

Town of Newport  
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners  
February 25, 2021, 7:00 pm

This meeting was rescheduled from February 18, 2021, because of inclement weather.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Commissioner Tim Chatburn, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner. Vice Mayor John Joswick, Commissioner Carol Ann Gretz, and Solicitor N. Christopher Griffiths was absent.

Minutes from the meeting of January 21, 2021, were approved via motion from Commissioner Chatburn and seconded by Commissioner MacDonald.

Mayor Spencer welcomed Senator Spiros Mantzavinos who was in attendance. He is looking forward to working with the mayor and council.

Town Manager's Report – mailing of business licenses, issues with software, status of renovations at the municipal building, absentee balloting for this year's municipal election, seeking appraisals for the court cage and safe that were removed from the Old Town Hall when the upgrades were made there, participation in the Continuity of Operations document formulated by New Castle County.

Police Chief's Report – January statistics. Recruit graduated from the Dover Police Academy, state accreditation process is about 50% complete, so late spring is looking to be completion date.

Alderman's Report - \$26, 542 court collections for January.

Maintenance Report – submitted with no questions. Mayor Spencer commented that maintenance did a nice job on the streets during the bad weather.

Code Enforcement – 100 block of W. Ayre Street – parking issues with mechanics. Recurring issue. Needs help with enforcement.

Mayor Spencer had a meeting with Senator Mantzavinos to review some items in the Newport Transportation Study and trying to get environmental center back on the radar starting with getting permits re-approved.

Public Comment: Franklin Walker, S. Marshall Street, noted that he was nearly hit on three occasions on E. Ayre Street because people are not stopping at stop signs, on James Street as well. He sees the police out there but bringing awareness to the situation. Temporary speed bumps could be possible solution. Commissioner MacDonald commented about people are flying down E. Christian Street, Chief Wohner commented about the road closures when the president travels through Delaware. Frank Walker, S. Marshall Street, complimented Sgt. Mitchell and Patrolman Savino as they assisted him with an issue of a truck parked on W. Ayre Street. Victoria Wollaston, E. Christian Street, wanted to know if her letter was going to be read as any other correspondence is and it was not because all commissioners were hand-delivered a copy. Mayor Spencer advised her that it was decided at the January meeting that administration would try to find a home for the cage but would be treating it as surplus property and putting it out to bid if it could not be used at the town office. The property cannot be given to someone, even for a donation. There was discussion about the intended use and the overall intent to handle it as surplus property as was voted on by council the previous month.

New Business – absentee voting. There was a possibility of allowing an absentee ballot for this election with council recommendation. There is the backdrop of the continuing state of emergency issued by the governor's office, the age of registered voters, and the recommendation by the governor's office that absentee or mail-in voting was the safest option. Council discussed and had many questions about the process. Commissioner Chatburn was comfortable with hand-delivery/hand-pickup of a ballot. Town Manager King expressed the difficulty of getting anyone to volunteer and to agree to attend the training and work the election, so it may be a better option for this year. After some more discussion, there were too many unanswered questions. Audience was supportive of in-person voting. No action was taken by council.

Mayor Spencer made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner MacDonald seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.