



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 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 J. Bangura, Councilman M. Chapman, Councilman M. Suhr, Councilman D. Wiggins, Town Manager J. Goodyear, Financial Office J. Helms, Town Engineer E. Gruenes, Town Solicitor L. Hatfield, and Chief of Police R. Longo.
 - 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: Chris Duke, Ryan Musacchio, Bob Taylor, Joshua Mertz, Jay Fisher, and Alan Emsley.
 - D. Announcements:
 1. CM Chapman thanked TM Goodyear and Public Works (PW) Staff for their efforts at the Townsend Municipal Park.
 2. CM Chapman welcomed Officer Hart to the Townsend Police Department and congratulated him for graduating from The Academy.
 3. CM Chapman announced from September 16 to September 22 it is Mitochondrial Disease Awareness week.
- III. General Citizen Comments
 - A. Alan E. stated the Railroad Tracks look new. TM Goodyear advised it looks like there is remaining work that may need to be completed; however, they were quick and efficient with repairs made.
- IV. Review/Adoption of Agenda
 - A. *CM Chapman motioned 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 August 7th, 2024, Town Council Meeting Minutes.
 - B. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the August 7th, 2024, Town Council Meeting Executive Session Minutes.
 - C. Mayor Lobdell provided title readings of the minutes for approval or rejection.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
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D. *CM Wiggins motioned to approve the minutes read by Mayor Lobdell. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*

1. Council approved the minutes from the:
 - a. August 7th, 2024, Town Council Meeting.
 - b. August 7th, 2024, Town Council Meeting Executive Session

VI. Departmental Reports:

A. Mayor S. Lobdell

1. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote to approve Resolution 2024-007, a resolution to recognize previous Councilman Joshua Mertz
 - i. Mayor Lobdell noted former CM Mertz served for approximately six years.
 - ii. Mayor Lobdell provided a reading of Resolution 2024-007, a resolution to recognize previous Councilman Joshua Mertz.

1. *CM Bangura motioned to approved Resolution 2024-007, a resolution to recognize previous Councilman Joshua Mertz. CM Wiggins seconded the motion.*

a. Roll Call: CM Wiggins – yea, CM Chapman – yea, Mayor Lobdell – yea, CM Bangura – yea, and CM Suhr – yea.

- i. Council unanimously approved Resolution 2024-007.

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.

1. No Motion made, nor action taken for this agenda item.

B. New Castle County Councilman David Carter

1. TM Goodyear announced NCC Carter is in a meeting with the Fire Company to discuss the upcoming Extinguish Your Thirst Fundraiser, September 14th.

C. Town of Townsend Police Chief's Report

1. Chief Longo announced Officer Hart completed 21 weeks of intense training and will be working with another member of the department for the next six weeks. Chief Longo advised Officer Hart will be formally introduced at the next Council meeting.

D. Town Solicitor Lisa Hatfield

1. TS Hatfield advised trial dates are forthcoming between the developer and owners.
2. TS Hatfield advised there are no issues for the Town.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
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- E. Town Engineer Erik Gruenes
1. TE Gruenes confirmed pre-construction for the Town Park irrigation system will begin this week and next week full construction will commence.
- F. Town Manager Julie Goodyear
1. TM Goodyear briefly recapped the TM Monthly Report.
 2. CM Suhr reported that an evaluation is needed to address obscured signage in Town. Specifically, by the cemetery heading west bound out of Town. TM Goodyear confirmed this will be addressed by PW with the assistance of Vialytics.
 3. **ACTION ITEM:** Review and discussion of the Fire Marshall "Memorandum of Understanding".
 - i. TM Goodyear confirmed no policy changes have been made.
 - ii. *CM Bangura motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Fire Marshall. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 1. Council approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Fire Marshall.
 4. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote on the bid(s) received for the road paving of Finley Street and Fulton Street.
 - i. TM Goodyear advised there was only one bid received which was way above the asking price. TM Goodyear confirmed a bid was received after the closing and she is working with TE Gruenes on the bid received.
 5. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion on Street Lights within the Town.
 - i. TM Goodyear confirmed the outed streetlights reported on Main Street have been addressed and are reported to be in working condition. TM Goodyear advised if there are any additional outed streetlights to report them to her so that she may address them.
 - ii. TE Gruenes confirmed Delmarva has advised that they typically wait until a development is completed to install the streetlights. TE Gruenes explained the contractor would need to sign a liability waiver with Delmarva to install the streetlights in the Woods of Hidden Creek. TE Gruenes advised the developer Rob Allen is not comfortable with signing this waiver.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
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141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734

6. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion on road speed signs on Commerce Street and Railroad Avenue.
 - i. TM Goodyear explained the Railroad Ave handout in the agenda packet is a Vialytics report. TM Goodyear advised after review with PW they have concluded that there are enough speed signs on these roads.
 1. CM Bangura agreed with the conclusion.
7. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion regarding Major Subdivision and Re-zoning request for Townsend Acres preliminary Concept plan review.
 - i. TM Goodyear confirmed the Planning Commission has heard and approved the Townsend Acres major subdivision and re-zoning request to move forward; no formal recommendation letter has been issued.
 - ii. Chris D. of the Becker Morgan Group presented the project for Townsend Acres. Chris D. noted the proposed homes are duplexes; however, per the Town's Code they are defined as Townhouses.
 - iii. Chris D. clarified the following based on questions from Council:
 1. Typically, there is more traffic generated by Single Family homes in comparison to duplexes and townhouses. The Trip Generation is based on the Institute of Traffic and Engineering Traffic & Generation Manual, which is a compilation of studies from throughout the nation.
 2. Confirmed they are new owners of the property and the previously made plans were made by different engineers. After reviewing the previous plans and performing studies, they found that the plans previously submitted were not suitable for the location. Additionally, they would like to provide an alternative concept to consumers.
 3. Project completion is approximately two to three years.
 4. The current zoning does not permit the proposed development.
 5. The road that is in alignment with Gray Street ends at the point specified as that is as far as the property line allows. Explaining, they are unable to develop on an unowned property.
 6. There will be driveways and garages for parking. Parking will not be restricted; however, the roads will be 50 feet wide.
 7. The newest wetlands study has determined there are more wetlands that have developed since the last study performed.
 8. Has discussed with Handler regarding tapping into the sewer connection of TV (Townsend Village) 2.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
VIA CONFERENCE CALL & Town Hall
141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734

8. Mayor Lobdell advised DeIDOT will review the traffic and asses any possible restrictions needed.
9. Council expressed concerns for:
 - i. The impact on traffic of Summit Bridge Road.
 - ii. Restricted access to enter or exit the development.
 - iii. Safety with only one roadway for entry and exit.
 - iv. Sewage Capacity.
10. Council agreed the applicants may move forward with their preliminary plans.
11. **ACTION ITEM:** Review RVE 2024-2025 rate sheet & contract for consideration.
 - i. TM Goodyear confirmed the rate increase requested is for the term of July 2024 to July 2025 and is between \$10 to \$15. TM Goodyear advised RVE is required to provide a 90-day notice; however, this was not done.
 - ii. TM Goodyear confirmed RVE has not had a rate increase in three to four years.
 - iii. Council agreed TE Gruenes has the option to attend meetings virtually or in-person.
 - iv. *CM Wiggins motioned to accept the rate increase retroactively July 1st. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's – CM Suhr abstained.*
 1. Council approved a July 1st retroactive rate increase for RVE 2024-205 contract.

VII. Committee Reports:

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

1. **ACTION ITEM:** Review and possible discussion on the July 2024 Budget vs. Actual Reports.
 - a. FO Helms confirmed there is not much to report and advised the only skewed item is for RVE's expenses.
 - b. FO Helms confirmed tax bills were issued in August and Council will begin to see the tax revenue increasing the following month.
 - c. FO Helms confirmed the budget will support the recently approved rate increase for RVE.
 - d. FO Helms confirmed grant revenue received for the Townsend Police Department's (PD's) building expansion will be found on page five, line number three, titled Police Fund Income Statement.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
VIA CONFERENCE CALL & Town Hall
141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734

- B. Human Resources Committee:** Chair: Councilman Suhr, Co-Chair: Mayor S. Lobdell
1. TM Goodyear confirmed employee reviews have been completed.
 2. Mayor Lobdell explained employee reviews will now be completed in the same month.
 3. TM Goodyear confirmed any Council members may view employee reviews.
- C. Public Works and Land Use Development Committee:** Chair: Councilman J. Bangura, Co-Chair: Councilman M. Chapman
1. CM Chapman recapped the South Street survey results.
 2. TM Goodyear confirmed there were eight accidents on South Street since January of 2021 to present:
 - a. 3 inattentive
 - b. 1 hit and run
 - c. 1 other
 - d. 1 DUI
 - e. 1 driving reckless
 - f. 1 improper backing
 3. Chief Longo confirmed only one may have been indicative of the stop sign or narrow street.
 4. CM Bangura advised the Committee recommends leaving South Street as a two-way.
 - a. Council agreed with the consensus.
 5. CM Suhr advised Council should still consider the safety concerns on Ginn Street.
 - a. CM Chapman advised the Committee has discussed the possibility of the Town creating and implementing temporary traffic flow plans to address safety during heavy traffic events.
 6. CM Chapman advised the Committee recently discussed recoupment of funds through future annexation, bringing business, and liquidation of unused PW equipment.
 7. CM Chapman stated a request has been received by the local Girl Scouts troop to install a Gaga Ball Pit at the Townsend Municipal Park, to be maintained by the Town.
 - a. CM Chapman advised the Girl Scouts are not ready to present; however, the following questions have been posed, additional questions may be added by Council:
 - i. Who will maintain it afterword?
 - ii. What is the maintenance?



