The Town Board of Oriental Annual Retreat held on Friday, March 1, 2019 was called to order at 8am. Mayor Belangia determined a quorum to be present and opened the meeting and stated we can have a public comment period if anyone would like to speak.

Present: Mayor Belangia, Mayor Pro Tempore White, Commissioner Overcash, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Price, Commissioner Dammeyer, Town Manager Diane Miller, Deputy Finance Director Tammy Cox, Administrative Assistant Jeannine Russo, Public Works Director/ORC Andrew Cox, Volunteer Board Members and Members of the Public.

Manager Miller started the meeting stating this is an informal meeting where the Board gathers to discuss budget and other issues. By North Carolina General Statutes the Town is required to have a balanced budget to the Board by June 1 for advertisement, usually approved at the June Board meeting after a Public Hearing, put in place ready to open on July 1. Manager Miller spoke about the difficulties with our software transition and how financials were affected causing us to work conservatively. Statute requires us to stay at 8% reserve. Catastrophic events cost money and take a greater percentage of our operating budget to recover. 2015-16 Audit was accepted by the LGC this week. 2016-17 should go quickly. Priority for several years has been rebuilding fund balance. Drainage has been a big issue. Buildings are being raised one at a time. GMO revisions and Flood Prevention Ordinance have helped. Will discuss priorities, recovery, capital projects, generator, police, water, Public Works and hear from advisory boards.

Dr. Bob Biller, Tree Board Chair: Dr. Bob Miller, Tree Board: Dr. Miller spoke about Hurricane Florence and its effects on the Town trees. Ken King has left the tree board and was recognized for his years of work. He introduced Patricia Deitrich, the newest member. Most of the damaged trees were not town trees. After Florence, they removed small trees; town and contractors removed larger ones. Surveyed and pruned trees in need. Toni Leavitt and Missy Tenhet surveyed entire town, reported trees in need. A lot of damage caused by tree topping – should not be done. Showed photos of trees repaired from storm damage. Pump station was damaged on Neuse Drive; some of the plants may survive, some may not. Tree Board is waiting for Bay River to fix lift station. Tree management/pruning cycle program was discussed where Town is separated into three sections, work one section per year. Six new trees were requested by residents, thirteen were replacements. Dr. Miller discussed accomplishments, 400 hours volunteer time, or more. Discussed Arbor Day observation and Proclamation. Budget request remains the same, $4,000, will go down over time. This will be the 25th celebration of Arbor Day on March 23, pruning workshop possible. There is $2,500 left from last year and are not planning any big expenditures.

Dr. Stan Aeschleman, Planning Board Chair: There are currently four members: In addition to Dr. Aeschleman - Cecily Lohmar, Dick Flaherty and Martin Barrow. Sandy Winfrey resigned due to work commitments. It has been a busy year with 30 permit requests. There is a request for a change to sign ordinance along with several other changes and will be presented as a package as a Public Hearing is needed. Planning Board cataloged the locations of all street lights in Town to facilitate future discussions with Duke. Discussed enforcement of violations to the GMO – possibly hire a part-time Code Enforcement Officer. The Board is almost finished with the CAMA Land Use Plan update. Budget request for the Land Use Map as this will require outside expertise. No other budget requests. There are no major projects at this time. He did speak to one item with a house being raised, a nonconformity issue, with location of the electric meter. Manager Miller spoke about a home on South Water Street. It was compliant originally. Building code allows the electric meter be no more than 6’ in air or build a stepped structure – even though meters are now Smart Meters - as they still need access. GMO allows the Planning Board to grant an exception for encroachment into setback so the home could be raised out of the flood zone. 6’ puts her meter still in the flood zone. It would have encroached 3’ into the existing setback. With house being raised and the setback being
10’, the steps will now make it 6’ noncompliant. Manager Miller and the Planning Board agree and will allow Mrs. Kennedy to raise her meter out of flood zone and build steps toward the rear of the house. A Planning Board member needs to reside in corporate limits.

