

January 6, 2025

The Town Council of the Town of Oxford met for a regular meeting on Monday January 6, 2025. Tina Coffman, Nate Foster, Cindy Millburg and Terry Zink were present. Town employees and department heads present included Clerk-Treasurer Tina Porter, Assistant Superintendent Kurt Lord, Marshal Aaron May and Utility Clerk Hope Dunning.

Meeting was called to order by Coffman at 7:00 pm – Quorum present

Coffman explained to the public that the council would be voting in the officers for 2025. Millburg made a motion for Coffman to be President. Foster seconded. None opposed

Zink made a motion for Foster to be Vice President. Millburg seconded. None opposed.

Coffman addressed the public about allegations of a decision by the board regarding possible firing of a town employee, Kurt Lord, stating that there was never a decision made by the board to do so. Coffman let those in attendance know there would be a 20-minute opportunity for the public to speak at the end of the meeting.

Coffman read a resignation letter from Larry Barnard stating he would be resigning from the Oxford town board effect January 1, 2025. Coffman explained that due to Barnard being an independent the position will be open for those who want to apply asking that anyone interested to contact the clerk treasurer's office by January 20, 2025.

Foster made a motion to accept the agenda for the January 6, 2025, meeting. Millburg seconded. None opposed.

Clerk-Treasurer's Report: Porter presented letters to the board in support of Lord that were received by the Clerk Treasurer's office.

A request from KIRPC for the council to appoint a representative for their board was passed on for board review and consideration.

An update to the council on the progress of the donation of the Federated Church building was provided. Porter explained that while an email was received from the town insurance company that they were told all paperwork was signed, the town attorney, Cliff Robinson, has not confirmed this. The last piece of information received from the town attorney to the Clerk Treasurer's office was that a quick deed was being drawn up for the church representatives to sign.

Porter presented to the board a Standard Fee Agreement and Office Policy for Barce & Redlin, P.C. to be taken into consideration when deciding as the town attorney for 2025.

An update was provided on the purchase of the new utility truck and plow approved by the board previously. The purchase did go through, and the clerk's office is working on completing the registration paperwork.

Cell phones for the council and town employees have been received and are just waiting on the IT department to assist with setting them up.

Information was passed along to the council from the Benton County Economic Development Director, Latisha Provo, regarding an event she wanted the council to be aware of and attend if possible. A request for the council to also reach out to the Director once their official emails are established was also stated.

A Town Hall Meeting Policy for the council to review and consider was handed out.

Porter notified the council of two CD's that will be maturing in January and requested the board to approve reinvesting them into new CD's.

Finally, Porter asked the council to consider approving a setup fee for a payment plan tab to be added in the utility billing software. Porter explained this would assist in more accurately tracking those who are on payment arrangements as currently that must be done manually by the utility clerk outside of the billing software.

Assistant Superintendent Report: Lord let the council know about the tires being needed for the blue Ford utility truck and that quotes for those tires have been submitted. Lord also explained issues with the check engine light coming on in the Sterling dump truck and would like to take it to Rowe trucking to be looked at.

Marshal Report: May updated the council about items that were able to be purchased before the end of the year, to included items for a deputy. May stated he would like to start conducting interviews as a deputy was put into the 2025 budget.

Fire Department Report: Bice updated council on grant being worked on with the assistance of KIRPC. The amount requested is 348,000 from the grant and stated after 2025 the township might be able to put 100,000. Bice stated this could be up to a two-year process. Bice reported two groups out for training of Fire 1&2. Also reported were issues to be worked on in 2025; birds in the building, gutters needing repaired/replaced, original water heater needing replaced with possible an on-demand unit in conjunction with a water softener, a digital sign for town promotions, replacement of stand by generator, cutting and cleaning of pine trees and the installation of the new computer for the department that has been received. Bice also updated new council members on the current situation involving the lack of an updated contract. Bice stated he had talked to the council last year about renegotiating the fire contract protection agreement between the town, township and fire department. Bice also made a statement regarding Kurt Lord and his contributions to Fire Department operations; receiving alerts to all callouts and assisting when needed at those - regardless of the time of day, keeping hydrants maintained and handling issues with them when they arise, actively communicates when scheduling maintenance, issues arise and or fixes complete.

