



**OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Special Meeting Minutes - REVISED**  
**Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125**  
**Tuesday, June 17, 2014**  
**Joint Public Hearing - 6:30 p.m.**  
**Regular Meeting - 7:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Mayor Earnie Porta, Vice Mayor Liz Quist, Councilmembers Denise Bush, Joe McGuire, Pat Sivigny, Jim Walbert  
Staff: Kirstyn Barr, Town Manager; Martin Crim, Town Attorney; Ned Marshall, Town Zoning Administrator; Chief Sheldon Levi, Town Sergeant/Chief of Police; Peggy Blackwell, Town Clerk

**Presentation**

Prior to the start of the meeting, Vice Mayor Quist presented plaques of appreciation for their years of service to the Town of Occoquan to retiring Councilmembers Denise Bush and Dr. Jim Walbert, and to Mayor Earnie Porta.

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Porta called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Public Hearings**

**2A. Proposed Fiscal Year 2015 Tax Rates Public Hearing**

A public hearing was held on the proposed tax rates for Fiscal Year 2015 to obtain citizen input. One citizen spoke during the public hearing.

Tyler Brown, Occoquan resident, urged the Town Council to not raise taxes as they had in the previous year.

The public hearing was closed by Mayor Porta.

**2B. River Park Zoning Text Amendment - Town Council and Planning Commission Joint Public Hearing**

A joint public hearing of the Occoquan Town Council and Planning Commission was held to provide an opportunity for public comment on the adoption of a new zoning district and the rezoning of the portion of the Fairfax County Water Authority parcel that falls inside the Town boundary of that new district.

Planning Commission member Ramsey Baerga asked about uses permitted and their applicability during the time of the lease.

No members of the public spoke.

The public hearing was closed by Mayor Porta.

### 3. Regular Business

#### **3A. Adoption of Fiscal Year 2015 Budget and Tax Rates**

Steve Vonderheide, Occoquan resident, asked what prompted the Town to advertise a proposed increase in the real estate tax rate. Specifically, he requested information on whether or not an anticipated shortfall existed that required an increase in the rate.

Mayor Porta explained that it has often been the practice of the Town Council, as well as other bodies such as the County Board of Supervisors, to advertise a higher potential tax rate than what is likely to be adopted. Such a practice takes into account that the Town cannot adopt a higher rate than advertised, and provides flexibility in the event new cost or other information becomes available between the time of advertisement and the time of adoption.

Councilmember Walbert further clarified that it is standard practice to advertise the possibility of a higher rate and that a higher rate does not necessarily reflect the sentiments of the Town Council as to what should be adopted.

The Town Council discussed the implications of increasing the tax rate and maintaining the current rate and the impact on the Town's budget and service delivery.

Ms. Barr, Town Manager, provided updated budgetary information to Town Council with regard to estimated additional revenue generated by a .005 cent and .01 cent tax increase. The updated information included the costs associated with the addition of a part-time, temporary administrative position, which was included based on the direction of the Town Council during a previous meeting during which the Town Manager proposed the additional position.

Councilmember McGuire inquired as to whether or not the revenue generated by real estate tax that will be collected from the new town homes in Occoquan Heights and Gas Light Landing will cover the costs associated with the new position, without increasing the current tax rate.

Ms. Breeding, Town Treasurer, stated that there were small increases throughout the budget on the expense side. Mayor Porta added that there were also small decreases in expected revenues. He noted that together these appeared to offset the expected incremental revenue from real estate taxes on the new town homes under the .11 cent tax rate.

Mayor Porta expressed concern about the long-term viability of current staffing levels, noting that he believed the proposed part-time, temporary administrative position was unlikely to be sufficient beyond the short-term. In his opinion, future growth, increasing citizen expectations regarding the quality and quantity of staff services, and the need to modernize a significant number of town processes, would likely require serious consideration of making the part-time Clerk, Treasurer and Maintenance Supervisor

positions full-time in the not-to-distant future. He further clarified that when discussing real estate taxes it is important to consider both the rate and assessments. Assertions about taxes being raised, reduced or maintained, are often inaccurate because the person making the claim is only looking at the tax rate.

