

Newport Town Meeting
February 20, 2020
Minutes

Meeting was called to order by Vice Mayor John Joswick at 7:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Mayor Joswick advised that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meeting Act.

Attendance: Vice Mayor Joswick, Commissioner Carol Anne Gretz, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Flo Czerwinski, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Solicitor Chris Griffiths. Mayor Michael Spencer was absent.

Minutes from the January 16, 2020, meeting were approved via motion by Commissioner Gretz and seconded by Commissioner MacDonald.

Public Comment – Resident Victoria Wollaston asked about the \$20,000 code enforcement line item under Town Administration on the 2020 budget. Town Manager King explained that the line item paid for our code enforcement officer, Frank Walker, the building inspector, Kyle Bendler, supplies, forms and business cards. Resident Patricia Hieber wanted to know about getting the town to install a handicapped sign on her sidewalk and to upkeep the blue paint on her curb. That will be done by the maintenance department – they will need to rent a machine to bore the concrete for the pole.

Town Manager’s Report – FOIA request was responded to. Forms for municipal election were completed and sent back to the Department of Elections and they provided a presentation to explain the municipal election process to be given to the election board and poll workers as a supplement to their upcoming training. In-town business licenses have been sent out and some have been returned. Town Manager King came in early and was available to register anyone who wanted to register. Three people took advantage of the opportunity.

The question was asked about how many total were on the registration list – 181.

Police Chief’s Report – Monthly department statistics for January. Chief Wohner applied for a grant in November and funding was just received to turn conference room into a soft interview room and to have video that can be viewed in a separate location. Joe Stagliano, resident, wanted to know if there was an update about the Jake Break ordinance. Chief Wohner apologized that he did not have an update. He did reach out to the state transportation department. Commissioner Gretz asked about some content on the report that was “blank” and Chief Wohner did not know why the program showed that as he did not enter “blank.” He believed that they were items not reflected by a specific category.

Alderman’s Report - \$35,321 January court fines.

Maintenance Report – There was a water leak in the maintenance yard. Attended a safety meeting in Dover. Checking on business licenses and permits. Will be sweeping the streets in the next couple weeks. Seats were recovered.

Commissioner MacDonald asked about the repair near Richey School and thought it was a repair to a storm drain and the reason why Christian Street is puddling. It was the concrete apron/entrance to the school that needed repairs. We talked briefly about the fixes and the lack of funds and the catch basins behind the school. Code Officer Frank Walker spoke about the water on Walnut and lack of catch basins and water following the natural course running downhill trying to find the sole basin on Justis Street.

Code Enforcement – 301 E. Justis Street – Harvey Hanna boarded up the home. There was a break-in at 309 E. Justis – the shed was open. NPD got involved and Code Officer Walker secured the shed and attached his business card hoping the owner would call.

Solicitor's Report – Working on locating owner of 309 E. Justis, two personnel issues, policies for police department, FOIA request. Deed request was completed by Town Manager King.

Commissioners – Vice Mayor Joswick – Issue on E. Ayre Street and Larch Avenue where people are disobeying stop signs. Commissioner Gretz said Highland Avenue in front of the school looked like a parking lot. Chief Wohner said that he asked for a meeting with the head of security to discuss the pickup situation. He asked about a carline in the back. Carline is a mess so people do not utilize it. Chief Wohner had the idea of how to structure a car line where people coming in would be forced to go onto Augustine to get into the back of the carline. The crossing guard contributes to the problem by parking her car on Highland at the entrance of the school.

Oaths of Office were issued to Victoria Wollaston and Jeff Sanders to serve on the town's Election Board.

Old Business – Resolutions for Gift Giving and Public Comment protocol were tabled.

Victoria Wollaston, resident, had a question about the railroad going up and wanted to know who was paying for that and parking having to be changed around. The Newport Trainstop is a federal project. She also wanted to know if the curb in front of her house could be fixed. Christian Street is on the list to be repaired, but E. Ayre Street is in worse shape so that will be done first. She wanted to know where the money was coming from to do Ayre Street and that she thought the tax increase was for trash. It was explained that it was intention to borrow for Ayre Street and the \$40,000 in the budget was for six months' of loan payments.

Vice Mayor Joswick made a motion to enter Executive session at 7:35 pm for personnel matters. Commissioner Czerwinski seconded.

Returned to Regular session at 7:59 pm.

Vice Mayor Joswick made a motion to adorn. Commissioner Czerwinski seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.