

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

AUGUST 2, 2023

Council of Trappe Meeting: President Newnam called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Council members Michael Sullivan, Brian Schmidt, Rose Potter and Walter Chase were present. Other attendees for the Town: Town Administrator Erin Braband and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan.

Agenda: Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Potter seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Minutes: Commissioner Potter made a motion to approve the July 5, 2023 Council minutes as presented. Commissioner Schmidt seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Senator Mautz requested to say a few quick words now because he needs to leave for another meeting. Senator Mautz stated that he encourages the Town to consider the designation of an Enterprise Zone and he would be happy to help however he can. Senator Mautz stated that he would defer the designation process to Cassandra Vanhooser who is the expert in this field.

Clerk's Report: Administrator Braband stated that the Clerk's report, the General Fund and the Enterprise Fund budgets are in the Council's binders and filed with the records.

Public Works: President Newnam stated that the Public Works report is in the Council's binders and filed with the records.

Public Safety: Sgt. Dobson read his monthly report that is filed with the records. Sgt. Dobson stated that the County has 3 new school resource officers so now there is 1 in every school in the County. Sgt. Dobson reminded everyone about school starting this month and to use caution in school zones and at bus stops.

Planning & Zoning: Commissioner Schmidt stated that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed Hause Annexation on Old Trappe Road and gave it a favorable recommendation. The Planning Commission also discussed food trucks and will continue the discussion at their next meeting. The Planning Commission also reviewed other jurisdictions short term rental policies and created the one that is being introduced tonight.

Communications:

Trappe Post Office - Commissioner Sullivan stated that he wants to contact Andy Harris in regards to the Trappe Post Office and request his help in getting it reopened. Commissioner Schmidt stated that he previously sent letters but was informed that each time a letter is received an investigation is opened and whatever progress is being made must stop until the investigation has been completed. Administrator Braband stated that she had talked to the Cambridge Postmaster this week and he said that the exterior work has been completed and the interior work should be starting next week. Commissioner Sullivan stated that he will follow up after next week and see how things are progressing before sending the letters.

Rural Life Museum Trash Request - Elizabeth Ferguson requested that the Rural Life Museum be removed from the Town's trash service. Mrs. Ferguson stated that the Museum does not use the service and if there is trash to be disposed of, it will be taken by one of the volunteers to do so. The Museum would like to not have to pay the \$182.00 annual fee for the service since it is not used and money is very tight for the Museum. After discussion, Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to allow the trash exemption as the Museum brings in a certain amount of tourism to the Town and is a unique circumstance. If the trash becomes an issue the Museum will be required to rejoin the service and pay the appropriate fee. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Emmanual Wesleyan Church – water leak - Pastor Hawkins from the Emmanual Wesleyan Church requested a leak credit for an extremely high water bill for the parsonage at 29503 Piney Hill Road. The parsonage had a water leak under the house which led to a water bill in the amount of \$1,559.86. The water was immediately shut off when the leak was found and it was repaired by a licensed plumber. The Town's current leak credit policy is for sewer credits only and the parsonage is not on Town sewer so Pastor Hawkins was told to come to the Council to ask for help. After discussion, Commissioner Sullivan made a motion to split the water portion of the bill by 50% with the Town. Commissioner Chase seconded the motion. Commissioner Sullivan, President Newnam, Commissioner Schmidt, and Commissioner Chase approved the motion with Commissioner Potter abstaining.

Talbot County Parks and Recreation appointment – President Newnam stated that the Town received a letter from Talbot County stating that Mr. Chase's term on the Parks and Recreation Board had expired and they requested the Council to appointment a new member. Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to reappoint Mr. Chase to the Talbot County Parks and Recreation Board. Commissioner Potter seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Attorney Updates: Attorney Ryan stated that she attended a workshop with the County Council on July 19th and the Lakeside EDU's and water/sewer maps were discussed. Attorney Ryan stated that there is an appeal hearing on August 10th for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's court case with MDE.

