

**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2, 2024
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. Tyler Greenley, Acting Chief of Police
Mrs. Mary E. Leonard, Center 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.

Christmas Lights Winners

Mayor Leonard announced the winners of the 2023 Christmas Decorated Homes:

Honorable Mention

Gene Jester & David Taylor
Dino Johnson

Winners

3rd Place: Richard & Carolyn Conklin
2nd Place: Matt & Janet Mason
1st Place: Delmas & Theresa Mears

Public Comment

Mayor Leonard opened the floor for public comment. There were none.

Agenda Adoption

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

Staff Reports

General Government

Town Manager Tolbert advised that the Center's HVAC system installation has been completed. He added that the floors have been completely stripped and waxed. He reported that the Town has achieved its goal of obtaining the Sunset Bay sewage treatment plants and transferring them

to HRSD. The final documents were delivered to the Clerk's office in Accomac on December 19th. HRSD is the legal owner of the sewage treatment plants and associated properties sans HOA covenants and restrictions. The change in ownership will automatically void the lease between the Town and Sunset Bay Utilities. HRSD is well into the process of designing new plants to replace the existing dilapidated plants. The Town signed a contract with Davis Bower and Friedel on December 18th to provide design, construction administration, and inspection services for the Town's initial public sewage collection system. The contract is valued at \$283,600 and will be paid for with the Town's ARPA award. Design prep work began immediately and should be completed in September of this year. In addition to the ARPA funds, the Town will seek additional funding through the state's Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund to make sure the Town can obtain the construct the entire system at one time.

Town Manager Tolbert reviewed the Meals and Transient Occupancy Tax revenue for December. He then advised that things are slow at the Harbor. Harbormaster Merritt is working with Public Works to price material for the replacement of the wood finger piers at the traditional slips. They will begin working on this project this month for completion before the spring season. Water pedestals for the new floating piers have been ordered and will be installed over the winter. There is some subleasing in the winter months at the Harbor as well. The ACOE is also planning to dredge in the spring. He reviewed the December Financial Report advising that the Town is where they should be in December. He also gave the Building and Zoning Report for December. He stated Building and Zoning Administrator Bowden issued 36 building permits and conducted 40 inspections. The total value of building cost instruction of \$1.72 million, with fees collected of \$5,000. He also reported he received an email from Mr. Robby March of ANEC who received an email from an EV customer. The customer came to Chincoteague advising that it usually takes 50 hours to charge their battery to 100%. They reported they enjoyed the 90 minutes today contributing to the economy of Chincoteague by having lunch at Bill's Seafood Restaurant, visiting Sundial Books, and the Island Library while the car was charging. He added that it was astonishing to see the battery increase at that time.

Councilwoman Bowden asked about possibly putting in a floating pier with finger piers off of it.

Town Manager Tolbert advised they have discussed this, but once they put a floating pier there it is more difficult to access as it will run the entire length, parallel with the bulkhead.

There was brief discussion.

Councilman Taylor asked about the sewer collection system and the state Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund.

Town Manager Tolbert advised it is a loan fund with low interest of less than 1%. This is not something they would want to do, however, would be by act of Council. He added they wouldn't have to fund the entire project with this. He stated they would be collecting connection fees.

Councilman Taylor stated that if they do this in phases and charge the same amount in hookup fees that were being charged by Sunset Bay Utilities, then those fees would pay for the next

person's fees. He explained that for those people who aren't tied into the sewer at all wouldn't be funding it.

Town Manager Tolbert agreed that this is an option.

Mayor Leonard advised that at the Legislative meeting, they were advised that some of the ARPA funds would come back.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that they don't expect everyone to expend all the funds. He added that they will stand in line for these funds. By the time this would become available the design would be complete.

Police Department

Acting Chief Greenley reported that the Department held its annual Christmas Toy Ride with 50 bikers. They went shopping on the 13th and were able to give toys to 33 children. They donated the extra toys to Atlantic Volunteer Fire Company. They assisted with traffic control for the annual Christmas parade, and on December 5th Pfc. Matthews, Pfc. Renas, and Pfc. McGee completed Speed Measurement Training. Acting Chief Greenley reported that the white Durango, and the white Dodge Ram have the police lettering. The white Durango is currently getting interior equipment installed, the Dodge Ram is next and should be done soon. He added that all of the officers have been issued with bullet proof vests, that are lighter, better design, and protection on the side. They also received new pepper guns. Both were issued through a grant.

