



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
August 7th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
VIA CONFERENCE CALL & Town Hall
141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734

7:00 pm Town Council Meeting

- I. Call to Order: approximately 7 pm.
- II. Opening Ceremonies
 - A. Roll Call: Mayor S. Lobdell, Councilman D. Wiggins, Councilman M. Chapman, Councilman J. Bangura, Councilman M. Suhr, Town Manager J. Goodyear, Town Solicitor M. Hoffman, Chief of Police R. Longo, and Town Engineer E. Gruenes.
 - 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: Alan C. Emsley, Ellen Wolfe, Karen Geiger, Phil Converse, Dwain A. Haines, James Reyes, and Troy Geiger.
 - D. Announcements: none.
- III. General Citizen Comments
 - A. Mr. Emsley noted it is great to see the Townsend Police Department's (PD's) presence on Main Street and Commerce Street.
 1. Mayor Lobdell noted additional staff has been hired. Furthermore, a new speed radar sign has been installed at the Town Hall.
 - B. Ms. Wolfe advised the streetlight that had been installed by her house is not turned on yet.
 1. Mayor Lobdell advised Ms. Wolfe to keep Chief Longo and TM Goodyear updated.
 2. TM Goodyear advised she will reach out to Delmarva power regarding the streetlights that are out.
 - C. Mr. Converse noted it is great to see the Townsend PD enforce the speed limit. Mr. Converse requested an update on an incident that occurred on Railroad Avenue.
 1. Chief Longo advised two of the three suspects have been apprehended and the weapons have been recovered. Chief Longo advised the investigation is still pending.
 - D. Mrs. Geiger requested a timeline for when Street Lights will be addressed.
 1. Mayor Lobdell advised outreach has already been done; noting, TM Goodyear will be following up this week. Furthermore, the Town has been working to address the installation of streetlights in the new development.
 2. TM Goodyear advised phone calls and reporting via Delmarva's website are the only options that are available to address streetlight concerns. CM Chapman advised Delmarva does not have a special contact.
 3. NCC Carter advised he will provide the Town with one of their Delmarva contacts.

- IV. Review/Adoption of Agenda
 - A. *CM Chapman made a motion to adopt the agenda. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - 1. Council adopted the agenda.
- V. Approval / Rejection of Minutes:
 - A. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the July 10th, 2024, Town Council Meeting Minutes.
 - B. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the July 10th, 2024, Town Council Meeting Executive Session Minutes.
 - 1. Mayor Lobdell read the list of meeting minutes for approval.
 - a. *CM Bangura motioned to approve the minutes as written. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - i. Council approved the minutes from the:
 - a) July 10th, 2024, Town Council Meeting.
 - b) July 10th, 2024, Town Council Meeting Executive Session.
- VI. Departmental Reports:
 - A. Mayor S. Lobdell
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM:** Oath of Office for newly elected Council Member, Dylan K. Wiggins.
 - i. TM Goodyear led the Oath of Office for Dylan K. Wiggins to recite as he was sworn in.
 - 2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on appointment of one Board of Elections Member.
 - i. Possible swearing in of new Board of Elections member.
 - ii. No motion made, nor action taken for this agenda item.
 - 3. **ACTION ITEM:** Swearing in of new Planning Commission Members
 - i. Mayor Lobdell noted Mr. Geiger and Mr. Reyes have served the Town for many years and thanked them for their time on the Planning Commission.
 - ii. Troy Geiger
 - 1. TM Goodyear led the Oath of Office for Troy Geiger to recite as he was sworn in.
 - iii. James Reyes
 - 1. TM Goodyear led the Oath of Office for James Reyes to recite as he was sworn in.
 - B. New Castle County Councilman David Carter
 - 1. NCC Carter announced and shared some details regarding the Townsend Fire Company fundraiser that will be held on September 14th.
 - i. Mayor Lobdell advised the Town will share this event on all sites.

