

TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE BUDGET AND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

JUNE 10, 2021

COUNCIL PRESENT: Fred Janci Mayor, Sandie Puchalski, Vice Mayor; Robert Williams;
Robert Bilicki; Glenn Schagelin; Stephen Joseph, Margo Digan

COUNCIL ABSENT:

TOWN CLERK: Absent, Charlie Gibble

ZOOM ATENDEES: Councilman Margo Digan, Councilman Glen Schagelin, John Joeckel

Guest: Aileen Joeckel

TOWN BUDGET AND COUNCIL MEETING

- **I Public Comments** – Mayor Janci welcomed everyone and opened the floor for Public Comments.
 - John Joeckel comments-Thanks for not raising the Real Estate taxes. He went on to say that town council needs to raise property tax 22cents. Other towns have more money coming in for their property taxes.
 - John Joeckel asked why is property tax only \$70 a year. He stated we need to fix the ordinance.
 - Councilman Stephen Joseph asked why John is thanking us for not raising the real estate taxes and complaining the property tax is too low.
 - John Joeckel stated the past clerk was incorrect in amount reduced by the property tax.
 - Mayor Fred Janci asked why it wasn't fixed by the past council.
 - Vice mayor Sandie Puchalski said that we will look into it.
 - Councilman Bob Bilicki said he checked. The tax was reduced from 16 cents to 13 cents due to the meals' tax.
 - Mayor Fred Janci stated the tax reduction and meals' tax took place during John Joeckel's tenure.
 - John Joeckel said the ordinance still has 22 cents for property tax. He stated that ordinance needs to explain what property tax is.
 - Council member Bob Bilicki stated, "Let's move on and address this later."
 - Mayor Fred Janci stated that he will talk to the county to see what can be done.
 - John Joeckel said he assumes there are 7 days from public town hall to final town council to vote.
 - Mayor Fred Janci and Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski stated there would be a meeting next week to finalize the budget.
 - Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski motioned to adjourn the budget meeting, Mayor Fred Janci second the motion all agreed.
 - Meeting adjourned at 6:47.

II. Town Council Meeting

Mayor Janci asked for approval of the May minutes.

Minutes were reviewed. Councilman Glenn Schagelin motioned to approve, Councilman Bob Williams second the motion. Everyone agreed.

John Joeckel complained about the minutes for February were not posted until several months after the meeting. He stated that minutes should be posted in a timely manner.

All agreed.

Mayor Fred Janci explained that the town now has a new clerk who started recently. (Mid April) Council Bob Williams motioned to approve the May minutes. Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski seconded the motion. All agreed.

- A motion to accept minutes was made by Councilman Bob Bilicki, seconded by Councilman Margo. A vote was taken and all approved.

VI. Review of Financial Report

Mayor Janci asked if everyone had a chance to review the Town Financials for May 2021.

- VM Puchalski made a motion to accept financials and Councilman Margo Digan seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all approved.

Mayor Janci asked if everyone had a chance to review the Port Financials for May 2021.

Meeting with The Hotel Management Company to start at 7:15

- Meeting started later due to technical difficulties.
- Paul Landry, Senior Vice President of REVPAR International spoke regarding the feasibility of a Hotel in Wachapreague at the site of the current motel. His company does feasibility and advisory studies. They work along the east coast and internationally.

- REVPAR finished their report and sent a preliminary.
- Paul Landry said he did not believe it was feasible.
- REVPAR focused on a full service hotel along the water where the current motel is located.
- He said the cons are outweighing the pros.

The pros are the hotel would be located on a waterfront and there is fishing.

Cons are, lack of amenities, the chicken farms, odors,

and bad cell phone signals. Paul stated some of these item could be improved.

Paul also stated that Wachapreague will always be competing with Chincoteague, Cape Charles and Onancock.

There was also concern about the lack of corporate use and only seasonal vacation rentals.

REVPAR put a pause on the project due to lack of feasibility.

There is more information in the letter regarding the hotel feasibility.

- REVPAR recommended a 30 room hotel with a 60 to 70 seat restaurant and a small bar.

There could possibly be 4 retail spaces of varying sizes at the hotel too. This was added to Increase amenities in Wachapreague.

- REVPAR recommendation was to work on bringing up the current motel up from a 1 ½ star rating to a 2 ½ to 3 rating. They also recommended building up broader amenities in town.

Paul Landry also said longer term rentals such as B&Bs and VRBOs are probably preferred. Paul Landry said REVPAR is here to assist.

- John Joeckel asked Paul Landry why the document wasn't made public for the town. Councilman Bob Williams said there are only 9 people here at the meeting (this includes the council members).

The June 8th meeting was advertised as the Town Budget meeting and the Hotel Feasibility meeting. This is all the interest that the town has.

- Chris Wardius questioned Paul Landry if the town had sewer would this help. He was disappointed because he had higher hopes for the hotel. Chris said that this shows sewer is vital to this town.
- Bob Williams stated that Keith from the campground came to town hall complaining about smell from Island House septic. Chris stated that it is not good to invest more money in a current Inn with a failing infrastructure. Vice Mayor Sandie stated that sewer opens opportunity. Mayor Fred Janci stated financing is the key to getting sewer. He is concerned regarding VIMS and their involvement. He stated he gave VIMS the Pump and Haul Ordinance. Mayor Fred Janci said there are items missing from VIMS commitment letter. Mayor Janci is concerned about the town obtaining a grant if there is no commitment in writing. VIMS donated the lot to HRSD. The town cannot use this toward applying for a grant. He also stated that land donated to HRSD, it by passes the town therefor it does not help the town get a grant. Mayor Fred also stated that VIMS will not help with grant writing. Dick Snyder said he would personally help. Councilman Bob Bilicki stated that VIMS could go back 80X40 foot drain field on the corner of Brooklyn and Riverview, but they have not. If VIMS does this they are not a HRSD user. Councilman Bob Bilicki stated that they are still working with Delegate Rob Bloxom and State Representative John Lewis on this project.
- Mayor Fred Janci stated that he hopes to get \$231,000. though Covid Funds. Chris Wardius stated that we need to work together. Council member Bob Williams stated this is a complicated issue. Tomeka stated there are three B&Bs no longer active. Council Bob Bilicki said there are active transient rentals that are outside of the approved transient zone that the mayor needs to address.
- Mayor Janci said maybe we should look at opening up B&B opportunities to the town. Councilman Margo stated it is a zoning issue.
- Councilman Glenn Schagelin stated that VIMS should not be pointed at VIMS. Town Council should have gotten the monetary commitment in writing first. Mayor Fred Janci agreed. Aileen Joeckel asked if the ordinance could be rescinded.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. HRSD

