



OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
Tuesday, May 21, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Earnie Porta; Vice Mayor Jenn Loges, Councilmembers Cindy Fithian, Eliot Perkins, and Theo Daubresse

Absent: Councilmember Nancy Freeborne Brinton

Staff: Adam Linn, Town Manager / Chief of Police; Matt Whitmoyer, Deputy Town Manager; Philip Auville, Town Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Public Hearing on FY2025 Tax Rates

Mayor Porta opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m.

Mayor Porta invited the public to speak. No one spoke at the public hearing.

Councilmember Perkins moved to close the public hearing at 7:02 p.m. Councilmember Fithian seconded. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Request to Accept May 7, 2024, Town Council Meeting Minutes

Vice Mayor Loges moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Fithian seconded. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. REGULAR BUSINESS

a. Request to Adopt FY2025 Tax Rates

Councilmember Perkins moved to set a real estate tax rate for the Fiscal Year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024, of \$0.116 per \$100 of assessed valuation. Councilmember Fithian seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Councilmember Fithian moved to set a meals tax rate for the Fiscal Year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024, of three and one-half percent (3.5%). Vice Mayor Loges seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Vice Mayor Loges moved to set a transient occupancy tax rate for the Fiscal Year 2025 beginning July 1, 2024, of seven percent (7%). Councilmember Fithian seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

b. Request to Adopt FY2025 Annual Budget

Mr. Linn noted that the Town's current IT contractor notified staff that the rates will double beginning next fiscal year, which goes against the current contract. Staff have met with the IT contractor to discuss the issue as well as with two other IT contractors from the previous solicitation bid. The current IT contractor replied that they can stay at the same rate but with less service. Staff is currently looking into whether to stay with the current IT contractor or to go with a different IT service contractor.

Mr. Linn also noted that the Town's landscaper contractor is having a performance issue, and that staff has sent out a letter of default. The company was originally privately owned but has since been bought out by an equity firm. Currently, the contractor has reported to staff that the issue has been with the weather, truck issues, and the cost of the plants for the landscaping. Staff is looking at other landscaping contractors in case the current contractor is not able to cure the default and resolve outstanding issues. Mr. Linn advised that the Landscaping and Snow Removal contracts are both up in FY2025.

Councilmember Fithian moved to adopt the Fiscal year 2025 General Fund Budget beginning July 1, 2024, as presented in the amount of \$1,408,258 in expenses and \$1,408,258 in revenue and appropriate the funds for the expenses shown in the budget. Councilmember Perkins seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Councilmember Perkins moved to adopt the Fiscal year 2025 Events Fund Budget beginning July 1, 2024, as presented in the amount of \$238,726 in expenses and \$313,285 in revenue and appropriate the funds for the expenses shown in the budget. Councilmember Fithian seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Councilmember Fithian moved to adopt the Fiscal year 2025 Mamie Davis Fund Budget beginning July 1, 2024, as presented in the amount of \$0 in expenses and \$256 in revenue and appropriate the funds for the expenses shown in the budget. Vice Mayor Loges seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Councilmember Daubresse moved to adopt the Fiscal year 2025 E-Summons Fund Budget beginning July 1, 2024, as presented in the amount of \$7,200 in expenses and \$15,200 in revenue and appropriate the funds for the expenses shown in the budget. Councilmember Perkins seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and

Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Vice Mayor Loges moved to adopt the Fiscal year 2025 Capital Improvement Plan beginning July, 1, 2024, as presented in the amount of \$1,374,031 in expenses and \$1,374,031 in revenue and appropriate the funds for the expenses shown in the budget. Councilmember Daubresse seconded. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Daubresse, and Councilmember Perkins

Nays: None

Mr. Linn noted that the Council had directed staff at a previous Council Meeting to look into modifications to the kayak launch that would eliminate the need for everyone to use the switchback ramp and the floating roll off ramps to enter the water. Mayor Porta had noted that these are problematic for long kayaks and paddleboards and that he had received emails from users hoping an adjustment could be made. Staff spoke with the Town Engineer and contacted the manufacturer of the current ramp and received a response that an additional floating dock attachment can be added for \$4,500.

Mayor Porta replied that he is concerned that the proposed solution still does not address the need to use the ADA switchback ramp and noted that the raised metal edge on the existing floating platform would make accessing an additional floating platform difficult. His preferred solution would be to open the end of the switchback to allow a metal ramp down to a platform there. Staff expressed concern that this would require more pilings, while Mayor Porta hoped it could be attached to the existing pilings. He agreed to meet with staff on site to discuss the issue further.

Mayor Porta noted that Chief Linn had informed him of an incident in which a town resident had called 911 to report suspicious activity by a young man in the Occoquan Pointe/Barrington Pointe area. The young man turned out to be distributing campaign literature at doors for Cameron Hamilton, a candidate for Congress in the 7th Congressional District. The town resident allegedly asserted that the HOA was private property and that there was no trespassing or solicitation. Upon responding, town police noted that the distribution of campaign literature was protected first amendment activity to which such restrictions did not apply. They advised the young man that he could continue, but he chose to leave. Mayor Porta telephoned Cameron Hamilton to explain, apologize if his canvasser felt unwelcome, and reassure him that such activity was permitted in the town. Mayor Porta reported that Mr. Hamilton was gracious in his response, expressing his understanding regarding the incident and his appreciation for the call.

Mayor Porta added that he is writing a formal letter in both his personal capacity and his capacity as Mayor to the Town Police Department thanking them for providing water patrol during a stand-up paddle board competition on the river after the Coast Guard Auxiliary unit cancelled due to the weather.

Mayor Porta also noted that he spoke with the Town Manager on cancelling the June 4th Town Council meeting due to the work going into RiverFest Weekend the week that the agenda would have to go out. **Councilmember Fithian moved to cancel the June 4th Council Meeting. Vice Mayor Loges seconded. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mayor Porta recognized Lisa Terry from Occoquan to speak on a matter of concern. Ms. Terry advised that there is an issue occurring on Hall Street just outside the town boundary. She advised that a homeowner has begun constructing a roadway to connect Hall Street to Mt. High Street. The concern is the potential effects from water now running off into the Town.

Mayor Porta noted that the he and Chief Linn have been dealing with this issue for a few weeks and in

response to concerns expressed by residents both within and outside of the town, have been in contact with the county and Supervisor Boddye's office. The latter has been working on the issue for some time and the county has put a stop to the unpermitted activity. Mayor Porta noted that as far as he is aware, the county has no plans to build a connection between Hall Street and Mt. High Street (a connection that the town and county have historically opposed) and that any such connection being built by a private property owner is unauthorized. He has advised property owners who have contacted him to be vigilant in reporting any additional unauthorized activity and has indicated that he is sending a letter to Supervisor Boddye, Chair Jefferson, and County Executive Shorter, thanking them for monitoring the activity and reiterating for the record the town's opposition to a connection of the two streets due to traffic and drainage issues.

Vice Mayor Loges indicated that she had researched the issue of restricting sales of certain products in town and requested that the Town Council address the matter at an upcoming meeting for public health reasons.

Mayor Porta directed staff to discuss the matter with the Town Attorney.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



Philip Auville, Town Clerk