Public Works Department

Town Manager Tolbert reported that Public Works Director Parks met with a company today that was able to give a price on replacing the sand in the sand filters at the water plant. As soon as Public Works Director Parks gets a good price, they'll be issuing this. He added that the money is in the budget. They a tree removed at the Greenwood Cemetery by a local tree removal contractor. He reported that the Brianna's Kindness Park restrooms are completed and open to the public. He added that the porta-johns will be removed from the Park as well. Public Works Director Parks found a contractor that paid the Town to scrap the chiller and boiler. They also took the gas water heater, the ductwork, and will cleanup the piping in the mechanical room. He stated they planned OSHA 10 training course for the 17th and 18th. This is a basic safety course for outside and construction work. They plan to remove and store Christmas decorations, replace finger piers at the Harbor, install an alarm system for the drain pumps at the traffic circle, and continue routine maintenance of equipment and vehicles.

Chincoteague Center

Center Director Leonard reported that for the month of December there were 10 events, which was an increase of 22% from last year. She advised of upcoming events scheduled and announced that walking at the Center has started back Monday through Friday from 9am – 10am, beginning today. She reported on the classes, and events during the month. She stated that Delegate Bloxom's New Year's Eve event went well. They were able to secure the trolleys, which were a huge success. Center Director Leonard reported that with the help of the Chamber, they submitted a proposal to the Virginia Tourism Commission to have Chincoteague host the annual 2024 Virginia Visitor Center Seminar Summit and was awarded this opportunity. There

will be at least 100 people to come from visitor and welcome centers across the state. The seminar will be held in March and the attendees will be touring the Island, Wildlife Refuge, and NASA via the Island Trolleys. They will be spending money on motels and restaurants on the Island. During the seminar they plan to utilize local people like decoy carving. She welcomed suggestions for events, classes, etc. She also reported that she met with the Island Community House who requested to have bingo at the Center. It is the last Monday in the month from 1:00p.m. – 3:00p.m. Since July they have 1,500 new followers on Facebook. They plan to bring back the Decoy Show Thanksgiving.

Councilwoman Bowden asked if they have what they need with an audio-visual system.

Center Director Leonard advised they have nothing.

Town Manager Tolbert responded that it's in the works.

Councilwoman Bowden feels that with the Tourism Summit, they will need it.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that the object, this winter is to have a permanent system installed.

Center Director Leonard stated her email is on the report and invited comments and ideas.

Councilwoman Bowden stated that she is doing an awesome job.

Mayor Leonard invited everyone to do the walk in the morning to see what has been done at the Center.

Councilwoman Bowden asked why they didn't complete the kitchen and why the Community House can have a full kitchen.

Center Director Leonard believes it because of the Health Department.

Town Manager Tolbert stated that the permit restricts no more than 2 food events within a certain amount of hours. He is unsure why, but believes it has to do with the capacity of the drainfields. He stated it would be beneficial to look into this to change it.

Center Director Leonard stated that some of the caterers bring food carts.

Emergency Services

Town Manager Tolbert reported that they responded to 62 calls in December. He stated that Emergency Services Coordinator Rush is on the EMS Advisory Board for the state. Governor Younkin has directed \$8 million surplus in the General Fund to be redistributed to EMS. The new ambulance is scheduled for inspection by the end of January. He advised that they have 1 new hire, and 2 letters of intent for the full-time positions.

Adoption of the Minutes

Councilman Savage motioned, seconded by Councilman McComb to adopt the minutes of the December 4th, and 11th Council meetings. Unanimously approved.

Consider FY25 Trolley and Grant Application

Town Manager Tolbert advised that Council reviews the Pony Express budget annually at the January regular meeting allowing the grant application to be submitted on time. He stated that this year's Trolley operations budget is \$92,803 of which federal and state grants will fund about 73% with the Town's local match covering the remaining \$25,400 (27%). The budget includes a raise in salaries to attempt to lure and retain enough drivers to operate a full schedule for the first time since Covid. The new schedule will provide service 7 days a week during the months of July and August. They also do specials for the Oyster and Seafood Festivals.

Town Manager Tolbert also stated they plan to surplus the 4th vehicle during the spring or summer. They propose to purchase the trolley outright. This direct purchase will take it out from under the guise of the DRPT and into the Town's to use as they see fit. DRPT has restrictions, and between Center Director Leonard and Transportation Director King, DRPT allowed a trolley to be used for the Delegate's Ball and lining it up for the Summit in March. DRPT was agreeable to these items because one was for a sitting Delegate(s) and the other involves a Department of the State of Virginia. It was very popular. He feels if the Town owned one, it would be popular as well and feels it would be worthwhile that the Town consider purchasing it so there would be no restrictions. He further advised they don't know the process of purchasing it.

They discussed naming the new trolley allowing the elementary school children to vote on the name. There was discussion regarding the salaries, the recruitment of an excellent group of school bus drivers from Accomack County Schools.

Councilwoman Bowden motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Richardson to approve the FY25 Trolley Budget as presented as well as the submission of this information for the FY25 – 5311 Trolley Operations Grant. Unanimously approved.

