



ORIENTAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
Friday, March 5, 2021 at 8:15am
507 Church Street, Oriental, NC
Mayor Sally Belangia Officiating

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7

8 The Town Board of Oriental Monthly Meeting held on Friday, March 5, 2021 was called to order at 8:15am. Mayor
9 Belangia determined a quorum to be present and opened the meeting and stated we can have a public comment
10 period if anyone would like to speak. The meeting was open to the public – either in person and/or remotely by
11 ZOOM. The Board was able to take comment through both the Manager’s email (manager@townoforiental.com)
12 prior to the meeting and phone (text) through 252-671-2821 during the meeting, as well as questions through the
13 chat in ZOOM. All documents for the meeting were available through the Town’s website at
14 www.TownofOriental.com. Registration for the ZOOM meeting was posted with the meeting documents. All
15 participants were required to pre-register.

16

17 Present: Mayor Belangia, Mayor Pro Tempore White, Commissioner Overcash, Commissioner Simmons,
18 Commissioner Price, Commissioner Barrow, Town Manager Diane Miller, Deputy Finance Director Tammy Cox,
19 Administrative Assistant Chantelle Allison, Public Works Director/ORC Andrew Cox, Police Officers Nic Blayney
20 and Bill Wichrowski, Volunteer Board Members and Members of the Public.

21

22 The Agenda was approved by a MOTION from Commissioner Overcash, seconded by Commissioner Simmons.
23 Unanimous vote : 5-0.

24

25 The Consent Agenda was approved by a MOTION from Commissioner Overcash, seconded by Commissioner
26 Simmons. Unanimous vote : 5-0.

27

28 Public Comment: There were no forwarded messages prior to the meeting, nor did anyone present have comment.

29

30 County Commissioner Candy Bohmert addressed the Board regarding budget preparation, both for the County and
31 the Town. Ms. Bohmert listed several items that the County had concerns regarding their budget and funding,
32 including County building repairs, Sheriff’s Department needing 3-4 cars, and ambulance service equipment needs
33 (Oriental is 3rd highest in number of emergency calls). The County is considering/requesting options for funding, or
34 a possible need to raise taxes to cover these costs.

35

36 Commissioner Overcash received a letter from the Library in response to the Town’s decision not to donate.
37 Commissioner Simmons stated that the Library is not considered a non-profit, rather a government entity. Manager
38 Miller clarified that since it is not a non-profit, we can contribute if desired. Discussion on other options may
39 continue later.

40

41 Commissioner Barrow discussed reopening Town Hall to the public. Since it was closed due to the Governor’s
42 Order (now expired), a motion was not necessary to reopen. Manager Miller had no issues with reopening but did
43 mention that Town Hall employees would not be required to wear masks due to regular communications issues with
44 the demographic that tends to come in to pay water bills. We do maintain distance as often as possible. Town Hall
45 will reopen to the public effective Monday, March 8, 2021.

46

47 Officers Nic Blayney and Bill Wichrowski discussed the monthly Police Report.

48

49 Manager’s Report: Manager Miller stated our revenues are above budget currently, part of which is due to FEMA
50 reimbursements which were not budgeted for. FEMA overage funds can be applied for, depending on the proposed
51 use. There is a need for a Dump Truck for Public Works, and a replacement Police Car; Public Works has \$27,500

52 in reserve for equipment and the Dump Truck would be \$65,000+/-, the Police Car would be \$40,000+/-.
53 Authorization to purchase both vehicles was requested.

54
55 Commissioner Overcash made a MOTION to approve the purchase of the Dump Truck and Police Car.
56 Commissioner Simmons seconded the motion. Unanimous vote: 5-0.

57
58 (Manager's Report Continued) CAMA permit application responses have been received, and the engineer is
59 preparing the response to CAMA to rebut the objections. Permit review has been expanded to 150 days. Manager
60 Miller requests more residents and business owners need to write in support of extending the breakwater at
61 Whittaker Point. Road repairs on White Farm Rd towards Whittaker Point have begun. Drainage work between the
62 Styron and Bohmert properties is complete, but still behind on continued drainage work around town due to
63 inclement weather. Pamlico County is promoting a "Tarp Your Load" campaign to reduce roadside litter. Free
64 tarps will be given out at the Grantsboro Transfer Station on March 6th and April 3rd. Pamlico County sent a letter in
65 support of the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport's Small Community Air Service Development Program Grant
66 Application, along with a pledge. Oriental Board chose to not send a similar letter, nor pledge funds to guarantee
67 operations.

68
69 Harbor Waterfronts Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation meeting minutes for February were submitted.

70
71
72 Mayor Belangia moved on to the Town Hall Board Retreat at 8:48am.

