

Town of Camden
Regular Town Council Meeting
Camden Municipal Building
July 6, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sturgeon 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 26, 2026, in the following manner:

- a. The official bulletin board,
- b. The official Town of Camden website.

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

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

Council Absent: None

Staff Attending: Town Manager Harold Scott Jr., Town Clerk Lynda Huizinga, Account Specialist Malori Lewis, Administrative Assistant Diane Mosby, Town Solicitor Scott Wilcox, and Police Chief Marcus Whitney

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Added to agenda that the IDEA Committee meeting on July 17, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. in the King's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Tax bills for tax year 2026 were mailed out last week.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Rhodes, seconded by Councilwoman Morgan, to approve the June 1, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes. All in favor; none opposed.

FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Lewis stated that the delinquent taxes as of June 30th are down to \$10,323.01, and based off the last meeting, everyone does have some sort of arrangement made. She added that there is one person that has not kept up with their agreement and that we will talk to our town solicitor about the next steps. Ms. Lewis reported that RETT funds received in June were \$11,850.30. She also welcomed everyone to Fiscal Year 2027. Ms. Lewis stated that, at the close of Fiscal Year 2026, overall expenditures were 98% of budget, excluding flood-related expenses. She explained that the Administration Department appears to be at 126% in the financial report included in the Council packet; however, when flood-related expenses are excluded, the Administration budget is at 106%. She noted that many expenditures charged to the Administration budget are not exclusive to administrative operations, including building maintenance, HVAC repairs, generator expenses, and elevator maintenance. These costs exceeded budget projections due to the extensive building maintenance and repairs resulting from the previous year's flooding. Ms. Lewis further reported that the Public Works Department finished the fiscal year at 79% of budget. She

commended Brian for serving as our "jack of all trades" and helping keep expenses below budget by completing many projects in-house. Finally, Ms. Lewis reported that the Police Department concluded the fiscal year at 94% of budget.

Mayor Sturgeon reviewed the year-end financial report and noted that property tax revenue came in at approximately 99% of budget, despite the implementation of new assessments and tax rates. She stated that the largest revenue shortfall was in building permit revenue, with approximately \$84,000 received compared to the \$126,000 budgeted, contributing to an overall revenue shortfall of approximately \$153,000. She reported that interest income and grant revenue met budget expectations. Overall expenditure was approximately \$313,000 over budget; however, after excluding flood-related building repair expenses that are expected to be reimbursed by insurance, the Town's operating loss was approximately \$164,000, significantly better than the \$390,000 originally projected. Mayor Sturgeon commended the Town Manager and Police Department for controlling expenditures and noted that special duty police costs are offset by reimbursements, although the timing of those reimbursements affects the current financial report. She also noted that the financial statements are unaudited and unreconciled, with final figures to be available after the fiscal year-end closing process.

CAMDEN-WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Lewis reported that the Fire Department responded to 88 alarms in June, an increase of 13 calls from the previous month. The department logged 803 total manpower hours, averaging nine personnel per alarm, with six truck-qualified personnel. The average alarm duration was 29 minutes, with the first truck responding within 3 minutes. Chief Lewis reported that the department received mutual aid assistance from neighboring departments five times and provided assistance to Dover Fire Department twice, Felton Fire Department twice, and Magnolia Fire Department once. June calls included 17 automatic alarms, 16 motor vehicle collisions, 13 ambulance assists, and 37 miscellaneous incidents. Chief Lewis also provided an update on the July 4th holiday, reporting 11 fire-related calls, including six incidents involving fireworks. He reminded residents to use caution with fireworks and encouraged them to leave fireworks displays to professionals, noting that improperly discarded fireworks resulted in fires, including a house fire within the district and a significant brush fire in Magnolia. Chief Lewis announced that the department's Crab Feast fundraiser will be held on August 22 and encouraged residents to purchase tickets.

