

December 16, 2024

The Town Council of the Town of Oxford met for a regular meeting on Monday December 16, 2024. Rusty Hoaks, Tina Coffman, and Terry Zink were present. Town employees and department heads present included Clerk-Treasurer Tina Porter, Utility Clerk Hope Dunning and Marshal Aaron May.

Regular meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. quorum present

Claims: Porter provided information and asked for clarification of some of the meeting claims that were being presented. It was asked if the council was aware the town has been paying for uniform cleaning for the contracted licensed water/wastewater operator and stated the contract between him and the town does not state this is an allowed benefit. The council did not make a motion to allow those charges to continue and asked for those services to be stopped. Porter explained the push back she has been receiving from the current town attorney with billing line items from his invoices. Clarification of line items was asked for by Porter in an email to pay the bill from the correct appropriation and the attorney replied that he did not want to breach privilege as the reason for not providing that information. Hoaks stated he would talk to the attorney about this issue. Porter discussed an auto pay charge on the previous Clerk-Treasurer's credit card that the town has not been allowed access to that has resulted in a bill and late charge. Porter has put in a formal request to be given access to those accounts, however that request has not been approved as of this board meeting. Porter requested permission to go ahead and pay that bill to avoid any further late fees and will attempt to dispute the charge once access to the accounts has been granted. Barnard made a motion to allow the payment of the bill. Coffman seconded. None opposed. Zink made a motion to accept claims. Coffman seconded. None opposed.

Minutes: December 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup> minutes were presented. Coffman made a motion to accept the minutes. Barnard seconded. None opposed.

Utility Clerk Report: Dunning reported an update to the council about the court case involving the town gaining access inside a resident's home to remove a water meter due to repeated unpaid bills. The court ruled in the town's favor for the resident to allow the town access along with the costs of doing so and the cost of the litigation to be paid by the resident. If access is not granted by the resident a future court date is already scheduled where the court may then allow the town the right to enter without the resident's cooperation.

Assistant Superintendent Report: Coffman presented quotes that Lord obtained for a new dump truck. Discussion ensued as to what size truck would be required to complete the work, state and government programs and discounts, grants, as well as which funds would be used to make the purchase and when. The council asked that more information be obtained and presented for the next meeting. Hoaks stated the back end of the leaf vac has been blown out and so leaves have not been picked up yet but once it is fixed that should get done. Discussion started again regarding obtaining a new truck and at 7:16 p.m. members of the public and board members engaged in back-and-forth conversations. No action was taken by the board to restore order, and the meeting continued informally until 7:17 p.m.

Marshal Report: May updated the council regarding dark areas in town in need of lighting. May stated he reached out to REMC and was told the poles on Smith St where it is dark are not their poles, that they are communication poles so they will not run power on those. As for the area of Quail and Pheasant Run it was stated that REMC told May that when Rick (Robbins) was still with the town that assistance was provided to him on the engineering in that area and the idea of adding more light poles. That Robbins had stated to the contact at REMC that would be a town project and obtained quotes from different contractors but ended up scrapped due to cost. Hoaks and Coffman stated they did remember that taking place, that the cost was around 30-40k for just that area and that it was not approved at the time due to the cost. May stated REMC was not able to provide a cost for the area now and that if the town was interested in getting lighting in that area, they would need to start the project from scratch. May talked to the State Highway Department about Jake Break signs that had been requested and was only told they would get to it but no timeframe. May informed the council of

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various quotes he was working to obtain. Discussion ensued as to the items being considered and the timeframe for turning in those quotes.

Fire Department Report: Porter stated she has been working with K-IRPC to get things in place on the town's side for them to apply for a grant for a new tanker. At 7:23 p.m. members of the public and board members engaged in back-and-forth conversations about reaching out to various entities within the county for assistance. No action was taken by the board to restore order, and the meeting continued informally until 7:25 p.m.

Old Business: Porter presented a new proposal for salaries for 2025, explaining options for the council to consider so that a 2025 Salary Ordinance could be presented and approved before the new year. Barnard made a request for a policy to be placed for those employees who end up with the rolled in health stipend to forfeit that amount if they later decide to sign up for the health insurance. Barnard was also not in favor of rolling in the phone stipend to the pay. The council will take what was presented into consideration and table the discussion for now.

Porter updated the council on moving forward with items to be done for acquiring the Federated Church. All the utilities for the building have been contacted and set up for the town to take over billing responsibilities.

Porter informed the council that when looking at creating a new leak adjustment policy it was discovered that there is no policy in place currently, which is required. Due to this and other findings with billing procedures a leak adjustment policy will not be presented at this meeting and leak adjustments will not be made going forward until an approved policy is in place. Porter stated other billing issues discovered have to do with minimum billing not always being collected per the town ordinance. A resident was present and was asked to speak about his issue with the matter. That resident requested not to be charged a bill since water was not turned on at the service location. The council did not make a motion to approve the resident's request. More discussion ensued regarding the ordinance and different scenarios and at 7:37 p.m. members of the public, board members and employees engaged in back-and-forth conversations. No action was taken by the board to restore order, and the meeting continued informally until 7:41 p.m.

New Business: Porter presented a request from KIRPC for a representative from the town to sit on their board.

First Net quotes were presented for cell phones for all employees and elected officials as part of the proposed transition of removing cell phone stipends from everyone's pay. Porter also informed the council of the first net representative being able to upgrade older existing hotspot equipment. Discussion ensued as to the cost of phones and stipend as well as the service available. Barnard made a motion to approve ordering the cell phones. Zink seconded. Coffman abstained. Hoaks was in favor.

Resolutions were presented to close two unnecessary bank accounts. Funds from both would be transferred to the water bank account. One would remain in the same fund while the other would be reallocated to the water depreciation fund. Coffman made a motion to approve. Zink seconded. None opposed.

A resolution that was made by the town attorney was presented to the council to allow remote meetings. Hoaks explained the council may want to table that until the next meeting.

An agreement from Boyce needing to be signed by the Clerk Treasurer was presented to start preparing our new proposed rate ordinance in the utility billing system as it takes 4 to 6 weeks to prepare. Barnard made the motion to approve the Clerk Treasurer to sign the agreement. Coffman seconded. None opposed.

Resident Comment/Concerns: May was asked if he had equipment he needed to do his job. One resident asked for further explanation about the water billing for water not turned on. Hoaks was thanked for his service to the town by residents.

Around the Table Concerns of Council Members Only: Hoaks presented what he interchangeably called a formal write-up and a statement on a town employee to be placed in his employee file for two years, after which it can be destroyed if no further incidents occur. Hoaks explained this was the recommendation of the town attorney. Discussion ensued about it being a write up, a statement and or a reprimand. A member of the public stated they hoped this part would not be in the newspaper to which Hoaks directed the reporter in attendance to not put this information in the newspaper. Zink made the motion to include the writeup in the employee's file. Barnard seconded. Coffman opposed. Hoaks was in favor.

Coffman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Zink seconded. None opposed.

The next regular Town Council meeting is Monday January 6, 2025 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 Julia Coffman  
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Date Approved 1-6-25

