which should allow traffic to move more easily. He gave the May report for the Center which started off with the CHS prom, Island Roots hosted a paint and plant night, and there were to weddings. The Center was used 15 out of 31 days in May. June will be even busier with Rocketfest next week. The kids will be building 30 model rockets and launching them from our Little League fields.

Town Manager Tolbert gave the Meals and Transient Occupancy Tax report for May along with the Financial Report. He continued with the Building and Zoning Report which included 51 building permits, 42 inspections and 15 case activity inspections. There were also 3 Business License site visits, 2 code case violations, working without a permit, 16 code case violations, tall grass, 16 zoning site visits, 42 building permit plans' reviews, and 35 walk-ins for building and zoning questions. The total value for the building cost of construction for the month was \$556,404.86 and the total building permit fees collected were \$3,867.99.

Councilwoman Bowden asked if the Building and Zoning software was helping.

Town Manager Tolbert advised it was and commented further. He added that the process is quicker if done online.

Councilwoman Bowden asked for the report from the front office.

Town Manager Tolbert advised he would get the information together and send it to Council.

Police Department

Chief Greenley reported in addition to the report in the packet, on May 3rd, the Police Department aided with traffic and foot patrol along with security for the vendors at the Seafood Festival. On May 8th Investigator Barnes attended the FBI National Academy's Associates Technology Summit. On May 13th the Department hosted Coffee with a Cop at Blackfin Restaurant where members of the community were able to come and voice their concerns to the Department. On May 15th, SRO Geminiani provided the CES Pre-K class with a tour of the Police Department complete with an interactive investigation that the class completed while receiving the tour. On May 16th SROs Carmody and Geminiani manned the CPD job fair booth at Chesapeake College in Queenstown, and will go to ESCC Tuesday, June 4th. On May 22nd LT. Gladding and Dispatcher Adams attended Level 1 DART training. He added that both of the SRO Grants were approved again this year.

Councilwoman Bowden suggested having the Coffee with a Cop 2 times a year.

Chief Greenley agreed and advised he would schedule it.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Parks reported the Public Works Department cut grass in the cemeteries before Memorial Day weekend, installed banners, which were 25 more than last year, they re-established a parking lot for the Leonard Park with millings, they also plan to put in a split-rail fence. He added that topsoil and seeding will be installed outside the parking area, and they also plan to add parking bumpers. They installed 220 feet of storm drain on Willow Street, constructed a walking trail at the Brianna's Kindness Park, and started directional bore of waterline replacement for Piney Island. He commended Mr. Meckley on a good job building the Council tables. He reported that the gentleman who mirrored his position during Student Government Day has applied for a job with the Town. He advised for the month of June they will have asphalt paving, concrete sidewalks, and driveways, spraying weeds, mowing, curb painting, continue improvements at the Brianna's Kindness Park, Leonard Park, and Ocean Breeze. They will also continue with routine maintenance of equipment and vehicles.

Councilwoman Bowden asked about the ditches and the equipment they were supposed to look into.

Public Works Director Parks advised that the sales rep. didn't follow through. He will reach out again because the Town's equipment is down.

Councilwoman Bowden asked if they were spraying for weeds.

Public Works Director Parks advised they spray every 6 weeks.

Mayor Leonard asked if the Town was installing a waterline on Wildcat.

Public Works Director Parks advised they fused the pipe today and will bore tomorrow.

Emergency Services

Director of Emergency Services Rush reported they ended May with 100 calls, which is the same as last year. He advised that each year his staff goes to the lighthouse for training before it's open for the season. He further explained the different aspects of training they conduct there, adding that they actually train there a couple times a year. He stated that he has been working on Mr. Tarr of the Fire Company regarding Medicare payments. There is a 148-page document to review and fill out a multiple page form for the Fire Company to be reimbursed for Medicare. He reported that they were certified last week. He also reported that they continue with weather monitoring and as of June 1st it is Hurricane Season. He advised of the Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant with Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. They are currently coming up with a plan for a shore-wide evacuation.

Director of Emergency Services Rush reported on IPaws, Integrated Public Alert Warning System, which also works with Code Red. He explained that to be notified with Code Red you have to sign up, but with IPaws it works on cellular service within our area. IPaws is used in extreme circumstances and will be up and running by the end of summer. He advised that NOAA predicts 17-25 named storms for this season. He reminded of the nor' east winds that

cause high tides and flooding and advised that everyone should prepare now. He suggested that every time you go to the store get something for your emergency preparedness kit.

Mayor Leonard asked if they were having a hurricane meeting.

Director of Emergency Services Rush advised that the local elected officials will hold a Microsoft Teams meeting Thursday, June 6th at 10:00 a.m. He added that someone with Homeland Security in the Governor's office along with VDEM will be on to discuss what the season looks like.

Councilman Savage asked if you had to have internet connectivity to receive notifications from the IPaws system.

Director of Emergency Services Rush advised that you do not, it is through cellular service.

Gun Violence Awareness Proclamation

Mayor Leonard read the proclamation.