Business Guests: Ashley Bice, President of Discover Oxford introduced herself and explained to the new council members the history and working relationship between the town and Discover Oxford. Bice explained Discover Oxford's board requirements and requested the council to consider who they would want to appoint for that position. Bice also spoke about Kurt Lord's character; stating "he is only a text away" and ensures Discover Oxford has what they need for their events.

Shirley Zink, Oxford Library board member, introduced herself and requested the council to consider sponsoring her for another four-year term.

New Business: Claims presented. Millburg made a motion to accept claims. Foster seconded. None opposed. Minutes from the December 16, 2024, meeting were presented. Clarification regarding a written statement that would be placed in Kurt Lord's employee file was made by Porter when asked by the council, which resulted in no corrections being requested. Foster made a motion to accept minutes. Millburg seconded. None opposed. Disconnects were presented. A request from Coffman was made to check one of the accounts, as it was stated to her a payment had been made. Confirmation was made and that account was removed from the list. Zink made a motion to approve the remaining disconnects. Foster seconded. None opposed. Coffman explained to the board and public how liaisons for departments are chosen and voted each year by the council. Discussion among board members took place to determine which department they would like to oversee. A motion was made by Foster for Zink to be the liaison for the Fire Department, Foster to be liaison for the Police Department, Millburg and Coffman to be the liaison for the Utility/Street Department. Millburg seconded. None opposed. Coffman explained choosing the town attorney for the year and choices available. Costs and current pending litigation were discussed regarding the choices. The council has tabled the decision for the next meeting. Coffman explained who KIRPC is, their relationship with the town, and how the board appoints a member each year to sit on their board. Millburg stated she was interested in being that member. Foster made a motion for Millburg to be on the KIRPC board. Zink seconded. None opposed. Coffman explained that the town generally votes to use the Benton Review as the newspaper for the Towns media coverage and notices. Foster made a motion for the Benton Review to be the town newspaper for 2025. Millburg seconded. None opposed. Millburg stated interest in being on the Discover Oxford board. Foster made a motion for Millburg to be on the Discover Oxford board. Zink seconded. None opposed. Meeting dates and times were discussed along with holiday conflicts. Millburg made a motion for meeting dates and time to be the 1st and 3rd at 7:00 p.m. except for the following changes from Monday to Tuesday; January 20th meeting to be January 21st, February 17th meeting to be on February 18th, and September 1st meeting to be on September 2nd. Zink seconded. None opposed. Discussion was had about putting a policy in place for conducting the town meetings. Public input was allowed, no policy was approved, and the discussion was tabled.

PTO Policy for employees was presented to the board to assist with simplifying payroll and time off. Currently calculations must be done, dates remembered and considered, and some manual entries made for the different PTO types; sick, holiday, PTO, vacation, having one overall PTO type will reduce the workload and chance of errors during payroll calculations. Millburg made a motion to accept the PTO Policy. Foster seconded. None opposed.

Millburg made a motion for the Clerk-Treasurer to reinvest two maturing CD's. Zink seconded. None Opposed.

Millburg made a motion to approve paying for adding the payment plan tab to the utility billing software. Zink seconded. None opposed.

Millburg made a motion for the town to sponsor Shirley Zink as a Town Library board member. Foster seconded. None opposed.

Foster made a motion to approve the quote from Etter Tires to replace the utility truck tires. Zink seconded. None opposed.

Coffman then opened the floor to the public for comments asking them to be respectful and limit the total time to 20 minutes. Over 34 comments from the public were made about Kurt Lord, with all but one in full support of him and his character.

Zink made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Foster seconded. None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next regular meeting is Tuesday January 21, 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 *Tina Coffman*
TINA COFFMAN, COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Date Approved 1-26-25