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
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- iii. What are the park locations?
- iv. What is the timeframe to build it?
- v. Are there plans for what it will look like?
- vi. Why are you doing this?
- vii. Do you want to dedicate it?
- viii. Do you want signage or plaques on it?
- ix. What material are you using? Playground inside panels or wood/plastic?
- b. CM Chapman provided a brief explanation of the Gaga Ball game.
- c. CM Bangura clarified the questions will be provided to the Girl Scout Troop prior to presenting so that they are prepared to answer them during their presentation.
- d. CM Wiggins noted this will bring Community Engagement opportunities.

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

- 1. CM Suhr advised he met with Chief Longo to discuss utilization of the grant funds received for the PD expansion and potential budget requests. Chief Longo to continue working with TE Gruenes and TM Goodyear with the intention to bring plans forth to Council.
- 2. TM Goodyear advised a meeting will be needed to review and edit the Town's COOP and create an Emergency Response Plan. TM Goodyear confirmed she has been working with Chief Longo on the proposed edits for the Committees final review and recommendations.

E. Community Engagement Committee: Chair: Councilman Dylan Wiggins

- 1. CM Wiggins stated a meeting was held August 30th and it was identified that there are great plans; however, a majority of the work has been performed by the Town Staff. Additionally, would like to revamp the Committee but there are no funds allocated to the Committee's budget.
- 2. CM Wiggins proposed the following action items:
 - a. Revamping of the butterfly garden at the Town Park project:
 - i. Approximately \$300 and volunteers will be needed.
 - a. TM Goodyear confirmed the Town purchased a gift card of \$100 from Willey's Farms.
 - b. Mayor Lobdell advised the budgetary request is within TM Goodyear's spending authority.
 - b. National Wildlife Re-Certification.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
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3. CM Wiggins advised the Town will continue holding their annual events and proposed the following events:
 - a. Movie Night at the Park
 - b. Jazz Festival at the Park
4. TM Goodyear clarified the Committee has a budget for specific events such as the Town Fair; however, this does not include any additional events.
5. CM Wiggins announced that he will be attending the NAACP Gala on Friday, September 6th on behalf of the Town.
6. CM Wiggins advised the Committee is looking to be intentional with community engagement and would like to install another donation box in a more secluded location for privacy. CM Wiggins explained he would like include non-donation items in the pantry box and for the Town to not only request donations but also to supply donations. CM Wiggins clarified the Town does not have to have a traditional homeless problem; however wants to provide resources for anyone that may be in need.
 - a. Alan E. offered his assistance to provide food donations.

F. Code Review Committee: Chair: Mayor S. Lobdell, Co-Chair: Councilman M. Chapman

1. CM Chapman confirmed the Committee will be meeting on September 23rd at 1 pm.
2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote regarding enforcement of the dumpster ordinance.
 - a. *CM Chapman motioned to extend the ban on enforcement of the dumpster ordinance for an additional 30 days. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - i. Council lifted the ban of dumpsters in the residential district.

G. Veterans & Social Services Committee: Chair: Councilman Chapman, Co-Chair: Councilman M. Suhr

1. CM Chapman announced the Veterans Raffle is open and confirmed only one ticket has been purchased. CM Chapman explained tickets may be purchased in person or via PayPal.

VIII. Discussion of future agenda items.

IX. Recess Council Meeting to Convene Executive Session.

- A. *CM Chapman motioned to recess the council meeting and convent to executive session in accordance with the agenda. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 1. Council recessed and convened to executive session at approximately 8:39 pm.



Townsend Town Council Meeting Minutes
September 4th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
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- X. Convene Executive Session:** Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §§10004(b)(4)(9), 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 to address personnel matters.
- XI. Close Executive Session & Re-convene Council Meeting.**
- A. Council closed executive session and reconvened the council meeting at approximately 9:26 pm.
- XII. ACTION ITEM:** Possible vote of Council.
- A. No motion made, nor action taken for this agenda item.
- XIII. Adjournment.**

A. *CM Bangura motioned to adjourn the meeting. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*

1. Council adjourned at approximately 9:26 pm.