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Sally Belangia, Mayor

Diane H. Miller, Town Manager/Clerk

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82 Approved _____, 2021



ORIENTAL ANNUAL BUDGET RETREAT
Friday, March 5, 2021
507 Church Street, Oriental, NC
Mayor Sally Belangia Officiating

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7 The Town Board of Oriental Annual Budget Retreat was held on Friday, March 5, 2021. Mayor Belangia initiated
8 the Annual Budget Retreat portion of the Meeting at 8:48am, after the Town Board Meeting concluded. The meeting
9 was open to the public – either in person and/or remotely by ZOOM. The Board was able to take comment through
10 both the Manager’s email (manager@townoforiental.com) prior to the meeting and phone (text) through 252-671-
11 2821 during the meeting, as well as questions through the chat in ZOOM. All documents for the meeting were
12 available through the Town’s website at www.TownofOriental.com. Registration for the ZOOM meeting was
13 posted with the meeting documents. All participants were required to pre-register.
14

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16 Commissioner Price, Commissioner Barrow, Town Manager Diane Miller, Deputy Finance Director Tammy Cox,
17 Administrative Assistant Chantelle Allison, Public Works Director/ORC Andrew Cox, Police Officers Nic Blayney
18 and Bill Wichrowski, Volunteer Board Members and Members of the Public.
19

20 This is an informal meeting where the Board gathers to discuss budget and other issues. By North Carolina General
21 Statutes the Town is required to have a balanced budget to the Board by June 1 for advertisement, usually approved
22 at the June Board meeting after a Public Hearing, put in place ready to open on July 1.
23

24 Harbor Waterfronts Advisory Committee: Lisa Thompson – Discussed 2020 Budget requests and actual
25 expenditures. 2021 Priorities: Continue dock/waterfront oversight, repair Net House, continue Abandoned &
26 Derelict Vessels (ADV) Ordinance, Harbor Master contract, continued oversight of Whittaker Pointe Restoration.
27 Long range goals: Floating docks, town boat, Key West sign. Boating Infrastructure Grant Application is due
28 March 2021 (necessary for mooring field implementation). Budget request: \$36,700-52,700.
29

30 Manager Miller discussed current Waterfront projects and their status (Net House, Whittaker Pointe, Jurisdiction
31 Survey for Legislature).
32

33 Commissioner White relayed suggestions as presented to the Board: From Jim Blackerby - designate Whittaker
34 Pointe as a closed area (closed access to foot/boat traffic). Ordinance, signs and gate would be necessary for
35 restriction. From Bob Dillard – he offered a floating dock to the town for free, Commissioner White and Mr.
36 Blackerby offered to tow the dock to wherever necessary.
37

38 Tree Board: Dr. Bob Miller, Chairperson – Members: Phil Borders, Dick Creighton, Patricia Dietrich, Lynne
39 Kaplan, Toni Leavitt, Missy Tenhet. Tree management program includes maintenance of 1,339 street, park and
40 other public trees, ongoing survey of public trees for potential risk and removal, 3 year pruning cycle to train young
41 trees to reduce future risk and to lower future maintenance costs, contracting tree services to prune/remove large
42 trees as needed, GMO requirement for landscaping parking lots plan review, public tree protection from utility
43 trenching, planting/pruning/watering new trees, informational releases/seminars. Dr. Miller stated last year the Tree
44 Board pruned 478 trees, removed 7 trees (3 by Tree Board, 4 by contract), new planting of trees was canceled due to
45 Covid-19 restrictions. Budget request is the same as last year: \$4000.
46

47 Manager Miller discussed overgrowth of trees on undeveloped lots and working with property owners to help
48 control the spread of disease/insect/pest related issues.
49

50 Arbor Day will be March 27 this year, and Dr. Miller requested the Board approve the Arbor Day Proclamation
51 Resolution. Resolution 2021-02 approved by a MOTION from Commissioner White, seconded by Commissioner
52 Price. Unanimous vote by roll call: 5-0.

53
54 Planning Board: Dick Flaherty – Discussed review of current GMO and the new NC Land Use Law for
55 discrepancies, concerns that changes to the GMO are based on a reactive mode rather than a proactive mode, and
56 desires for review of the Table of Permissible Uses.

57
58 Manager Miller commented about home-businesses/parking/traffic, and the struggle to maintain balance in the
59 residential and commercial areas, without restricting or allowing too much in the GMO/TPU. She also requested a
60 review/increase for the Variance Application, as the costs incurred by the Town (public notice, signage) far exceeds
61 the current fee charged to the applicant.

62
63 Tourism Board: Marsha Paplam – Discussed struggles with tourism and Covid-19 over the past year, and
64 views/safety precautions going forward so the community can safely hold public events again soon. Hopeful events
65 for the year: Croaker Fest, town-wide yard sale, Old Front Porch Music Festival, Boat Show.

