

Newport Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
August 17, 2017

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Spencer announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meeting Act.

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor John Joswick, Town Manager Wendy King, Commissioner Timothy Chatburn, Commissioner Florence Czerwinski, Police Chief Michael Capriglione and Solicitor Chris Griffiths. Commissioner Kathy Joseph was absent.

Minutes from the meeting of July 20, 2017, were approved via motion by Vice Mayor Joswick and seconded by Commissioner Chatburn. All ayes.

Public Comment: Erin Goldner, Hope Street, thanked the town for the donation and participation in the town hall meeting held at Minquas Fire Hall. Chief Capriglione spoke and Mayor Spencer served as Host/Emcee. Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna and Associates, thanked the town for its hospitality in conjunction with the 8<sup>th</sup> annual 5K for Delaware Kids Fund. Feedback was outstanding and it was appreciated that Mayor Spencer and Commissioner Chatburn were in attendance.

Barbacane Thornton partner, Jeff Kowalzyk, presented the results of 2016 budget. He recapped the role of the town manager being almost fully responsible for the finances with assistance from Tom Josiah, the town's outside Certified Public Accountant. There were no adjustments necessary with the audit and the presented numbers are the actual figures. Field work was conducted in May, 2017, with a slight delay because the state was not able to provide information on the state pension plan until later. They found the financial statements to be accurate and complete. Budget and Actual numbers are consistently being looked at and monitored. Mayor Spencer wanted Mr. Kowalzyk to expound upon the compensated absences reporting and subsequent recommendation because there is a new commissioner. It was explained that while there are a number of persons who have exceeded their carryover, the overall figure was decreasing, primarily due to tenured employees retiring and that the remaining employees who were carrying over time were aware of the policy. The inability to take time allotted is a factor for at least two employees due to lack of coverage.

Stonehurst pumphouse: Chris Griffiths, Town Solicitor, has been working with the Matarese family to develop an agreement between the town and them for rental of the pumphouse. There were questions regarding the parking area and if it will be exclusive for the Matareses use because it is a public street. The resolution would be to place a "72-hour" parking sign to ensure vehicles are not left for extended periods of time. Mayor Spencer made a motion to enter into an agreement with

the Matarese family for rental of the inactive pumphouse, effective August 17, 2017, subject to the changes recommended by Mr. Griffiths. Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. Roll call vote - all ayes.

Correspondence - none

Town Manager's Report - Skatepark lease was taken over by another member of the church, so it will remain rent-free with the same stipulations regarding insurance and licensing. Nuisance properties and how to declare them and resolve issues with property owners who are not abiding by property code and discussion about potential solutions. Mayor Spencer asked if the church had insurance for the skatepark - yes they do.

Police Chief's Report - monthly statistics. No questions.

Alderman's Report - \$54,615 fines collected. Mayor Spencer had a question on the receivables 3-10 year number. There was a \$27,000 difference from the previous month. Monthly report will be reviewed.

Maintenance Report - 111 N. Walnut donated a metal container to the town. Estimate on lighting on truck - \$2,340.

Code Enforcement - New owner on Abid Merchant's apartment units/garages. Ayre Street parking is looking better. Sundew Painting still vacant. Mayor Spencer wanted to know if there was an update on 102 E. Ayre. Condemnation was discussed, along with placing stop work orders on the permits.

Solicitor's Report - RV parked in D&D Limousine parking lot was moved. FOIA request was received requesting seized firearm data since 2012. Decision was that if no such report exists, no report is required to be developed to answer the request. Pumphouse lease with Matareses.

Commissioners - Vice Mayor Joswick talked with Town Manager King regarding complaints he has received from surrounding property owners (not in town) about the noise from Waste Management. Per our ordinance, trash haulers are exempt, along with emergency vehicles, state work, utility work, and town vehicles.

Chief Capriglione was called out of the meeting.

Mayor Spencer replied to an opinion column in the newspaper written by a former Newark police officer claiming that Newport Police Department had a ticket quota. He wanted to do a mid-year review of the budget and states that the overages are not sustainable. Town Manager King was explaining the SLEAF grant/seizure process and the police vehicle maintenance line item. Mayor

Spencer wanted to know why the 2006 Dodge Durango police vehicle was not sold. Town Manager King said she would sell the vehicle but questioned what would be purchased in its place. A \$900,000 police budget will not occur and he asked commissioners if they felt the police budget was getting any better. Vice Mayor Joswick felt that all the money seized was not received and reflected in the budget at that time. Mayor Spencer noted that every other department is under budget but the police budget is not sustainable. He questioned if SLEAF was necessary because it seems to cost the town in the long run. Town Manager King said the police budget cannot be cut without it affecting personnel and that the vehicle maintenance budget cannot be cut because the fleet is aging. Commissioner Chatburn felt we needed to have a separate conversation to address these items.

When Commissioner Joseph returns next month, Mayor Spencer would like to rescind the motion that made the Mayor and Vice Mayor responsible for overseeing the police department.

Chief Capriglione returned.

Mayor Spencer and Chief Capriglione had an active discussion regarding the police budget and how the overages are not sustainable. Commissioner Chatburn suggested this be discussed next month when the Chief can prepare to speak on his budget.

Skatepark - new representative came in late- recorder did not pick up much conversation.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to adjourn; Vice Mayor Joswick seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.