Executive session: President Newnam stated that an executive session was held on July 5, 2023 to obtain legal advice.

ORDER OF BUSINESS BEFORE THE COUNCIL

Ordinance 5-2023 – An Ordinance of the Council of Trappe to amend the Trappe Town Code to add Section 12.4 titled "Short Term Rentals" to permit short term rentals within the Town of Trappe and incorporate certain minimum standards was read by President Newnam. Attorney Ryan stated that the Planning Commission met last month and reviewed policies from other jurisdictions and came up with a recommend policy for the Council to consider. Attorney Ryan reviewed the provisions of the proposed short term rental Ordinance. After discussion the Council asked Attorney Ryan to make the following changes to the Ordinance – Section C.2a, page 2 – remove the word office from this section. Section B.4, page 4 – add the wording, of the Town of Trappe, after the word Ordinance. The Council requested that Attorney Ryan make the requested changes and bring the Ordinance back to the September meeting for introduction after review.

Hause Annexation Request – Zach Smith is representing Brian Hause and requesting that the Council consider annexing the part of Mr. Hause’s property that is currently in the County along Rt. 565. This was presented to the Council in 2021 and the Council was in favor of the annexation with the inclusion of an indemnification clause. Mr. Hause is now ok with proceeding with this clause to be included in the annexation. After discussion, Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to direct Attorney Ryan to prepare the Resolution and Ordinance for the Annexation for the September meeting, to keep the zoning the same as the remainder of the property which is Industrial (M) and to prepare the Indemnification Clause for Mr. Hause to sign. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Enterprise Zone – Cassandra Vanhooser, Enterprise Zone Administrator for Tilghman Island presented information on Enterprise Zone designation and the qualifications to become an Enterprise Zone. An Enterprise Zone designation would give businesses the opportunity to be eligible for income tax and property tax credits for 10 years which could promote economic development. Attorney Ryan suggested that if the Council is interested in pursuing this designation that an internal study be done to see how much vacant commercial property remains in Town before applying. Mrs. Vanhooser stated that the Town may not qualify to apply and she is currently working to figure that out. After discussion the Council decided to hold off on discussing this any further until Mrs. Vanhooser can determine if the Town is even eligible.

Town Computer Server Options – Administrator Braband stated that the Town’s computer server has died and the Town needs to decide how to proceed. The Town’s IT company, BDK, presented two options for the Town to consider. Option 1 is to upgrade to an Azure Server which received an estimate of \$6,120 with an annual fee of \$1,317 for Microsoft 365 Business Premium and Barracuda Email protection. Option 2 is to upgrade to a Hosted Server which received an estimate of \$5,602.50 with the option of a 1 year hosted contract for \$625.00 or a 3 year hosted contract for \$525.00. Administrator Braband stated that the Azure upgrade would allow the Town to not have an actual server anymore and incur those long-term maintenance costs and possible down time. The Hosted Server upgrade would require a monthly charge for the hosted server resources and the Town would incur routine server update expenses. Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to approve the Azure Server quote with the annual fee for the Microsoft 365 Business Premium and Barracuda Email protection. Commissioner Chase seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Culvert/Ditch issue at 3759 Rumsey Drive – The Town has received the property information from the GIS system and the ditch is on Town property. The Council discussed setting up a ditch cleaning program and asking the County to clean out the Barber Road culvert and ditch to help with drainage. A request was made to get estimates from local contractors to clean the ditch from Barber Road to past Mrs. Chester’s property and a quote to replace the culvert. Quotes will be discussed at the next meeting.

Public Questions/Comments – None

Executive Session – President Newnam stated that an executive session is requested to obtain legal advice. Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to enter into executive session at 8:01 pm. Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Schmidt made a motion at 8:28 pm to reopen the public meeting and then adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Potter seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Braband, Town Administrator/Clerk