66
67 Manager Miller thanked the Tourism Board for their extensive planning and execution of the Spirit of Christmas
68 celebration, and the considerations taken to continue the New Year’s Dragon Run tradition while adhering to Covid-
69 19 restrictions.

70
71 Parks and Recreation Committee: Bonnie Crosser – Discussed comments from the public, the Town, and the
72 County for improvements to the Oriental Recreation Center. Requested funding (Town of Oriental and Pamlico
73 County) to purchase/install a swing set, pressure wash the Pavilion, replace playground edging, add playground fill,
74 address drainage issues, picnic tables, ADA access, and sod the area. Exhibit suggestion – “Shark Teeth” children’s
75 digging event. Dog Park – recurring expense for disposal bags. Suggestion/request for Dog Station (disposal bags)
76 for Dolphin Point. Lupton Park – beautification, hand sanitize station/supplies, pickle ball equipment replacement.
77 Total budget request: \$10,877.

78
79 Commissioner White mentioned some of our parks that are not being recognized and utilized, and there was
80 discussion about signage, maps (brochures) and parking to encourage use of these areas.

81
82 Discussion of closed roads vs abandoned roads, the Town may have closed a particular road, but did not give it
83 away.

84
85 Marsha Paplam suggested a “Whimsical Town Map” by Town Dock 1/duck pond. There was some discussion
86 whether this would fall under Tourism or Parks & Rec. Commissioner Overcash suggested new brochures that
87 show the “lost parks”. Discussion continued about ideas to encourage usage of these areas.

88
89 Board of Adjustments: Joe Valinoti (not present)

90
91 Manager Miller researched the increase in trash/recycling volume but was unable to determine if the increase in
92 volume was due to Covid-19/Stay-at-home order/more people working from home. Commissioner White discussed
93 canceling residential recycling pick-up, therefore forcing residents to drop off recycling items at the County
94 locations. Manager Miller explained that recycling tipping fees are cheaper than trash, therefore our trash tipping
95 costs would increase if people chose not to recycle.

96
97 Projects underway – Priorities from 2020 – Priorities for 2021: Manager Miller – cleaning budget increased
98 substantially due to Covid-19 precautions, behind on drainage projects due to weather/other issues, Net House

99 restoration underway, Services: green waste, recycling/trash, cardboard pickup, Grant Applications: GCC (Police),
100 Dottie Gray, NCORR.

101
102 Needs/priorities 20-21 and 21-22: Staffing – paid and volunteer, speed limits, trailer adjustments for Public Works,
103 Repairs/sealant to WTP, Whittaker Pointe road construction underway, streetlights/LED/solar options/contracted
104 terms. Keith Smith questioned the location for potential solar lighting; Manager Miller explained that could be
105 determined later. Current revenue is ahead by \$400,000 +/- due to FEMA recovery funds. Water Plant Scrubber
106 should be a priority, Softener for Water Plant, we do not charge enough for water to qualify for grants.

107
108 Long Range: CAMA Land Use Plan is revised, flood mapping, street/road/sidewalk repairs, ADA improvements
109 (sidewalks/website revision).

110
111 Roads: 2020 Pavement Condition Assessment from J.M. Teague Engineering & Planning – need to address high-use
112 roads that need maintenance first and drainage issues. Streets include Hodges, Main, South Water St, Neuse Dr (at
113 the beach). Hodges/Main are not developed to handle the truck traffic, needs addressed asap. Neuse Dr. at the
114 beach – suggested a box culvert to help correct the drainage, bulkhead/drainage at turtle pond. Commissioner White
115 - Road suggestions from the quarterly meeting: Neuse & Ragan, the beach, Windward. Commissioner Overcash –
116 South Water St should be a priority. Commissioner White – Discussed homeowner responsibility for ditches, if the
117 homeowner or the Town is responsible for digging out ditches and/or replacing bad culverts. Manager Miller – the
118 homeowner is responsible, but it could cost a lot in legal/recovery fees to enforce this versus the Town just doing the
119 maintenance/replacements. Commissioner Barrow – Windward should be high on priority list.

120
121 Speed Limits: Hwy 55, White Farm, North (toward Blackwell Point) are all State controlled. Would like to reduce
122 speed limit on Hwy 55 out past the Dog Park towards Dolphin Point. Ordinance required to change speed limits on
123 Town roads. Speed checks by Police, speed limit electronic radar display. Officer Wichrowski – they try to
124 maintain a balance between addressing complaints about speeding and being too aggressive with speeding/tickets.
125 Manager Miller – Crosswalks: (particularly near Churches) DOT will consider crosswalks at intersections, but not in
126 the middle of the road.