Lisa Thompson, Harbor Waterfronts Advisory Committee: Back to full membership. Members are Dan Allen, Don McGuire, Jim Blackerby and Pat Stockwell. Ms. Thompson spoke about their budget – comes from half of Occupancy Tax collected from tourist tax dollars. HWAC oversees Oriental’s five waterfront areas. She discussed projects and priorities. Whittaker Pointe project: Grants received – 1.68 million dollars to rebuild. Pump out has been rebuilt. Watercraft racks were built at the Wildlife Ramp. They are working with Duke Law students about enforcement. Dredging project has about $84,000 of $109,000 match. DEQ will extend the grant another year. These are two separate projects. They have spoken to attorneys, approved money from HWAC budget to have a surveyor certify jurisdictional limits on the water. Unfunded repairs – fishing pier, floating dock for boat races (want). Dinghy dock needs new decking on land. Small boat dock - gangway to be ordered. Dinghy dock extension for day trippers. Manager Miller stated for the floating dock project, we would need access by water. Key West sign was discussed. Net House project will not happen this year – volunteer job. Boating Infrastructure Grant – mooring fields. Commissioner Overcash asked if we can use spoilage from dredging to shore up Whittaker Pointe? We are still trying to make that happen. There is a possibility of filling geotextile tubes with the dredged spoils. Need information from the engineering firm, scientific info/evidence that it will work. Mayor Pro Tempore White: After jurisdiction, what is our authority? Duke Environmental Law Center attorneys assisting with this now have an office in Beaufort, on board with us at no expense to the town. Manager Miller stated there is a Mini Brooks request to approve the survey from the water side and then apply to the General Assembly for a local bill. We will then need an Ordinance – rules. We cannot pass things we cannot enforce. Commissioners Simmons and Overcash spoke to folks in Beaufort about their Ordinances; Brunswick County is the model – we will follow what has been done successfully.

Marsha Paplham, Tourism Board: Ms. Paplham stated their budget will remain the same. She thanked Public Works Director Andrew Cox for his research on the Christmas decorations that will fit where they will not be hit by trucks, got a special deal on them saving money as well. They will be picked up to save shipping costs. Tourism continues to work with Allison Berry at Our State Magazine, reaching more people all over the state. Quarterly business and nonprofit meetings – brings them together. Tourism is putting together a volunteer list to give to new residents who would like to volunteer their time. Marsha stressed the importance of contributions to the Whittaker Creek Project. Committee currently has three members – can member be from out of the village? Manager Miller will research this. Manager Miller addressed a question from the Quarterly Business Meeting regarding money spent relative to tax base. Tourism immediately impacts the businesses and taxes to the residents. She stressed the impact Whittaker Creek has on the Town, not just the residents on the creek. Members must be, it was determined, currently a resident or business owner in town limits. Ms. Paplham asked if this can be changed. Manager Miller stated it can be without a Public Hearing. Tourism is hoping to have five or six members.

Water Advisory, no representatives from this Board – down to one member, Mike Steere, who is currently out of town. The work load has been reduced but still value their input where it regards budget and schooling. Looking for someone in the chemical industry or water industry, helps with budget, sounding board for ORC Andrew Cox. Manager Miller requested anyone with expertise in civil engineering or the chemical industry would be helpful. They meet four times a year and twice before budget.

Parks and Recreation is also down to one member, Chair Jim Edwards. Manager Miller spoke, Mr. Edwards is the operator of Bow to Stern Sailing so not always available. Recreation is considered a want and not a need, especially in light of events like Hurricane Florence. There have been additions to the playground and is used daily. Some equipment will be replaced due to falling branches from the hurricane. Marsha Paplham asked if Tourism and Parks and Rec might become one committee. Tree Board member Missy Tenhet stated she would be interested in helping
Parks and Rec as a Tree Board representative. Tree Board is always out around town, they can do things such as inspecting equipment, fences, etc. Manager Miller feels we need some new volunteers to donate small amounts of time to help with these things.

Priorities/Recent History: Two and a half months into the fiscal year, we had Florence and have been doing nothing but Florence since.

161 registered boats stayed overnight, probably over 200 as not everyone registers. Boats that overstay are generally broken down – but are still spending money in our economy.

Ordinance update: Chapter S is our most updated Ordinance. Last year we added a schedule for development as well as hired an engineering firm to try to revise system development fees. Impact fees were suspended due to Carthage litigation and no longer had validation for the costs. We are awaiting these results. Manager Miller feels fee was justifiable and maybe should have been more. Tap fees for new parcels are a contracted service. These have recently increased and we are spending more than we are taking in. Raising the Annexation administrative fee will also be considered. The entire fee schedule will be looked at as well.

Asset Management: Rolling stock maintenance, Record keeping: preventative maintenance program in place now. High service pump not re-buildable, must be replaced, worked overtime during storm.

Evaluation system working very well. Employees know what their goals are and what is expected of them, better performance.

