

**Town of Camden
Regular Town Council Meeting
Camden Municipal Building
November 4, 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 October 28, 2024, in the following manner:

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

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon 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

Mayor Dougherty mentioned that he would like to add two items under New Business; Shop Local (c.) and Suggestions for the West Street Property (d.).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Hall will be closed on November 5th for Election Day, November 11th in observance of Veteran's Day, and November 28-29th in observance of Thanksgiving.

The 4th Annual Camden-Wyoming Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 7th, at 6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilman Ridgely, seconded by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, to approve the October 7, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Lewis stated that the delinquent tax amount to include the 2024 billing is \$83,223.52. She added that we received \$15,184.12 in RETT funds in the month of October. She advised that the tax revenue received thus far for the 2024 billing is \$2,025,990.52.

CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT

Phillip Lewis gave a report that included but was not limited to fire and EMS calls. He stated that they held their annual Fire Prevention Open House last month and had a good turnout. He added that the State Fire Marshal issued a statewide burn ban due to the dry conditions.

CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY

Councilman Ridgely stated that while he missed last month's meeting, the purpose of the meeting was to approve the FY25 budget. He added that there will be no rate increase by Camden-Wyoming Sewer and Water Authority, however, there will be an increase by Kent County.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN

Gail Christensen stated that they do not have any updates at this time, and they are hoping that the historic flags will be hung by January.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Whitney gave a report that included but was not limited to traffic arrests and criminal activity. He stated they have had 67 hours of paid overtime and zero (0) hours of court overtime. Chief Whitney said they have had a total of 546 calls for this period, compared to 493 calls for this period last year.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Scott first wanted to congratulate our Board of Adjustments Chairman, Mike Prystajko, on retiring from the Military after 40 years of service as both a service member and civilian. He stated that he did 29 inspections during the month of October and that Sunset Village has 2 more apartment buildings that should be completed by January. He added that he did final inspections on most of the buildings at the new King Storage facility and there is one building that is pending a final inspection. He mentioned that the State of Delaware/Del-DOT has asked the Town if they can find funding to improve the stormwater drainage pipe that runs from South Main Street to Gibbs Ditch. If the Town is not willing to make these improvements, the State would need to implement an underground retention pond when they begin the Camden Bypass in that area. They are asking for a letter of commitment if the Town is willing to make these improvements. He added that John Gaines from Del-Dot was in attendance this evening and can answer any additional questions.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked what the estimated cost would be and added that we would not be willing to commit to anything without an estimated cost.

Mr. Gaines stated that there is not an estimated cost at this time and that they are not looking for an immediate commitment. He added that there are known drainage issues with South Street and

West Street, and the only way to improve these issues with the Camden Bypass project would be to either install the underground storage or for the Town to improve what is there now.

Mayor Dougherty stated that this would need to be discussed by the Council and the Town's Engineer, and he will follow up after these discussions.

MAYOR

Mayor Dougherty stated that there was very limited attendance at the Public Workshop on October 29th. He stated that everything is going well in the Town and thanked the Police Department, Town Staff, and the audience for attending.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Annexation

- i. *Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity – Map# 7-00-094.08-03-46.00-000*
- ii. *State of Delaware – Map# 7-00-103.00-01-28.00-000 – old Troop 3 location*
- iii. *DNREC – Map# 7-00-086.13-02-23.00-000 and Map# 7-00-086.13-01-42.00-000*

Mayor Dougherty stated that there will be a public hearing and a resolution next month regarding these annexations.

Purchase of new Police vehicle

Chief Whitney explained the transmission went out on their 2018 Tahoe. The repair is costly, and the vehicle is out of the warranty timeframe. He stated that a new fully equipped vehicle would cost \$65,000.

Councilman Ridgely confirmed that the Council recently approved two new Police vehicles.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon clarified that this vehicle is not due for replacement based on the cycling of vehicles and asked if this was the oldest vehicle in the fleet, and where the money would come from to purchase this vehicle.

Chief Whitney explained that the two new vehicles approved for this budget year are part of the two-per-year rotation. The 2018 Tahoe was discussed at a recent meeting due to a costly repair, but it was voted not to replace the vehicle at that time. Purchasing this replacement vehicle would be in addition to the two that were approved for this year. He explained that this is not the oldest vehicle in the fleet; the 2014 Ford Explorer is, which will be traded on the next rotation, and he recommends the usage of RETT funds to purchase the replacement vehicle.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilwoman Rhodes, to purchase an additional Police vehicle to replace the 2018 Tahoe using RETT funds. All in favor; none opposed.

Shop Local

Mayor Dougherty explained that he has designated Saturday, November 30th, 2024, as the annual “Small Business Saturday” for the Town of Camden and encourages everyone to support small businesses and merchants.

Suggestions for the West Street Property

Mayor Dougherty explained that this property is currently considered multiple parcels and the goal is to modify it to one parcel. He has some requests for potential benches as part of a beautification project and will see what beautification grants may be available to fund this type of project.

Councilman Ridgely added that the Friends of Historic Camden believe that benches are a great idea if the property will ever become a public space.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked what the overall goal for the property would be because we do not want to see issues like dog waste not being picked up or people sleeping on the benches on our property.

Councilwoman Rhodes said we need to simply fix what needs to be fixed before we consider any future projects.

Mayor Dougherty explained that we do not have any current plans for the property, but we are open to suggestions.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon asked about the purpose of purchasing this property.

Mayor Dougherty explained that one parcel of this property houses our Public Works building and that a lot of the Public Works equipment was sitting outside of our property line, as agreed upon by the owner of the surrounding property. When the property was available for purchase, we took advantage of ARPA funding to purchase the entire property, so that our equipment was on our own property and to take advantage of the storage buildings on site to store this equipment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dawn Gonzalez (Barclay Farms) – Asked the reason behind the annexations, where Habitat for Humanity is located, and what the protocol for requests from the State of Delaware would be. She added that the Public Workshop to discuss marijuana rules and regulations was very informative.

Mayor Dougherty explained that the annexations will clean up the Town of Camden boundary lines, Habitat for Humanity is located on the northbound side of Route 13 near the skating rink,

and State of Delaware requests can be brought to the Town's attention by anyone working for the State of Delaware.

Maxine Wayson (300 Williams St.) – Expressed her concern with a property near her residence.

Gail Christensen (21 S. Main St.) – Agreed with Mrs. Wayson's concerns and added that she understands that the Code Enforcement officer is also the Town Manager and the Building Inspector who has a lot of responsibilities and expressed that the Mayor and Council need to find a solution to the code enforcement issues that she believes have not been resolved.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Rhodes thanked the Town staff for all they do and thanked the Police and Fire Departments for all their hard work and added that she will speak to Mr. Scott this week about Mrs. Wayson's concern.

Councilman Ridgely thanked the Town Staff, Police, and Fire Department and added that Mr. Scott has a lot of responsibilities and should have help because it is a lot for one person to handle as the Town continues to grow.

Vice-Mayor Sturgeon thanked the residents for coming and mentioned that the Town is growing, and it is time to see what we need to do to expand roles. She also thanked the Fire Department for holding their annual Fire Prevention Open House and encouraged the Mayor and Council to organize a ride along with the Police and Fire Departments.

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 7:56 p.m. by Vice-Mayor Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Malori Lewis, Account Specialist*