

Town of Newport
Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Commissioners
April 16, 2026

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendance: Mayor Michele MacDonald, Vice Mayor Stephanie Banks, Commissioner Michael Capriglione, Commissioner Michael Spencer, Commissioner Lisa Spencer, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Mark Wohner, Solicitor Tanner Jameson.

Minutes from March 18, 2026, were approved by motion made by Commissioner Capriglione and seconded by Commissioner Banks. Commissioner Michael Spencer was not a commissioner in March and Mayor MacDonald was not present at the meeting in March and they abstained from the vote.

Town Manager's Report – Chief Wohner and Town Manager King met with Shante' Hastings, other members of DelDOT and Senators Walsh and Mantzavinos about the sinkhole at S. Walnut Street. They were amenable to repairing the sinkhole. If a pipe protectant needed to be applied, it would be a cost share. Robby Brown from DelDOT Real Estate was in attendance and discussed the possibility of cancelling the town's current lease at 415 Washington Avenue and entering a new long-term lease. Before that can occur, they need to do their due diligence by holding public meetings for the public's input. Town Manager King shared that she would like to demolish the bays that are in disrepair and put up a pole barn using CRF funding. They offered to assist with completing the county demolition application, but all property engineering and environmental testing would be at the town's expense. She is getting quotes together to meet the May 1 CRF application deadline. We were shut down when trying to discuss "curb to curb" and the fact that every time DelDOT does work on a road they maintain, future responsibility is passed onto the town. Municipal Street Aid funding should be adjusted accordingly. Maintenance did go around and assess the road conditions around town but they have not been quoted yet. A subpoena was received from Delaware Association of Professional Engineers requesting invoices, correspondence, meeting minutes, etc., relating to work done for the town by Remington & Vernick Engineers. American Rescue Plan reporting for 2025 spending was submitted. Spring Cleanup is Saturday, April 18, 2026. Delaware League of Local Government dinner is April 25 if anyone is interested in attending. There has not been an update or follow-up meeting about the Memorial Day parade. It was acknowledged that the timeline was aggressive and the planning may be better for 2027. Commissioner Capriglione was concerned about the void of our current lease with DelDOT and signing a long-term lease because the public may not be in favor of us being there. Commissioner M. Spencer said there was plans at least 10 years ago to demolish the bays but New Castle County Conservation would need to get involved because of the lot size and impervious surface. DelDOT found another location that would suit their needs which is why they are willing to sign another long-term lease. Mayor MacDonald asked if there was somewhere else we could go if we needed to. Commissioner M. Spencer said that having the yard is a deal. Commissioner Capriglione believed that DelDOT should want to help the town and does not want a big burden for the town. Mayor MacDonald asked if the Parade Planning Committee met since the lodge did their initial presentation. There have been two meetings since then. Commissioner Banks said she believed money was the big issue. After the last meeting was over, she said that Newark paid for everything and then the Masons brought Newark money. She told them that the town is much smaller and does not have the funds to pay to put on a parade and then come back with money. They would need to find out how

much the things they want – DelDOT blocking roads, State/County/Newport Police – will cost. Jordan Seemans, Harvey Hanna & Associates, said that the planners officially decided to call off the parade for this year and work on it for next year with better coordination and are thinking about a smaller event in the fall called Newport Community Day. Mayor MacDonald said that it would need to wait until Public Comment. Commissioner Capriglione asked Solicitor Jameson if DAPE had the power to subpoena records. Chief Wohner said they had statutory authority. Frank Walker, resident, took issue with the floor being open for discussion by someone not on the board and asked why Harvey Hanna can talk at the meetings but no one else can. Mayor MacDonald said that once she realized he was reading from his phone, she did say that we would have to wait until Public Comment to finish the discussion as Mr. Walker could say what he wanted to say in Public Comment.

Police Chief's Report – Department statistics for March, 2026. The message boards are up for the red light camera. They go into effect April 20. Warnings will be given for 30 days and then civil citations will be issued. An officer did get deployed and may get deployed again in October. Another officer had to take family leave so it was the hope the deployed officer would be back but his orders were extended and now the department is short. Toward the end of the year, he hopes the 7th officer can be revisited.

