

**Town of Camden**  
**Special Meeting of the Council**  
**September 20, 2010**  
**Town of Camden Municipal Building**

At 7:03 p.m. Mayor Maly called the Camden Town Council Meeting to order and led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence in recognition of our troops currently serving and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The following persons were in attendance:

Council Members	Kevin Casquarelli, Councilman Jeffrey Lewin, Councilman Laura G. van Rooten, Councilwoman (Absent) Kenneth Fuchs, Vice Mayor Richard Maly, Mayor
Administrative Staff	James O. Plumley, Town Manager Charlotte L. Klauder, Town Clerk / L.U.A. Capt. Gary Melvin, Camden Police Dept.
Public	Attachment

**Notice**

Notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the Delaware Open Public Meetings Act by posting on August 12, 2010, copies of the agenda in the following manner:

- a. The electronic sign on Voshell Mill Road; and
- b. The bulletin board in the parking lot, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floor lobbies of the Municipal Complex; and
- c. The Official Website.
- d. Published in the Delaware State News on Sunday, September 19, 2010.

**Town Manager/CFO Recommendation**

Mr. Plumley stated the Town received various suggestions during the August 9<sup>th</sup> workshop as it pertained to the deficit, which he will report this evening. He reiterated the Town's income comes solely through revenues of taxes, business licenses, rental licenses and permits. The deficit is \$388,049.70 and to rectify it, we have three (3) options.

1. Adjust income (i.e. tax rate, licensing rate or other fees)
2. Adjust operating expenses
3. Develop a plan combining both

He stated it is incumbent of the Council to work on a plan that will help us not only remedy the current deficit, but to ensure it does not happen again.

I do not believe we can relieve ourselves of the deficit problem by doing any one of the three (3) options individually. To solely take care of the budget deficit we would have to increase the taxes by 50% or reduce our operating expenses, meaning cut people. It will have to be a combination for it to work. This plan should include us saving 10% while living within our means on sustainable, renewable income. Now that I've put that in place my recommendations are as follows:

- I believe we will be able to put ourselves forward responsibly if we include a 12% across the board tax – equal and even. The increase a few years ago was not even. This increase would be across the board. That will generate approximately \$116,000.
- Next make an adjustment in the business license fees. I think the rate is fair and good. I think where we have a problem is there are certain businesses in town that put more of a demand on our resources and/or police. For example, Bev Knight's Jewelry store does not put one bit of strain on our resources or police; however Texas Roadhouse is open longer and their calls are much higher. My plan is to develop a factoring system to determine a rate for the various businesses, for example:
  - Wal-Mart is a 24/7 business. It is a constant strain on our resources. I propose we factor in increases to accommodate that additional draw.Changing the business license fee structure will generate another \$70,000 +/- annually.
- Relative to operating expenses, I believe we need to instate a 16 hour per day police force. We cannot afford the 24/7 force. Is it a good thing? Yes; however we simply cannot afford it. Our dollars coming in do not support the force at the 24/7 level. Other areas do not have a 24/7 police force, such as Wyoming and the unincorporated areas across the highway and they are fine. The Chief and I got into evenings; where is our demand? Most of it is Wal-Mart, but a large percentage goes to Wal-Mart parking lot. Then I offer this: Wal-Mart relieve their issues by way of paying for security. We still have the coverage you just may not get a response in the 15-20 minutes anymore. Where I think the biggest concern is if you have a break-in, you will have coverage via the State Police versus Camden Police. Your calls will be prioritized by the County Emergency Dispatch.
- In addition to the Police I think we need to review non-uniform positions. There may be some other positions that you as a Council may want to talk about.

That is my proposal. I think this is what is best for the town and the most responsible way to proceed.

At this time Mayor Maly announced a 10 minute recess in order to await the arrival of Councilman Casquarelli. He stated Councilwoman van Rooten was absent due to personal medical issues.

Councilman Casquarelli arrived and the meeting reconvened at 7:27 p.m.

Mayor Maly opened to the floor to the Council for discussion relating to Mr. Plumley's recommendation and the deficit matter as a whole.

Councilman Lewin expressed his belief that a multi-faceted approach would be the best course of action. He asked Mr. Plumley for the last tax increase percentage. Mr. Plumley stated approximately 33% increase for residential and 40% for commercial.

Councilman Lewin stated the average across the board would be a 47.5% increase in two (2) years, which is a lot for our citizens to endure again. He stated you tend to lose confidence when you raise taxes then turn around and do it again. He stated he understood another component will need to be added, specifically business licenses.

Councilman Lewin asked Mr. Plumley what the total amount of delinquent taxes was currently. Mr. Plumley answered between \$40,000 & 43,000. He continued by stating a few months ago it was \$80,000; however due to the great job by Ms. Lisa Driggins, we were able to realize \$40,000 +/- . He stated he and Ms. Driggins would be meeting with the solicitor to determine how to proceed with addition collections. Mr. Plumley commented there will always be someone who doesn't pay, but the town is taking the right steps to rectify the situation.

