

Town of Oriental
Town Board Special Meeting
October 29, 2012

A special meeting of the Town of Oriental Town Board was held at Oriental First Baptist Church, October 29, 2012, beginning at 5:00pm.

Council Present: Mayor Sage; Commissioners Johnson, Summers, Styron, and Venturi.

Council Absent: Commissioner Bessette

Others Present: Town Manager Maxbauer; Barbara Baker; Laura Penninger; various town residents; and media.

Mayor Sage determined that a quorum was present and opened the meeting.

Mayor Sage stated that this meeting has been called in response to the many emails and phone calls received regarding the placement of the fire alarm siren that had previously been located at the Town Hall. He went on to thank Fire Chief Alan Arnfast and other members of the Southeast Pamlico County Fire Department for attending and helping to provide information with which the Board can make an informed decision as to the placement of the siren.

Mayor Sage reminded the public that it was necessary to take down the siren due to the renovation of the town hall and the fact that the pole, holding the siren, was determined to be rotten. He also made it clear that no formal Board decision has been made as to the placement of the fire alarm siren.

The question was asked why we need a fire siren in this era of modern communication. Fire Chief Arnfast stated that the County owns the fire alarm siren and that it is part of the Civil Defense system. The siren not only signals firemen for calls, but also has the capability to warn of a tornado and even a nuclear attack. Also, the ISO, the insurance organization which determines our fire tax rating, requires that the Fire Department have two forms of communication.

It was determined that the siren runs on a three phase power supply. The Southeast Fire Station only has a single phase power supply. The Water Plant is outfitted with a three phase power supply. There was some discussion as to the feasibility of fixing the generator at the town hall, which was originally a three phase generator but can only produce single phase power at this time. It was also questioned as to who would cover the cost of this repair. The fire department offered to help defer the cost of this repair, but no final amount was determined.

Mayor Sage reiterated that the first question was “Why do we need the siren?” and that question has been answered. The second question was “location”. Town Manager Maxbauer responded that there are several locations that currently have three phase power capability and that he would be remiss if he did not at least consider those locations.

There were further questions as to what the cost would be to outfit the Town Hall with three phase power when, during the course of renovation, it has been configured for single phase

power. It was noted that there is a cost difference to consider. There was some discussion regarding the electrical requirements of the siren in order to get it back into service. Town Manager Maxbauer reminded the Board that the pole was initially taken down because of power interruption due to re-wiring the new town hall and at that time the pole was found to be rotten. There was some discussion regarding the possibility of installing the siren at the Fire Department. Mayor Sage again reminded the public that no official decision has been made and the Board is simply gathering information to answer questions that have been raised.

Mayor Sage complimented the Volunteer Fire Department and expressed his appreciation in their dedication and service. He then went on to take comments from the public. Various members of the public asked questions and expressed opinions. Questions were answered, opinions were noted, and possible solutions were shared.

Commissioner Summers noted that the siren will be raised from 35 feet to 50 feet which will allow sound to travel farther and should not affect people as much.

Town Manager Maxbauer recommended the Board make a determination as to whether or not the Town Hall be equipped for single phase power or three phase power. He went on to say that he would like to work in cooperation with the fire department to find a solution and to request that the fire department assist in the financial requirements with regards to the placement of the fire siren.

Mayor Sage stated that we need to determine the real financial requirements; can the old generator be made to work at the town hall; and agree on the proper allocation of the cost by determining which is the town's responsibility and which is the fire department's responsibility. The Town Board has no objections to tax payers paying for Oriental "things", but the siren does not just serve the Town of Oriental. We need to pool the information we have gotten to make a proper decision.

The decision was made to have Fire Chief Arnfast, Town Manager Maxbauer, and representatives from the Town Board get together to discuss various remedies and to get a cost estimate with the idea of having the Fire Department help out with the cost.

There being no further business, Commissioner Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Summers seconded. Motion passed. 4-0. Meeting was adjourned.

William R. Sage, Mayor

Robert J. Maxbauer, Town Manager