

TRAPPE TOWN MEETING

March 7, 2007

7:30 p.m.

Trappe Town Hall

The Town meeting was opened by President Cheryl Lewis and called to order at 7:35 p.m. Commissioners Walter Chase, Don English, and Norm Fegel were present. Everyone stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The February minutes were read and accepted as presented. The Financial Statement for February was also accepted as presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ordinance 1-2007 – Amending Town Code

President Lewis read Ordinance 1-2007 Town Code Amendment.

Attorney Booth stated that this Ordinance is a catch all provision of the Town Code to set up general civil penalties for municipal infractions, as well as a general penalty for misdemeanors. The difference being that municipal infractions are civil matters and misdemeanor are criminal matters. These do not apply to any specific section of the Code and this is what we are trying to do.

Motion was made by Com. English to adopt Ordinance 1-2007 - Amendment to the Town Code.

Motion was seconded by Com Fegel.

Vote: Lewis - Y English – Y Chase – Y Fegel – Y

ORDINANCE 2-2007 – Town Zoning Ordinance Amendment

President Lewis read Ordinance 2-2007.

Attorney Booth explained civil municipal infraction fines go into the town's pocket instead of the State's.

Motion was made by Com. Chase to adopt Ordinance 2-2007 Town Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

Motion was seconded by Com. English

Vote: Lewis – Y English – Y Chase – Y Fegel – Y

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Mr. Ball thanked Mr. Parker for helping to set up his computer system.

Mr. Ball visited all the basketball hoop sites and said that two have been removed. There are none left in the streets as of tonight. We hope this has now been resolved.

Mr. Ball stated that in January he had made a couple of requests for the budget. He recommended that we donate \$ 2,500.00 to the Talbot County Emergency Management which is 911 since they handle all of the calls for the town, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. We are the only town that they do this for. \$1,000.00 to the Task Force who has and is now currently working in the town and \$1,500.00 to be used for reimbursement expenses for the Town Police Department.

President Lewis stated that this would not change the budget it would just realign the \$5,000.00 that we designated for Law Enforcement. \$3,500.00 of this will still be going to the County.

Loraine Schwaninger asked if the Sheriff's Department in Easton still assisted the Town? President Lewis yes, but we are the only town that makes a donation like this and just like the other towns we are paying the same taxes. The donation was just a volunteer act on the part of the town.

Travis Dunn asked the question did we not pay the Sheriff's Dept. for their services?

President Lewis stated that this was before her time and she could not explain she only saw reports that showed payments for services rendered; when Sheriff Pope took over he stated that we no longer needed to pay for their services since they provided the same service to all the towns in Talbot County. So the next year we just gave a donation to the Police Department to help purchase a K-9 dog.

President Lewis announced that we will not be approving a budget tonight so if the Council is in agreement we will make the budget changes and present the budget next month.

BUDGET REVIEW:

President Lewis addressed the question that was asked at the last town meeting concerning the general fund reimbursing the enterprise fund for time spent by the water clerk in the town office. President Lewis stated that the town clerk probably spent as much time working with the water and sewer bills as the water clerk did working for general town duties. So this kind of balances itself out and I do see that it is an actual burden on the water and sewer account. It really appears to be more a burden on the general.

President Lewis made a recommendation that we look at the increase that we made in the previous month and that we include an incremental increase of 3% on a regular annual basis for the water and sewer budget. Then we can review every year as we prepare the budget instead of having to adjust the budget in the middle of the year when we see that

the funds are insufficient to cover the costs. Most expenses such as utility bills etc seem to increase on a yearly basis along with other upgrades incurred on the enterprise fund.

Com. Chase asked are we increasing the water bill plus a 3% increase? President Lewis answered no the 3% will be for next year. This year's increase will be 5%, but not on the full bill this is only on the usage which is above and beyond the first \$ 41.00 per person. This affects only the accounts that use over the 1700 gallons allotted.

Richard Dorbin asked if this increase would automatically be a certain amount of money until it reaches the threshold, this will be money in the bank, and then we will cut it and not have the increase?

President Lewis said I do not think that we will ever reach that point since the increase is not on the total bill just the additional gallons used, but every year the Council will have the ability to review and keep the 3% or not make the increase. Unless action is taken to remove the increase it will remain.

Public Hearing is set for April 4th at 7:00 p.m. on 2007 Budget Amendment and Annual W/S 3% increase.

President Lewis said that the basic water charge and basic sewer charge will be the same; the change will be in the monthly usage from \$5.25 for sewer usage after the first 1700 gallons to \$5.85 and \$3.20 for water usage to \$3.60 after the first 1700 gallons. This will only be on the per 1000 gallon charge, not to the basic rate. Attorney Booth will do the advertising for the paper.

NEW BUSINESS:

HOSPITAL MEETINGS INFORMATION:

President Lewis stated that Com. Chase and Com. English have attended meetings on moving the hospital from Easton she asked them to inform everyone.

Com. English explained that this issue was well covered in the paper. Com. English and Com. Chase attended meetings with the Talbot County Council, the Town Council, Trappe, Easton and St. Michaels to discuss problems with moving the hospital and the direction that they want to take. The County and Easton has hired a lobbyist to fight the bills that were presented by Senator Pippin from Queen Anne for the hospital. They have a fear that the Easton Hospital will move from the town of Easton to Wye Mills or the Upper Area of Queen Anne. Since this is the largest employer in Easton there is an interest in keeping it in the County.

Com. Chase felt that before anyone jumps to conclusions we should wait to see what happens with the research since everything else is just speculation.

President Lewis felt that it was a good idea to have an outsider to come in and work with the County to meet the needs of the people. Com. English felt that the lobbyist was hired just to fight the bills which they do not feel will pass anyway. The County had on their

agenda last week to appoint two different task forces to work together jointly in keeping the hospital in Easton.

President Lewis said that the bills that we are talking about are; Maryland Law requires that if you want to build a hospital or move a hospital you have to obtain a certificate of need from the State to show that it is necessary to do one of these options. When you remove that need it makes it possible for hospitals to do things that they were not able to do before. This is to prevent hospitals from moving out of low income areas to higher income areas which is a real concern for the State.

President Lewis thanked Com. Harrison for the Planning Commission meeting last month on the dog park it was a very pleasant and informative meeting.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

Clerk: Talbot County has Good Friday off and last year we followed their schedule, do we want to do the same this year.

Motion was made by Walter Chase to honor Talbot Counties schedule and close for Good Friday. Motion was seconded by Com. English.

Vote:

Lewis – Y English – Y Chase – Y Fegel – Y

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

March 20th Last Filing Date for Candidates Town Council

March 21st Planning Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

March 31st Trappe United Methodist Church Easter Egg Hunt 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

April 27th Special Trash Pickup

Motion was made by Com. English to go to Executive Session at 8:20 p.m.

Motion was seconded by Com. Fegel.

Vote:

Lewis – Y English – Y Chase – Y Fegel – Y

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10

Respectfully submitted:

Joedy Cecil, Town Clerk

Approved by: Cheryl Lewis, President