



ORIENTAL TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 1PM
507 Church Street, Oriental, NC
Mayor Sally Belangia officiating

1 The Town Board of Oriental Workshop meeting was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 and was called to order at
2 1:09PM. Mayor Belangia determined a quorum to be present. The meeting was open to the public. All documents
3 for the meeting were available through the Town's website at www.TownofOriental.com.

4
5 Present: Mayor Belangia(SB), Mayor Pro Tempore Price (AP), Commissioner Overcash(CO), Commissioner
6 Roe(FR), and Commissioner Crosser(BC). Town Manager Diane Miller(DM), Dep Finance Officer Lisa Millington
7 (LM), 1 member of the Public. Absent: Commissioner Litzenberger(BL),
8

9 FR makes a motion to approve the agenda. AP seconds. 3-0.

10 Mayor chooses to wait a minute for Charlie. Commissioner Overcash arrives 1:11PM

11
12 Personnel discussion. It shouldn't be long before we get email that says the LGC accepted the audit, at which point is
13 a good time to swear in the finance officer. And Daniel has passed both of his tests for certification. Hopefully,
14 December 10th, the state will make him ORC of all things He's just not named the ORC. Which is what we're
15 paying Jeff for. And as soon as I get from the state, that they have named him the ORC, then we can stop paying Jeff.
16 Manager would like for you to consider normally when people either get promoted to more responsibility, and this is
17 a significant additional legal responsibility for Lisa. And it will be significant additional responsibility for Daniel,
18 even though he's doing most of the work already. That you would consider a raise for both of them. In light of we
19 have additional funds that we did not spend for our financial contract. And we also we've only paid for six weeks of
20 the fourth public works person.
21

22
23 Our concern is that Josh is already past the minimums for retirement. Josh is our backup and he can drop papers with
24 two weeks notice at any time. So when you do not have a backup, then you have to pay a contracted backup. Manager
25 notes- Board's choice.
26

27 BC: During our budget process, the \$41,000 that was line item for the consultant. And at that time, the reason we
28 were able to do it, it was a definite one time event. I raised my hand and objected to the amount, was told that if we
29 don't use all the amount, we'll take it back. The appropriate thing for the remaining balance of the consultant is you
30 close that budget line item and transfer it to fund balance.
31

32 Well, you can if you approve it. Best practices said it's not a good idea for an operation.

33
34 Manager will prepare a budget amendment that reduces the fund balance appropriated, reduces the line item budget
35 for the consultant.
36

37 Having a backup for the water plant. Josh retires. We could hire him back a part time just to do it. Yes, but you
38 would also have to make sure he does the continuing education to retain that certificate. They have to renew annually
39 by credits.
40

41 BC: Just making sure we have, he would be back up. We currently in the budget, during the budget cycle, we
42 anticipated Daniel's achievements, and we have him in the budget cycle at \$25 an hour. We also have about 33% of
43 the fourth public works that we haven't spent, which accounts for \$13,000, roughly.
44

45 If we wanted to take some of that money, and move it to administration, we'd have to do a budget amendment to
46 move that. Deputy finance to be Finance Director. We hired her at what you allocated. Commissioner Roe and myself
47 are on board giving Lisa a raise as well as Daniel at this point. Well, you have to take some of the money, and when I
48 was suggesting we could take (BC does calculations) that money from Public Works salaries, and then take it over to
49 admin. So we're transparent and reporting that that is an administrative cost. \$1,800. Up including taxes, \$3,200.

50
51 We said that normally after you get through your probationary period, everybody gets a minimal raise. But we are at
52 the point now where not only she passed her probationary period has given us exemplary work, but she is also about
53 to take on the legal financial responsibilities of the town. (Discussion and calculation) So those benefits pull off other
54 than the differential that she'll take. Okay, so it's \$2080 plus At \$2/hr raise. Discussion on WHEN the raise would
55 become effective.

56
57 When we discussed that particular role, we were having some angst over wanting two people in that role (PW).
58 We were told by the previous individual that you needed two people. So Daniel took over that role and has done an
59 exemplary job.

60
61 FR: By the way, I want these people to know that this board appreciates them. I see a huge change in the office. I see
62 a huge change in public works. I think we're asking people to do more work, different work, different work and more
63 work. So even if we hired somebody in January (for open PW position), all that health coverage is over calculated for
64 hiring them July 1st.