CAESAR RODNEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

N/A

CAMDEN WYOMING SEWER & WATER AUTHORITY

N/A

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC CAMDEN

Councilman Ridgely provided an update from the Friends of Historic Camden. He announced that the organization will continue its summer speaker series, with the next presentation scheduled for July 25 at 7:00 PM at the Camden Friends Meeting House. The program will focus on Delaware's Hundreds and the history behind their creation. Councilman Ridgely also announced that the Friends will have a booth at the Peach Festival in Wyoming in August and are preparing activities and displays for the event. He thanked the Town for its continued support and requested further discussion regarding a solution for submitting applications to Delmarva Power, as the organization does not currently have the required insurance policy.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Whitney gave a report that included, but was not limited to, traffic arrests and criminal activity. He stated they had 38.5 hours of paid overtime and 6 hours of court overtime. He added that they received a total of 499 calls during this period, some of which were more serious, compared with 466 last year.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Scott reported that Main Street remains closed between South Street and Bushnell Road as part of a Del-DOT project. The current projected completion date is September 9, although he noted that the schedule has been subject to delays. He clarified that the road closure is a state project, not a Town project, and directed residents with concerns regarding the closure to contact Del-DOT. Mr. Scott reported that the Town completed 20 inspections during the month. He also announced that the final inspection for Popeyes is scheduled for July 13, indicating the project is moving forward. He provided an update on ongoing HVAC issues at Town Hall, noting that the third floor continues to experience problems with humidity and a mildew-like smell. Staff are continuing to work toward a resolution. Mr. Scott reported that the light pole in the rear parking lot was removed to allow Del-DOT to proceed with construction of the driveway connection to the bypass. He reminded Council and residents that the first IDEA Committee meeting will be held on July 17 at 1:00 PM at Town Hall and is open to the public. Mr. Scott provided updates on the TAP application, noting that he expects to follow up once the staff member responsible returns from vacation. He also announced that he will attend the Kent County Levy Court Planning Commission meeting regarding Preston Automotive Group's request for site plan approval for an automotive dealership, retail space, and restaurant near the highway. Mr. Scott stated that he is researching potential grants for solar panels and electric vehicle initiatives and introduced the Town's new attorney, Scott Wilcox.

Councilwoman Gray asked if the old Rite Aid property was sold and what it was going to be.

Mr. Scott confirmed that it was sold and will be an appliance store.

MAYOR

Mayor Sturgeon reported that she met with Mr. Scott to discuss increasing community events within the Town. She announced plans to work with First State Animal Shelter to coordinate a drive-through rabies clinic. The event is anticipated to take place on a Saturday morning during cooler weather, with the date dependent on vaccine availability through the university. The Town is seeking approximately \$1,000 in County funding to assist with event expenses. Mayor Sturgeon also reported plans for a Town Hall rededication and ribbon-cutting ceremony in October, pending completion of building repairs and HVAC issues. She further discussed the possibility of holding a small children's parade in October in conjunction with the Fire Department's open house. Mayor Sturgeon stated that the Town is working to provide more community events throughout the year while considering seasonal challenges and scheduling limitations. She also provided updates on attending the July 4th event at the Harvest Year Senior Center, participating in the Senate Bill 23 hearing on behalf of the Town, meeting with Kent County Levy Court regarding potential funding opportunities for community activities, and meeting with a homeless coalition group from Dover to discuss potential solutions and funding resources.

Councilwoman Gary asked what the name of the group was called.

Mayor Sturgeon provided additional information regarding the homeless coalition group she met with in Dover. She explained that the group does not currently have an official name or formal organizational structure and is primarily a group of individuals meeting to discuss related issues. She noted that efforts have been made over the past year or two to establish a nonprofit organization to lead the initiative, but

progress has been limited. Mayor Sturgeon stated that she was invited to attend by the ACLU and participated to provide assistance based on her background and experience. She emphasized the importance of maintaining communication with Dover, as issues affecting the area may eventually impact surrounding communities. She noted that understanding their efforts may help the Town develop proactive and community-focused solutions. At this time, Mayor Sturgeon stated that she does not see a coordinated effort currently being developed by the group.

Councilwoman Morgan mentioned that she heard that the Delaware State University building by Sam's Club was going to be converted into a homeless shelter.

Councilwoman Gray provided additional information regarding a potential housing initiative in the area. She stated that the State is considering or has purchased a former Sheraton facility, which was previously acquired by Delaware State University and converted into dormitories. She explained that the proposed use would be modeled after the Hope Center in New Castle County. Councilwoman Gray clarified that, while commonly referred to as a homeless shelter, the model is intended to provide transitional housing and support services, including providing individuals with a room and resources to help them transition into more permanent housing. She noted that the program differs from the traditional perception of a shelter where individuals stay overnight and leave each morning.