Green Waste: Since the storm, being filed to FEMA, all storm debris. We provide cardboard pick up through the County as a service to our businesses.

We are due to renegotiate our trash contract this year, may not have in place by July 1. The new contract will be at a higher cost and there is only one contractor in the area.

Grants: We have several going on now, may have more opportunities in the near future, unsure if we can take on any more at this time.

Hurricane Florence Restoration: South Avenue – showed photos of before and after – new boardwalk and pier will be at grade and ADA accessible. Boardwalk – 238 feet, replaced. Small boat dock, gangway, fished out and measured to be replaced. Town Dock #1, minimal damage. Rotary water fountain in Lou Mac Park – water line also pulled out and will be replaced, possibly with a dog friendly one. The dinghy dock will be repaired. The fishing pier is out to bid, due today. Benches have been ordered that floated away. Discussed projects: Re-ditching at High street, water line out for second bid. Generator has been submitted to insurance and FEMA, which had been in Capital Reserve. PEV at the harbor restroom is not functioning, submitted to FEMA. Road – awaiting engineering and has not been sent to bid, waiting for FEMA. The waterline is $65-$70,000. Electrical poles are not working, severed from Duke. Bid for road will be past $500,000 threshold, requires formal sealed bid. Mayor Pro Tempore White: Liability during Croakerfest - rebar, snakes, etc. Can it be moved possibly to the waterfront? Mayor Belangia: It has been going on for 40 years, our economy needs it. Any safety precautions put in place are at cost to us - Cost vs. Liability. Mayor Pro Tempore White: We need to get together with Cheryl Thompson and do a walk-around. Mayor Pro Tempore White: Talk to the attorney. Marsha Paplham: If we get fencing, are we still liable? Yes. Moving at pace, FEMA program manager has been wonderful. Manager Miller has signed off two FEMA claims and two insurance claims. Should start moving more quickly.

Staffing: Today is Samantha McKinney’s last day. She has taken a position in a law firm. We are still down a Public Works position. Manager Miller will be comparing our salaries to others in the league in towns comparable in size.

Public Works Director Andrew Cox: 2018-19 things that did not get accomplished. The used oil heater, company was wiped out by storm. Trailer to be reconfigured did not happen. Police vehicle is here, will take a field trip next...
break. This vehicle is a police vehicle made for police daily work. We may start a reserve for replacement of the charger, on which we had an unexpected $3,000 expense this year.

Accomplishments: We survived! Recreation equipment replaced, meter change-outs behind but ongoing. There is one 2" meter to be possibly replaced. Hazard Mitigation Plan meetings: drainage was funded at about $14-16,000 per year the last three years, more to be done. Materials purchased for some areas were diverted to others damaged after the storm. We are moving forward but still dealing with recovery.

Annexation: Next board meeting, 32 acre property out on White Farm.

GMO Revisions coming.

Done, in progress, or moved out until next year: Purchased vehicle, fixed dump truck, lead abatement on 75,000 gallon tank, purchased truck. We have a Capital Reserve for a structural vehicle with an arm that would allow Public Works to cut ditches, large expense. The crosswalk to Town Hall is backed up until resurfacing. Long range plan needs updating, need survey first. There is a possibility of getting a boat so we can enforce and clean up waters’ edge. Audits should be caught up this year. A lot of progress has been made in spite of the storm.

The company doing the Pamlico Regional Hazard Plan used 2007 rather than 2017 guidance, affected points. Community rating went from 8 to 9. This affects our flood insurance rates. Manager Miller seeking to speak to this company to get us back to an 8 or a 7. Manager Miller asked the Board to number priorities in order of importance and return to her. New contract (20 year contract) will be signed in 2020 for water tank. Every year our tanks are inspected inside and out.

Citizen suggestions: We asked the audience for suggestions. Grace Evans suggested Hodges and Broad Streets drainage – supposed to be the state. Manager Miller spoke with them. Regardless of making progress with them, we will go overland instead of burying infrastructure that keeps getting plugged up. Spoke about areas that once had curb and gutter. Manager Miller said almost every piece of property in town is being developed, this adds to the drainage, water coming off of roofs. She encourages homeowners to keep their ditches clear to get drainage to the existing ditch line; unless we have a deeded easement, public works cannot go in there. Grace Evans suggested pervious concrete. Manager Miller stated she suggests this to new residents but it is almost twice the cost and no one has chosen to use this in their construction and we cannot force folks to retrofit their driveways.

