

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 14, 2020**

**This meeting was conducted electronically pursuant to Governor Carney's State of
Emergency declaration, effective March 13, 2020, as amended.**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Saxton called the August 14, 2020, Town Council Regular Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Councilmembers Derek Abbott, Randy Bartholomew, Sue Callaway, Dick Oliver, Carol Stevenson, Frank Weisgerber, and Mayor Tim Saxton; Town Manager Maureen Hartman; Chief Jason Lovins; and Administrative Assistant Pam Smith.

Motion by Councilmember Abbott, seconded by Councilmember Stevenson, to move the Treasurer's Report to Item 5 before discussing spending monies in other agenda items. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Oliver, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Roche, 141 Henlopen Dr. – Spoke in support of having the Public Comment period at the end of the meeting rather than at the beginning of the meeting.

Ed Nazarian, 20 Peterson Dr. – Suggested having the Town Council meetings in the Town Hall meeting room. Mayor Saxton stated that it is difficult with the spacing required and added that the Town is looking at improving the speaker system in the Town Hall meeting room so that Council can meet in Town Hall and the public can listen from home if they are not comfortable coming to Town Hall.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

July 10, 2020, Town Council Regular Meeting: Motion by Councilmember Callaway, seconded by Councilmember Oliver, to accept the July 10, 2020, Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Oliver, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion unanimously carried.

July 23, 2020, Town Council Meeting: Motion by Councilmember Oliver, seconded by Councilmember Weisgerber, to accept the July 23, 2020, Town Council Meeting Minutes. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Oliver, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion unanimously carried.

July 23, 2020, Town Council Executive Session: Motion by Councilmember Oliver, seconded by Councilmember Stevenson, to accept the July 23, 2020, Town Council Executive Session Minutes. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Oliver, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion unanimously carried.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO THE FEMA AD HOC COMMITTEE

Mayor Saxton clarified that the FEMA Ad Hoc Committee's job is to do research and provide the information to the Town Council. The committee will not be negotiating directly with FEMA.

Motion by Councilmember Oliver, seconded by Councilmember Abbott, to appoint Randy Bartholomew (Chair), Ed Bintz, Ria Malinak, Maria Vershel, Chris Miller, and Robin Greenhall as members of the FEMA Ad Hoc Committee with one open position for a property owner on the west side of town. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Oliver, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion unanimously carried.

Mayor Saxton asked Councilmembers to reach out to property owners on the west side to fill the one open position.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Councilmember Bartholomew reviewed the following report and Council discussion followed:

Narrative related to financials YTD through July, 2020

In general, it is too early to re-cast or draw sound conclusions regarding the annual budget based on the results of the first quarter. The most significant comments follow:

Revenue-

Almost all categories are trending like prior years with the most significant items as follows:

- *Property taxes, Trash and Ambulance Fees are all billed early in the fiscal year with collections at 96%, consistent with prior years.*
- *Realty Transfer Tax is ahead in the 1st quarter, but it is unlikely to continue at this pace. Comments: 1) This may be a catch-up from the months law offices and courts were closed, 2) individuals trying to buy here to get away from the larger cities and 3) the pace may decrease as the summer months close.*
- *Rental Taxes are based upon property owners self-reporting in October. This may be an area of concern regarding the annual target. Realtors are claiming rental rates are moderate to high, but we do not know for sure how many rentals were discounted due to the Covid-19. We will be able to tell once some of the larger realtors submit the rental tax. Some believe that numerous homes were taken off the market to be used by the owners.*
- *All other items- Building permits are coming in slowly. There are a few new structures being built which will generate more building permit fees. Renovations are also still coming in strong. Parking permit, rental and Mercantile are ending for the season.*

Expenditures-

In general expenses are in line or trending below budget.

DISCUSSION OF CANAL ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Councilmember Weisgerber reviewed the steps that have been taken to improve water quality in the Town's canals. He noted that DNREC has the harvester to remove algae blooms, but the Town must rely on DNREC's availability which DNREC can't guarantee. Councilmember Weisgerber would like the Town to manage the algae blooms and widgeon grass in order to remove the growth early. Councilmember Weisgerber suggested the Town manage the water in the canals with equipment such as a Weedoo for the removal of algae blooms and widgeon grass

in the spring before it has a chance to multiply. Councilmember Weisgerber said the cost of the equipment is \$85,000 to \$95,000. Councilmember Weisgerber stated that one issue is the town staff doesn't have the personnel or the time to do the job. After suggestions from Council, Councilmember Weisgerber will reach out to marine construction companies and landscapers to see if they have any interest in operating the equipment.

Mayor Saxton asked for an official proposal regarding the Weedoo for discussion at a future Town Council Workshop Meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON RFPs FOR BEACH ACCESS WALKS

Council agreed that the three beach walkways that were done this year were very successful.

Motion by Councilmember Abbott, seconded by Councilmember Bartholomew, to move forward with the RFP process to do at least three at-grade walkways with the option to do an additional three and to survey the proposed walkway rights-of-way. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Oliver, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion unanimously carried.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS – REPORTS POSTED ONLINE

COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION REPORTS – REPORTS POSTED ONLINE

Canal Water Quality Committee – Committee members need to be appointed and approved by Council before the committee meets.

Communications and Public Relations Committee – The committee is planning a thank you luncheon for the Town Staff and Police Department.

Update 2 to the Follow-up Report to the 2020 South Bethany Mediacom Survey will be posted on the Town website. The August 13, 2020, Focus Group Questions and the audio to the Mediacom Focus Group Discussion will also be posted on the Town website. Regarding the Mediacom negotiations, Councilmember Oliver said Councilmember Callaway has done an exemplary job and she is to be congratulated and praised. Council agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Abbott, seconded by Councilmember Bartholomew, to adjourn the August 14, 2020, Town Council Regular Meeting at 11:20 a.m. FOR THE MOTION: Councilmembers Stevenson, Weisgerber, Callaway, Bartholomew, Abbott, and Mayor Saxton. AGAINST THE MOTION: None. Motion carried 6-0. Councilmember Oliver had dropped off the call.