

**Town of Camden
Regular Town Council Meeting
Camden Municipal Building
September 9, 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 August 30, 2024, in the following manner:

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

Councilman Ridgely 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, Jim Liguori, and Police Chief Marcus Whitney

AMENDMENTS

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon stated that she would like to add a discussion on the progress of live streaming our meetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tax bills for 2024 are due by September 30th.

Amendment to Ordinance #2016-O-02 (Rental License Standards) has been removed from the Public Hearing Calendar due to the Mayor and Council's decision to not proceed with the proposed amendment at this time.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to approve the August 5, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Lewis stated that the delinquent tax amount is \$10,395.86. She added that we received \$17,596.66 in RETT funds in the month of August. She advised that the tax revenue received

thus far for the 2024 billing is \$642,016.94.

Councilman Ridgley asked how much ARPA funds are remaining.

Ms. Lewis stated that the balance is \$19,454.34 and that this amount does not include the funds that were approved last meeting to purchase new handguns.

CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT

Jeff Brown gave a report that included but was not limited to fire and EMS calls.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked if they keep track of false versus actual alarms.

Mr. Brown stated that the Fire Marshal's office only helps keep track of commercial alarms. They follow a 3-strike rule and after that, a report is filed with the Fire Marshal's office.

CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY

John Badger explained that they are having a workshop tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. There was a 20% sewer increase on the last bill and there will likely be another increase next year.

Councilman Ridgley clarified that the rate recently went from \$2.91 per thousand gallons to \$3.12. He added that next year will increase to \$3.74.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN

Gale Christensen stated that they were awarded a grant of \$7,500 for the flag program and she showed an example of what the flag will look like. They hope to have a QR code that will bring up historical information on where the flag is located. She added that Friends of Historic Camden would like to be involved in any potential future development discussions for the West Street property.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Whitney gave a report that included but was not limited to traffic arrests and criminal activity. He stated they have had 94.5 hours of paid overtime and 8.5 hours of court overtime. Chief Whitney said they have had a total of 522 calls for this period, compared to 528 calls for this period last year.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon suggested adding prior year statistics to the Police report breakdown totals and asked about late-night activities at Wawa.

Chief Whitney explained that they have had discussions with Wawa and have local management support for potential special duty assignments or closing that store from the hours of 1:00-3:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. They are still waiting on support from regional management.

Chief Whitney advised Council that we had two critical failures with one of the video surveillance servers. There are two servers, which are approximately 15 years old. Due to the age of the servers and the critical failures, the servers are being replaced at a cost of \$24,550. He also brought up the previously approved purchase of two new Police vehicles at \$60,000 each. He advised that the cost of the new vehicles has gone up and he would need at least \$70,000 to purchase and equip each vehicle, which would be an additional \$20,000 more than what was approved previously. He added that he would like to consider replacing vehicle #128 due to a history of major repairs, at the cost of \$70,000 to purchase and equip the replacement vehicle. If approved, he is asking to use RETT funds for each of these items.

Councilman Ridgely asked if we have spare vehicles.

Chief Whitney explained that we are required to have two spare vehicles and that the two oldest vehicles are retired each year when the two new vehicles are purchased.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked if the purchase of the replacement Tahoe could be delayed because an additional \$70,000 is a lot to spend right now if it is not necessary. She also asked how much the repairs have been for this fiscal year and mentioned that spending \$70,000 is more significant than the cost of repairs. She suggested having this discussion when we begin the preparation of next year's budget since we are already over budget without one-time funding.

Chief Whitney stated that the purchase of the replacement Tahoe may be delayed due to the purchase window with I. G. Burton. He added that vehicle #128 may or may not have any additional major repairs and we can handle the repairs accordingly if it stays in rotation.

Mayor Dougherty said we have expended approximately 220% of what was budgeted for this vehicle so far.

Mayor Dougherty advised that due to the critical nature of the server replacement, he advised Chief Whitney to have AdvanTech start the work immediately.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon questioned the disaster recovery plan and suggested cloud-based backup of the servers.

Chief Whitney explained that cloud-based is a vulnerability and would open it up to problems, as well as recurring subscription fees, and he will discuss the disaster recovery plan with AdvanTech.

A motion was made by Councilman Ridgely, seconded by Councilwoman Rhodes, to approve the funding for the replacement servers of \$24,550 from RETT. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to amend the budget amount to purchase two new Tahoe's, to increase the authority by \$20,000. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilwoman Rhodes, to delay this purchase at this time. All in favor; none opposed.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Scott stated that he did 38 inspections during the month of August. He has met with Kerwin Gaines regarding a potential cyber security grant to replace hardware for Town Hall staff. We have applied for a grant to add additional handicap accessibility for our parking lot and to make changes to the sidewalk/bus stop in Camden Commons. He added that we are still waiting for the “no parking” signs for that development.

