

Town of Camden
Regular Town Council Meeting
Camden Municipal Building
April 7, 2025

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 March 31, 2025, in the following manner:

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

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

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

Council Absent: N/A

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 Friday, April 18th, in observance of Good Friday.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilman Ridgely, seconded by Councilwoman Sturgeon, to approve the March 3, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Lewis stated that the delinquent tax amount is \$19,197.56. She added that we received \$6,235.51 in RETT funds in March.

Mayor Dougherty mentioned property taxes that are two years delinquent and asked how many have been sent to Mr. Morris for further review.

Ms. Lewis mentioned that 7 were sent and one of them was paid in full because the property

was sold, leaving 6 properties that are currently eligible for monitions.

Councilwoman Sturgeon asked about the status of canceling old business license invoices and if an adjustment will be made.

Ms. Lewis advised that the invoices have been canceled, and this has been reviewed with the CFO and auditors.

CAMDEN WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT

N/A

CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY

Councilman Ridgely advised that they have not had a meeting so far this year, and the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8th.

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN

Councilman Ridgely stated that they meet every fourth Thursday of the month and that they have a speaker coming in May, who is going to speak about the Brinkley Brothers and their history in the Underground Railroad. He added that they are still working on their website and flag project.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Whitney gave a report that included, but was not limited to, traffic arrests and criminal activity. He stated they had 45 hours of paid overtime and 3 hours of court overtime. Chief Whitney said they have had a total of 397 calls for this period, compared to 464 calls for this period last year.

Mayor Dougherty confirmed that we still have two open positions and inquired about the vehicle expense lines exceeding the budget for this year and asked Chief Whitney if he had any suggestions.

Chief Whitney explained that they are still waiting for the 3 Tahoes that were ordered last year, and 3 vehicles will be traded. He has someone interested in purchasing two of the downed vehicles that have engine and transmission problems, and we will likely get the fair market value. He suggested increasing the maintenance budget for newer vehicles to \$1,500 and older vehicles to \$2,000.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Scott stated that he did 24 inspections in March. He mentioned that Servpro is scheduled to

come next week to clean the duct system due to mold throughout the building, even after multiple dehumidifiers have been purchased and placed throughout the building, and he has reached out to an engineering firm to come in and evaluate the HVAC system because of high humidity in the building that may be causing the mold. The evaluation cost could be around \$25,000-\$30,000. He has only reached out to one engineering firm so far, but he will research other reputable HVAC engineers to obtain additional quotes for an evaluation. There have been many issues with the HVAC system going back many years, and with a large, high-dollar project like replacing our system, we need an engineer whom we can trust to get the job done correctly. Mr. Scott added that the system is pushing heat in the summer and air conditioning in the winter, when it should be the other way around. He also discussed workers' compensation and explained that the specific line item is over budget because the premium increased, and we had 4 claims submitted, both of which affect the amount expended.

Mayor Dougherty mentioned that mold has been an ongoing problem and that every office has a space heater running in the winter. He added that the building is not that old and shouldn't have these types of problems, and he is aware that the HVAC system will be an expensive thing to fix.

Councilwoman Sturgeon asked if there was any type of warranty on the HVAC system.

Mr. Scott explained that any warranties have expired as the building was built in 2008.

Mayor Dougherty added that this evaluation needs to be built into the budget, and we should have a few other estimates by then, but he expects other estimates to be around the same cost.

Mr. Scott mentioned that the traffic bollards on Thomas Harmon Drive make plowing and other things more difficult, and the bollards have had to be replaced multiple times by people driving over them, at a cost of \$150 each. He added that the bollards just cause people to drive around them illegally in the wrong direction, and feels that removing the bollards will help alleviate the accidents that occur at the 3-way intersection when people come in from the highway.

Chief Whitney said that he understands the reason behind the placement of the bollards was an attempt to limit or reduce traffic in Newell's Creek, but the Police Department never really saw the point in them. There are a lot of accidents at the 3-way intersection, and a lot of it is due to all the traffic that is forced to go all the way around and come into the shopping center off the highway. This is increasing the traffic flow in one direction and causes a problem with enforcement because with only one Officer on shift, it is hard to find the time to place an Officer there to stop someone from going the wrong way, and this lack of enforcement increases the complaints coming from residents in Newell's Creek. Chief Whitney added the cameras at Thomas Harmon and Walmart Drive only point out and have recorded 246,000 cars in a 45-day span, and it's not even summertime yet.