2. NCC Carter advised the tree planting for Wiggins Mill Park will be taking place in October, once the official date is confirmed will provide the information to the Town. Furthermore, the layout of the trails has begun. NCC Carter advised a public meeting will be held.
 - i. Mayor Lobdell offered Town Hall's Council Chambers as a meeting space for NCC Carter.
3. NCC Carter confirmed the NCC re-assessment is moving forward. NCC Carter advised data mailers issued to business owners; homeowners will be receiving them within the next month or so. NCC Carter noted the assessment does not provide revenue to the County. Furthermore, the assessment has not been done in thirty years. Additionally, with new legislation, a reassessment will be required every five years. NCC Carter noted owners will be able to question their assessment.
 - i. NCC Carter explained the assessment does not raise taxes and noted the tax rates have gone up due to deficits and school referendums.
4. NCC Carter advised Public Workshops will be held regarding the Sewer Infrastructure.
5. NCC Carter advised he will be pushing for an update in January for the Southern New Castle County Infrastructure. Noting the transportation districts are failing due to the growth in Middletown.
 - i. Mayor Lobdell advised he has sent letters and emails regarding Main Street and Route 71.
 - ii. NCC Carter advised CM Chapman to reach out to State Legislatures to learn how the Town may obtain funding to address all roads, not just the Town owned roads, due to increased wear and tear from spillage of the other cities. Furthermore, roads are State or Town funded.
6. NCC Carter advised he would like to set up a meeting with TM Goodyear to discuss the next steps for the Interfaith Housing of Delaware project.

C. Town of Townsend Police Chief's Report

1. Chief Longo introduced TM Goodyear and Council to Officer Peters.
2. Chief Longo clarified that the electric vehicles were all purchased and outfitted under grant funding.
3. Chief Longo invited Council and Town Staff to attend the Graduation Ceremony for the PD cadet on August 29th; details will be shared soon as they are received. Chief Longo advised the fourth officer will be on the road soon.
4. Chief Longo advised it is more cost effective to utilize the DSP (Delaware State Police) dispatch line. Chief Longo noted DSP is efficient and the Townsend PD share a good working partnership.

D. Town Solicitor Lisa Hatfield

1. Mr. Hoffman advised there are no reports from TS Hatfield.

E. Town Engineer Erik Gruenes

1. TE Gruenes confirmed projects are making progress.
2. TE Gruenes is coordinating with the RVE GIS specialist regarding the Surface Water Matching Planning to stay on budget to address easements and confirm parcel boundaries.
3. TE Gruenes confirmed a pre-construction meeting was held with TM Goodyear and the Contractor to discuss the Townsend Park Irrigation system. TE Gruenes advised the Contractor has stated they will be able to complete the work within five days. Additionally, the contract is underway for a proposed start in the third week of August.
 - i. TM Goodyear confirmed she has the contact information for the Baseball Team so that they are made aware of when work will begin.
4. TE Gruenes confirmed the Public Works and Land Use Development (PWLUD) Committee has determined at their last meeting to move forward with Finely Street and Fulton Street instead of Ginn Street. Additionally, a bid has been put out for construction with a closing date of August 30th.
 - i. TE Gruenes advised the letter of recommendation will be prepared for the September Town Council meeting and there is language within the bid that states the Town would like to proceed with work as soon as possible so that work may begin as early as the following week.
 - ii. TE Gruenes advised a pre-construction questionnaire meeting has been scheduled for August 13th so that they may see the site themselves.
5. TE Gruenes advised all other projects within Town are going well and provided highlights from his report.

F. Town Manager Julie Goodyear

1. TM Goodyear noted she has been with the Town for one month and all items have been going well.
2. TM Goodyear advised her report has been combined with the Public Works Supervisor's information and welcomed feedback from Council to her report.
3. TM Goodyear provided highlights to her report:
 - i. By participating in the States copier program, the Town will be saving 15% annually.
 - ii. The Town is targeting outreach to renew the 29 licenses that have expired within the last calendar year.
 - iii. Follow-up meetings were held with the Contractor who performed the parking lot sealcoating and stripping at the park.
 1. CM Chapman advised the Town is subject to the Contractor's schedule therefore the work had to be completed on the weekend.