Andrew Cox – Water Plant and Public Works

Water System needs: Purchased 120 new meters. Looking back at the Smart Valve project. This year ammonia, chlorine and salt have had price increases. Dechlor has had a change in strength - must use more before it is pumped into the river. The Second mixer is paid off; other mixer broke in the storm from either power surge or lightning strike. Smart valve should be done this year. Visited three-year look ahead and the smart valve went from $6,000-$10,000. This is why we are doing it now. Accomplished this fiscal year: Safety shower has been built inside plant with eye wash, rebuilt the shower outside and repaired damage from the hurricane. Daniel Early has been sent to C-Distribution and C-Well School. Andrew Cox has been to Maintenance Tech Level 3 and received certification. Discussed water plant repairs. Pamlico County interconnected with us for approximately 45 minutes last week due to a pump issue.

Public Works: Drainage at the Methodist Church – installed clean out, cleaned lines. Welcome signs at both entrances to town; we lost one in the hurricane but was brought back and will be repaired. Working on South Water drainage project. Replacing play cushion at Lupton Park and trying to finish recovery before grass-cutting season. Bond Beach has been restored back to the right side of the street using residents’ old Christmas trees. Some tools were replaced due to overuse in the storm.

Public Works budget is the same as last year. We may keep uniforms for Public Works but move to self-maintained as the cost is approximately $4,900 per year. We may bump up the drainage line. Andrew Cox has researched
pesticides – we have fully funded mosquito abatement. Several residents are beekeepers in town and found one that is bee friendly and near water.

Capital Improvement: Anything valued over $5,000, Commissioners were given a list. Last year, flood insurance nearly doubled. We dropped that coverage and went with the League's insurance with a $50,000 deductible. Should we reinstitute the previous insurance or stay with the league? Manager Miller wanted to make the Board aware going into the next year and hurricane season. Looking at the potential to buy a boat and get folks certified to be on the water. Potentially start a new reserve for police vehicle. Continuing the reserve in PW for the skid steer to enable us to do the ditches. The fund from the generator may enable us to do one of the other projects sooner. Replacement of softener media, when this does not work as well, we use more salt as well as the price of salt going up.

Police: Need to put software in the new vehicle, increase office supplies, new car printers have thermal paper - bigger expense, increase ammo line - last year $250, overdrew $188. There are new requirements for training certifications as our officers do other larger task force things as well. New ballistic vests - approximately $700 per vest. Capital reserve: $5000 in capital reserve. Charger repair has been overdrawn due to lifter issue. Manager Miller will ask for $10,000 so car can be purchased in approximately three years. Mayor Pro Tempore White: While we are waiting to get jurisdiction, we can still get the boat, deploy booms, etc. Lisa Thompson is acquiring a boat for the harbor, we can utilize if needed. Commissioner Overcash: liability? She would be operating as our agent so we are covered and an Officer can be on the boat with her. Mayor Pro Tempore White: Camp will be selling boats shortly, will look into this. Attendees went outside to see the new police vehicle. Officer Blayney thanked the board for their help in acquiring this vehicle.

2020 Cycle NC: Manager Miller spoke about some of the issues with the 2017 Cycle NC. Trash was an issue, on Town property with alcohol. The new director is attending March 5 BOC Meeting. Commissioners suggested Manager Miller make a list of the grievances from the last event to present to the director.

Public Comment

Missy Tenhet: Ms. Tenhet feels there have been issues with the Town attorney, feels he should be looked at again and has issue with his handling of the Harbor Master position. Manager Miller responded: She is in favor of putting out more information than legally needed in favor of transparency, feels we receive, for the size of our municipality, a disproportionate amount of his time. Commissioner Dammeyer feels the professionalism of Manager Miller is a large factor in the good working relationship with Mr. Davis.

Needs/Wants/Nice to Have – More drainage funding, to be fully staffed, reserve to replace the Dodge Charger for Police, continue reserve for Public Works. Culverts: Two options – one is sending a letter to the owner to clean or replace – requires legal intervention at a cost OR at the Town’s expense remove and replace or jet them out for, probably, similar cost.

Budget Meetings are scheduled as April 10 at 8am and April 24 at 8am.


Mayor Pro Tempore White spoke about a possible Ordinance change that would allow us to be able to move a boat that has overstayed at TD1 or TD2.

Commissioner Dammeyer made a MOTION to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Simmons. Motion passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 1:52pm.
Sally Belangia, Mayor                             Diane H. Miller, Town Manager/Clerk

Approved , 2019________________