PROCLAMATION

IN RECOGNITION OF DECLARING FRIDAY JUNE 7, 2024 TO BE LOCAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY

This proclamation recognizes that Friday June 7, 2024 will be proclaimed Local Gun Violence Awareness Day in the Town of Chincoteague to honor and remember all victims and survivors of gun violence and to declare that we as a community, we must do more to reduce gun violence.

WHEREAS, every day, more than 100 Americans are killed by gun violence, alongside more than 200 who are shot and wounded, and on average there are more than 13,000-gun homicides every year; and

WHEREAS, protecting public safety in the community we serve is the public official's highest responsibility; and

WHEREAS, support for the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens goes hand-in-hand with keeping guns away from people that shouldn't have them; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of legal gun owners abhor gun violence and love and respect the peace and liberty that this Country stands for, and

WHEREAS, on June 7, 2024, people across the United States will recognize National Gun Violence Awareness Day and wear orange in tribute to victims of gun violence; and the loved ones of those victims; and

WHEREAS, The color orange symbolizes the value of all human life; and

WHEREAS, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on June 7th, 2024 to help raise awareness about gun violence; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 7th, 2024, citizens will raise awareness about gun violence, the value of human life and honor the lives of gun violence victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our children safe.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Chincoteague declares June 7, 2024, to be Local Gun Violence Awareness Day. I encourage all citizens to support their local community's efforts to prevent the tragic effects of gun violence and to honor and value of all human life.

Signed: _____
John Arthur Leonard, Mayor

Attested: _____
Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager

Committee Report

Budget & Personnel Committee

Vice Mayor Bott advised he had nothing to discuss as the minutes were in the packet.

RCEC

Councilman Taylor reported they met on May 28th. They reviewed the Leonard Park parking lot. He feels they needed a designated parking area. He added that the grass has been planted. He suggested possibly not putting up the fencing at this time. He reported that the Dog Park group requested another sunshade at the Dog Park, and he agreed to accommodate them. He mentioned the trail at the Brianna's Park and thanked Public Works Director Parks for this. He reported that Ms. Leonard wanted 4 saucers to be placed for a teenagers' hangout at the Brianna's Park. He feels that the Town could order 2 and see how it goes before committing to 4. He wants a safe place for the kids to be.

There was further discussion regarding the parking lot, and installation of fencing.

Adoption of Minutes of May 6th and 16th Council Meetings

Councilwoman Bowden motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb to adopt the minutes of the May 6th and 16th Council meetings as presented. Unanimously approved.

Consider Award of Abandoned Vessel Remove Contract

Town Manager Tolbert reported that they have 3 quotes for this project. The lowest bidder was Cockrell Marine Railway, Inc. in Eastville, VA with a quote of \$48,000. He advised that if they don't spend all of the money, they will have to return it.

Mayor Leonard asked if he looked into adding the barge.

Town Manager Tolbert advised he has not but will.

There was further discussion.

Town Manager Tolbert stated he will review the specifications of the grant and contact VMRC for further information prior to selection of bidders. They have until the end of the summer to complete the project.

Vice Mayor Bott motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden to table this matter for more information. Unanimously approved.

Council Comments

Councilman Taylor stated he would like to thank VDOT for putting the rocks on the Causeway. He suggested they put more rocks at Queen Sound where there is wash over.

Councilman McComb commented on the parking along Chincoteague Road during the rocket launches and feels the Town needs to get involved to push this along.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that Director of Emergency Services Rush communicates with them regularly.

Councilwoman Bowden stated that this is bothering her. When they had a lobbyist, and when they went to Richmond, it was a circus to get their elected officials to talk to them. She feels the Town needs to be proactive. The south end of the Island is in trouble where the tide rolls in even on low tide. She asked about dredging.

Mayor Leonard advised that the Army Corps of Engineers dredge twice a year at the Harbor but only the entrance coming through the breakwater, not on the sides. He feels that it would help if Harbormaster Merritt could put markers out.

Councilwoman Bowden wants to see Council come together and express, strongly worded, to the Army Corps and to get anyone on the Town's side to help. This is one of the most pressing and serious things on the Island. She also congratulated Chief Greenley on his new baby boy. She concluded with, "Go Yankees!".

Mayor Leonard concluded by reminding everyone that it's summertime and to be ready.

Closed Meeting – In accordance with §2.2-3711(A) (1) of the Code of Virginia that the Council convene a closed session for the purpose of discussion and review of specific personnel performance.

Councilman Savage motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden to go into a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3712 (A) (3) of the Code of Virginia that the Council convene a closed session for the purpose of consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose . All present were in favor and the motion was carried.

Ayes: Bott, Bowden, McComb, Richardson, Savage, Taylor

Nays: None

Absent: None

Certification of Closed Meeting in Accordance with §2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia Councilman Savage motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden to certify that to the best of each member's knowledge:

- 1. Only public business lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements was discussed and**
- 2. Only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered.**

All present were in favor and the motion was carried.

Ayes: Bott, Bowden, McComb, Richardson, Savage, Taylor

Nays: None

Absent: None

Adjourn

Councilman Savage motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden to adjourn.

Unanimously approved.

J. Arthur Leonard, Mayor

Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager