

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2021
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:

None

Staff Present:

Mr. Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager
Mr. Robby Fisher, Police Chief
Mr. E. Bryan Rush, Emergency Management Coordinator
Mr. Harvey Spurlock, 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.

Consider Remote Participation

Public Comment

- Chincoteague Chamber Executive Director Shotwell thanked Council, the Town, the Chincoteague Police Department, EMS, and Public Works for all their help for the Oyster Roast. She stated that it was a huge success and thanked everyone again.

Mrs. Julie Brommer, Chincoteague Island Cats reported on the recent cat roundup. She advised they didn't have a veterinarian to neuter or spay so they trapped 64 cats that were given the rabies vaccinations. She reported that she brought 400lbs of dog food to the Manna Café and distributed wet and dry cat food to those on the Island who are taking care of the feral cat colonies. She thanked Council for their continued support.

Councilwoman Richardson asked if the program was finished for the year.

Mrs. Brommer stated that with the colder temperatures they are unable to conduct the spay and neuter program as the cats need heat during recovery. They plan to hold a small clinic in the spring.

Councilwoman Bowden thanked her for all they do and expressed that their dedication is fantastic. She plans to continue to support this.

Councilman Taylor also thanked the volunteers and gave a special thanks to those who helped with short notice.

Agenda Adoption

Councilwoman Bowden motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Richardson to adopt the agenda as presented. Unanimously approved.

District 1 Supervisor Report

Supervisor Tarr reported and reviewed the new election map advising that the Town's election district has been opened up to a section of the mainland. He added that this does not affect the school district zone. He also advised of the ARPA money that will be distributed for tourism, marketing. Accomack has \$240,000 to divide between Chincoteague, Onancock, and the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce. He continued that with the County legislation, they promote teachers and plan to give them more money to keep them here. The County will be enforcing a weed and grass ordinance. They are also supporting the Rt.175 improvements.

Supervisor Tarr discussed Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant, which is a 1-year pilot program. It allows public Broadband Authorities to apply directly without investment from the private sector. This will help with the costs to get Broadband to the outlying areas. He added that there are challenges overlapping internet services. The County also plans to help the local fire companies with the ARPA funds. The Board understands that the fire companies have suffered financial shortfalls due to COVID. He announced that they have approved to give \$50,000 to each fire company in the county. He stated they gave the deputies a bonus. He added that they have also agreed to match the bonuses for the EMS. They will also give the landfill staff a bonus as well, which will come from ARPA.

Councilman McComb joined the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Proclamation for Cemetery Cleanup Week

Mayor Leonard read the proclamation:



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, throughout our community there are many cemeteries and family burial grounds;
and

WHEREAS, over the years many of the loved ones of those buried in our cemeteries have moved away or are no longer able to tend to these cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, many organizations and individuals throughout our community have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of those sites and common areas within these cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, these organizations and individuals need assistance from all citizens to accomplish their cleanup goals to beautify and preserve our family burial grounds.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor John A. Leonard do hereby proclaim the week of November 8th through 13th, 2021, as Cemetery Cleanup Week within the Town of Chincoteague and call upon our citizens to volunteer to organize and assist in the cleanup of our Island cemeteries.

DATED this 1st day of November 2021.

John A. Leonard, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager

Mayor Leonard asked if anyone has gone to Assateague and cleaned the cemetery there.

Councilwoman Richardson advised they have.

Staff Reports

General Government

Town Manager Tolbert advised the traffic lights were reprogrammed to the winter cycles. He reported on the 3rd Annual Kids Fishing with Harbormaster Merritt. There were 28 children between 3-16 years of age. They all had a great time fishing. They were served lunch and given a t-shirt. He commended Harbormaster Merritt. Chief Fisher brought a police car and the VMRC brought a patrol boat for the children to see. He reported that there has been a significant increase in fuel sales. A new fuel management system has been ordered.

Town Manger Tolbert reviewed the financial report. He stated that the tax conversion was completed today, and staff is in the process of printing and preparing for mail by the end of the week. He also reported on Meals Tax and Transient Occupancy Tax revenues. He advised that Building and Zoning Administrator Bowden has been busy with not only building permits but, grass ordinance violations, accumulation on property, and derelict structures. He reported that there are a few properties that should be taken care of within the next few months.

Police Department

Chief Fisher gave an update to his report for October. He advised of the training his department received during the month: Instructor school, breath alcohol training, decibel meter training, in-

service training, and FOIA training. He reported on the assistance they gave for the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company's oyster fritter fundraiser, Oyster Festival and Trick-or-Treating. He also advised they have the Toy Run planned for the Saturday of the Christmas parade.

Councilwoman Richardson commented on the number of adults who dressed up in costumes to take the kids Trick-or-Treating.

Mayor Leonard stated that the Brianna's Kindness Park is getting a lot of use. He mentioned some vandalization there and asked if the Police could go by there to check on it.

Chief Fisher advised they would. He announced that they are now in No Shave November.

