

October 7, 2024

The Town Council of the Town of Oxford met for a regular meeting on Monday October 7, 2024. Rusty Hoaks, Jim Deckard, Tina Coffman, and Larry Barnard were present. Terry Zink was absent. Town employees and department heads present included Clerk-Treasurer Tina Porter, Utility Clerk Hope Dunning, Town Marshal Aaron May, and Fire Chief Justin Bice.

Regular session called to order at 7:01 pm

Minutes: Minutes were submitted to the board for approval. Coffman motioned to approve. Barnard seconded. None opposed.

Claims: Claims were submitted to the board for approval. Deckard motioned to approve. Barnard seconded. None opposed.

Clerk-Treasurer Report: Clerk-Treasurer Tina Porter informed the council of a town credit card with a previous town employee as the authorized user as having a past due balance. The previous Clerk-Treasurer Deanna Sutherlin attempted to get an invoice for the charge without success. The credit card company, Elan, has not allowed new town employees to make changes to the accounts, which is why the card is still able to be charged. Porter asked for approval from the council to pay the current balance due. Once new town credit cards are in place Porter will work with the town lawyer to have Elan account closed. Coffman motioned to approve payment of the card. Barnard seconded. None opposed.

Utility Clerk's Report: Utility Clerk Hope Dunning presented two disconnect lists to the council, one for late/nonpayment of September's bill for August consumption, and a second list for those who are noncompliant of payment arrangements they had made. One resident on the list was present at the meeting and requested an extension until Friday October 11, 2024. Three others on the September bill list requested extensions through the Utility Clerk

Deckard motioned to approve the rest of the lists to be disconnected. Coffman seconded. None opposed.

Superintendent Report: Quote for a new flowmeter was presented to the council. The current one has been faulty, and repairs are no longer working to correct the issues. Hoaks explained to the rest of the council about IDEM requirements and how this item in working conditions is needed to stay in compliance. Coffman motioned to approve the purchase of the new flowmeter. Barnard seconded. None opposed.

Marshal Report: Town Marshal Aaron May reported some of the residents on his violation list did get some cleanup done however he did write up violations today for others. May stated he will be checking streetlights tonight to hopefully get those fixed before the scheduled town Halloween events. May also reported that one of the residents being in violation of an ordinance was present at the meeting and wanted to speak to the council. The council opened the floor to the residents in violation and discussion ensued. Hoaks restated to the residents of the town ordinances about the number of pets allowed and that issues between neighbors are a civil matter.

Fire Dept. Report: Fire Chief Justin Bice informed council of an \$8,000 donation received from the former United Methodist Church of Oxford and that the Fire Department is using that entire donation plus other funding to procure various turnout gear for current firefighters. Bice also presented a quote for air bottles and face masks. Deckard made a motion to approve the purchase of those items. Coffman seconded. None opposed.

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Bice provided an update to the council regarding the transition to new internet providers and IT services for the Fire Department building. He mentioned suggestions for phone services that could be explored, which may benefit all town facilities.

Bice also shared recent developments in the search for a new tanker, noting that two quotes have been received: one for a tanker with a pump and one without, with the higher quote totaling \$489,000. He indicated a preference for a shorter tanker than the one quoted and assured the council that further updates and quotes would be provided as they become available.

Additionally, Bice informed the council that the Fire Department currently has three open positions. He discussed the existing burn ban and highlighted recent issues in town related to unattended burning. Finally, Bice reminded the council of his request to renegotiate the firefighters' contract.

Old Business: Tina Porter updated the council on the rest of the town's facilities transition from AT&T to Mainstream for internet and phone services. Due to a couple of important town emails still being tied to AT&T the transition may take longer than initially planned and updates will be provided as progress happens.

Porter presented cleaning bids that had been submitted for taking over the cleaning of the Town Hall and Fire Department. Hope Dunning and Tina Porter let the council know they would be willing to add the town hall cleaning to their duties up until the Town Hall moves location and therefore the council would only need to consider someone for taking over the Fire Department monthly cleaning. The council looked over the bids. Coffman made a motion to accept the bid from Sharon Dare to clean the Fire Department. Deckard seconded. None opposed.

Dunning updated the council on issues with a resident that has a meter located inside their home and had been scheduled for disconnect

New Business: Tina Porter relayed information provided to her about insuring the Federated Church building that is being donated to the town before all of the paperwork to change over is done. The council did not see a reason to move forward with that recommendation at this time. Porter will be reaching out to the town attorney to discuss next legal steps needing to be taken for the acquisition of the building.

Business Guests: President of Discover Oxford Ashley Bice discussed plans for the Oxford Halloween on Saturday October 26, 2024 and asked for the town's permission to close off Justus and Smith streets on the square for that event. Coffman motioned to approve. Deckard seconded. None opposed.

Bice also discussed preliminary plans for the annual tree lighting event that will be presented by both Discover Oxford and the Oxford Lions Club.

Executive Director of Benton Community Foundation Andrea Bowman opened for the Oxford Parks and Trails committee. Parks and Trails committee member, Don Johnson, spoke to the board about projects the committee has in mind that they would like to pursue further. Requests were made for permission for the committee to contact the railroad to ask if creating a walking path over a portion of the railroad would be an option. Discussion ensued; no motion was made. A second request was made to have permission to consider the area at Academy Park where the pool once was for a

pickle ball court and to be able to have designers/planners look at the area. Discussion of the space requested as well as other options was had. Coffman made a motion to allow the committee to pursue looking into the Academy Park area, Barnard seconded. Hoaks voted in favor. Deckard did not cast a vote. With a majority in favor, the motion passed.

Around the table concerns: Deckard spoke of personal experience with a recent water leak which resulted in an unusually high water bill. Deckard expressed frustration in the timing and notification he had received. Dunning explained the process based on the system, policies and ordinances in place.

Barnard made a recommendation for a Town Manager position to be created due to the imminent council member changes and increased responsibilities to be placed on the town in the new year. Barnard also recommended that Hoaks fill the position and write up the job description. Coffman opposed with no other members casting votes. Council decided to table the issue until the November 4<sup>th</sup> 2024 regular meeting.

Board Meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm

The next regular Town Council meeting is Monday October 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at the Oxford Town Hall. The public is welcome and invited to attend.

Submitted by Tina Porter  
TINA PORTER, CLERK-TREASURER

Approved by Russell Hoaks  
RUSSELL HOAKS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT/JIM DECKARD, VICE

Date Approved 10-21-2024