

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
January 16, 2025

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendance: Mayor Stephanie Banks, Vice Mayor Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner Tim Chatburn, Commissioner Lisa Spencer, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Solicitor Max Walton

Minutes from the December 19, 2024, meeting were approved via motion from Commissioner Capriglione and seconded by Commissioner Spencer. All Ayes.

Town Manager's Report – Truck was purchased and is being upfit. Spoke to Steve from Badger Electric to review the lighting needs for James Street Bridge so they can be ordered. Received the contract from the contractor for the Ayre Street project and forwarded it to Solicitor Walton for review. The documents for our municipal election have been received, completed and forwarded back to the state election office. Chief Wohner will reach out to SBI for information on how the process of ordering a background check will take place since 2025 will be the first election year where candidates will be required to order one when filing for office. This will also be the first year that we will be using the state election rolls. There are three open seats on council for 2025. Monday, April 7, 2025, is our election date and the deadline to file is Friday, March 7, 2025. The white maintenance truck is for sale. The sealed bid floor was \$9,000 but we did not receive any bids so “best offer” bids are being accepted. Attended Delaware State Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Corporation Service Company was the keynote sponsor. Beginning with the first payroll in January, we must participate in the state's Paid Family Leave program. There are four components to the program but based on the number of employees we have; we are only required to participate in the Paid Family Leave. The cost is split between the town and the employees and the only employees who can opt out are part-time employees working less than 40 hours a week. Claims can be made beginning January 1, 2026. Chief Wohner did an informal analysis of what town residents pay in taxes versus what they would pay if they lived in unincorporated New Castle County. There is a car rental business that was looking into the same property that the vinyl wrapping business was looking at and was not sure if that business would be considered “automotive.” Commissioner Chatburn tended to think “automotive” meant “repair” and that detailing would not fall under that. Solicitor Walton asked if there was a definition of “automotive” in the zoning code. There was some discussion about the nature of the rental business. Vice Mayor MacDonald looked up the category code to look at the definition. Solicitor Walton will make a determination once the definition of “automotive” is identified.

Police Chief's Report – Department statistics for December, 2024 and annual. He included a letter out to the properties on Ayre Street supplying the parking laws of the town. Stonehurst also received it because of some parking issues occurring there as well. He and the town manager will attend a Teams meeting about the speed camera enforcement and attached some helpful information for council. Commissioner Capriglione asked if there was another agency we could cost-share with and Chief Wohner said that DelDOT would be the only one. Newark has identified some locations and will be not be cost-sharing. That was a question he had for DelDOT because he was not sure who else was interested in it. DelDOT did send a reply and noted that they would be put a camera down the sinkhole

to see the extent of damage and if they can see if other repairs have been made. There was no timeline as to when they were planning to do that.

Alderman's Report – Court collections – \$15,916 for December, 2024.

Maintenance Reports – Submitted with no questions. Vice Mayor MacDonald asked about the entry discussing meeting Dan to start the job. It was the bamboo removal starting from the backyard of a resident on Mary Street.

Town Solicitor's Report – Solicitor Walton advised that if we want to do absentee voting, we need to allow it by ordinance. He said he would prepare the ordinance, and we could discuss it. It would not be for the 2025 election year, though.

Commissioners – No questions or comments.

Mayor's Report – Nothing to report

Public Comment – Kevin Haigh, resident, made a comment regarding the potential adding of a business that would impede parking. He said that between the 200 and 300 block of Ayre Street was so bad that the residents could not even park their cars. Commissioner Capriglione said he would ride by and look at it and stated the town was simply trying to define the word “automotive” in our zoning code and nothing was being decided on tonight.

Solicitor Walton confirmed that Newark's speed camera cases will be going to JP court and not their Alderman Court.

Commissioner Capriglione made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Banks seconded. All Ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.