Alderman's Report - \$18,843 in court fines collected in March.

Maintenance Reports – Submitted with no questions. No code enforcement report. Mayor MacDonald asked if there was a schedule for code enforcement and there was none. It is as things are seen.

Solicitor's Report – He will be happy to review the new lease from DelDOT.

Commissioners – Commissioner M. Spencer said he would like to get the environmental center permits and resurrect some things that were put on hold in the last administration.

Mayor's Report – They finally opened up the Downtown Development District application for three additional communities to apply for DDD designation.

Public Comment – Frank Walker, resident, said that there were microphones for use so the audience could hear what was being said and he has not been able to hear most of it. He indicated there were side conversations and the ability to be heard should be of concern to the council. He asked the solicitor that was at the meeting last month concerning two members of council living in the same household creating a conflict of interest and said he did not receive an answer from him. He asked for a business card and was told he did not have any and that was the last he heard. He said he was disappointed that no one spoke about it here. He says he has a question from last month that is still on the table. Solicitor Jameson said while he cannot answer on the spot, he would be happy to look into it. Mr. Walker said that would be next month and if there was some way to communicate with him if he provided his phone number. Solicitor Jameson said that communication would be through the town manager.

Commissioner L. Spencer asked him why there was no concern when two candidates from the same household ran for office a few years ago. Commissioner M. Spencer said that if Mr. Walker could not hear he should sit in the front row and went on to explain the circumstances in Rehoboth where the husband of a sitting councilmember was appointed and while not illegal, being appointed was bad optics. Commissioner M. Spencer did not want to be appointed. He had every right to run as it would be for anyone in the room as it was for the couple on the west side of town who ran a few years ago. There is no conflict of interest as he and his wife have had numerous disagreements in 42 years and when he was mayor for almost 20 years, he only had maybe five times where it was not a 5-0 vote and his spouse was not on council. Two of those five were Kathy Joseph and Albert Bradbury trying to get the

commissioners to donate their salary and that got shot down. He said that Mr. Walker was not the mayor and he was not going to listen to him go on about it. He and Mr. Walker began shouting at each other. Mayor MacDonald said that no one fussed about the two people who ran for office who lived together, and Mr. Walker said that he asked the attorney for a legal opinion. Chief Wohner said that Solicitor Walton did answer the question using Rehoboth as an example that there is no conflict of interest and no law that prohibits it and votes would be on a case-by-case basis. Mayor MacDonald read the excerpt in the minutes that addressed the question. Mr. Walker reiterated that he did not hear that. Mayor MacDonald said that it was explained and that we were done addressing it and moved on. Jordan Seemans, Harvey Hanna & Associates, congratulated Mayor MacDonald for being re-elected Mayor and thanked former Mayor Banks for her work over the last couple of years. Demolition of the pump house was a success and taken care of the week prior. Minquas is putting on a benefit concert on June 10 to purchase a piece of equipment they need. They will donate parking. Parade – they are cancelling the planning of a parade this year. Downtown Development District – application is due June 15. They are underwriting an economic impact analysis should redevelopment occur in the town and what the town would look like. Introduction of Billy Sanchez, operator of a food truck park at the Wendy's property. Mr. Sanchez spoke on his intention to bring something new to the town by having a nice variety of latin food offerings and to make everything safe. Commissioner Capriglione had a conversation with Mr. Sanchez and the curb cuts were for Wendy's and there are a lot of pedestrians. He noticed kids jetting across the street. The town wants the utmost safety for pedestrians. There was discussion about the proposed parking plan for the trucks and for the fireworks company that is onsite in June. There will be five food trucks. Kevin Haigh, resident, wanted to be sure there would not be alcohol and that the town would be sure that was not allowed. That is actually a state requirement – Commissioner Capriglione said that a patio license is near impossible to get approved.

There was no Old Business.

There was New Business.

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

Meeting adjour