Councilman Ridgely asked if “no trespassing” signs are necessary on our West Street property.

Mr. Scott said we don’t mind if residents walk on the property if they clean up after themselves.

MAYOR

Mayor Dougherty stated that the West Street property is multiple parcels, and he would like to consider adjusting the lot lines in case we decide to sell any of the parcels in the future. He added that we approved raises for all but one employee at the last meeting and would like to discuss a raise for that individual at the next meeting. He thanked the audience for their attendance and thanked the Town staff for all they do.

OLD BUSINESS

Status of live streaming meetings

Mayor Dougherty asked Mr. Scott to provide an update on the progress of live streaming our monthly meetings.

Mr. Scott explained that we have only ever done live streaming during the pandemic, and the person who organized that no longer works here. He added that our tenants have volunteered to assist us with setting up streaming. The goal is to have live streaming in place by the next meeting. He reiterated that the meetings are being recorded and will be posted on the website manually until the live stream is available.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kahan Maniar (Camden Liquor/Camden Cigars) – He asked that the West Street property be considered for some sort of activity like a pickleball court or concession stand and expressed his concern with upcoming marijuana rules and regulations.

Justine Zimny (Lebanon Rd) – She suggested Facebook Live and asked what type of server was replaced in August of 2023 upon approval from Council, as well as the timeline to replace the two servers discussed this evening.

Chief Whitney explained that the server replaced last year was an outdated State server that links us with DELJIS. The server discussed this evening is strictly for cameras and video surveillance, and AdvanTech is now moving forward upon the contract being signed on August 29th.

Gale Christensen (21 South Main Street) – She mentioned a previous Board of Adjustment meeting she attended and stated that the meeting was not opened for Public Comment and would like clarification on the process of how these meetings are handled.

Robert Crow (29 East Street) – He expressed his concern with vehicles speeding down East Street which is now a dead-end road. He suggests adding speed bumps to slow down vehicles that do not see the “No Outlet” sign.

Carole Milton (305 Meeting House Lane) – She expressed her concern with the tree on the corner of East Street and Camden-Wyoming Avenue and the inability to see oncoming traffic, as well as weeds in her development.

Mercedes – She asked how we can go about treating the wood at the Brecknock Park playground to avoid splinters or other injuries.

Mayor Dougherty explained that Brecknock Park is maintained by Kent County Parks and Recreation, not the Town of Camden.

Dawn Gonzalez (Barclay Farms) – She mentioned an incident where the trash company took her 5-gallon buckets that she has used for many years to dispose of her yard waste. After speaking with Mrs. Mosby, she is happy to say that the trash company dropped off replacement buckets. She also inquired about setbacks for R-2 zoning.

Councilman Ridgely advised that setbacks are listed within the Zoning Ordinance that is available on our website.

Fleur McKendell (44 East Fred Circle) – She asked what the process would be regarding an issue with an elected official and wanted to thank Vice-Mayor Sturgeon for requesting an update on live streaming of meetings.

Brandon Moore – He stated that he was told to report his concerns regarding an incident with Councilman Woodall to the Police Department and feels like they talked him out of it. He mentioned a FOIA request that could not be fulfilled due to the server failure and said he was told by Chief Whitney that he walked the former Mayor out in handcuffs.

Chief Whitney stated that he did not say that.

Mayor Dougherty explained that Mr. Moore has taken the appropriate steps to file a formal complaint, and this is an active investigation that cannot be commented on at this time.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Ridgely thanked the Town staff and Chief Whitney for their diligence. He would like to get ahead of the recreational marijuana conversation and mentioned that we will have three options; not approved, partially approved, or fully approved for manufacturing and testing. He is working with Commissioner Coupe to hold a workshop to discuss this topic and details will be forthcoming.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon would like to do a compensation study to see what a fair salary increase would be for the longtime employee mentioned in tonight's meeting. She also thanked everyone for coming and for their comments and thanked the Fire Department for holding an awesome community fundraiser.

Councilwoman Rhodes thanked everyone for coming and thanked the Town staff, Police, and the Fire Department for all their hard work.

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 Councilwoman Rhodes, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to enter into Executive Session. All in favor; none opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Refer to Mayor.

*Respectfully submitted,
Malori Lewis, Account Specialist*