

**Town of Camden**  
**Regular Town Council Meeting**  
**Camden Municipal Building**  
**July 1, 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 June 24, 2024, in the following manner:

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

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, Administrative Assistant Diane Mosby, Town Solicitor Greg Morris, and Police Chief Marcus Whitney

**AMENDMENTS**

None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Town Hall will be closed on July 4th, 2024, in observance of Independence Day.

Tax bills for tax year 2024 will be mailed out this week.

**MINUTES**

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to approve the June 3, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to approve the June 3, 2024 Executive Session Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

**FINANCE REPORT**

Ms. Lewis stated that the delinquent tax amount is \$14,602.28. She added that we received \$11,286.00 in RETT funds in the month of June.

**CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Harold Scott Jr. gave a report that included but was not limited to fire and EMS calls. He added that the two new ambulances are anticipated for July 2025, and a pumper tanker has been ordered, which is estimated to be 5 years out. Lastly, he mentioned that there are 53 days until the crab feast.

**CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY**

Councilman Ridgely said they have not had a meeting since last month and there are no updates at this time. The next meeting is scheduled for next week, with updates to be given at the August Town Council meeting.

**FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN**

Gail Christensen is excited to announce that they received a \$7,500 grant for the flag project and wanted to thank Senator Paradee for his help with that process. She added that they will be present at the Peach Festival and are looking for volunteers to work their table.

**POLICE REPORT**

Chief Whitney gave a report that included but was not limited to traffic arrests and criminal activity. He stated they have had 54.5 hours of paid overtime and 7 hours of court overtime. Chief Whitney said they have had a total of 521 calls for this period, compared to 561 calls for this period last year. He added that he is still waiting for an update on the COPS grant he applied for.

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Mr. Scott stated that tax delinquency is down substantially compared to prior years and that many high-dollar delinquencies have been paid recently. He mentioned that he did 25 inspections during the month of June. The liquor store should be completed by the end of August. He added that after two years of construction, next Tuesday is the final inspection for the Clubhouse at the Reserves on East. Savannah Farms advised that they will be breaking ground by fall; they have been waiting on Del-Dot to begin the Camden Bypass project because their infrastructure will correlate with that project. Finally, Mr. Scott wanted to congratulate our part-timer Natalie on the birth of her baby girl and welcome our new part-timer, Diane.

Councilman Ridgely inquired as to the status of the final site plan submission for Savannah Farms and asked if the groundbreaking is contingent on their final approval.

Mr. Scott advised that they haven't come back to the Planning Commission yet and confirmed that the groundbreaking is contingent upon the final site plan approval.

**MAYOR**

Mayor Dougherty wanted to thank Ms. Lewis for stepping up and doing two jobs and training the new part-timer. He also wanted to thank the Town Solicitor for his assistance with our 2-year delinquencies.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Change zoning of Map# 7-02-094.00-01-10.00-000 (3977 Upper King Rd.) from R-3 to R-2*

Mayor Dougherty explained that this large piece of property is currently vacant, and they would like to change the zoning from R-3 (Mixed Residential) to R-2 (Single-family Residential).

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to approve the zoning change from R-3 to R-2. All in favor; none opposed.

*Salaries*

Mayor Dougherty stated that they have been looking at salaries across the board, but there is a pressing need on the Police side. He asked Chief Whitney to explain the current process for a new Patrolman, what a Recruit makes while in the academy versus what they make after graduating, and when they are considered a Patrolman.

Chief Whitney explained that a Recruit is considered a Patrolman once they are sworn in the night of graduation. In the academy, the salary is \$50,000 and upon graduation to a Patrolman, there is an immediate pay raise of \$5,300 as a Patrolman Step 1. Graduating from the academy is a difficult process and the first pay raise instills an incentive to complete it.

Mayor Dougherty explained that the pay scale for a Patrolman consists of a yearly Cost of Living increase, which is a minimum of 2%, and every other year there is a Longevity increase of 3%.

Mayor Dougherty stated that he has reviewed recruitment flyers from various departments throughout Delaware and we are below the norm for the surrounding departments. He added that he wants to implement an ordinance to create a Commercial Public Safety Impact Fee because commercial properties create a lot of calls for service. He also wants to create a new pay scale for the Police Department and Administrative side.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked if we would be dealing with Police and Administration collectively or separately.

Mayor Dougherty said separately since the Police are covered by their Union. They will not be contingent on one another but can be implemented at the same time.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked which surrounding agencies are comparable to Camden.

Chief Whitney explained that Cheswold is comparable in salary, but not workforce. Clayton is comparable for workforce, but their salaries are higher and their calls for service are lower.

Mayor Dougherty added that Clayton is closest in population, but Camden has more commercial properties.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mary Ann Faust (267 Paynter's Way) – Asked what the Commercial Public Safety Impact Fee would be and how often the fee would be charged. She thinks this is a great idea.

Chief Whitney said his thought is that the fee could be 2% of the commercial properties' annual tax assessment. He added that approximately 85% of their calls for service are commercial-based and residents should not have to carry the burden.

Mayor Dougherty added that we are not the first Town to consider this, several Towns have implemented such legislation.

Gale Christensen (21 S. Main St.) – Thanked Ms. Lewis for posting the recent budget on the website. She asked Harold for an update on the sidewalk grant for South Main Street. She also asked how to see the streaming of the monthly meetings and if there was an update on the Town Clerk position.

Mr. Scott explained the sidewalk grant is still in the early phases.

Ms. Lewis explained that we are learning how to work with the new equipment to record and stream the meetings, and the link will be posted on the website once training is complete.

Mayor Dougherty said we are considering an internal promotion for the Town Clerk position and we hope to have it filled within the next 2 months.

Dawn Gonzalez (Barclay Farms) – She asked why the zoning discussed under New Business is being changed, if something is being planned, or if we're just trying to be proactive. She also asked how we will be monitoring viewers who raise their hands during the streamed meeting. She added that she agrees with the Commercial Public Safety Impact Fee.

Mayor Dougherty explained that we are just trying to be proactive and that there is nothing planned at this time. He also explained that the streamed meetings are for viewing purposes only, viewers can submit their questions and/or concerns to Town Hall the next day.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilwoman Rhodes wanted to thank the Town staff, especially Ms. Lewis for taking on extra duties. She also wanted to thank the Town Solicitor, the new part-timer, the Police Department, Mr. Scott, and his staff.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon thanked everyone for everything they do to get things done, she understands that we are understaffed, and she appreciates all our efforts. She also wanted to send her condolences to the Fire Department for their loss, services for Volunteer Firefighter Moore are Wednesday at Noon.

Councilman Ridgely thanked the Town staff and Police Department. He added that he is excited to announce that 2 new businesses are opening in Town, a brewery and a new architectural engineering firm.

Mayor Dougherty thanked everyone for showing up and thanked all staff for their efforts.

#### **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 7:40 p.m. by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Malori Lewis, Account Specialist*