- Vice Mayor Sandie said we need to pick a date for the next public HRSD meeting. Vice Mayor Motioned that HRSD public meeting to be held July 8th at the Wachapreague Fire Hall. Margo second the motion, everyone agreed.

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B. Marina

- Vice Mayor Sandy Puchalski reported everything is good at the marina, she submitted paperwork for reimbursements and is waiting for them.

C. Town Maintenance/Garbage (Repairs)

- Councilman Glen Schagelin said everything is functioning well. Councilman Schagelin said he is looking into buying a new garbage truck. He said it would cost around \$150,000. He was asking what the amount of money available is, and can the funds from the American Rescue be used towards a new truck.

- Mayor Fred Janci responded that there was a clause in the grant that said it was not to exceed 75% of the town budget. Mayor Janci stated that we were told we would get up to \$231,000. Mayor Janci said we will have to wait and see what we get.
- Councilman Margo Digan stated that she and Councilman Glen Schagelin were going to go over the maintenance job description.

D. Powell Park

- *Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski stated that everything has been fine except for some cleanup needed at Powel Park.*
- Vice Mayor Sandie said the Jill Gillmor wanted to donate a bench in honor of Betty Sutter. Vice Mayor Sandie suggest a wooden bench with a plaque at the doggie park.

E. Seaside Park

Mayor Fred Janci stated that mulch was on its way.

F. Town Beautification

- Councilman Margo Digan said she had nothing new to report.

G. Tourism

- Councilman R. Bilicki reported that the Natural Conservatory is moving forward on the bird watching platform. Anne Swick agreed to be the chairman of the committee. Councilman Bon Bilicki suggested new plantings on an embankment on the east side near the bird watching area where the plants have died. Tomeka stated that was a poor site for dredging material from the old Marina.
- Councilman Bob Bilicki said he heard from Blake about 2 months ago at a town hall meeting regarding the sign located at the Keller Hickman Lumber. Councilman Bilicki reported this sign is a non-conforming VDOT sign. It is currently in bad shape on the North Side. Councilman Bob Bilicki stated only one side is allowed to be fixed at a time since it is a non-conforming sign. He stated the material that they are planning on using should last 8 to 10 years, Councilman Bob Bilicki stated it is not in our budget. He requested that part of the money we received from the American Rescue Funds be applied to repairs needed.
- Mayor Janci asked for clarification on the estimate of the sign. \$1500.00 times two and \$300 times two. Mayor Janci recommended eliminating the transfer sign. Then there would only be one due.
- Councilman Bob Bilicki also mentioned refreshing the Welcome to Wachapreague sign near town hall.
- Councilman Bob Bilicki applied for a variance to put a directional sign on route 180. It would be located on railroad property. He said Route 180 from Wachapreague to Harborton is a scenic byway. This is why the town would need a variance. Council Bob Bilicki said it is currently being reviewed.

H. Derelict Properties

- Councilman Stephan Joseph stated that notice needs to be served to the new owners of the Barnes House.
- Councilman Stephen Joseph reported he is working on the pink house.
- Mayor Janci reported that Jack Norman is getting the materials to finish his home. He stated he would move his trailer.

Councilman Bob Bilicki stated that Patricia Braggs received her letter on 48 Main St. She called Councilman Sandie. Councilman Bob Bilicki will talk to Patricia Braggs May 16 and get back to council.

I. Safety and Security

- Councilman Bob Williams is still waiting for the response from VDOT regarding solar sign.
- May 16th a car struck and broke a light pole on Atlantic and Bayview. Police and ANEC were called. Both have been replaced.
- Mayor Fred Janci stated that one of his markers were broken.
- Councilman Joseph reported that the sign for Church and Liberty have been reversed.

J. Zoning Administrator's Report

- Mayor Janci stated he had nothing new to report.

K. Streets and Drainage

- Covered under Safety and Security

L. Floodplain Administrator/CRS Coordinator/ A-NPDC/RAFT

- Councilman R. Williams reported he has a meeting with the Hazardous mitigation committee.
- Councilman Bob Williams has the 2021 Virginia Community Grant Preparation Fund Manual to review so he can understand requirements needed to apply for grant.
- Councilman R. Williams reported that the CRS rating will stay the same.

M. Planning Commission

- Councilman M. Digan said Eileen sent all their goals and strategies. The committee will meet on the 23rd.

N. ADA Parking Space Requirements.

- *Councilman Margo Digan asked if there are any handicap parking spaces available.*
- *Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski reported that she had a handicapped sign that Margo could use.*
- *Councilman Margo Digan reported that she contacted some law enforcement officers regarding patrols. Vice Mayor Sandie noticed some lights and someone pulled over.*

XII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Sandy and second by Mayor Janci. All approved.

MAYOR

TOWN CLERK

6/10/2021