

Town of Camden
Regular Town Council Meeting
Camden Municipal Building
June 3, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 24, 2024, in the following manner:

- a. The electronic sign,
- b. The official bulletin board,
- c. The official Town of Camden website, and
- d. The Delaware State News.

Mayor Dougherty led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

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

Council Absent: Councilman Woodall

Staff Attending: Town Manager Harold Scott Jr, Account Specialist Malori Lewis, Town Solicitor Greg Morris, CFO Tom Josiah, and Police Chief Marcus Whitney

AMENDMENTS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Hall will be closed on June 19th in observance of Juneteenth.

Tax bills for tax year 2024 will be mailed out the first week in July. We are basing the bills on the assessed values from last year since we have not received the updated assessment from Kent County.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to approve the May 6, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, to approve the May 20, 2024 Public Workshop Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Lewis stated that the delinquent tax amount is \$17,161.19. She added that we received \$18,783.76 in RETT funds in the month of May.

CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT

Jeff Brown gave a report that included but was not limited to fire and EMS calls. Tickets are on sale online and at the Fire Department for their upcoming Crab Feast on August 24th.

CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY

John Badger said they have no updates, but he can confirm he still has not received an increase on his water bill.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN

Councilman Ridgely said they met on May 23rd and they are gearing up for Peach Festival, they will have giveaways and incentives to join their organization. They are waiting to receive an update on their grant application to help fund the flag program and they are also waiting for Kent County to provide an update on the Goggin House project. He added that their next meeting will be on the last Thursday in June at 7 p.m. at Camden Town Hall.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Whitney gave a report that included but was not limited to traffic arrests and criminal activity. He stated they have had 100.5 hours of paid overtime and 14 hours of court overtime. Chief Whitney said they have had a total of 530 calls for this period, compared to 502 calls for this period last year.

Mayor Dougherty asked if the two new Officers had completed the Police academy and were working with the other Officers.

Chief Whitney said the new Officers are out of the Field Training Officer program and are released for what they call a “solo beat”, but that won’t begin until next year as there is still a lot to learn. He added that he is pleased with their progression, and they are picking things up quickly.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Scott stated he did 20 inspections during the month of May. The pool at Reserve on East is now open, but the Club House is still pending fire marshal approval. The Club House and pool at Sunset Village will be open by the end of the week, they have 6 buildings open and the other 5 buildings are being built. He added that he has called Del-Dot to discuss extending the brick sidewalk on Camden-Wyoming Avenue from South Main Street to Willow Avenue, with a

potential grant to install decorative lighting. Finally, JK Sound will begin the audio and video upgrade project in the King Meeting Room next Monday.

Mayor Dougherty asked how long the project would take.

Mr. Scott said the estimated timeframe is two weeks.

MAYOR

Mayor Dougherty said that Town staff are doing an excellent job while being short-handed, they have gotten tax delinquency totals down significantly. Several people are two years delinquent, and they will be turned over to our Attorney for collection of those taxes. He added that the roughly \$17,000 that is currently delinquent is about half of what the delinquency total has been over the last 2 years, so he again wanted to thank the Town staff for doing an excellent job.

Mayor Dougherty also mentioned that there will be a tax increase next year. We will be implementing the new Kent County assessment and modifying the tax rate we charge because we want to try to keep the taxes comparable to what they are now. He added that it has been 13 years since the last tax increase.

PUBLIC HEARING

FY25 Budget

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to enter a Public Hearing. All in favor; none opposed.

Mayor Dougherty welcomed questions and comments regarding the proposed FY25 budget from the Council and added that Vice-Mayor Sturgeon spent a lot of time working on this budget.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked Mr. Josiah if there had been any changes since the Public Workshop.

Mr. Josiah said there have been no changes since the last meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gale Christensen asked where the budget is located on the website.

Mayor Dougherty advised that Ms. Lewis could show her where it can be found after the meeting.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to exit the Public Hearing. All in favor; none opposed.