There was brief discussion about putting cameras in a the parks.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Spurlock reported that along with the Brianna's Kindness Park, they have been cutting grass and continuing with routine maintenance. The restroom brickwork for the Brianna's Kindness Park is underway. He also reviewed the layout changes the RCEC approved. He advised of the new fuel system at the Harbor. They will continue to use the internet service until the chip reader is installed at which time, they will use cellular service. He reviewed the Lead & Copper in the System Analysis. He announced that there is a Public Works Committee meeting Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

Emergency Services

Emergency Management Coordinator Rush reviewed and updated the monthly stats. He stated that his staff conducted Iron Pony Rope Course training. They also did community outreach in the Downtown area for Trick-or-Treating. He stated that they will be receiving a "reserve" ambulance. He advised that this is not a 3rd ambulance and will only be used when an ambulance is out-of-service. He reported on hurricane Wanda and reminded everyone that hurricane season runs through November 30th. He also reviewed on the COVID-19 stats and the vaccine information. He stated that face coverings are still recommended indoors when you can't socially distance. He then reported on the boosters and added that you can mix and match shots for the booster. He added that the EMS has been busy and reminded everyone to "Wash your hands, wear your masks, and watch your distance".

Committee Reports

Public Safety Committee

Councilwoman Bowden advised they met on October 5th. They discussed staffing levels for the Police Department, they are looking to backfill the SRO position. She stated they need 2 officers on each shift. They talked about salaries of the officers. Capt. Greenley is conducting salary comparison for the officers on the Eastern Shore. They also discussed the 1% Transient Occupancy Tax for Public Safety. She stated that if EMS, Police, Public Works, or the Fire Company needs anything to contact Town Manager Tolbert and he will put it on the agenda for the next meeting. She added that the funds have been put into a separate line item. She hopes this gets these agencies over the minor hurdles that they may have.

ARPA Committee

Mayor Leonard stated this was the initial meeting. They reviewed the guidelines and discussed the list. According to the list the top priority is sewage.

Cemetery Committee

Councilwoman Richardson reported that they met October 7th and discussed the proclamation. The cleanup week is November 8th – 13th. They will be cleaning the Thornton Cemetery on Saturday, November 13th from 9am – noon. She advised that the Navy is going to the Thornton Cemetery on Thursday to help for their Community Service Project.

Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee

Mayor Leonard asked when the Brianna's Kindness Park Grand Opening Ceremony is. Town Manager Tolbert advised it is, Saturday, November 13th at 10:30a.m.

Councilman Taylor stated that they met on October 26th. He stated that the kids are enjoying the playground. He thanked the whole community, the Council, those who did fundraisers, those who donated money, time, and land. He stated that it is nice to see everyone coming together to get this done. He also thanked the Public Works Department and businesses. He stated there will be speakers for the Grand Opening and he feels the Park has the right name. He announced that they are within budget and again thanked everyone.

Mayor Leonard stated that Brianna's Kindness Park is nearing completion and would like to see more attention on the Memorial Park.

Councilman Taylor also stated that they need something for the teenagers. He feels the Churches, Council, and Committee members should do something for the teenagers of the Island. He suggested the Police Department and other organizations could create some positive activities.

Adoption of the Minutes for the October 4, 2021, Council Meeting.

Councilman McComb motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden, to adopt the minutes of the October 4th, Council Meeting as presented. Unanimously approved.

Mayor and Council Comments

Councilwoman Richardson stated that the Town hired someone to do grass cutting and she advised he is doing a good job. He will be sent to work with the Navy on Thursday. She stated that all cemeteries are looking good and the Public Works employee is doing a good job.

Councilwoman Bowden advised she had nothing to say.

Vice Mayor Bott encouraged those who have received the 1st vaccination to get their boosters.

Councilman McComb congratulated Emergency Management Coordinator Rush on his new appointment by the Governor. He also congratulated the Chincoteague High School Volleyball

Team for winning the district championship, and for winning their 1st regional game this evening.

Councilman Taylor stated that he is looking for public participation in keeping the parks clean. He asked for volunteers.

Councilman Savage also congratulated Emergency Management Coordinator Rush for his appointment. He stated that this was well deserved. He was the only appointee on the Shore, and this means a lot. He expressed his appreciation of all of the Town on the work they do.

Mayor Leonard stated that they recently lost a citizen of the Island. He also stated that there is a lot of things that came out about his that they didn't know. He suggested down the road, that the Town should look into something to honor Mr. Steve Katsetos. He was always looking out for the Town. He concluded with "Roll Tide".

Closed Meeting in Accordance with §2.2-3711 (A) (5) of the Code of Virginia to discuss prospective business opportunities.

Vice Mayor Bott motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb to go into a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3711 (A) (5) of the Code of Virginia to discuss perspective business opportunities. Unanimously approved.

Certification of Closed Meeting in Accordance with §2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia:

Vice Mayor Bott motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb in accordance with §2.2-372 (D) of the Code of Virginia that the Council certify that to the best of each Council Member's knowledge.

- (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from opening meeting requirements under this chapter and**
- (2) only such public business matters were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered. Unanimously approved.**

Adjourn

Vice Mayor Bott motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb to adjourn. Unanimously approved.

J. Arthur Leonard, Mayor

Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager