



**Townsend Town Council Meeting Agenda**  
**August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 7:00 pm**  
**VIA CONFERENCE CALL &**  
**Town Hall**  
**141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734**

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**7:00 pm Town Council Meeting**

- I. Call to Order: 7:03 pm
- II. Opening Ceremonies
  - A. Roll Call: Mayor S. Lobdell, Councilman M. Chapman, Councilman J. Bangura, Councilman J. Mertz, Councilman M. Suhr, Town Manager A. Tantillo, Finance Officer J. Helms, Chief of Police R. Longo, Town Engineer E. Van-Otoo, and Town Solicitor B. Forman.
  - B. Pledge of Allegiance: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
  - C. Recognition of Visitors:
    1. Mayor Lobdell recognized all visitors present as reflected on the sign in sheet and via zoom: Dwain Haines, Harold Stafford, Sheryl Rojas, Joseph Rojas, Ellen Wolfe, Norma Brister, Leslie Katts, Renee Kostik, Emily Whiting, Brittany Loughry, Jason Cludick, Jon Bates, Ashley LoCasto, Eric and Deshanna from the HELP Initiative, and Rachel Zara.
  - D. Announcements:
    1. CM Mertz announced the Townsend Back to School Event will be held later this month, noting announcements for the date and time are forthcoming. CM Mertz requested donations for the event advising donations may be submitted to Town Hall.
- III. General Citizen Comments
  - A. Ms. Rojas asked if radar sign placements have begun. TM Tantillo confirmed radar sign installments are underway.
  - B. Ms. Wolfe reported there is a property that has overgrown weeds and grass that is blocking the right of way for constituents. TM Tantillo confirmed the Town is looking into this matter.
  - C. Mr. Bates reported there were a number of permit violations that have been sent out. He advised that he believes the International Building Code states there are permits that are not required. Mayor Lobdell advised this is correct however, Town Code may supersede this. Mayor Lobdell noted the Town is working with constituents to rectify these violations. Additionally, the goal of the Town is to ensure files are accurate and properties are in compliance.
- IV. Review/Adoption of Agenda
  - A. *CM Mertz made a motion to move section VI.F.1. & VI.F.2. in front of section V.A.. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
    1. Council amended the following:
      - a. Moved **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on Resolution 2023-011 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Eschalla Clarke in front of presentations.
      - b. Moved **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on Resolution 2023-012 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Sheryl Rojas in front of presentations.

B. *CM Bangura made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*

1. Council adopted the amended agenda.

**V. Approval / Rejection of Minutes:**

A. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Council Meeting.

B. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Council Special Meeting.

C. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Council Meeting Executive Session.

D. *CM Bangura made a motion to approve the Town Council Minutes from the July 12<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting and the July 12<sup>th</sup> Town Council Special Meeting. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's – CM Mertz abstained.*

1. Council approved the Town Council Minutes from the:

a. July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Council Meeting.

b. July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Council Special Meeting.

E. *CM Mertz made a motion to table the Town Council Minutes from the July 12<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting Executive Session. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*

1. Council tabled the Town Council Minutes from the:

a. July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Council Meeting Executive Session.

**VI. ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on Resolution 2023-011 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Eschalla Clarke.

A. CM Mertz sponsored Resolution 2023-011 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Eschalla Clarke on behalf of the prior administration and provided a reading of the resolution.

B. *CM Mertz made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-011 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Eschalla Clarke. CM Chapman seconded the motion.*

1. *Roll Call Vote: CM Bangura – yea, CM Chapman – yea, CM Mertz – yea, and CM Suhr– yea.*

a. Council approved Resolution 2023-011 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Eschalla Clarke.

b. Mayor Lobdell noted that he does not currently have a vote but if he did, his vote would be a yea.

**VII. ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on Resolution 2023-012 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Sheryl Rojas.

A. CM Mertz sponsored Resolution 2023-012 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Sheryl Rojas on behalf of the prior administration and provided a reading of the resolution.

B. *CM Mertz made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-012 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Sheryl Rojas. CM Chapman seconded the motion.*

1. *Roll Call Vote: CM Bangura – yea, CM Chapman – yea, CM Mertz – yea, and CM Suhr– yea.*

a. Council approved Resolution 2023-012 A Resolution to Recognize Councilwoman Sheryl Rojas.

b. Mayor Lobdell noted that he does not currently have a vote but if he did, his vote would be a yea.

