

ORTLEY BEACH VOTERS AND TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

General Membership Meeting

Saturday, September 21, 2024

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order – A call to Order was conducted by President, Anthony Colucci beginning the September 21, 2024 OBVTA general membership meeting.
2. Moment of Reflection - A moment of silence was conducted by the OBVTA Board of Directors for those who have died and are suffering in the two wars happening around the world. The moment of reflection was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call – Roll call was conducted by the Secretary, John Clarke, and the following Board of Directors were present; Anthony Colucci, Paul Jeffrey, Debbie Barton, John Clarke, Joe Cantalupo, Cathy Crisafulli, and Joan Strathern.
4. Quorum –President, Anthony Colucci, requested Secretary John Clarke to determine whether or not a quorum was present. Upon review of the members present for the General Membership meeting, it was clearly established that a quorum had been reached as far in excess of 40 members of the membership were present at the meeting thereby establishing a quorum.
5. Minutes – The minutes from the August 17, 2024 General Membership meeting were presented and accepted by a unanimous vote from the Board of Directors.
6. Treasurer’s Report – The Treasurer’s Report was presented by the OBVTA Treasurer, Debbie Barton. Total operating year-to-date income is \$10,951.00 and for the month of August, \$272.00. Year-to-date we have 657 memberships although many of these remain unpaid and it was discussed and agreed among the Board of Directors that the 2023 unpaid memberships would be dropped from our active list. In addition, we have 20 total business members, however, as referenced above, 5 of these remain unpaid.

Year-to-date expenses total \$12,854.00 and for the month of August expenses amounted to \$1,517.00. Total cash in hand amounts to \$72,727.00 with our three

CD's amounting to a total of \$50,000.00 and \$11,802.00 in the money market account at TD Bank and \$9,980.00 in the checking account at TD Bank.

A motion was made to accept the financial report of Debbie Barton at our September General Membership meeting and this was accepted by all Directors present.

7. Guest Speakers – The OBVTA asked that the Mayor, Daniel Rodrick, the Toms River Business Administrator, Councilman, Justin Lamb, and Lieutenant Gene Bachonski, attend and speak at our September General Membership meeting. The Mayor, Business Administrator and Justin Lamb were unable to attend. However, Lieutenant Gene Bachonski did attend.

Lieutenant Bachonski indicated that school has started and they have police officers in the three high schools, two intermediate schools, nine elementary schools, and Donovan Catholic. He then went on to compare summer stats from 2022, 2023 and 2024 from Memorial Day to Labor Day. He was happy to report that almost all of the calls had gone down. For instance, from 2023 there were a total number of calls of 1,065 and in 2024 there were 757. He is very pleased with the presence of the police in Ortley Beach and he believes that these numbers reflect that the Toms River Police Department is doing an effective job. He also feels that the curfew has been very helpful in curtailing the juvenile issues and has helped alleviate the pop-up parties. In 2024, there were zero successful pop-up parties, in his opinion, due to the curfew, and to the social media scrubbing and increased presence both on and off the beaches.

Lieutenant Bachonski indicated that marijuana is now legal and they are pretty much taking a hands off approach to any marijuana use. He did remind the public that driving under the influence of marijuana or any drug and/or alcohol, is illegal and not to do it. He also discussed gun carries in that they haven't had any problems yet, but it is allowed to carry at the current time. So, he believes they are out there in the community and to be very careful in dealing with people who could potentially be carrying a gun. He reminded everyone that the rule of thumb in self-defense is to walk away and leave the scene first. If you do not utilize this option, then you could be losing the defense of self-defense. He indicated that car burglaries on the mainland are being influenced by what is characterized as a Felony Lane Gain and he reminded everyone as a public service announcement to

keep their doors locked and don't leave valuables in plain view. Furthermore, he reminded everyone once again not to be victims of fraud. If you do not know who calling or emailing, do not respond, do not trust anyone and try to be vigilant in dealing with potentially fraudulent activities. He also discussed the high intensity activated crosswalk pedestrian that is over near Stewart's by Sunset Beach. There are five phases to this; 1) if they are completely off, you can proceed through the intersection; 2) if it is flashing yellow, you need to slow down; 3) if it is solid yellow, you need to prepare to stop; 4) if it is solid red, you need to stop for pedestrians; and 5) if it is flashing red, you are allowed to proceed when clear.