65
66 And we wait just a couple of months to try to pull somebody on to public works. There are benefits, everything are 90
67 days out. We have to be able to sustain it into the next year.

68
69 So, Daniel to four, I have Lisa to three. Daniel's is effective immediately. Lisa's will be effective as soon as you raise
70 your right hand and don't run away. Can the mayor swear? (Diane leaves to pull statute) Lisa can start you on the
71 financial discussion.

72
73 Financial discussion. So you have a lot of paperwork in front of you. I know it might be a little overwhelming in
74 some of which is very small print. But today's discussion is to discuss investments. So, if we look at this
75 memorandum first this is actually data pulled from the nctreasurer.com site, which shows us the percentage of fund
76 balance. Which is appropriate for similarly grouped cities, and this is for 2020. And if you scroll down, if you look
77 down to units without electrical systems, Oriental is about the 500 to 999. And this is how much the fund balance
78 should be available. You can see where Oriental fell in 2020. This also shows what your cash investments were,
79 which brought you to \$1 million with cash and invest. The conversation today was supposed to be about how much
80 do you folks want to invest?

81
82 Question for Lisa. It doesn't preclude you to invest the money. Not at all. This is just, because I've had a lot of
83 questions previously about this money's just sitting out there and how much is the typical fund balance for other
84 municipalities. I wanted to hear to see for different population sizes, just so you have a comparison with that.

85
86 You are currently invested with NCCMT, whose informational packet is also in front of you. Do you get a little
87 background on them what their, their purposes, their benefits. And I believe that was the auditor's final
88 recommendation, is to invest, if you're going to invest more funds, to NCCMT, where you have already an
89 established relationship.

90
91 DM: While that trial balance shows you that you have \$957,000 in general fund and you have over a million in
92 general fund checking, that also includes the restricted accounts. So if you take out all that restricted money, that
93 \$1,073,000 comes down to \$484,000. My other concern is that revenue over expenses today is \$37,000. So, I am
94 comfortable that the money that we just moved from the utility account into the regular central depository to
95 combine and make it all one account. I am comfortable that you could invest that today. Add that to your \$260,000
96 that's already invested, now that we're through hurricane season. But with the \$37,000 revenue over expenses, I'm not
97 comfortable taking a lot more, but it is totally your choice.

98
99 Back to our original conversations during retreat -from July 1st to middle of October or better. We are operating off
100 of our reserve. We pay all of our membership things and all licenses July 1st and then we don't get any taxes as
101 revenue. November, December is actually when we get most of our property taxes. So it's not a one twelfth of the
102 year happens in each month. We operate off of our reserves just to pay the bills for the first couple months of the
103 fiscal year.

104

105 LM: So, \$346,000 is regular checking, but those next several accounts are all restricted. Waterfront enhancement and
106 then parks and rec and then tourism and then tree board donations, parks and rec donations. That's all reserved.
107 Down to the NCCMT investments and then also both sets of those Powell funds are restricted. You could move the
108 first citizen Powell funds into the Powell account at NCCMT. If you have no intention of using that in the near future,
109 you can move that all in there because it's already a reserved account moving to an already reserved account.
110

111 What is in the near future? In the next, in the rest of this fiscal year, we put it all in there. If something comes up,
112 we'll need it. You can get it but you should not be using it as a regular savings account. You should be using it as an
113 investment account where you're going to leave it for the most part.
114

115 That's one of the questions we have to ask them is, is there a penalty if you move too much, too many times, we didn't
116 get that prior. I don't think we're going to find it in a safer place. Harbor and Waterfront has got \$135,000.
117 And they had that conversation at their meeting. They're going to decide there's X amount of money that they're
118 absolutely not going to touch to keep for catastrophe. And they can earn the interest on it.
119

120 So the decision then on restricted funds is do we see use in the rest of this fiscal year or the first and next fiscal year?
121 And, you know, it's the first time we're moving in years, moving money into or out of move the \$167,000.
122

123 FR: So, could we ask Harbor and Waterfronts? They're ready to make that call on what they need to have them
124 reserved. And should we ask tourism what they think they're going to do? They're having to meet this afternoon.
125