**VIII. Presentations:**

- A. Presentation from Girl Scout Troop 1220 regarding a potential Silver Award project in the Town of Townsend.
  - 1. Girl Scout Troop 1220, located in Townsend, provided a PowerPoint Presentation regarding their project with the goal to obtain the Silver Award. Girl Scout Troop 1220 explained what the award entails noting it is the highest award achievable.
  - 2. Girl Scout Troop 1220 is seeking the Town's assistance to distinguish the locations of the storm drains so that they may place markers; noting there will be no labor costs, only material costs. Girl Scout Troop 1220 provided the Council with a plan of action and explained the safety precautions that will be taken during the project.
  - 3. Mayor Lobdell noted inlets should be marked in order for the Town to eventually obtain MS4 Program Certification. Additionally, the Town will have an advantage with Girl Scout Troop 1220's starting the process.
- B. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote to authorize Girl Scout Troop 1220 Silver Award project.
  - 1. No vote needed. Spending limit is within the Town Managers spending authority. TM Tantillo will be coordinating with the Girl Scout Troop 1220 project.
- C. Presentation regarding the HELP Initiative, Inc.
  - 1. Mr. Stafford provided background of and explained what the HELP Initiative, Inc. program is; focusing on lighting quality. Mr. Stafford offered their free service to the Town and the Town residents. Additionally, they are fully insured. Eric advised they have many partnerships throughout the State that are seeking to assist their community. Deshanna, explained they will need the Town to advise where the areas of concern are and what the needs of the Town in order to assist with creating a safer community. Furthermore, they will be able to address any additional needs brought to their attention while out assisting residents. Mr. Stafford advised they typically work closely with the Chief of Police.
  - 2. Mr. Stafford confirmed their two main sources of funding are from Energize Delaware and Get Up and Rescue Plan Act funds.
  - 3. Mr. Stafford seeks approval from the Town to solicit their free service to the residents. Additionally, seeks support from the Chief of Police and the Town Manager to coordinate efforts to provide services to the Town.
  - 4. TM Tantillo noted, postings will be made on the Town's sites to make residents aware of the HELP Initiative, Inc. program and what it entails. Mr. Stafford advised the door hanger they post will also include the Town's contact information, so residents are assured of their legitimacy.
  - 5. A demonstration of the lights that may be installed for residents was provided. TE Van-Otoo advised this will not interfere with the Town's concern for light pollution.
  - 6. Council advised Chief Longo and TM Tantillo will coordinate with HELP Initiative, Inc.. The Public Safety Committee will be provided updates.

**IX. Departmental Reports:**

- A. Mayor Scott Lobdell
  - 1. Mayor Lobdell provided a brief introduction and explanation of the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment appointments.
  - 2. *CM Mertz made a motion to swap action items to the following order of 2, 4, 1, 3. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
    - a. Council amended the agenda for the action items under the Mayor's report to be ordered as follows:
      - i. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote for Board of Adjustment appointments.