Upcoming events include a Vest-a-Cop that is taking place on Monday, September 30th from 5:00-8:00 p.m. and the Jingle Balls Run is taking place on December 4th which is a 5K. Both of these fund raisers benefit the Toms River Police Department.

On a sad note, Lieutenant Bachonski announced that he is retiring as of October 1, 2024. He is 50 years old and will be retiring at that time. He indicated that he has been attending OBVTA meetings since 2014 and indicated that while he has had his share of complaints from the organization, he feels that the relationship has been excellent throughout the years.

The OBVTA then presented Lieutenant Bachonski with a gift card signed by the General Membership and a small token of appreciation in the form of a gift card from the OBVTA. Also, he was presented with one of the new OBVTA hats that were given out at the meeting via raffle. Lieutenant Bachonski will be greatly missed by the OBVTA and we sincerely thank him for all his service to the Ortlely Beach community and to OBVTA in particular. He will be missed.

8. Review of 2024 Goals and Wishes – Our President, Anthony Colucci, presented the General Membership with a review of our 2024 goals and wishes. These include the following:

Getting the beach ready for Memorial Day - The beach was ready and Earl did the repair work so we were able to get that accomplished.

The beach replenishments – John Clarke gave an update on this and indicated that the Army Corp of Engineers is attempting to gain additional funding for the

beach replenishment at which time they hope to award a contract in October, 2024.

EMS – The town has hired additional EMS and Ortley Beach has coverage 24/7 on this. The OBVTA has been in communication with the new administration in Toms River and we are attempting to find out where we stand on shared services with Tri Boro.

OCUA Property – We had an opportunity to discuss a passive recreation use with them in the past and we have been blocked by John Parker who has previously always rejected all of our attempts to use this vacant lot. There have been some changes that have taken place at the Ocean County Utility authority in that the Chairman, John Parker, has recently passed away. There will be a new chairperson elected and we hope to have more meaningful discussion with the OCUA in the future about the use of that property for the benefit of Ortley Beach.

Surf Club Redevelopment – We have been in communications with Toms River continually about the Surf Club Redevelopment and although it seems to be moving slowly, we have been assured that this boardwalk extension and the development in the area as discussed previously, is moving forward in a positive direction.

Rails for the beach walkways have not been installed as we requested. We had a meeting with Justin Lamb who assured us before the season that this would get done but have lately been told that they are waiting for the beach replenishment to take place before they finalize railings such as this.

Business Development on Route 35 North – The latest on this is that the property next to the laundromat is apparently being developed by Dakan Construction and all we were told is that this will be developed as commercial properties on the 1st floor and residential apartments on the 2nd floor. The other vacant lot on Route 35 North was the property on 5th Avenue adjacent to Wasabi 35. It appears that pilings have been installed in this location and it looks that will be residential property development.

There was much discussion about the kayaks at Bayside Park. The racks were in fact built at the request of the OBVTA but the path to the water is not great. It is

very narrow, riddled with poison ivy, and very muddy at times. We have requested that it be widened and a wooden walkway be added to the area to allow people to use this and we are waiting to hear from Councilman Lamb on this. The OBVTA, specifically Anthony Colucci, has taken photos and forwarded them to Justin Lamb to show the issues therein. We had discussions on this issue from the membership during the membership comments and apparently one of the issues with the kayak slips is that parents are allowing their kids to climb all over the kayaks and use them somewhat as a jungle gym. This is obviously a problem and we are attempting to contact Toms River to put signs up so that they are not allowed to do this. Another complaint was that there are many empty slips on the kayak launches and that the slips are difficult to get and if people are not going to use them, there should be a cutoff date, for instance, June 30th, and if kayaks are not included thereon, they can be awarded to someone who would use them.

