

Town of Newport  
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners  
October 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 Tim Chatburn, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Commissioner Lisa Spencer, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Solicitor Tanner Jameson was sitting in for Solicitor Max Walton.

Minutes from the September 18, 2025 meeting, were approved by motion by Commissioner MacDonald and seconded by Commissioner Spencer. All Ayes.

Town Manager's Report – Fall Cleanup was scheduled for Saturday, October 18, 2025. New change order from the contractor for E. Ayre Street was submitted to Remington Vernick and the first invoice was submitted for payment. Operation Warm Camping for Coats will be held on Saturday, November 1, 2025, in the lot across from the James Street Tavern. Kickoff is at 5:00 pm. Dill Dinkers is hosting an event to raise money for the Food Bank of Delaware. Johnny Pickles is a pickleball influencer and will be playing pickleball for 24 hours straight. It will begin on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at noon. There was a kickoff train stop advisory committee meeting that was attended by Chief Wohner, Mayor Banks, Commissioner Spencer and the town manager. There will be an 18-month study that will take information from 2013 and incorporate that with new information on ridership and other factors. There will be a public workshop on Monday, October 20, at Minquas Fire Company. Chief Wohner and town manager attended a kickoff meeting for the 141/Centerville Road railroad crossing. There have been numerous complaints about the train holding up traffic and an alternative will be investigated. The traffic study revealed that there was an average of 13 closures per day ranging from 1-146 minutes. There were 322 closures that had a duration of longer than 10 minutes. Next steps are a capacity analysis on how to redistribute volume, existing and future models to determine level of service delays and queues, follow-up stakeholder meetings and public meetings. Bestfield house – Solicitor Hatfield contacted the engineer working on this matter and it was recommended that the owner pursue annexation of that small piece of land into the county. FY2026 Budget will be introduced next month and a tax increase will be recommended. It will have been 8 years without one. Redevelopment may not happen until 2027. Housing Authority will be meeting with Mayor Banks, Jordan Seemans and town manager to discuss Downtown Development District.

Police Chief's Report – September department statistics. The police department, through a grant, was able to supply pencil boxes and supplies to all 400 students of Richey Elementary School. There were pencils, erasers, crayons, ruler and a postcard that had a photo of the police officers and PTO special dates and contact information on the back. They were distributed on the first day of school. Chief Wohner outlined the promotional process for the department and in the past there has been a structure but it was never part of any policy. He explained the ranks and how to get there. He wanted to be sure council was aware of this because there is a financial obligation to this policy as bumps in rank come with salary adjustments. Commissioner Capriglione asked about the hiring of a certified officer. Chief Wohner stated that he would have the ability to adjust as necessary for the good of the department. He would not bring in an officer from the county who was a low rank there to a higher rank here because leadership ability has not been proven. Commissioner MacDonald recognized that we could not

compete with other agencies and asked if this structure was better. Chief Wohner said that our starting salary is slightly lower than everyone else's but the longer you are at the department is where you start to pull away – we cannot compete. There are sergeants on the state police whose salaries are more than Chief Wohner's. Chief Wohner announced that Sergeant Kashner took a position with Homeland Security investigations so we are down an officer. The position has been posted and there are 11 applicants so far. He went on to say that he was concerned about being able to attain the seventh officer because of the pay bump that was distributed last year. Overall council consensus is that the promotional policy is fair and realistic. There were comments on the recruitment efforts of other agencies with signing bonuses. He asked if a vote was necessary for the promotional structure. It is administrative initiative that would not require a vote from council for implementation.

Alderman's Report – Court collections – \$24,162 for September, 2025.

Maintenance Reports – Submitted. First house behind G. Fedale has a boat in the yard and the grass is high.

Town Solicitor's Report – Solicitor Tanner Jameson introduced himself.

Commissioners – Nothing

Mayor's Report – Went to Tom Harvey's Delmarva Scouting recognition. Downtown Development District meeting is upcoming.

Public Comment – Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna & Associates, said that he would will be getting the comprehensive plan working group back together to finish the plan. He was complementary of the town manager in the dealing of the E. Ayre Street rehabilitation project. He passed out the flyer for the Operation Warm Camping for Coats event. Ryan Kennedy wanted to place flyers out that will be removed after the event. The goal is to raise enough funds for 2000 coats. Richey School has been the recipient over the years. Monday night is the workshop for the train stop and wanted to encourage attendance. Kevin Haigh, resident, confirmed the cleanup date was October 18 and wanted to know if it was announced anywhere. He was told it was put in the newsletter and online. He asked about the audit of 2024 which is not back yet. He is asking because of the tax values, the county's reassessment project and wants to be sure that the commissioners know how much money is to be collected from taxes. He was concerned about the misclassification of property but that was not the case in any of the appeals within Newport – all of the owners who appealed the new assessment were appealing the value, not the property classification.

Chief Wohner announced the DEA Takeback on October 25, 2025.

There was no New Business.

There was no Old Business.

Commissioner Capriglione made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner MacDonald seconded. All Ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