127
128 Admin Priorities: Archive Social - \$199/mo annual contract, eliminate early voting (saves \$2600), website revision
129 GovSite (ADA compliance), TV contract expiring (no plans to renew), replace 4 tablets at a time, sound
130 dampening/acoustic tiles in large board room and main office, refrigerator replacement. Commissioner Barrow –
131 had questions on the website upgrade, other provider quotes/comparisons. Manager Miller – GovSite is specific for
132 governments, it is our current provider and staff is familiar with it, would not need to transfer all web content in
133 order to upgrade, would really like to stay with same provider.

134
135 Commissioner Priorities: Commissioners Overcash/Simmons – concentrate on drainage and roads. Commissioner
136 White – Water Plant Softener, vehicles, employees. Manager Miller – Employee pay to meet State average this year
137 on the third year of the pay and class study implementation plan. Commissioner Barrow – Police Officers
138 training/advancement opportunities. Commissioners Overcash/Barrow – Radar.

139
140 Ed Preston – CEO Benchmark Professional Seminars, retired New Bern Police Chief – offers field training, conflict
141 de-escalation, management programs, various courses, career advancement, criminal investigation, mentoring. Mr.
142 Preston is interested in becoming a Reserve Police Officer (free) and would like to host programs/training in this
143 area in lieu of pay.

144
145 Water System: Andrew Cox – Introduced Joyce Snader – Gopher Utility Svcs – presentation for E-Pro Electric
146 Valve Closure System, designed for automatic detection/shut off for chlorine gas leaks at the WTP. Budget requests
147 mirror the previous year with any price increases as necessary. Need to replace 4 hydrants this year. Current year

148 has seen above average need for new water taps, but the increased revenue offsets the increased expense. Water
149 maintenance contract – this may be the last year. Reiterated need for the Softener installation, quoted last year at
150 \$24,000.

151
152 Public Works Department: Andrew Cox - Budget requests mirror the previous year with any price increases, as
153 necessary. Requested project funding for drainage work on Neuse/Ragan St. and by the Town Beach. Request to
154 use savings from uniform budget to repair the older tractor.

155
156 There was some discussion between Commissioners, Town Manager and Supervisors on the need/cost for the
157 automatic chlorine shut-off system, more discussion/decisions later.

158
159 Police Department: Nic Blayney, Bill Wichrowski – Recap of previous year: Irons set (emergency entry device),
160 speed sign – cannot use yet due to old/malfunctioning computers and need for training/software installation
161 (postponed due to Covid-19), evidence safe – first one delivered was damaged/refused and just received the
162 replacement, grant update – for new computers/software/training. Budget requests – Update radios; current radios
163 are outdated, problems charging, and have spotty reliability. Would like two new vehicle mounted radios and two
164 new handheld radios, identical to what the Sheriff's Dept uses (much better range). Update mobile phones; current
165 phones are outdated and won't hold a charge. Would like two new mobile phones with ATT Firstnet (better service
166 provider, updated cameras for evidence collection, Push-To-Talk capability, mobile hotspots included with this
167 provider eliminate extra cost for separate hotspot service).

168
169 Finance Director Tammy Cox – Would like to change over all mobile phones provided for employee use to ATT
170 Firstnet. This provider's service is dedicated for First Responders, and the benefits, upgrade capabilities and cost is
171 approximately the same as the Town currently pays for mobile phone service and/or reimbursing employees for use
172 of their personal phones for business needs.

173
174 Manager Miller – note of good news: The dump-truck approved earlier in the morning was ordered for \$65,000.
175 Original quote was \$76,000.

176
177 Recap of priorities: Roads and drainage issues, Water Plant Softener, Law Enforcement training, Park signage

178
179
180 MOTION to go into Closed Session by Commissioner White and seconded by Commissioner Overcash. Unanimous
181 vote by roll call: 5-0. Time recorded: 2:22pm

182
183 (CLOSED SESSION)

184
185 Return to Open Session – Time recorded: 2:45pm

186
187 Commissioner White – Topic of Closed Session was the Town Manager's Annual Review. He stated Manager
188 Miller had a very good review and did a great job this year. Holding her salary where it is right now, but she could
189 be eligible for a performance bonus.

190
191
192 Town Board Meeting scheduled for April 6, 2021. 1st Budget Meeting scheduled for April 14, 2021 at 8:00am.

193
194 MOTION to Adjourn by Commissioner Simmons and seconded by Commissioner Price. Unanimous vote by roll
195 call: 5-0. Time recorded: 2:52pm

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Sally Belangia, Mayor

Diane H. Miller, Town Manager/Clerk

Approved _____, 2021 _____