- ii. **ACTION ITEM:** Possible swearing in of new Board of Adjustment members.
  - iii. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote for Planning Commission appointments.
  - iv. **ACTION ITEM:** Possible swearing in of new Planning Commission member.
3. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote for Board of Adjustment appointments.
- a. Mayor Lobdell put forward Eschalla Clarke to be appointed for the three-year term on the Board of Adjustment, noting Ms. Clarke is also interested in serving on the Planning Commission.
  - b. ***CM Mertz made a motion to accept the nomination of Eschalla Clarke to serve on the Board of Adjustment for a three-year term. CM Champman seconded the motion.***
    - i. Discussion:
      - . See IX.3.a..
    - ii. ***Voice vote of Council: all yea's.***
      - . Council appointed Eschalla Clarke to serve on the Board of Adjustment for a three-year term.
  - c. Mayor Lobdell put forward Dwain Haines to be appointed for the two-year term on the Board of Adjustment.
  - d. ***CM Chapman made a motion to accept the nomination of Dwain Haines to serve on the Board of Adjustment for a two-year term. CM Suhr seconded the motion.***
    - i. Discussion:
      - . See IX.3.c..
    - ii. ***Voice vote of Council: all yea's.***
      - . Council appointed Dwain Haines to serve on the Board of Adjustment for a two-year term.
  - e. Mayor Lobdell advised there are two candidates interested in serving for the one-year term on the Board of Adjustment: Lorraine Gorman and Sheryl Rojas. Council briefly discussed the candidates. Ms. Rojas explained why she is interested in serving and how she believes she would benefit the community on the Board of Adjustment.
  - f. Mayor Lobdell put forward Ms. Rojas to be appointed for the one-year term on the Board of Adjustment.
  - g. ***CM Chapman made a motion to accept the nomination of Sheryl Rojas to serve on the Board of Adjustment for a one-year term. CM Mertz seconded the motion.***
    - i. Discussion:
      - . See IX.3.e.-f..
    - ii. ***Voice vote of Council: all yea's.***
      - . Council appointed Sheryl Rojas to serve on the Board of Adjustment for a one-year term.
4. **ACTION ITEM:** Possible swearing in of new Board of Adjustment members.
- a. TM Tantillo led the oath of office for each Board of Adjustment member to recite as they were sworn in.
  - b. The following Board of Adjustment members were sworn in:
    - i. Dwain Haines for a two-year term.
    - ii. Sheryl Rojas for a one-year term.
  - c. Eschalla Clarke will be sworn in on the Board of Adjustment to serve for a three-year term at a later date.
5. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote for Planning Commission appointments.

- a. **CM Mertz made a motion to appoint Eschalla Clarke to serve on the Planning Commission. CM Bangura seconded the motion.**

- i. Discussion:

- . See IX.3.a..

- ii. **Voice vote of Council: all yeas.**

- . Council appointed Eschalla Clarke to serve on the Planning Commission.

6. **ACTION ITEM:** Possible swearing in of new Planning Commission member.

- a. Eschalla Clarke will be sworn in on the Planning Commission at a later date.

B. New Castle County Councilman David Carter

1. Ms. Zara spoke on behalf of NCC Carter.
2. Ms. Zara reported she and NCC Councilman Carter are working with Interfaith Housing and have addressed the safety concerns for properties owned by Interfaith Housing. Additionally, they will be moving forward with applying for demolition and building permits soon. Town of Townsend Police Chief's Report
3. CM Mertz thanked Chief Longo for adding the yearly numbers to the report.
4. Chief Longo advised traffic and trespassing are the highest concern. Noting, this will be better addressed once additional staffing is obtained. Additionally, a better trend report will be provided next year with more data.

C. Town Solicitor Lisa Hatfield

1. Mr. Foreman presented on behalf of TS Hatfield advising there are no items to report.

D. Town Engineer Edwin Van-Otoo

1. TE Van-Otoo advised the bidding documents prepared for review will be sent to the Town Manger. TE Van-Otoo noted wells must be tested to ensure they are in working order prior to the bidding process. Additionally, there are costs associated with this. TM Tantillo confirmed she will provide updates.
2. TE Van-Otoo clarified his report stating there are no DNREC permits needed for the Finley Street project. However, there is an environmental review needed as part of the Nationwide Permit that must be obtained first. Furthermore, he will provide updates on timelines and briefly explained the processes.
  - a. TE Van-Otoo confirmed the Nationwide Permit is free.
  - b. TE Van-Otoo confirmed the environmental review will cost \$35.00 minimum, per hour and is dependent on the area size.
3. TM Tantillo confirmed the developer for The Woods at Hidden Creek will continue working with the Post Office to rectify the mailing issues for the residents at this development.
4. TE Van-Otoo advised there is a statewide mandate for developments to have LED lights. TE Van-Otoo confirmed there are lights being installed at The Woods at Hidden Creek entrance, noting there is a backorder on the lights.

E. Town Manager Antonina Tantillo

1. CM Chapman reported the Public Works Department left grass cuttings on the street that must be addressed. TM Tantillo confirmed that this is being addressed immediately.