Councilwoman Morgan confirmed and that they get a caseworker.

Mayor Sturgeon stated that the Town will continue to monitor the efforts, participation, and population impacts of surrounding programs and initiatives. She noted that, at this time, there is no immediate need for similar services within the Town of Camden.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Changes to Public Comment (2 times per meeting)

Mayor Sturgeon stated that the Town is implementing a Public Comment Protocol Policy. The policy outlines procedures similar to the current practice, including a designated public comment period and a three-minute time limit for each speaker. The mayor explained that the most significant change is the addition of speaker eligibility and prioritization. Individuals wishing to speak during public comment will be required to sign up in advance. Speakers will be recognized in the following order of priority: Town residents, Town business owners, and then all other individuals. If time does not allow all registered speakers to be heard, those who are unable to speak may submit their comments by email to the Town Clerk. Mayor Sturgeon requested that any proposed changes to the policy be submitted during the current week. The Town Council intends to adopt the Public Comment Protocol Policy at its next meeting, following a review by the Town's new Solicitor and any recommendations or revisions they may provide.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Camden-Wyoming Sewer & Water Authority Board opening for a new member

Mayor Sturgeon announced that the Camden-Wyoming Sewer and Water Authority Board had an opening for a member. The Town had advertised the vacancy on its website and received interest from Charles Christensen, who expressed his willingness to serve on the Board. She explained that the appointment was needed because Councilman Dan Ridgely would be stepping down from the Sewer and Water Authority Board. Mayor Sturgeon made a motion to appoint Charles Christensen to the Camden-Wyoming Sewer and Water Authority Board.

Mayor Sturgeon announced that, following another resignation from the Camden-Wyoming Sewer and Water Authority Board, there is still one vacant position to fill. She encouraged residents to consider serving or to recommend others who may be interested, noting that the Board meets quarterly. Mayor Sturgeon emphasized that serving on the Board is an important responsibility due to the significant growth occurring within the Town and the role the Sewer and Water Authority play in supporting that growth. She clarified that the Authority is a separate entity from the Town and not a component unit; however, its governing board must include three representatives from the Town of Camden and three representatives from the Town of Wyoming. With one Camden representative position still vacant, the Town will continue advertising the opportunity on its website and social media and encourage anyone interested to apply.

b. Ordinance 2026-O-01 – Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program – Discussion

Mayor Sturgeon introduced Ordinance No. 2026-O-01, regarding the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program, and turned the discussion over to Chief Whitney, noting that it was his program to present.

Chief Whitney presented Ordinance No. 2026-O-01, establishing the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program. He explained that the ordinance is organized into twelve sections and provided a summary of its key provisions. Chief Whitney stated that the ordinance includes general provisions and defines the offense of failure to stop in accordance with Title 21 of the Delaware Code. Violations would be treated as civil offenses, carrying out a civil assessment without points being assessed against a driver's license. The ordinance also includes definitions of terms such as owner and traffic signal, procedures for issuing summonses and notices of violation, payment instructions through a voluntary assessment process, and procedures for contesting a violation through the standard court system. Additional sections address failure to pay, proof of violations, presumptions, and liability. Chief Whitney emphasized that the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program was not created or initiated by the Town of Camden, but by the Delaware Department of Transportation (Del-DOT). He explained that the camera equipment had already been installed, was operational, and that Del-DOT intended to proceed with the program regardless of whether the Town adopted the ordinance. He stated that adopting the ordinance would provide the Town with a degree of oversight because the camera is located within the Town's jurisdiction and would also allow the Town to receive a portion of the program's proceeds. He reiterated that while the Town was not required to adopt the ordinance, the monitoring program would move forward regardless of the Council's decision.

Mayor Sturgeon clarified that the cameras associated with the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program are not Flock cameras. She emphasized that they are strictly red-light enforcement cameras installed at intersections and are not part of a Flock Safety camera system.