OLD BUSINESS

FY25 Budget – Final Reading

Mayor Dougherty stated that the budget has been discussed at two prior meetings and would like to call for a vote to accept the proposed FY25 budget.

A motion was made by Councilman Rhodes, seconded by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, to approve the FY25 Budget. All in favor; none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #2024-R-01 – Adoption of FY25 Budget

Mayor Dougherty signed the above Resolution to adopt the FY25 Budget.

Updates to 2023 Zoning Ordinance, Table 240-3

Mayor Dougherty explained that there was a box in the C-2 zoning table that was missing in the 2023 update. The table for hospitals should have included a “P” for permitted, as hospitals are permitted in C-2 zoning.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon wanted to confirm that hospitals were included in C-2 zoning in prior years and were simply overlooked in the 2023 update and that there are no changes to the Zoning Ordinance, just the correction of a typographical error.

Mayor Dougherty confirmed.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to approve the update to the 2023 Zoning Ordinance, Table 240-3. All in favor; none opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Anne Faust (267 Paynter’s Way) – Asked if South Street will be a dead end after the completion of the Camden Bypass and expressed her concern about overgrown trees on South Street.

Mayor Dougherty confirmed that South Street would be a dead end and that arborists were hired by the electric company to trim the trees, so they did not interfere with the electrical lines.

Kahan Maniar – Wanted to express his appreciation that there will be two new Officers due to the increase in crime spreading from Dover, especially because his shop was broken into the night before. He added that having additional Officers will help business owners and residents and help keep Camden beautiful.

Mayor Dougherty added that in addition to the two new Officers approved this year, there are two new Officers in the budget for next year as well. Now that the budget has been approved, Chief Whitney will begin the hiring process.

Dawn Gonzalez (Barclay Farms) – Had questions on the charter regarding Town Council missing meetings, if the University of Delaware bill mentioned a few months ago was resolved and paid, and if the comprehensive plan review process has started.

Mayor Dougherty said the charter does not specify how many meetings a Council Member can miss, that the University of Delaware bill has been paid, and the comprehensive plan review process has begun.

Carole Milton (Camden Commons) – Wanted to thank the Police Department for their assistance with graduation traffic and asked if there were any updates on her concerns about her development since she met with Mayor Dougherty.

Mayor Dougherty said the letters they discussed were sent out, which has a 30-day limitation that has now been met and we will be following up on the letters and reinspecting the properties.

Audrey Bethea (101 Meeting House Ln.) – Wanted to thank the Police Department for their presence during graduation. She mentioned that she would appreciate it if we could extend the sidewalk for the bus stop that she mentioned previously. She also has concerns about the unkept area behind her house because there are a lot of bugs. She understands the development is owned by the Buckson's, but wanted to know if there was anything the Town could do.

Mayor Dougherty said we will do what we can to alleviate some of her concerns and wanted to add that we have ordered additional parking restriction signs for Camden Commons.

Mr. Scott said we could call Mosquito Control to come out and spray.

Gale Christensen – Wanted to say thank you for removing the flag from the wall. She mentioned that there is a utility pole in front of 18 South Main Street that leans into the road, and she contacted the utility company to no avail. Tractor trailers are hitting the pole and debris is falling to the ground, and wanted to know if we could put pressure on the utility company.

Mr. Scott said two poles have been braced and the utility company believes that is sufficient.

Mayor Dougherty said can we send a letter to the utility company.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Rhodes thanked everyone for coming and thanked the Town staff, Police Department, and Fire Department for everything they do while being short-handed.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon thanked everyone for coming and thanked all staff and departments for their hard work.

Councilman Ridgely echoed the other Council's appreciation and thanked the public who have joined our committees.

Mayor Dougherty thanked everyone and added that he appreciates the Fire Department for assisting his neighbors in Barclay Farms.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilwoman Rhodes, to enter into Executive Session. All in favor; none opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made at 7:39 p.m. by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilwoman Rhodes, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Maleri Lewis, Account Specialist*