

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
November 19, 2020
7:00 pm

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, Commissioner Carol Ann Gretz, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Town Manager Wendy King, and Solicitor N. Christopher Griffiths.

Moment of Silence for late Commissioner Florence Czerwinski.

Minutes from October 15, 2020, meeting were approved via motion from Vice Mayor Joswick and seconded by Commissioner Gretz.

Minutes from September 17, 2020, were not entered as there was not a quorum of attendees to approve them.

New Business – Appointment of a new commissioner. Mayor Spencer reached out to former commissioner Tim Chatburn who had served as commissioner for many years and served on the committee for updating the town's comprehensive plan. He would finish out late Commissioner Czerwinski's term until March, 2021. Mayor Spencer made a motion to appoint Tim Chatburn. Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. There were no questions. All ayes.

Commissioner Chatburn took his Oath of Office.

Mayor Spencer appointed resident Stephanie Banks to the Board of Adjustment via motion to fill the vacancy of Mary Ryan. Vice Mayor Joswick seconded. There were no questions. All ayes. Training will be arranged.

Town Manager's Report – Loss of Commissioner Czerwinski and Jack Hanna, Halloween 2020 goody bag giveaway had very little participation, but there are plans to do something bigger in 2021, CARES Act grant funding was approved and funded for just under \$29,000. Work has begun at the municipal building for the video doorbell camera/speaker system. For the Old Town Hall, two tv's will be mounted for presentations, there will be a microphone for each commissioner, speakers in the ceilings for better acoustics, a new council table will be built. The cage will be removed. It was mentioned that the current owner of the Newport National Bank would want the cage, but the town is not giving the cage away. Commissioner Gretz wanted to know why this was being done. Chief Wohner explained that during meetings, many attendees say they cannot hear council speak, let alone now when everyone is wearing a mask. Mayor Spencer explained the grant source and if it was not for the specificity of items, it is not something we would have decided to do. Town Manager King said that with council wearing masks, it was presently difficult to transcribe minutes. It will come in quite handy for presentations, workshops, etc. Commissioner Gretz wanted to know how much it was costing and it was explained that it was not costing the town anything, but the grant would pay \$4,000 for the audio/visual equipment to Tom Mitten. The construction work was done by a company that had done work for the police department (YBE Investors). Budget notes, Thanksgiving holiday schedule. Commissioner Gretz asked about the maintenance purchase from McDonald Safety. Vice Mayor Joswick asked if the person who caused the accident that totaled our police car was going to be held accountable – the person was not insured. The town was compensated, but may need to spend some money on equipment. The insurance company will try to collect from the party at fault.

Police Chief's Report – Monthly statistics for October, 2020. Showed the commissioners the PPE bags that each police officer have in their vehicle. The bags will contain medical masks, N95 masks, face shield, Tyvek suit,

goggles, and safety glasses. Commissioner MacDonald asked about the officer injured and Chief Wohner explained that a second incident occurred and the officer was out for a few days, but is back.

Alderman's Report - \$26,099 collected fines.

Maintenance Report – presented with no questions.

Code Enforcement – Clogged drain on Mr. Tusi's property causing flooding on Harvey Hanna property was resolved. Problems with trucks. Collapsed garage on E. Ayre Street, trucks on W. Ayre Street, Suez fixed leak on W. Ayre Street. Fence in the park looks nice. Commissioner Gretz noted that there are four wheelers being ridden at the park.

Solicitor's Report – FOIA request, 309 E. Justis update, Executive Session recommendation.

Commissioners – Commissioner Gretz was happy she got a sign she had been waiting for.

Mayor's Report – Noted that there was a plaque placed at the Memorial Park for Jack Hanna and Fred Hess for organizing the Pearl Harbor Day celebration. He spoke to Connie Culver and they will probably have little participation for Pearl Harbor Day. DMA is not participating. Met with new senator, Spiros Mantzavinou about the transportation study, bike trail and other related matters.

Correspondence was received from the attorney next door to 309 E. Justis Street asking what the town's position was on demolition of sheds on the property because he received a call from a resident. A letter was received from Robert Poppiti about mask-wearing and civil rights. A letter was received from DelDOT to state what the code was regarding 5G installation on poles in state right-of-ways.

New Business – FY2021 General Operating Budget presentation. \$1,521,250, decreased from \$1,546,250. Amount does not include grant income/expenses, police pay duty or pass-throughs such as SLEAF. Capital budget to include roadwork one block at a time as opposed to having to borrow funds. Brief discussion about closure of 95 will affect any roadwork we do because of potential additional load on our roads. Second reading will occur in December.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to go into Executive Session. Commissioner MacDonald seconded. Go into Executive Session at 7:45 pm.

Return to Regular Session at 7:54 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.