

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
March 18, 2021, 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, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner, and Solicitor N. Christopher Griffiths. Commissioner Tim Chatburn was absent.

Minutes from the meeting of February 25, 2021, were approved via motion from Commissioner MacDonald and seconded by Mayor Spencer.

Town Manager's Report – Absentee balloting was not authorized by council for the 2021 election, so voting will be in person. Time was spent coordinating the election – notifications, arranging training, communication with the state election office, postings, etc. Budget, safety manual, property tax invoices.

Commissioner Gtetz asked what the safety manual was. Town employees do not have a safety manual outside what is addressed in the personnel policy, so with our worker's compensation insurance carrier's assistance, one was created. She asked how the election was being run this year. It was explained that there were 3 election board members that would certify the voting machines and outlined what their duties would be. It was noted that there would be poll workers to sign people in, verify identification and announce the voting process. The poll workers and election board members will be attending training on the municipal election process.

Police Chief's Report – monthly departmental statistics for February.

Alderman's Report - \$23,877 court fines for February.

Maintenance Report – Filled some potholes, cleaned up the lot under 141 at Ayre and S. Marshall.

Code Enforcement – Mitsdarfer is trailing mulch in the street, discussed weight limits, Active Crane cleared their driveway.

Solicitor – Police matter that the chief will handle on his own, election is being handled, pending litigation, will ask for an executive session.

Commissioners – no questions or comments.

Mayor's Report- He said it has been nice serving Newport for the last 26 years.

Public Comment – Joe Stagliano, 200 Stonehurst Drive, asked about bulk pickups and yard waste. It was noted that Waste Management does two bulk pickups a year and yardwaste conversation was halted because of Covid-19. Victoria Wollaston, Christian Street, asked for clarification on the duties of the election board because she believed the election board served as pollworkers. The duties of the election board are to certify the voting machines, open/close the election and be available in case there are challenges or issues with the registration. The charter does not address pollworkers, but the state election code requires them. Michael Capriglione, Highland Avenue, asked who the pollworkers were and believed that pollworkers should reside in town since one of the pollworkers does not live in town. It was clarified that state election law presides over municipal charter and there is nothing in the state code that prevents a person not living in town to be a pollworker. Frank Walker, S. Marshall Street, noted that

he was the election chairman at the last election and was able to register people the same day but knows that state election law dictates a 30-day time frame from registration to election. Mayor Spencer confirmed that municipal election laws have changed from what they were. Mr. Walker also wanted to clarify that Chief Wohner would not be in uniform. Mr. Capriglione asked about the possibility of absentee ballots since he was not going to be able to attend the election. Mayor Spencer advised that it was brought up at February's meeting and council did not recommend allowing them. (Charter allows for absentee balloting with council recommendation.) He said it would be considered in the future, but at that point, council had too many questions about the process and did not want to act hastily. Ms. Wollaston asked why microphones were purchased if no one uses them. Kevin Haigh, Augustine Street, asked if the 30-day registration deadline appears in our charter and if it was necessary to re-register. It was confirmed that it does state in our charter the registration deadline is 30 days prior to the election date and re-registration is not necessary. Mayor Spencer noted that it may be considered to use the state voter rolls. Mr. Haigh asked when notification was made about the deadline. All election notices have been online since January as the state requires it be done by mid-month.

Regular meeting adjourned for Executive Session – 7:25 pm.

Regular meeting back in session at 7:43 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.