Vice Mayor Quist expressed her concern about the current organizational structure of the staff, noting in particular that bringing in additional help, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, to address administrative tasks would allow the Town Manager to address core issues that would increase organizational efficiency and professionalism.

Councilman McGuire inquired if temporary assistance could be contracted to assist with data entry and other administrative tasks, as opposed to creating a position within the organization.

Ms. Barr stated that contracting a person on a temporary basis is a viable option, but other issues currently exist within the budget that make it difficult to move forward in the coming year. She stated that it would be beneficial for staff if Council identified what its priorities are for the coming year.

Councilmember Sivigny expressed concern about increasing the real estate tax rate and did not see a need to do so at this time. He stated that in previous years, craft show revenues were transferred to the operating budget in order to offset costs. Mayor Porta noted that during the time that he and Dr. Walbert have been on the Town Council, year-end financial results have often been better than budgeted. He suggested that the Town Council consider giving the Town Manager discretion to hire part-time, temporary, administrative help at her discretion during the course of the year, provided she could do so within the parameters of the overall budget.

After discussion, the Town Council directed the Town Manager to hire a part-time, temporary administrative position at her discretion, provided she could do so within the overall FY 2015 operating budget.

It was moved to set the Real Estate Tax Rate for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2014 at \$.11 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Walbert, seconded by Councilmember Sivigny, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**  
**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

It was moved to set the Meals Tax Rate at 2% for Fiscal Year 2015.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Walbert, seconded by Councilmember McGuire, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**  
**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

It was moved to set the Transient Occupancy Tax Rate at 2% for Fiscal Year 2015.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Walbert, seconded by Vice Mayor Quist, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

It was moved for the adoption of the FY2015 Proposed Budget with the discussed modifications in the amount of \$505,296.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Quist, seconded by Councilmember Walbert, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

It was moved for the adoption of the FY 2015 Capital Improvement Plan as presented by the Town Manager in the total amount of \$1,640,000.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Quist, seconded by Councilmember Walbert, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

It was moved to adopt the Mamie Davis Account with \$2,000 for Revenues and \$2,000 for Expenses for Fiscal Year 2015.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Quist, seconded by Councilmember Walbert, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

It was moved to adopt the Craft Show Account budget with \$210,000 for Revenues and \$90,000 for Expenses for Fiscal Year 2015.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Quist, seconded by Councilmember Walbert, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Vice Mayor Quist, Councilmembers Bush, McGuire, Sivigny, Walbert

### **3B. Adoption of River Park Zoning Text Amendment**

It was moved to amend the Town of Occoquan official zoning map and adopt the draft zoning map dated June 12, 2014, prepared by Matthew Williams, Town of Occoquan Assistant Zoning Administrator, and to amend the Town's zoning code to add a new zoning district titled Parks and Public Utility District.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Quist, seconded by Councilmember Walbert, that the Action Item be approved. The motion was carried by poll vote, unanimous.**

**3C. Adoption of Dangerous Conditions Ordinance**

It was moved to adopt the proposed Town Code Section 30-1, Dangerous Conditions.

**A motion was made by Councilmember McGuire, seconded by Councilmember Sivigny, that the Action Item be approved. The Motion was carried by poll vote, unanimous.**

**3D. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Memorandum of Understanding**

It was moved to approve the Town's participation in the Potomac Heritage Scenic Trail and direct the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Sivigny, seconded by Vice Mayor Quist, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by poll vote, unanimous.**

**4. Closed Session**

Vice Mayor Quist moved that the Council convene in closed session to discuss as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), a personnel matter involving performance evaluation or job assignments of a specific employee. Councilmember Walbert seconded. **The motion carried by poll vote, unanimous.**

The Council came out of closed session at 9:05 p.m. Ms. Quist moved that the Council certify that, in the closed session just concluded, nothing was discussed except the matter or matters (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) lawfully permitted to be discussed under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act cited in that motion. Dr. Walbert seconded. Ayes: Sivigny, McGuire, Bush, Walbert and Quist by roll call.

**5. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.



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Kirstyn Barr, Town Manager