Councilman Ridgely asked Mr. Scott about the status of hiring someone for Code Enforcement and Inspections.

Mayor Dougherty explained that we are going to advertise for part-time Code Enforcement and see what response we get and go from there.

Mr. Scott explained that he has spoken with two different inspection companies to prepare for inspections at Savannah Farms and other projects.

Councilwoman Sturgeon asked for clarification on how Zoom is currently being utilized because people are saying they have been bounced out of the meeting and are not able to make public comments. She also asked if the recordings are listed on the website for people to view previous meetings.

Mr. Scott said that public comment has not been allowed from day one, and he was not aware of anyone being bounced out of the meeting, but he will investigate that.

Ms. Lewis said she will do some research on getting a link to view previous meetings.

Mr. Scott mentioned that Rider Pride Day is Saturday, April 12th from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., and they will have a job fair and all kinds of events going on.

Mr. Scott and Mayor Dougherty also sent their condolences to Mr. Hawkins, a former Council Member, for the loss of his grandson, who was involved in the Fire Department.

MAYOR

Mayor Dougherty thanked Ms. Lewis for updating the cover photo on the website to a historic picture of our town.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Fiscal Year 2024 Audit Report from Horthy & Horthy, PA

Paige Rubino represented Horthy & Horthy, PA, and thanked Ms. Lewis, Chief Whitney, Mr. Josiah, and the Mayor and Council for their assistance with getting through another successful audit. She commended Ms. Lewis on her first full year audit and thanked her for being quick with answering emails and being available to get them anything they needed.

Ms. Rubino reported that they issued an unmodified or clean opinion on the financial statements, and their report on internal controls reported that they did not identify any internal control deficiencies that rose to a significant deficiency or material weakness to the financial statements.

Assets exceed the Town's liabilities by \$11.7M, of which \$7.9M is unrestricted and can be used to satisfy obligations, and \$4M is invested in capital assets and other related debt. The outstanding debt is a little under \$2.3M, and the capital assets of the Town are \$6.2M. The net position increased from the prior year due to growth, building permits, realty transfer taxes, and the land sold to the State for the bypass project. Ms. Rubino said the audit went extremely well, and they look forward to working with everyone again next year.

Mayor Dougherty thanked Ms. Rubino and is happy to know we had such a successful audit.

Rossi Group Introduction

Annmarie Townsend explained her background as a professional planner and is pleased to present the Rossi Group, a female-owned company. They work with several cities and towns throughout Delaware for planning and development. Ms. Townsend runs the land use administration training course through the IPA and has a history in local government and state planning. She added that managing growth and figuring out how Camden wants that growth to look is a big factor, as well as making sure Camden has a clear planning process and that the Historic District is protected. She added that evaluating fees and fee structures to make sure costs are being covered is a priority when following a budget. She would love to help Camden with plan and application reviews, land use training, and ordinances. She could also work with the Planning Commission to make sure that the zoning and subdivision reflect what we want for the community.

Mayor Dougherty said that he is familiar with some of the things Ms. Townsend does and that we will be looking for someone to do exactly that, but we also need assistance with the codification of ordinances.

Purchase of Infrared Camera for Drone

Chief Whitney explained that they have set up a drone unit, and that he and two other Officers are FAA-certified pilots. He recently received the certificate of authorization to fly within the Dover Air Force Base Delta airspace, which we are fully in. He also received co-authorization for the entire state, which will allow Camden PD to support Fire Departments in locating hot spots and things of that nature. The drone was funded through an FCVC grant, and at the time of purchase, the H30T camera was not available because it is made in China, and there were some issues with having technology shipped to the US from China. The company that sold us the drone did not expect that this camera would ever become available again, so a different camera was purchased, which is a lesser camera that is not doing what it needs to do. Chief Whitney said the H30T camera is available again, and he would like to replace the lesser camera with the H30T camera for \$10,750, which qualifies as a RETT expense. This camera is top of the line with thermal ability to assist with nighttime operations.