FY25 Trolley Budget

ACCOUNT	REVENUE	FY25	FY24	FY 23 Actual
	OPERATIONAL REVENUE			
704501.0100	TROLLEY GRANTS (5311 Operations)	\$62,340	\$68,913	\$33,630
704501.0110	PROGRAM INCOME	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$1,829
704501.0200	RTAP REIMBURSEMENTS	\$0	\$0	\$0
704501.0300	MISC. NON-PROGRAM INCOME	\$0	\$0	\$0
704501.8900	TRANSFER FROM GEN. FUND	\$25,463	\$28,148	\$25,419
	SUB TOTAL	\$92,803	\$101,061	\$60,878
	CAPITAL REVENUES AND GRANTS			
704501.0100	FEDERAL GRANT (New Trolley)	\$0	\$132,400	\$0
704501.0100	STATE CAPITAL GRANT (New Trolley)	\$0	\$26,480	\$0
704501.0100	TRANSFER FROM TROLLEY CAPITAL ACCT.	\$0	\$0	\$0
	SURPLUS TROLLEY SALE	\$40,000		
	EXPENDITURES			
	SALARIES			
703010.0100	SALARIES	\$44,220	\$49,980	\$19,476
	SUB TOTAL	\$44,220	\$49,980	\$19,476
	BENEFITS			
703010.2001	SOCIAL SECURITY	\$3,383	\$3,831	\$1,489
	SUB TOTAL	\$3,383	\$3,831	\$1,489
	OPERATIONAL EXPENSES			
703030.3401	INSURANCE & BONDING	\$3,400	\$3,400	\$0
703030.4400	COMUNICATION SERVICES	\$800	\$500	\$0
703030.4401	PRINTING & REPRODUCTION	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$1,253
703030.4402	ADVERTISING & PROMOTION	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$825
703030.4403	EDUCATION & TRAINING	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$0
703030.4404	CLEANING SUPPLIES	\$300	\$300	\$0
703030.4406	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	\$500	\$500	\$0
703030.4407	MEMBERSHIPS & DUES	\$250	\$250	\$250
703030.4408	TRAVEL & MEALS	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$100
703030.4701	FUEL & LUBRICANTS	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$2,237
703030.4702	TIRES & TUBES	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0
703030.4703	UNIFORMS	\$500	\$1,000	\$0
703030.4704	PARTS	\$750	\$750	\$602
703030.5201	DRUG TESTING/BACKGROUND CHECKS	\$1,000	\$750	\$67
703030.6100	RTAP EXPENSES	\$0	\$0	\$0
703030.7302	REPAIRS/MAINT	\$4,500	\$6,500	\$9,123
703030.8505	RENT TO GENERAL FUND	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$15,000
	SUB TOTAL	\$45,200	\$47,150	\$29,457
	Total Operating	\$92,803	\$100,961	\$50,422
	CAPITAL EXPENSE			
703090.9001	NEW TROLLEY	\$0	\$148,626	
	TRANSFER TO TROLLEY CAPITAL ACCT.	\$40,000	\$10,254	
703090.91	CAPITAL EXPENSE	\$0	\$0	
	Total Capital	\$40,000	\$158,880	\$0
	Total Trolly Budget	\$132,803	\$259,841	\$50,422

Council Comments

Councilwoman Bowden wished everyone a Happy New Year. She hopes and prays that the Town will continue on the path to continue welcoming our visitors and the citizens who live here. She stated they have issues to address and take care of. She agrees with Councilman Taylor about being kind. She also stated they need to make sure the employees are being taken care of in the Town. She advised to pray for Councilman Savage's mother. She added to also pray for Councilman Taylor's son-in-law who was in a serious ATV accident.

Councilman McComb agreed and echoed Councilwoman Bowden's comments.

Councilman Taylor stated that he prays for blessings in 2024.

Councilman Savage wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mayor Leonard stated that 2023 is over and 2024 is rolling along. He concluded with "2024 is a new season, so, Roll Tide".

Closed Meeting – In accordance with §2.2-3711(A) (1, 4) of the Code of Virginia for the discussion of specific personnel and the protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business.

Councilman McComb and Councilman Savage motioned, seconded by Vice Mayor Bott to go into a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3712 (A) (1, 4) of the Code of Virginia for the discussion of specific personnel and the protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business. All present were in favor and the motion was carried.

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 Councilman McComb motioned, seconded by Vice Mayor Bott to certify the Closed Meeting was in accordance with §2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia. All present were in favor and the motion was carried.

Ayes: Bott, Bowden, McComb, Richardson, Savage, Taylor

Nays: None

Absent: None

Adjourn

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

J. Arthur Leonard, Mayor

Michael T. Tolbert, Town Manager