- iv. Concrete repairs at the intersection of Main Street and Ginn Street were minimal.
 - v. Feedback from PW has not been received regarding the no parking signs on South Street
 - vi. The quotes gathered for the deck repairs at Town Hall were an outstanding request from the previous Town Manager.
 - vii. Mulching at the Park will be completed before the end of August
 - 1. CM Chapman recommended to contact Townsend Supply for mulch.
4. Mayor Lobdell requested PW to repair potholes by the intersection of Ginn Street and Main Street.
5. TM Goodyear confirmed two citizen complaints were received and addressed. One has been resolved; the other is still outstanding.
- 6. ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on Townsend TAP (Tier Award Program) Project Execution for SRTS (Safe Routes to School).
- i. TM Goodyear advised the TAP program would like to move forward. However, needs confirmation from the Town on the design of South Street. TM Goodyear explained Council needs to determine if the Town wants South Street traffic to be one-way.
 - ii. Council briefly discussed funding that is stated within the agreement.
 - iii. CM Suhr noted Council needs to discuss turning Ginn Street into a one-way. CM Suhr advised there is an offset when entering Ginn Street from the development.
 - 1. CM Chapman recapped the discussing held by the PWLUD Committee regarding Ginn Street. Explaining, the Committee evaluated lower impact solutions for Ginn Street based on the safety concern expressed during events.
 - iv. CM Wiggins advised outreach to emergency personnel and buses to determine if the proposed changes would affect their response or pick-up times to Townsend Village (TV) II.
 - v. TM Goodyear noted the agreement is only for the design phase.
 - vi. Council agreed to gauge public feedback in the form of a survey that would be open for two weeks. Council determined the following process:
 - 1. Survey to be posted on the website and Facebook.
 - 2. Signs posted on South Street regarding the survey.
 - vii. TM Goodyear confirmed no amount is due from the Town as DeIDOT will cover the 20% match. Additionally, should the Town not move forward or complete the project the Town will need to reimburse DeIDOT.

viii. *CM Chapman motioned to approve the agreement for Townsend Sidewalk Walkability for PE Design Agreement Services Transportation Enhancement Project. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yeas.*

1. Council approved the Townsend TAP (Tier Award Program) Project Execution for SRTS (Safe Routes to School).

7. ACTION ITEM: Discussion regarding the agreement between Townsend and Connolly and Gallagher LLP.

- i. TM Goodyear advised TS Hatfield has requested a \$95 increase to the current rate. Noting the current rates are as follows:
 - a. Nonlitigation rate of \$300 per hour
 - b. Litigation rate of \$400 per hour
- ii. Mayor Lobdell noted from a budget standpoint a rate increase should not affect the budget advising the Town was well under budget last year. Furthermore, this is still a low rate for the Town.
- iii. *CM Wiggins approved the proposed rate increase to \$395 for nonlitigation and \$400 for litigation for Connolly and Gallagher LLP. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yeas.*
 1. Council approved the following rates for Connolly and Gallagher LLP:
 - a. Nonlitigation rate of \$395 per hour
 - b. Litigation rate of \$400 per hour

8. ACTION ITEM: Discussion and possible vote on RVE's (Remington & Vernik Engineers) Proposal for Implementation of Vialytics.

- i. TM Goodyear explained this software allows users to utilize an app on their phone as they drive to track curb to curb conditions such as, potholes and alligator cracks. TM Goodyear advised she would like to use this for Code Enforcement task management. Additionally, the software provides reports of the Town's assets. TM Goodyear confirmed that TS Hatfield has reviewed the terms and there are no issues with the proposal
- ii. Mayor Lobdell provided more information regarding the presentation held by Vialytics.
- iii. Council briefly discussed what budget may be used to purchase this software.
- iv. Mayor Lobdell noted that the proposal presented is for one cost of unlimited users. Mayor Lobdell explained that the Town would hold the grandfathered cost for unlimited users if changed to cost per user.
- v. CM Suhr raised a concern with subscriptions and how often would the subscription be used based on the Town's needs.
 1. TM Goodyear advised the Town would partner with RVE to perform the data analysis of roads. However, this may be used more for task management.

2. Mayor Lobdell provided an example of a code enforcement task.
 3. TM Goodyear advised she would manage and issue the tasks and the PWS (Public Works Supervisor) should also have the training. Furthermore, RVE may review the roads quarterly or bi-annually.
 4. CM Chapman noted this past spring PWS DiMartino was directed to perform a road analysis which took 10 days to complete. Additionally, PWS DiMartino will review 6 months from that date.
- vi. Mayor Lobdell noted the Town has received 50% off on the setup and may try to negotiate other costs. Council agreed to allow TM Goodyear to negotiate.
 - vii. Council confirmed the proposal is within the Town Managers spending authority and may proceed with the proposal as presented.

