

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 1ST, 2022
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. Robby Fisher, Police Chief
Mr. E. Bryan Rush, Director of Emergency Services

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.

- Mrs. Julie Brommer, Chincoteague Island Community Cats, gave an update on the neutering, spaying, and vaccinations of the local community cats. She thanked Council for the use of the Firehouse and the Donald J. Amrien Recreation Center for the clinic.

- Chincoteague Chamber Executive Director Shotwell gave a huge shoutout to the Police Department, the EMS, the Town staff and Council, Saltwater Cowboys, and everyone for all they do. She didn't hear any complaints about the swim. She announced that as of 3:00 p.m. today the video she shared on the Chamber's Facebook page reached 5 million views and 11,758 reaches. She reported that they have received several calls for bookings next year. She again thanked everyone.

Agenda Adoption

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

Staff Reports

General Government

Town Manager Tolbert reported on the failure of the bulkhead at Memorial Park adding that a temporary fence was immediately erected. He advised he contacted the Army Corps of Engineers and the local Wetlands Board as to the need of emergency repair. A marine contractor was also contacted, and a price was obtained. Materials will be available within the next 2 weeks. He reported on the Inlet Study advising there will be a site visit on August 19th. He invited NASA and USF&W to have a representative at the meeting along with Council to make sure this goes through the budget next year. He reviewed the Cigarette Tax information and stated it should be in place by January 1st. He reviewed the Financial Report adding that they received the 2nd tranche of the ARPA funds. He advised of the annual audit report stating there was no detection of fraud, malfeasance, or incompetence. He continued with the Meals and Transient Occupancy Tax revenue for June activity reported in July. He also reported on the Building and Zoning Department with 39 building permits for July. He informed Council that he signed a contract Friday with I-worQ Systems, Inc. to provide a cloud-based building and zoning permit service for the Town. He added that I-worQ can use the County GIS system within the software with no additional fees. It will take approximately 60 days to implement.

There were brief questions and comments about the cigarette tax.

Police Department

Chief Fisher gave an update to the July report in the packet. He reported that in July they assisted the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company with the carnival, fireworks, and swim. They supplied an officer at the carnival each night with no major problems. They conducted a department meeting on July 20th about the swim. Sgt. Adams and Cpl. Butler recertified in the breathalyzer operations. He commented that Town Manager Tolbert, Emergency Management Coordinator Rush, and the State Police were a big help. He advised they met with the troopers about their duties during the swim. He stated that the Governor's Protection Unit was here so the Governor and his wife could attend the Pony Swim. He stated that regarding the swim everyone in the Town, volunteers, bus drivers, and all did a great job with only a few glitches.

Mayor Leonard commented that he saw Chief Fisher in the YouTube videos of old pony swims and auctions. He also stated that the State Police were thorough.

Emergency Services

Director of Emergency Services Rush updated the numbers for July. They went from 90 to 133 calls. He advised that Pony Swim Day didn't start out well with calls but settled down later in the afternoon. They had 8 more calls than last July. He reported that out of the 133 calls, the average response time to get an ambulance at the emergency was 4.83 minutes. This is very good. He stated that this is due to the elected officials who put stock in the system, and the system working the way that it does. He advised that EMT Jonczak was presented with his Citation as he was unable to attend the last Council meeting. He thanked Parksley, Greenbackville, and Oak Hall for helping during the swim, and Oak Hall for helping during the auction and fireworks night. He also thanked the Atlantic Fire Company who did the fire watch during the fireworks on the 30th.

Director of Emergency Services Rush also reported they are continuing to monitor COVID and the weather. He announced an After-Action meeting for the fireworks and Pony Swim tomorrow. ANTARES is scheduled for a mid-October launch. He reported the COVID numbers for Virginia. He will have the After-Action Report completed by mid-August. He added that the Department of Homeland Security is looking for a Special Events Assessment by September 2nd, 2023. He also stated that 6 months and under can get vaccinated and for everyone to be weather aware.

Committee Reports:

Budget and Personnel Committee

Vice Mayor Bott advised they met on July 12th and discussed the surplus. They will discuss further in September to make recommendations to Council for allocation.

Adoption of the Minutes of the July 5th Council Meetings

Councilman Savage motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden to adopt the minutes of the July 5th Council meetings as presented. Unanimously approved.

Eastern Shore Broadband Update

Mr. Bridgham with the Eastern Shore Broadband gave some history of the ESVBA. He advised of the speed, connection fees, programs for low income, and monthly costs.

Councilwoman Bowden asked how many Chincoteague customers have ESVBA and what the cost was.

Mr. Bridgham advised 7 and the service fee is \$150.00.

Councilwoman Bowden asked if they would bring it directly to the house and bury the line.

Mr. Bridgham stated they would and can bury it or bring it in overhead.

Councilwoman Bowden stated that they could go to ESVBA.com and sign up or call.

Mayor Leonard advised his motel has it and it is phenomenal. The schools, Town, and Fire Company also have it.

Councilwoman Richardson asked if the High School was the end of the line on North Main Street.

Mr. Bridgham advised it goes from the Harbor (South Main Street) all the way to the turn circle (North Main Street) and some side streets. They can install on any side street.

Councilwoman Richardson asked how much it would be to run service into Misty Meadows just off of North Main Street.

Mr. Bridgham advised they set the service connection fee for Chincoteague at \$150.

Community Center Capital Improvements

Town Manager Tolbert reported that the Center's HVAC needs replacing. He stated that Trane of Chesapeake looked at the system. He explained the age of the current system, the problems, and advised of the new system that would be more efficient. He added that they can bridge the gap between the cloud ceiling so as not to change the appearance, but to make it more efficient. The cost for the new system would be \$167,000. He showed the schematics and explained that some of the preparation can be done in-house. He also stated that this could be paid for with the Center's Investment Account which has \$282,893.

Councilman McComb motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Bowden to approve the expenditure for the purchase of a new HVAC system for the Center. Unanimously approved.

There was further discussion.

Mayor and Council Comments

Councilwoman Bowden stated they weren't sure what to expect after 2 years of no carnival. She feels this was the best carnival season she's ever seen. She thanked every single person involved including the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company, the Town of Chincoteague staff, Public Works, the bus drivers, the Chincoteague Police Department, Sheriff's Office, and everyone for everything they did. She stated that it was a tremendous success. She also stated that the proceeds go back into the Town one way or another. She can't thank everyone enough for all their help and support. She concluded with "Go Yankees".

Councilman Taylor asked God to continue to bless them.

Councilman Savage stated that this is resiliency at its finest when we have the group of people that we have. He extended kudos to everyone.

Mayor Leonard stated it is something to see all the preparation work that goes into planning that everyone doesn't see at Pony Penning. He added that they can't have a successful Pony Penning without all of them. He thanked everyone. He advised he didn't get to see much of the carnival because he stayed in the back of the auxiliary stand. He commented that the lines on July 4th were nearly 2 hours long. He stated that it was amazing and thanked the citizens for their continued patience through July and throughout this month.

Closed Meeting in Accordance with §2.2-3711 (A) (1 & 5) of the Code of Virginia to discuss evaluation of senior staff, discussion of specific personnel and potential sale of real property.

Councilwoman Bowden motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb to go into a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3711 (A) (1 & 5) of the Code of Virginia to discuss evaluation of senior staff, discussion of specific personnel and potential business opportunities.

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: Councilwoman Bowden 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 only such public business matters 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

Councilwoman Bowden motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb to adjourn. Unanimously approved.

J. Arthur Leonard, Mayor

Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager