

Town of Camden
Regular Town Council Meeting
Camden Municipal Building
June 1, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Torres called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and noticed that this regular Council Meeting was being held in compliance with the Delaware Open Public Meeting Act by posting the agenda on May 25, 2020, in the following manner:

- a. The electronic sign,
- b. The Delaware State Newspaper,
- c. The Dover Post Newspaper,
- d. The Official Bulletin Board, and
- e. The official Town of Camden Web Site.

Vice-Mayor Schock led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Torres led a moment of silence.

Council Attending: Mayor Torres, Vice-Mayor Schock, Councilman Woodall, Councilman Girty and Councilwoman Rhodes.

Council Absent: None.

Staff Attending: Town Clerk Sarah Cahall, Account Specialist Amanda Marlow, Town Solicitor Craig Eliassen, Tom Josiah, and Chief Marcus Whitney.

Roll Call:

Mayor Torres
Vice-Mayor Schock
Councilwoman Rhodes
Councilman Woodall
Councilman Girty

AMENDMENTS

Motion to move item #11 to after item 5 councilman Woodall and second by Rhodes all in favor; none opposed

Motion to move item #8 to move after new business item #E councilman Girty and seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock all in favor; none opposed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town hall will be closed July 3, 2020

MINUTES

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Schock, seconded by Councilman Woodall, to approve the May 18, 2020 regular meeting minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Girty, to approve the May 18, 2020 executive meeting minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Councilman Woodall, seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock, to approve the May 26, 2020 public workshop minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Josiah went over fiscal year 2020 with one more quarter to complete. He stated we are on track. Business license and permits revenue is over budget which is good. Expenditures we are over 75% because there were two additional payments for the mortgage. Public safety and public works funding are good and on track. Street aid funding revenue is on track and is about the same as last year. RETT helps a lot with capital needs. Public safety budget was \$99,000.00 spent \$21,000.00. Public works budget will remain low.

PLANNING & ZONING REPORTS

Mrs. Cahall stated that on May 20, 2020 Board of Adjustment approved four minor variances for McDonald's. She added that the Planning Commission approved the preliminary site plans for McDonalds. She also informed everyone that there will be a Planning meeting on June 17, 2020 with two items on the agenda.

Mayor Torres said she spoke with Chairwoman Gray and they are brainstorming on setting a public workshop/meeting with Planning Commission and Council to get everyone involved with Planning & Zoning updates and/or future plans.

CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT

None.

CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY

None.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN

None.

VFW

None.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Whitney gave a report that included but was not limited to traffic arrests and criminal activity. He said numbers were low due to COVID19, but officers were still active.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mayor Torres stated RETT check for March was a little more than \$62,000.00

MAYOR

No comments.

Mayor Torres ask for a motion to enter executive session.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock, all in favor; none opposed to enter in executive session.

A motion was made Councilman Girty, seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock, all in favor; none opposed to adjourn the executive session and return to the regular meeting

PUBLIC HEARING

FY 2021 Budget

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Schock, seconded by Councilman Girty, to enter public hearing. All in favor; none opposed.

Mayor Torres said she received an abundance of phone calls from business owners regarding the proposal of the commercial tax increase.

Councilman Girty added the 30% commercial tax increase is a hike.

Mayor Torres added that she verified they can put a 30-day extension on the budget.

Mrs. Marlow suggested to rezone the larger business to a C-3 to put them at a different tax rate. She added there's a lot of small business on the highway that are zone C-2

Councilman Girty said he wants to be fair cross the board to small business owners. He added that he wants to bridge a gap between small business owners vs. large businesses.

Councilman Woodall is happy with the balance budget and he's willing to vote on it today. He is open to suggestion and thoughts.

Vice-Mayor Schock said he doesn't agree with the 30% increase but is in the agreement there needs to be a change.

Mrs. Marlow informed them changing the zoning will take months.

Councilwoman Rhodes asked how we would determine small vs large business.

Craig Eliassen stated that Chief Whitney will determine if there is a discernable difference with C-1 and C-2 properties because public safety is a factor.

Chief Whitney said there is a marginally difference and would be a hard to determine.

Councilman Woodall stated we already had the budget meeting doesn't like pushing things off.

Vice-Mayor Schock suggested a 15% commercial tax increase.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Leslie Drake associated with Camden Town Center- Stated Covid19 has affected most of their tenants. She thinks a tax increase at any amount is unexpected.

Dave Bailey, Wyoming Mill Work- Said it's a horrible time to do a tax increase and many local businesses aren't doing well right now. He would like to see a fair share and asked to table the commercial tax increase.

Lisa Dawson, Dawson Bus Services- they have been in service for 91 years and feels this commercial tax increase for small businesses is a horrible idea during this time. She is concerned for her 100 employees keeping their job and keeping their doors opened. Mrs. Dawson said it would have been nice if they would of came and out spoke to the business owners. She asked for Mayor and Council to table.

Walt Simpson, Walt Simpson Realty- feels this is a hasty discussion during the pandemic and would like to table it.

Joseph Simpson- Stated a huge tax increase can likely drive businesses out.

David Cantara- Shops of Camden Town Center – Stated most of the tenants are small business owner at the location. They must work with everyone with lowering rent due to COVID-19 and Amazon has hurt the retail landscape. He said the commercial tax increase is no different than asking tenants for a rent increase.

Brian Lessard, 261 Main St- His concerns is the commercial tax increase seems like a temporary situation and not a long-term solution. He would like to see a collaboration with the business owners and Council. The 30% tax increase will trouble some business owners with keeping their doors open.