Councilman Woodall said with all the potential uses for this drone and the camera, especially with thermal, like potential missing persons and finding suspects that may be on the run, he sees no reason not to go ahead and approve this purchase.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Woodall, to authorize Chief Whitney to purchase the camera for \$10,750 using RETT funds. All in favor; none opposed.

Proclamation – Camden Wyoming Rotary Club 80th Anniversary

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Rhodes, seconded by Councilwoman Sturgeon, to present Ann Mathison with the Camden Wyoming Rotary Club with a Proclamation celebrating their 80th Anniversary. All in favor; none opposed.

Traffic Pattern on Thomas Harmon Drive

Chief Whitney said that many complaints come from residents of Newell's Creek who do not want the bollards because they must drive all the way around. He added that a lot of the tickets issued are to Newell's Creek residents.

Councilman Ridgely suggests a trial period so as not to destroy the residential character of the neighborhood by making it a throughway, and revisiting it in 6 months to see if it was an improvement.

Councilman Woodall said it is already a throughway, and believes it was noted before that opening it up would alleviate some of the traffic burdens because people are having to go all the way around past Lowe's, down to the highway, or come through Lowe's and all meet at the 3-way intersection where we are seeing traffic accidents. Having an alternative route into the shopping center would alleviate traffic up front and have a smoother traffic flow, and believes it's a great idea to put it back the way it was intended, especially with the new traffic patterns being implemented with the Camden Bypass project.

Chief Whitney explained that it is not just Newell's Creek, it is also the entire development of Tidbury Crossing because the original design was to connect the two developments, which has now happened, and all of that traffic is now not allowed to come out the way the original design was set up; that traffic is forced out to Upper King Rd, Route 13 and Lochmeath Way, and ultimately back out to Route 13 all to come into the entrance to Thomas Harmon Drive off of the highway.

Mr. Scott said that signs could be placed, such as "no thru traffic" and limiting commercial traffic to local deliveries only.

A motion was made by Councilman Ridgely, seconded by Vice Mayor Rhodes, to eliminate the intrusion at Thomas Harmon Drive, add signage prohibiting commercial thru traffic except for local deliveries, and revisit this in 6 months. All in favor; none opposed.

Mayor Dougherty added that this will not be effective until the signs are installed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gail Christensen (21 S. Main St.) – Thanked Mayor Dougherty for getting training for the Board of Adjustment, adding Public Comment to the Board of Adjustment agenda, and having an email address for the Board of Adjustment Members, and mentioned that the Friends of Historic Camden want to be involved in what is done at the West St. property owned by the Town.

Justine Zimny (515 W. Lebanon Rd.) – Thanked Councilman Ridgely, Councilwoman Sturgeon, Councilwoman Rhodes and the Mayor for their due diligence and attendance since July, suggested that everyone speaking during public comment or otherwise should use the microphone for people watching the meeting on Zoom to be able to hear them, and her concern about the Town's budget because we are not far into the new year.

Dawn Gonzalez (Barclay Farms) – Asked how the questions or concerns brought up in these meetings are answered or addressed.

Maxine Wayson (300 Williams St.) – Thanked the Town for addressing the issue with the trash cans on Williams Street, asked the status of hiring someone for Code Enforcement, and expressed her continued concern with a property on East Street.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Woodall expressed his regret at not being at recent meetings due to personal reasons and apologized for his absence. He is proud to be here to serve and continues to love the Town of Camden.

Councilwoman Rhodes thanked the Town Staff for everything they do for the Town, the Police and Fire Departments, and the Town Solicitor.

Mayor Dougherty thanked everyone for attending the meeting and showing interest in our Town.

Councilwoman Sturgeon thanked Ms. Lewis, our CFO, and Chief Whitney for working with the auditors to do such a diligent job. An audit is very time-consuming and stressful, on top of your regular day-to-day responsibilities and being short-staffed; it is a true testament to being able to pull that information and documentation and get such a good report out of it, and something to be proud of.

Councilman Ridgely thanked everyone for participating in our community and thanked the Town Staff, consultants, and everyone who makes this Town great. He welcomed anyone who would like to voice their concerns to reach out to him.

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 at 8:32 p.m. by Councilwoman Sturgeon, seconded by Councilman Ridgely, to enter into Executive Session. All in favor; none opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made at 8:50 p.m. by Councilman Ridgely, seconded by Vice Mayor Rhodes, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Maleri Lewis, Account Specialist*