Councilman Lewin asked if it was reasonable to expect another \$20,000 will be collected. Mr. Plumley felt that number was aggressive. He explained Ms. Driggins was in the process of determining how much of the outstanding monies owed are over two (2) years old.

Councilman Lewin asked how many of the residents in arrears have the ability to pay. He also stated the business license issue is a good issue. He felt the factoring system was important for proportioning an amount for businesses that utilize the resources the most as they should be held accountable. He stated the most contentious issue was policing, and decisions should not be made in a vacuum. Either we are going to do this or not. You have to explore it first. I've done a fair amount of research on this in the last 30-40 days. I've compared other municipalities that are the same size and as isolated as we are. It is a straight formula of two (2) police officers per 1000 residents that is used and it does not take in all of the variables, such as crime rate and other available resources within the radius of the town, types of calls for service, citizen demand, response time, etc. I think in the case of a barking dog, it will certainly take a back seat to an assault or major car accident.

Councilman Lewin stated the other consideration may be furlough days and overtime. He questioned the use of overtime versus compensatory time as indicated in the police reports. He also questioned whether or not the residents of this town are willing to sacrifice 24 hour service for a 15 or 14 hour / 3 shift coverage. Councilman Lewin stated Council is still looking at other operating expenses, such as use of supplies, equipment, including the town owned vehicles. He questioned whether or not it was necessary for each of the officers to take home their vehicles. He expressed his believe that it was not necessary to have the number of cars we have in this town.

Councilman Lewin also addressed part-time versus full-time police officers, furloughs in addition to the other recommendations and input offered. He questioned outsourcing snow removal as an option. He firmly stated he would not support taking away a salary or increase that was approved and given. In addition Councilman Lewin suggested restructuring the code enforcement fine schedule as an option. He concluded by stating the U.S. unemployment rate is 9.75%, which is the highest it has been since before World War II.

Vice Mayor Fuchs expressed his desire to realize Wal-Mart's providing their own security during the overnight hours. Vice Mayor Fuchs also suggested additional lighting in the area to deter crime. Council concurred. Councilman Lewin suggested meeting with Mr. Chou of Wal-Mart to discuss this matter further.

Councilman Casquarelli expressed his concern for cutting the police department and the possibility of publication of same resulting in an increase of crime. He also remarked Wal-Mart was not only used by Camden residents; however the burden of providing services lies with our taxpayers. Mr. Plumley reasserted the fact that the Town of Camden could not afford to provide 24/7 police service.

Mayor Maly asked to see Chief Bryson's analysis of the business and residential demands of the police services. Mr. Plumley stated Wal-Mart accounted for 60.18% of the business calls. He pointed out that the Shoppes at Camden Town Center, the other side of Thomas Harmon Drive, only had five (5) total calls in that same timeframe.

Mayor Maly stated working out a business fee adjustment based on calls is a good starting point. He also commented within days of being elected he was entrenched in the patrolmen's contract negotiations wherein a caveat is provided for officer's to be hired out as off-duty security for businesses.

Captain Melvin stated the school resource officer at Fifer middle school is paid for by the Caesar Rodney School District; the high school utilizes a state police officer. He also commented that an officer hired for off-duty security would be paid a rate of \$45.00 per hour, with \$5.00 per hour going to the Town; his calculations find this to be \$121,000 per annum.

Mayor Maly stated another avenue to pursue was the maintenance of open space within the developments of Town. He suggested assessing a fee to the taxes for each homeowner within developments that either do not have a homeowners association or one that does not maintain the open areas, i.e. Camden Commons. He stated it is not fair to the rest of the residents to "pick up" the costs of maintaining these areas.

Councilman Lewin stated the last thing the Town wants to do is cut people. He also stated meeting with Mr. Chou was imperative, and questioned the number of calls Wal-Mart had in the last six (6) months. Mr. Plumley answered over 3,084. Councilman Lewin suggested a fee for service arrangement, stating even \$50,000 per year would equate to one less person to cut. He stated we need to look into our operations as well, four (4) day weeks or only being able to apply for permits two (2) days per week, etc. He also commented that once cuts are made, and everyone becomes accustomed to working efficiently within their means there is no reason to increase that number again. He stressed the need to do things right so we do not face a deficit again.

Vice Mayor Fuchs he stated by his calculation \$5.00 to the Town for an officer on duty at Wal-Mart overnight would equal closer to \$14,000 per year to the Town not \$121,000.

Councilman Lewin emphasized the need to think this matter through prior to making a definitive decision.

Mayor Maly offered the residents the opportunity to send their questions and/or comments as they pertain to this matter to him via email, USPS or drop-off at the Town Hall.

At this time Mayor Maly asked for a motion, following the rules of executive session, to close the public meeting and enter into executive session. Motion made by Councilman Casquarelli, seconded by Councilman Lewin, to close the regular session of Council. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

At 9:34 p.m. Councilman Casquarelli, seconded by Councilman Lewin, adjourned the executive session and reconvened the regular meeting. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Motion made by Councilman Lewin, seconded by Councilman Casquarelli, to adjourn the September 20<sup>th</sup> Special meeting of Council. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

*Charlotte L. Klauder*  
Town Clerk