2. CM Chapman noted TM Tantillo promptly removed an obstructive speed limit sign that he reported. TM Tantillo confirmed the Town is working on getting the sign replaced.
3. CM Mertz reported overgrown grass in a neighborhood and by the railroad. Additionally, there is poison ivy growth at the Town Park. TM Tantillo advised the Town is working on these concerns.
4. TM Tantillo and TE Van-Otoo confirmed two new houses as noted by CM Mertz are in code compliance and have received a permit.
5. CM Suhr raised a concern for technical trespassing if the Town were to address the overgrown grass by the Railroad and offered his assistance to contact the Railroad company.
6. CM Mertz advised the Town should be proactive with signs blocked by trees and reported there is a speed limit sign blocked by a tree on Wiggins Mill Road.
7. Mayor Lobdell confirmed the first speed radar sign has been installed on South Street within the Townsend Village II development.
8. **\*ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote to authorize the repairs/ replacement of the Town Park gazebo façade.
  - a. TM Tantillo advised she and TE Van-Otoo have worked with the contractors to obtain quotes. TM Tantillo presented two quotes that have been received that support the additional support needed for the gazebo façade:
    - i. A revised quote from Gary Rullo that includes the wire mesh, totaling \$27,750.00.
    - ii. The original quote from EDIS, totaling \$35,886.
  - b. TM Tantillo noted this item is not budgeted for and requested to use ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds.
  - c. ***CM Chapman made a motion to accept the quote from Gary Rullo in the amount of \$24,900.00 plus the \$2,850.00 to repair the Gazebo Façade to be paid out of ARPA. CM Suhr seconded the motion.***
    - i. Discussion:
      - . See IX.F.8.a.-b..
    - ii. Citizen comment and participation:
      - . None
    - iii. ***Voice vote of Council: all yea's.***
      - . Council authorized Gary Rullo to perform the repairs/replacement of the Town Park gazebo façade.

## X. Committee Reports

### A. Finance Committee: Chair: Mayor Lobdell, Co-Chair: Councilman Bangura

1. Review and possible discussion on the June 2023 Budget vs. Actual Reports.
  - a. FO Helms noted the budget presented is preliminary since it is the end of the year and will not be finalized until the audit is complete.
  - b. FO Helms confirmed the Town is under budget for 2023. Noting, at the time of report, revenue is over expenses by \$139,000.00. FO Helms explained this means the Town did not spend the \$139,000.00 as expected; confirming this is a surplus.

- c. CM Mertz formally requested the excess funds raised for the Town Fair be added to the Town Fair Budget of 2024. Additionally, requested this listed specifically in the budget for Town Fair budget planning.
- d. FO Helms noted the Police Department revenue is mainly consistent of New Housing impact fees and a small portion is from ticketed fines.
- e. FO Helms expressed concern for the 2024 Budget advising cash has been expended for the Police Department.

2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote to establish Police Chief spending limit.

- a. Mayor Lobdell advised a resolution was passed for the Police Chief that defines the Police Chief's reporting and roles. Noting there is a requirement for Council to set the Police Chief's spending authority. Mayor Lobdell noted the Town Manager's spending authority has just been updated to \$10,000.00, which includes the Police Chief's budget.
- b. TM Tantillo noted she has granted the Police Chief a spending limit of \$2,000.00 per purchase and \$6,000.00 per month.
- c. Chief Longo formally submitted a request on 08/09/2023, for a spending authority of \$25,000.00 per purchase to CM Mertz. CM Mertz noted Chief Longo has a budget of approximately \$300,000.00, which if divided monthly is approximately \$25,000.00 per month.
- d. Council briefly discussed the Police Budget to determine the Police Chief's spending authority.
- e. ***CM Mertz made a motion to approve the spending authority of the Chief of Police to \$10,000.00 per purchase and no more than \$25,000.00 per month. CM Chapman seconded the motion.***
  - i. Discussion:
    - . See X.2.a.-d..
  - ii. ***Voice vote of all Council: all yea's.***
    - . Council established the Police Chief's spending authority as \$10,000.00 per purchase and \$25,000.00 per month.

B. **Human Resources Committee:** Chair: Councilman Suhr, Co-Chair: Mayor Lobdell

- 1. TM Tantillo confirmed the Town is still soliciting for a Part-Time Administrative Assistant.
- 2. TM Tantillo confirmed the Town will be soliciting for a Part-Time Code Enforcement Officer.
- 3. TM Tantillo advised the Town is looking to begin soliciting for a Part-Time Public Works Employee in the spring for the next year.