The street scape project is moving forward but we are attempting to deal with the State at the current time to have the street scape awarded construction approval. Once the construction approval is completed, at that time bids can go out so that a construction company can be awarded the contract for the project. In the meantime, Drew Markowitz of NV5 is working on the bids so they can be ready to be sent out once construction approval is completed.

Another issue was the beach rules and general beach questions. John Clarke addressed this and indicated that they had previously had meetings before the season to go over a variety of issues, 19 in total, with Justin Lamb. Justin Lamb had indicated approval of all of these issues and we anticipated a very cooperative season with the new Toms River administration. Nevertheless, very few of the 19 approved items were actually installed and we are now limited in how we are to contact department heads to move these things along as we must now go through the Business Administrator prior to dealing with any Toms River department head.

The area between Harding and Route 35 North is an issue that we have been pushing for for several years. The Police Department in Toms River has approved these ideas and passed it on to the town engineer. We have tried to contact him but have not heard back from this and we are asking Councilman Lamb to set up a meeting so we can discuss the same with him. Likewise, the speed limit on Bay

Boulevard has received approval from the Toms River Police Department and, this is a county road, and needs to be installed by Ocean County.

9. Board Member's comments – John Clarke addressed the general membership about a couple of issues including the much anticipated beach replenishment. He has been in contact with Steve Rochet of the Army Corp. of Engineers who provided the latest update. The Army Corp. of Engineers has worked to request additional funding and will be working through a number of procedural steps. This is a little concerning as additional funding is needed and will hopefully be granted. Nevertheless, the Army Corp. of Engineers indicated they hope to award a contract in October of 2024. Once the contract award is complete, the Army Corp. of Engineers will coordinate with the contractor on the construction schedule. John Clarke did indicate that there appears to be ongoing beach replenishment taking place at Island Beach State Park that is anticipated to take 180 days. It has no idea whether that will impact our beach replenishment in any way at the current time.

John Clarke indicated further that GiGi's anticipates being open on weekends throughout the off-season. The OBVTA encourages all members to attend as keeping businesses open throughout the season will benefit Ortley Beach as a whole.

Dune Grass Planting – The dune grass planting was also discussed and appears that the dune grass planting will take place sometime in the beginning of November. The exact details will be forthcoming although we will not make a hard push this year on the dune grass plantings as the beach replenishment programs may take precedence and may need to be completed before a big push on dune grass plantings can take place in the future.

Paul Jeffrey also gave an update on the area near Mia's, the center median which curbs have been put in place. This has helped the parking issues on Bay Boulevard but it has been over a year since we have requested dirt to be placed in those areas to fill it out and it be seeded with grass. Paul had an update that the dirt and the seeding is hopefully taking place within the next week or so.

Cathy Crisafulli also addressed the membership and indicated that it is acknowledged that there is a difficult time with the new administration in getting

things done. She reminded the membership to stand and work together and this will be the best avenue to get many of the issues we want done in Ortleby Beach.

10. Membership Comments – Many of the member comments have been addressed here previously. Other comments that were brought up included the condos over on the beach side by the Golden Gull. It is uncertain as to what delays have taken place although Paul Jeffrey did indicate that this is not a sole developer but rather four separate owners and that the owners all have to be in conjunction with whatever construction is taking place. If one of the owners is unable to make payments in a timely manner, this could potentially stop construction. Also, they may be having issues with getting permits from Toms River as this is always an issue. It has been noted that there has been construction going on with those condos lately and hopefully they will move forward and be completed.

11. Close of Meeting - A motion was then brought to have the September 21, 2024, General Membership meeting brought to a close and that was unanimously approved.