Chief Whitney confirmed that the cameras are used exclusively for monitoring red-light violations at intersections. Chief Whitney explained that the intersection cameras serve as a means of enforcing red-light violations in the same manner as a police officer observing an offense. He stated that if a driver crosses the stop line without coming to a complete stop and proceeds into an intersection after the traffic signal has turned red, the camera may capture the violation and result in a citation. Chief Whitney noted that, unlike a citation issued by a police officer, which carries points against a driver's license and may affect a driver's record and insurance, violations issued through the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program are civil assessments. As outlined in Section 3 of the ordinance, these violations do not result in points being assessed against a driver's license and are not expected to affect a driver's driving record or insurance rates, although insurance companies ultimately determine how they evaluate such information.

Mayor Sturgeon directed staff to post the proposed Ordinance No. 2026-O-01 on the Town's website so the public could review it. She stated that the ordinance would be placed on the agenda for the next Council meeting to begin the formal adoption process and invited anyone with questions to review the ordinance and provide feedback before that meeting.

Councilwoman Gray asked if this is directed by Del-DOT.

Chief Whitney clarified that the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program is not a Town-directed initiative, but a Del-DOT program being implemented on a state-maintained roadway. Although the intersection falls within the Town's jurisdictional boundaries, he explained that Del-DOT has extended the Town the opportunity to participate in the program. Chief Whitney stated that, in his opinion, it would be beneficial for the Town to participate because Del-DOT will proceed with the program regardless of the Council's decision. By adopting the ordinance, the Town would receive a share of the program's proceeds and can exercise oversight. He further explained that any violation captured by the camera would be reviewed by the Town before a citation is issued, providing local oversight of the enforcement process.

Councilwoman Gray asked for clarification regarding the appeals process. She inquired whether, if a person receives a red-light camera citation by mail and wishes to contest it, the appeal would be directed to the Town of Camden.

Chief Whitney responded that the procedures for contesting a citation are outlined in Section 7 of the proposed ordinance. He explained that a person who receives a summons may request a hearing to contest the violation by submitting a written request to the entity designated on the summons within 20 days of the mailing date, as provided in Section 7.1 of the ordinance.

Mayor Sturgeon asked for clarification, using a hypothetical example. She asked whether, if someone else was driving her vehicle when the violation occurred and the citation was mailed to her as the registered owner, she would have the opportunity to contest the citation and provide an explanation or supporting evidence.

Chief Whitney explained that the ordinance contains a separate provision addressing situations in which the registered owner was not the driver at the time of the violation. He stated that the registered owner may submit an affidavit to the entity identified on the summons stating that they were not operating the vehicle when the alleged violation occurred. The owner must also provide the name and address of the individual or company that had care, custody, or control of the vehicle at that time, such as a driver, lessee, or rental company. Chief Whitney added that the ordinance also allows the registered owner to submit a certified copy of a police report if the vehicle or license plate had been reported stolen before the alleged violation. He noted that these provisions establish a process for owners to contest liability when they were not the operator of the vehicle at the time of the offense.

Mayor Sturgeon explained that the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program is a state initiative and emphasized the importance of the Town working collaboratively with the State and County on programs that affect the community. She reiterated that Del-DOT will implement the program regardless of the Town's participation. By partnering with the State, however, the Town can participate in the program because it is located within the Town's jurisdiction and receives a portion of the revenue generated from the civil assessments. Mayor Sturgeon then asked what percentage of the \$75 civil assessment the Town would receive under the program.

Chief Whitney explained that the revenue-sharing structure for the Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program was developed by reviewing similar programs used by other municipalities. He stated that the Town was not creating a new model but following an established process. Chief Whitney

explained that there is a cost associated with operating the program, but Del-DOT will cover those operational costs. He provided a hypothetical example, stating that if the program cost \$500 per month to operate and generated \$600 in civil assessments, Del-DOT would pay the \$500 operating expense and the remaining \$100 would be returned to the participating entity. If the program generated only \$400 in a month, Del-DOT would cover the remaining \$100 shortfall, and the Town would not be responsible for the difference. Chief Whitney emphasized that this arrangement provides a benefit to the Town because Del-DOT is responsible for funding the program, while the agreement also places responsibility for maintenance, upkeep, and repairs of the equipment on the contracted program provider and Del-DOT.

Councilman Ridgely asked if our adoption of this resolution affect the fee that would be charged for the violation.

