

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
March 16, 2023

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meetings Act.

Attendance: Mayor Michele MacDonald, Vice Mayor Spencer, Commissioner Stephanie Banks, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner John Joswick, Police Chief Mark Wohner and Solicitor N. Christopher Griffiths. Town Manager Wendy King was absent.

Minutes from the February 16, 2023, meeting were approved via motion by Vice Mayor Michael Spencer and seconded by Mayor MacDonald. All ayes.

Chief Wohner introduced the newest officer, Shane Smith, who just graduated from the police academy held in Dover. He noted that it was a unique situation that three milestones were being met – an officer just starting his career; an officer who had put in two years' time being promoted to Patrolman First Class and an officer who had been here for some time being promoted to Sergeant and they all mean a lot to him. Mark Savino is being promoted to Patrolman First Class. He said that while Shane has learned the proper things to do, Officer Savino now knows and understands the application of those things. Patrolman First Class Savino was given new collar pins. The next promotion is for Officer Kashner to Sergeant. He has demonstrated that he knows how to do the job and does it well enough to lead and be a supervisor and motivator to those around him. Sergeant Kashner was given new collar pins.

Commissioner Capriglione recognized State Trooper Ryan Jones and thanked him for attending the ceremony. Trooper Jones acknowledged that he would never forget where he came from.

Town Manager's Report – Mayor MacDonald read in Town Manager King's absence. Signature pages for the business license ordinance to be signed and returned for town secretary's signature. 2023 DSWA collection schedule was posted online. She met with Woodcrest's civic association president about a community yard sale to include all surrounding communities to possibly place in May. An accident damaged the Oliver Evans sign at Memorial Park and Delaware Archives has been notified. Newport will once again see banners of veterans on the lightpoles and anyone can honor a veteran as part of the 2023 Hometown Heroes campaign by contacting Sal Vaccarino (number at the municipal building). Three commissioner filings were received to fill the three open seats. Stephanie Banks, Michael Capriglione and Michele MacDonald will be sworn in at the Reorganization meeting on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 6:45, prior to the regular meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners. Reimbursement from DNREC was received for the lighting work at the boat ramp – remainder will be received once the cameras are purchased. Town Manager King and Mayor MacDonald met with Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna and Associates and Rick Ferrell to discuss boundaries the Downtown Development District. The skatepark is no longer affiliated with the Better Life Ministries. Gene Syvy is still very much involved in the day-to-day operations. DelDOT and the town have signed a new lease in the new name, Newport Skatepark. DelDOT sent letters advising that sidewalks on DelDOT-maintained roads will be brought to ADA standards.

Police Chief's Report – Monthly department statistics for February, 2023. Two nights ago, Officer Savino took a complaint in the industrial park of a theft of a catalytic converter and was able to create a

suspect and a suspect vehicle. While he was working Biden detail, he saw the vehicle go by. He and Officer Kashner did some surveillance on the vehicle and ended up making an arrest of a female in the vehicle. The male suspect called and is turning himself in on a warrant for the theft.

Alderman's Report – Court fines for February, 2023 - \$25,011.

Maintenance Report – Reports submitted with no questions.

Solicitor's Report – Solicitor Forman is working on a small project for the police department.

Commissioners – Vice Mayor Spencer will be attending the DFIT Steward Meeting in Dover. The first meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Update took place with Commissioner Capriglione, Dave Tiberi, Bill Lower, Tim Chatburn and himself. The purpose of the meeting was to set some directions about moving forward. There are only a few areas that need to be looked at and the industrial park needs updating. He thinks they should be finished by the end of the year or early 2024. Mayor MacDonald confirmed that DFIT was the insurance pool for worker's compensation and liability insurance.

Mayor – Mayor MacDonald commented on the meeting she attended with Bill Lower, Rick Ferrell and the town manager. In regard to boundaries of the Downtown Development District, they presented a few options. Mr. Lower, Harvey Hanna and Associates, added that the recommendations by the Mayor and Town Manager were well-received by members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee and will be presented to council in April's meeting. Still in need of names for Board of Adjustment. She was able to get names for the Board of Elections pending one confirmation. She would like to see community members who live outside a two-block radius become involved. The WILMAPO Newport Transportation Plan workshop was well-attended. People outside of town were there as well. WILMAPCO is updating their website so anyone can go on to see what was presented. Senator Mantzavinos emailed her about the upcoming bond bill and she advised him that we were working on it and what we were considering and that Bob Harvey was obtaining some quotes. He also asked about HB 1 and 2 – the marijuana bill. She deferred to Chief Wohner as he would know more about enforcement and concerns about that in general. If no one has charter changes, we should just move on with the ones that were identified. Vice Mayor Spencer had some thoughts on changes. Mayor MacDonald said that in the town manager's absence, if anyone has any thoughts, they can send them to her. She can add it to the spreadsheet she has. Vice Mayor Spencer said he could meet with the commissioners individually to discuss thoughts on changes. Commissioner Capriglione asked if it was too late to submit and Vice Mayor Spencer did not think so, but if it is, we can revisit in January. He said there is a bill in Dover that would revive people going to jail for parking in a handicapped parking spot. He said we would not be enforcing that people in jail, we won't enforce that. He said that one of our reps, DeShanna Neal, was on that and he spoke to her about it. He said the legislative committee at the Delaware League of Local Governments was against it. It will put a unfair burden on small towns to have to enforce. He has a legislative committee meeting coming up and will give an update. Mayor MacDonald advised that Capitol Hill Day is March 28, 2023, where you can meet with some legislators. If there is anything council wants brought up to let her know. The Delaware Local Government Day is May 11, 2023, from 12:00 – 3:30. Mayor MacDonald plans to go and Vice Mayor is going to attend. RAISE grant closed on February 28, 2023. She will look over the information now there is time and see if the town could benefit from that.

Public Comment – Kevin Haigh, resident, Augustine Street, asked about road repair and said that in years past, there was a list of priority roads and if anyone is doing that study. He advised that the town could receive funding from the state representatives. Vice Mayor Spencer advised that is not really how

it works anymore. Mayor MacDonald said that the Senator Mantzavinos was on the Community Rehabilitation Grant Committee that approved our funding for Ayre Street and swale work on Ayre and Stonehurst and he was also instrumental in getting us funding for the boatramp lighting and security.

No new business.

No old business.

Kevin Haigh, resident, Augustine Street, also wanted to know if the WILMAPCO workshop information would be available to the residents through our website. Vice Mayor Spencer asked Mayor MacDonald to have the town manager put it on the website.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:26 pm by Commissioner Capriglione and seconded by Commissioner Banks for personnel reasons.

Vice Mayor Spencer wanted to know if they should wait until the town manager could be there. Solicitor Griffiths said that typically when there is an issue, the employee has the right to have it in an executive session or in public session. He spoke to the town manager and did not have a definitive answer and believes the Executive Session could move forward. Mayor MacDonald confirmed that the town manager made the agenda. Mr. Haigh asked if a vote was going to be made and there was not.

Back in regular session at 7:36 pm.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.