

Town of Newport  
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners  
February 20, 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, Solicitor Max Walto. Police Chief Mark Wohner was absent.

Minutes from the January 16, 2025 meeting were approved via motion from Commissioner Capriglione and seconded by Vice Mayor MacDonald. All Ayes.

Town Manager's Report – TD Bank notification about the funds in the Community Fund going to escheat. Form was given to Kevin Haigh, Treasurer of the Community Fund. Election intention deadline is March 7 for the three open seats on Council. White maintenance truck was sold for \$2,450. New maintenance truck is complete except lighting. Meeting with DelDOT with Chief Wohner about speed enforcement cameras. The town is supposed to be getting a red-light enforcement camera so we will not be pursuing a speed enforcement camera. Bridge lighting quote was \$22,000 for 4 light poles and two spares. Quote will be sent to DelDOT for their review because they had some questions to be answered by the electrician. A second meeting for New Castle County's All Hazards Mitigation plan update was attended. Received an email from Representative DeShanna Neal's team about a complaint they received from an Air Liquide employee about the unsafe conditions crossing the street and the flashing beacon light was brought up again. They were brought up to speed about the conversation had with Air Liquide's safety director but he has not been in contact. Budget items. Ella Johnson Park had equipment and maintenance would remove if council had no objections. Council has no issue removing the equipment – no one uses them anyway. Commissioner Capriglione wanted to discuss the flashing beacon request at Air Liquide. There was some discussion but he would prefer to have the input of the police chief when he returns. Vice Mayor MacDonald noted that Dewey had a few of them and explained how the flashing beacon works. Those lights work best on roads with a lower speed limit.

Police Chief's Report – Monthly department statistics

Alderman's Report – Court collections – \$22,429 in fines collected in February, 2025.

Maintenance Reports – Submitted with no questions.

Town Solicitor's Report – Solicitor Walton reviewed the Ayre Street project contract, zoning issue related to the comprehensive plan update, interpretation for Chief Wohner.

Commissioners – Vice Mayor MacDonald had a question about the ARPA account balance and if the truck expense and bridge lighting expense were already subtracted from the balance. The truck was but the bridge lights were not. She asked about solar panels. There may or may not be an energy grant.

Mayor's Report – There is a huge spot on Mary Street that freezes that needs to be salted.

Public Comment – Joe Stagliano, Stonehurst, noted that the current noise ordinance has not been amended since August 1, 1985. There is a problem at Newport Terrace Apartments. Their trash hauler is dumping their dumpsters at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. It is disruptive. He has no issue with the town's snow plows because that is only a few times a year and street sweeping would not be happening that early. Solicitor Walton advised that if council was so inclined to change the ordinance, it would take two meetings. There would be an introduction one month and a public hearing the following month and it would take effect at adoption. April Balliet, Stonehurst, asked if more than one person needs to complain before a change would be made because at least 30 people that she is aware of are bothered by the noise. Solicitor Walton said it is council's prerogative to make a change. There was some discussion about what other trash companies' policies are. Commissioner Chatburn requested that Solicitor Walton review and amend the current noise ordinance and prepare updated language that would address a later start time for refuse companies in residential areas. Solicitor Walton will prepare language for a first reading in March and he will research how other areas do theirs.

Dave Lewis, Newport Masonic Hall Board of Directors, was interested in having them considered tax-exempt so they can invest those funds back into the building. New Castle County changed them to tax exempt and backdated it. He provided the documentation the county used in making the change.

Commissioner Capriglione advised Kevin Haigh that he missed the beginning of the meeting when the town manager mentioned the notification she received from TD Bank about the Community Fund account being inactive. He said he had to make a \$5.00 deposit to reactivate the account and was looking for possible places to donate the money to. Commissioner Capriglione noted that the purpose of the Community Fund was to service needy families and Mr. Haigh said it was also for services. Solicitor Walton said he did not know the foundation of the Community Fund and what documentation was available and whether it was non-profit. It was not. Mr. Haigh has the authority to withdraw the funds. There was some discussion. Mayor Banks thought it should go to Richey School in case they lose their food program due to the federal cuts. Mr. Haigh said he would not do anything without the town knowing where the funds were going. Commissioner Chatburn said that since it's been cold, people may have issues getting oil or paying their electric bill. There was more discussion about the mechanics of how an electric bill would be paid through this fund or whether to give it all to the school.

There was a student from Wilmington University in attendance. He did not have any questions.

Dave Lewis, Newport Masonic Hall, advised that if the community needed the building for anything for fundraising, just let him know.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.