126 Ask Harbor Waterfront to give a recommended amount to that. To be invested in North Carolina Capital
127 Management Trust funds. And that we take the funds from the dormant checking account, which has been closed. Put
128 it in North Carolina Capital Management Trust. And, and we would ask the Tourism Board what they plan to spend
129 and move what their recommendation is into that. That motion sounds good. Yeah, you forgot you were going to
130 move Powell in first citizens to Powell in NCCMT. So that we were having a discussion and then you jumped to a
131 motion. Well, I'm uncomfortable with saying Powell because I don't have a clue what we're going to do.
132

133 BC: Well, realistically, you would have to go into fund balance and Powell balance to even make a choice of doing a
134 block. So it's, it's more likely you're paving- I'm not going to speak for the gentlemen here, my fellow commissioners-
135 is probably on a cycle of every two year or every three year. And I would ask that you wait and see what we do with
136 the Water advisory board in our drinking distribution project, because we have paving in that that we can take
137 advantage of, which will not probably be this calendar year coming up.
138

139 So if we could add to my same motion, the Powell money in First Citizens Bank, that we will come back with a
140 recommendation by December 12th. If you want to. Yeah, then, then that would answer that. Just leave it off. We're
141 not gonna pave anything this year. We don't have enough money, so that'd be fine.
142

143 Do you and you want make a decision on Powell in December? I'll make it concurrent with harbor waterfronts and
144 tourism and Powell at the same time and just put that on the agenda.
145

146 So we want to move the dormant funds. And then we want to ask Harbor Waterfronts and Tourism about what they
147 are comfortable with putting in investments. And then on the 12th we're going to talk about Powell. Well, I would
148 just like if you and Charlie say this is what we think we'll spend and there's an answer for the whatever you're going
149 to spend it.
150

151 So \$50,000 on it? Let's articulate it. So we're looking at rumble strips, which are going to be a couple hundred
152 dollars. And that knock down thing will probably be a couple hundred dollars. Paint in the street. A couple of slow
153 down 15 MPH signs. We put two new ones up and I'm ordering new signs. So I've added to the order of new signs
154 more 15 mile an hour, slow down, all those things. To indicate that no parking is fine. Where the crosswalk is. So I'm
155 good with if there's \$54,000 in power, if we put 50 of it towards into this NCCMT, the four will be enough to do all
156 the odds and ends in patching and that kind of thing.
157

158 D. O. T. Does not want you to put a crosswalk where there is parked cars on both sides. They want you to not allow
159 parked cars where the crosswalk is that you don't have people darting out. It's not Broad Street. So just letting you
160 know that they would never allow that to happen. Because if you do it here, you've got to give up handicap parking.
161

162 BC: So, we're very close to a key metric of \$250,000 in investment. Which could change depending on Harbor
163 Waterfronts and I didn't have those in my calculation. I'd like for us to entertain to take \$38,000 out of regular and get
164 us to \$250,000. DM: I'm just terrified of things breaking. That's adding \$250,000 to the \$260,000 into our
165 investments. So it would go up to \$500,000.
166

167 Right now we're shy of it by 38,000. And it's, I just want to point that out in a public forum.
168

169 We will do as directed. AP: Well I came in here wanting 500,000 and I don't think that's possible. We're going to get
170 Harbor waterfronts. We're going to get \$50,000 out of Powell.
171

172 We decided \$50,000 for Powell. We're still short of the metric of \$250, 000 in investing. And it's my suggestion that
173 we pull out a \$38,000 to get to the 250,000 out of checking first citizens.
174

175 How much do we have in checking? \$346,000. So we're investing \$260,000 now. We're taking from First Citizens
176 and putting it into an investment account.
177

178 BC: \$200,00 of it's coming out of here, \$50,000 of it's coming out of Powell. It's a good metric. Is that a threshold of
179 \$250,000 we're needing to get to? Idle cash is an asset, and it's our responsibility.
180

181 Are you comfortable with us doing this? DM: It is your money. \$38,028.38 from First Citizens regular checking into
182 NCCMT. You could round it.
183

184 FR: I move that the mayor swear in the financial director. CO: seconds. SB: Thank you. I'd love to. No, Deputy. No,
185 now Financial Officer.
186

187 Stand up. Reach right in. Somebody take a picture. Mayor swears in Lisa Millington as new Finance Officer.
188

189 CO: I move that we adjourn. FR: second. 4-0.
190
191
192

193 _____
194 Sally Belangia , Mayor
195

196 _____
197 Diane H. Miller, Town
198 Manager/Clerk

199 Approved , 2024