Chief Whitney clarified that the amount of the civil assessment is established by the State and is not determined by the Town or the Police Department. He stated that he was not involved in setting the fine amount.

Mayor Sturgeon stated that Council members and the public would have time to review the proposed ordinance. She explained that the Town would then begin the formal review process, including the required hearing and reading process, before taking further action on Ordinance No. 2026-O-01, Electronic Red Light Safety Monitoring Program.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry Dougherty, Resident of Barclay Farms

Mr. Dougherty congratulated the Town Council and staff on the Town's strong financial position. He noted that the sale of the former Rite Aid property and the upcoming Savannah Farms development would provide additional revenue through RETT funds and permits. Mr. Dougherty recommended that the Town consider using available funds to pay off the municipal building debt. He explained that the building was originally expected to be paid off within a few years but was later refinanced, extending the payoff date to 2049. He stated that the Town can purchase bonds on the open market as they become available and suggested this could reduce future interest costs and remove the debt from the Town's budget. Mr. Dougherty thanked the Council for their time and stated that he would provide additional documentation regarding the matter. He also expressed his appreciation for the Town's efforts and his hope for the Town Hall building's continued progress toward reopening.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Gray provided a legislative and administrative update. She thanked Mayor Sturgeon for attending the legislative session regarding Senate Bill 23 and stated that the bill is currently awaiting action by the Governor. She explained that the bill addresses housing and was intended to encourage affordable housing but noted that the Town, along with the Delaware League of Local Governments and other municipalities, had concerns regarding potential impacts on local governments. The Town will continue to monitor the legislation and provide updates as information becomes available. Councilwoman Gray also suggested placing the Comprehensive Plan amendment for the 1035 South Main Street property on an upcoming meeting agenda to allow for public comment and discussion.

Councilwoman Morgan welcomed the Town's new solicitor and expressed her appreciation for his service. She thanked Mr. Scott, Town staff, and the employees who come in each day and continue to do a tremendous job. Councilwoman Morgan also recognized the Police Department and Fire Department, specifically acknowledging their efforts during the Fourth of July holiday and stating that she appreciated their dedication and commitment to responding when needed. She thanked all residents and members of

the public who attend the Council meetings and encouraged continued participation and community input. Councilwoman Morgan also expressed her appreciation to her fellow Council members for their continued service.

Vice-Mayor Rhodes thanked everyone who attended the meeting and welcomed former Mayor Dougherty and his wife. He expressed his appreciation to the police officers, noting that an officer assisted him earlier that morning. Vice-Mayor Rhodes also thanked the Fire Police and Fire Department for their service and gave special recognition to the ladies in the Town office for their continued work. He thanked Brian for his assistance and welcomed the Town's new solicitor.

Councilman Ridgely echoed the comments made by the other Council members and welcomed Mr. Wilcox as the Town's new solicitor. He thanked him for joining the team and expressed his anticipation of working with him. Councilman Ridgely also recognized former Mayor Dougherty and thanked him for attending the meeting. Councilman Ridgely stated that he believed one of the best pieces of news from the evening was the update regarding the Town's financial position. He noted that, despite the unforeseen challenges the Town has faced, including recent building-related issues, the Town staff and Police Department have demonstrated strong fiscal responsibility. He expressed appreciation that the Town is operating close to, but under, projected expenses and stated that this was positive news for residents. Councilman Ridgely thanked Mayor Sturgeon for continuing to provide detailed financial updates during meetings and for outlining the current state of the Town's finances.

Mayor Sturgeon thanked everyone for their efforts throughout the month and acknowledged the continued work being done by Council, staff, and departments. She noted that the Town is facing a number of challenges, including new legislation, changes within the Town, and changes at the State level, and stated that the Town will continue working to stay informed and address these matters. Mayor Sturgeon highlighted that the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update will be a significant undertaking and emphasized the importance of getting organized and prepared for the process. She expressed her appreciation to all Town office staff and reminded residents that she is available at Town Hall on Tuesdays for anyone who would like to meet with her or discuss Town matters, noting that appointments can be coordinated through Mrs. Huizinga. Mayor Sturgeon then requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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 7:48 p.m. by Councilwoman Gray, seconded by Vice-Mayor Rhodes, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lynda Huizinga, Town Clerk*