Justin King, 109 Main St- Mr. King said they are taunting a balance budget. He said that 31% increase on taxes business owners will have to cut their employees and it will drive business

owners out of Town. During this pandemic it isn't fair for a 31% tax increase. There is no transparency, no fairness and a smack in the face to business owners that are already struggling. He added that 12 years is going down the toilet in two months. When he walked into the Town there was no money in savings. He finds this absurd and unbelievable they can even consider this matter. He expressed that having an executive session before the agenda items showed a lack of transparency because that has never happened in the past. Lastly, he feels they are taking advantage of the situation everyone is currently in.

Frank Demondi, E&D Holdings- He said they lease space to small businesses, and they can't increase their rent during this time. His job is to keep their business operations running. He said the 31% tax increase is disrespectful. He added that Mr. King did a remarkable job creating a good business environment and hopes the town can continue with that. He hopes they can sit down with Mayor and Council to find a long-term solution.

A motion was made for a 35-day extension for the FY 2021 Budget by Councilman Girty, seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock, to exit public hearing. All in favor; none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #2020-R-2

A motion was made to table Resolution #2020-R-2 by Vice-Mayor Schock, seconded by Councilman Girty, All in favor; none opposed

COLA

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock, to remove the 2.3% COLA increase from the FY2021 budget. All in favor: none opposed.

Civilian Pay Scale

Allows for a 3% longevity increase every other year for administration on the Towns side. They are considering removing and allowing salary increase base off performance.

Councilwoman Rhodes questioned how the salary increase would be determined.

Mayor Torres said it would be budgeted if they have available funds and someone is in deserving of an increase. The Town manager would have that authority to give out.

Roll call:

Mayor Torres – yes

Vice-Mayor Schock- yes

Councilman Girty – yes

Councilman Woodall – yes

Councilwoman Rhodes – yes
Motion carries.

A motion was made to remove Civilian pay scale by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Woodall. All in favor; none opposed.

Police Contract

A motion was made to table the Police Contract by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Girty, All in favor; none opposed

Craig Eliassen questioned the status of the General Order #21.

Chief Whitney stated that its completed and submitted for Mayor and Council to review, vote, and approve. It defines the promotion and the hiring policy would include the CPOA request for latter ranks.

Craig Eliassen asked if it must be in place to complete negotiation within the union.

Chief Whitney said he feels as if it does because the policy isn't in place. How its stated in the union's request the latter ranks are just given to them based on their time period.

CPL Buckwald stated that was incorrect.

Councilman Girty asked CPL to elaborated because he was not on council at the time.

CPL Buckwald went into detail on how ranking structure is outlined. A way to allow your officers to have a rank structure.

Councilman Girty questioned if it was performance based.

CPL Buckwald stated its all performance based.

Chief Whitney commented that there is no verbiage in the contract that reads mention based on performance. It dictated that after so many years you are given another rank.

Councilman Girty questioned if there is testing for each rank.

Chief Whitney said there would be testing required, no disciplinary actions and other requirements.

A motion was made to accept the General Order #21 by Vice-Mayor Schock, seconded by Councilman Woodall, All in favor; none opposed

Roll call;
Mayor Torres – yes

Vice-Mayor Schock- yes
Councilman Girty – yes
Councilman Woodall – yes
Councilwoman Rhodes – yes
Motion carries.

Tax Discount

A motion was made for a 35-day extension to table the \$20.00 early bird tax credit by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Girty, All in favor; none opposed

Police Hazardous Pay

Mayor Torres said that during the state of emergency the officers have been working around the clock with nothing in addition to their regular pay.

A motion was made for \$6,000.00 per officer hazardous duty pay from the RETT account by Councilman Girty, seconded by Vice-Mayor Schock. All in favor; none opposed.

License Plate Reader

Chief Whitney said the license plate reader would be located at the intersection of Thomas Harmon Dr and Walmart Dr. he said it would be beneficial for residents and the town. It will pick up every license plate that goes in that area and will be a storage tool for the police department.

A motion was made to purchase the license plate reader in the amount of \$17,650.00 from RETT by Vice-Mayor Schock, seconded by Councilwoman Rhodes, All in favor; none opposed.

Town Manager

Mayor Torres stated her and Councilman Woodall conducting interview can selected Jason Stewart.

Vice-Mayor Schock voted no because there is a missing opportunity to promote with in. He stated Mrs. Marlow has a lot of experience here in Town and works well with everyone. He would rather see Mrs. Marlow in that position

Roll Call:

Mayor Torres-yes
Vice-Mayor Schock-no
Councilwoman Rhodes-yes
Councilman Woodall-yes
Councilman Girty-yes

A motion was made by Councilman Woodall, seconded by Councilman Girty. All in favor; one opposed.

OLD BUSINESS

FY2021 Budget second reading tabled.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Justin King 109 S Main St- Questioned Town Manager Salary.

Mayor Torres said the Town Manager position is \$60,000.00.

Justin King- Stated it's not a smart move to hire Mr. Stewart and recommend the discussion to be dismissed. He said Mr. Stewart is a business owner and the Town Manager is a full-time position and is concerned if there will be conflict. He agreed with Councilman Schock and said Mrs. Marlow is a pivotal role as the Account Specialist, budget, pay roll knows the role of Town Clerk and Town Manager. She added and works extremely hard with the CFO. Mr. King believes promoting with in is beneficial with moral and keeping employee's longer.

Pat Kelly 62 Nanticoke- He agreed with Mr. King and said Mrs. Marlow is qualified for the Town Manager position. He is disappointed to see she did not get the position. He wishes her success in the future. He added he is in favor for the license plate reader.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Girty- Stated he's happy to sit down with business owners and get any ideas they may have.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To consider strategy with respect to pending and/or potential litigation and/or with respect to personnel issues.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Girty, seconded Vice-Mayor Schock, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Cahall, Town Clerk*