C. **Public Works and Land Use Development Committee:** Chair: Councilman Bangura, Co-Chair: Councilman Chapman

- 1. CM Bangura advised the committee will be meeting soon to discuss objectives.
- 2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and introduction of Ordinance 2023-001 an Ordinance to Provide for the Quality of Outdoor Night Lighting to Conserve Energy, Reduce Light Pollution, and Improve Safety by Light Direction.

- a. CM Chapman motioned to sponsor Ordinance 2023-001. CM Bangura seconded the motion.
- b. TM Tantillo provided a brief introduction for Ordinance 2023-001, noting the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing for Ordinance 2023-001 and has issued a letter to Council with recommendations.
- c. TM Tantillo provided a title reading of Ordinance 2023-001 and a reading of the Planning Commission recommendation letter.
- d. No motion made, nor action taken for this agenda item.
- e. Council noted this is the first reading.

**D. Public Safety Committee:** Chair: Councilman Suhr, Co-Chair: Councilman Mertz

- 1. No reports.

**E. Community Engagement Committee:** Chair: Councilman Mertz

- 1. CM Mertz advised an announcement will be made in executive session.
- 2. TM Tantillo confirmed the Town will be holding a Back-To-School Night Event on August 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm. TM Tantillo encouraged everyone to donate school supplies. TM Tantillo advised the Town is searching for service vendors and organizations to participate in the event, noting there will be food vendors. TM Tantillo advised the Town is also seeking volunteers to assist with the event.
- 3. CM Mertz advised he has been contacted by the Townsend Elementary and the TECC (Townsend Early Childhood Center) to partner with the Town on a Halloween Event for the end of October.

**F. Code Review Committee:** Chair: Mayor Lobdell, Co-Chair: Councilman Mertz

- 1. No reports.

**G. Social Services Committee:** Chair: Councilman Chapman, Co-Chair: Councilman Suhr

- 1. No reports.

**XI. Recess Council Meeting to Convene Executive Session.**

- A. *CM Chapman made a motion to recess and convene executive session in accordance with the agenda under item twelve. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yeas.*

- 1. Council recessed and convened into executive session at approximately 9:12 pm.

**XII. Convene Executive Session:** Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §10004 (B)(1), the Town Council will consider a motion to meet in executive session to discuss qualifications for personnel job training as a police officer; Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §10004 (B)(9), the Town Council will consider a motion to meet in executive session for a strategy session, to address personnel matters; pursuant to 29 Del. C. §§10004(b)(2) and (4), the Town Council will consider a motion to meet in executive session for a strategy session, which will include legal advice or opinions from an attorney-at-law, with respect to potential litigation, as well as discussions that may have an adverse effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the Town; and pursuant to 29 Del. C. §§10002(o)§(17) et al providing that the “records, which, if copied or inspected, could jeopardize the security of any structure owned by the State or any of its political subdivisions, or could facilitate the planning of a terrorist attack, or could endanger the life or physical safety of an individual.”



- XIII.** Close Executive Session & Re-convene Council Meeting.
- A. Council meeting reconvened at approximately 10:18 pm.
- XIV.** **\*ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on doors and security enhancements for the police station.
- A. ***CM made a motion to accept the bid from EDIS for door repair using ARPA funds in the amount of \$14,490.00. CM Bangura seconded the motion.***
1. Discussion:
    - a. Held in executive session.
  2. Citizen comment and participation:
    - a. None.
  3. ***Voice vote of all Council: all yea's.***
    - a. Council approved the bid from EDIS for the Police Station door repairs using \$14,490.00 from ARPA Funds.
- XV.** **\*ACTION ITEM:** Possible vote of Council.
- A. ***CM Suhr made a motion on the Townsend Police Department security enhancements, to accept the quote from ADVANTECH for a total amount of \$17,070.00 from ARPA Funds, which includes a one year of hosted access control of \$122.50 per month. CM Bangura seconded the motion.***
1. Discussion:
    - a. Held in executive session.
  2. Citizen comment and participation:
    - a. None.
  3. ***Voice vote of all Council: all yea's – CM Mertz abstained.***
  4. Mayor Lobdell requested for Chief Longo to:
    - a. Obtain one cloud service through ADVANTECH for the Town Park and the Police Station.
    - b. Salvage as much as possible from the old Police Department security system for the Public Works Department.
- XVI.** Adjournment.
- A. ***CM Mertz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.***
1. Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:22 pm.
-