VII. Committee Reports:

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

1. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on outfitting for Townsend Police Department (PD) vehicles.

- a. *CM Bangura motioned to approve the funds allocated for last year of the outfitting of the Townsend Police Department Vehicles. CM Wiggins seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*

- b. Council approved funds as allocated for last years budget of the outfitting for Townsend Police Department Vehicles.

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

1. CM Suhr noted there are sensitive items to be discussed.

C. Public Works and Land Use Development (PWLUD) Committee: Chair: Councilman J. Bangura, Co-Chair: Councilman M. Chapman

1. CM Chapman advised there are no reports.
2. CM Chapman thanked Sartin for completing the work at the Park and for all that reviewed the area.
3. CM Bangura thanked TE Gruenes for attending their PWLUD meeting.
4. CM Bangura advised the visitors in attendance to send feedback for the PWLUD to the Town Manager.

D. Public Safety Committee: Chair: Councilman M. Suhr, Co-Chair: Councilman D. Wiggins

1. CM Suhr advised he will be meeting Chief Longo regarding the PD improvements that will be presented to Council.

E. Community Engagement Committee: Chair: Councilman D. Wiggins

1. TM Goodyear confirmed there is a Back-to-School supply drive that is open to receive donations until the end of August which will be donated to a local organization.

- a. CM Chapman noted the dates proposed for the event all fall on the same dates for other Back-to-School events.

- b. Mayor Lobdell requested that the Town hold some backpacks with supplies at Town Hall for residents to pick-up.
 - 2. CM Chapman confirmed that the Town will be going live on the Raffle September 1st. Noting, there will be 1,000 tickets sold at \$10 each. CM Chapman explained 50% of the cash will go towards the Veterans and Social Services Committee. CM Chapman advised the funds allocated to the Committee will be for veteran banners, new flags, outreach, establishment of programs, a fitness run, and other items as such. Noting, as the only sitting veteran on the Committee it would be an honor to work on this.
 - a. CM Chapman confirmed the following prizes for winners of the raffle:
 - i. First prize – 25% of the pot
 - ii. Second prize – 15% of the pot
 - iii. Third prize – 10% of the pot
 - 3. CM Chapman explained physical tickets may be paid via cash or PayPal.
 - F. **Code Review Committee:** Chair: Mayor S. Lobdell, Co-Chair: Councilman M. Chapman
 - 1. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote regarding enforcement of the dumpster ordinance.
 - a. *CM Chapman made a motion to extend the enforcement waiver for 30 days. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - b. Council extended waiver of enforcement of the dumpster ordinance for thirty days.
 - G. **Veterans & Social Services Committee:** Chair: Councilman Chapman, Co-Chair: Councilman M. Suhr
 - 1. CM Chapman advised the Town needs to reach out to Middletown to bring the veterans banners down per the initial agreement of bringing them down after July 4th. CM Chapman noted the Town would like to conserve the banners until after the fall.
 - 2. CM Chapman clarified the Town agreed to have the banners up from Memorial Day to Fourth of July and raise them for the month of Veterans Day to preserve them.
 - H. Mayor Lobdell appointed CM Wiggins to Chair of Community Engagement and Co-chair of the Public Safety Committee.
- VIII.** Discussion of future agenda items.
- A. NCC Carter requested to hold a discussion regarding annexation of properties on Main Street between the Town and the Fire House and the NCC Park Transfer.
 - B. Follow-up for the Street Lighting
 - C. Follow-up on the Speed Sign on Railroad Avenue

- IX.** Recess Council Meeting to Convene Executive Session.
- A. *CM Chapman made a motion to recess the Council Meeting and convene the Executive Session in accordance with the agenda. CM Wiggins seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
1. Council recessed and convened into Executive Session at approximately 8:32 pm.
- X. Convene Executive Session:** 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 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.
- XI. Close Executive Session & Re-convene Council Meeting.**
- A. Council closed the Executive Session and reconvened the Council Meeting at approximately 9:55 pm.
- XII. ACTION ITEM:** Possible vote of Council.
- A. *CM Chapman made a motion to approve staff recognition as outlined in Executive Session. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
- B. *CM Chapman made a motion to authorize purchase of the parcel as outlined in Executive Session. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
- XIII.** Adjournment.
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- A. *CM Chapman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
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1. Council adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:56 pm.
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