

**Town of Camden  
Regular Town Council Meeting  
Camden Municipal Building  
January 8, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:00p.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 December 29, 2023, in the following manner:

- a. The electronic sign,
- b. The official Bulletin Board,
- c. The official Town of Camden Web Site.

Vice Mayor Rhodes led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Dougherty led a moment of silence.

Council Attending: Mayor Dougherty, Vice-Mayor Rhodes, Councilman Woodall, Councilwoman Sturgeon, and Councilman Ridgely.

Council Absent: None.

Staff Attending: Town Manager Harold Scott Jr., Town Clerk Sarah Cahall, Account Specialist Malori Lewis, Town Solicitor Craig Eliassen, and Police Chief Marcus Whitney.

**AMENDMENTS**

None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Town Hall will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The municipal election is scheduled for Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 12-8 p.m. at the Camden Municipal Building. Available seats are currently held by Mayor Dougherty and Councilwoman Rhodes. Qualified parties may submit a letter of intent to the Town Clerk no later than the close of business on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Town Hall will be open on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, until 8:00 pm for candidates to file notification of candidacy.

**MINUTES**

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Rhodes, seconded by Councilwoman Sturgeon, to approve the December 4, 2023 regular meeting minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Rhodes, seconded by Councilwoman Sturgeon, to approve the December 4, 2023 executive session minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

**FINANCE REPORT**

Ms. Lewis stated the December RETT revenue was \$39,025.80 and the delinquent tax amount is \$39,679.02.

**CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Jeff Brown gave a report that included but not limited to fire calls. He added that for the year 2023 they had a total of 908 fire alarms and 4,442 EMS runs.

**CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY**

John Badger stated they replaced a 2-inch PVC water main pipe with a 6-inch pipe near Cataldi Ln. He said the Townsend 28-acre property was sold and has heard mention that it may be a development. He added they will have a budget meeting January 9<sup>th</sup>.

**FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN**

None.

**POLICE REPORT**

Chief Whitney gave a report that included but was not limited to traffic arrests and criminal activity. He said they had 70.5 hours of overtime and 2 hours of court overtime. He added that they had 6,100 calls for service in 2023.

Councilman Ridgely asked if they are actively seeking to expand the police Department.

Chief Whitney stated that was up to the Mayor and Council. He added they have 5 officers on patrol, they have 10 people total, including two that are in the academy.

Mayor Dougherty asked what the inability was recruiting new officers.

Chief Whitney said they need to work on retention. He went over the state agencies starting salary of D.A.T.E. at \$76,000.00 and is aware they can't compete with that but would like to get within a striking range. He added throughout the year they rely on granting which is usually \$25,000.00-\$30,000.00 that is put towards special duty, overtime, and paid jobs which doesn't come out of the Towns budget. He said he would like to see the starting pay at \$60,000.00.

Mayor Dougherty stated that Chief Whitney gave him 3 comparison wage scale of other agencies and they have been discussing what they can do to increase the starting salary for new officers.

Councilman Ridgely asked about implanting an action plan to recruit new officers.

Chief Whitney said the best thing is to hire a certified officer. He added that where the pay scale is, certified officers don't want to work in Camden because of the workload. He stated they had 6,100 complaints last year and that is a lot for Camden.

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Mr. Scott Jr. explained that two buildings for Sunset Village will be issued certificates of occupancy by the end of January. He stated that the King Storage unit is moving along. He added that the new dwelling at 116 N. Main St. should be completed within the next few months. He explained that Horty & Horty will start their audit next week.

**MAYOR**

Mayor Dougherty thanked the Town staff for doing a great job of organizing the Christmas Parade and decorating the Town float. He thanked Senator Trey Paradee for attending the Council meeting.

Senator Paradee introduced himself to some of the new Council. He explained police recruiting and retention is an issue throughout the whole State and doesn't just affect municipalities. He stated a lot of young people are not choosing to go into that profession. He stated that the pay issues for small municipalities may become more difficult because the Delaware State Police are in the process for their 3-year negotiation of their salaries, and it will be a significant increase.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Selection of Town Solicitor*

Mayor Dougherty explained they have selected Gregg Morris.

Councilman Woodall asked what Mr. Morris' hourly rate is and if he has a contract.

Mayor Dougherty said his hourly rate is \$225.00 an hour and if the Council would like a contract, he can provide one, or have no contract and the Council can remove him at any time.

Councilwoman Sturgeon is in favor of a contract and asked what notice would be required if he withdraws from his position.

Mayor Dougherty said it would be 30 days.

Roll Call

Councilman Woodall- yes, with contract

Vice-Mayor Rhodes-yes

Mayor Dougherty-yes

Councilwoman Sturgeon-yes

Councilman Ridgely-yes

*Friends of Historic Camden Flag Presentation*

Councilman Ridgely explained that the Friends of Historic Camden would like to have banners on every other utility pole on Camden-Wyoming Ave and Main St. He said the banners will promote and celebrate the Town of Camden Heritage. He explained the banners could have the Town of Camden logo or seasonal banners. He added that banners would be approved by the Council and installed by Del-Dot requirements. He stated the estimated cost would be \$8,300.00 excluding installation and the Friends of Historic Camden would like the Town and other agencies to help fund this project.

Councilman Woodall asked if they would be operating with code and how much funding does the Friends of Historic Camden have currently.

Councilman Ridgely said they will be operating within code and the Friends of Historic Camden has \$2,800 which is not sufficient to fund the project.

Councilman Woodall said he would be willing to help with the project personally, but the Town didn't budget for this project.

Gale Christensen added that there is space at the bottom of the bracket where a business can purchase a flag and add their name of the business to the bracket to help offset the cost of the project.

Mayor Dougherty is in favor of the project, however it's not in the budget so he can only give moral support at this time.

A motion was made by Councilman Woodall, and seconded by Vice-Mayor Rhodes, to give moral support for the project. All in favor; none opposed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

John Badger- 35 Dill Ln.- He inquired about the County tax assessment.

Carol Milton- 305 Meeting House Ln.- She asked if public comment was in writing. She addresses her concern with the appearance of her development from basketballs to trash.

Dawn Gonzalez- Barclay Farms-Asked if there is a breakdown on the 6,100 complaints and asked if the Townsend property that is proposed to build is in the historical area.

Michelle Snyder- 605 Commons Ln.- Asked if the budget conversation regarding police will be discussed now or after elections because of the increased criminal activity. She mentioned that

the children in Camden Commons are just playing, not being destructive, and they are aware of their surroundings.

Dylan Woodall-111 N. Main St.- He asked why some individuals make more money than others.

Harold Scott Jr.- 112 E. Camden-Wyoming Ave- He thanked Senator Pardee for everything he has done for the Town and the Fire Department.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made at 8:15pm by Councilwoman Sturgeon, seconded by Vice-Mayor Rhodes, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Cahall, Town Clerk*