

**City Council of the City of New Castle**  
**Special Council Meeting at Town Hall – 201 Delaware Street – New Castle**  
**Wednesday April 16, 2014**

**Call to order: 6:00 pm**

**Roll Call:**

Councilperson Megginson  
Councilperson Cochran  
Council President Ratchford  
Councilperson Petty  
Councilperson Vannucci

**Also present:**

William J. Barthel, City Administrator  
Mayor Donald A. Reese  
Daniel R. Losco, City Solicitor  
Marian C. Delaney, Finance/HR Manager

President Ratchford announced the first Item on the agenda.

**Presentation to Council concerning self-insurance program, and decision by Council whether to self-insured model. (Council President Ratchford– posted 4/09/14)**

Insurance Presentation from Terri DeSanto, Director of Public Sector, SIP and Vincent Capaldi Terri DeSanto was asked by Mr. Barthel to present the advantages for the City of New Castle to use self-insurance. Terri DeSanto explained that a lot of municipalities were going to self-insurance, to save money. Every year the rates continue to go up and the rates will not stop going up. Also, there is only one carrier that will issue the insurance for the City. By self-insuring the City can save money and the money that is not used can be invested. Self-insurance is a win-win for everyone. There is really no downside only upside. Terri DeSanto projected there could be a 25% reduction. The self-insurance is not controlled by the State guidelines. The City must also be a member of the League of Local Governments. The other advantage is you are removing the cost of the middle man. The research has proven that in every 10 years there is a catastrophic year and this is where the savings come in. The Trustees of the fund decide where the left over funds should go and profits can go back to the group. There is a vote on what should be done with the excess money. It is not just one person saying what should be done. Vincent said the goal is to offer affordable coverage. Cities must follow strict guidelines to stay in the program. A City can be put out of the program if they do not follow guidelines. President Ratchford stated she felt very comfortable with the self-insured program. I feel our City Administrator has done all the due diligence. Mr. Barthel asked Ms. DeSanto when they could have all of the numbers. Ms. DeSanto felt she could have the numbers back to City by the end of May. Everyone thanked Terri and Vincent for their presentation. Terri asked if there were any questions to please call her.

**Trustee Meadow Presentation. (Council President Ratchford– posted 4/09/14)**

President Ratchford introduced Corky Viola from the Trustees of New Castle Common. Corky Viola said after Super Storm Sandy the Trustees rededicated their Board to maintaining and preserving the Trust properties. The Trustees realized a lot of their properties were unprotected from such events like Sandy. The Trustees brought in Drew Hayes from Forrsite Associates to guide them and to evaluate some of the properties. With that Corky introduced Drew Hayes.

Drew Hayes stated that his presentation tonight is all about the Meadows. Drew said maintaining the Meadows saves a lot of money. With the money that is saved it can be reallocated to other projects. People come to see the Meadows. Meadows discourage the geese and the Bull Hill project is the test area for the Meadows. Minimal mowing is performed in the spring. Councilperson Cochran asked if this creates an issue with mice, rats and skunks. Drew Hayes responded not really that most animals are drawn to an area by food. One of the biggest problems is people putting out cat food.

Councilperson Megginson said he was very happy to hear that the property was going to be mowed. He stated that he'd gotten many complaints about it not being mowed. Residents do not think this looks good as they drive into town. The City residents think it is the "City not mowing" when the Trustees are not mowing. Councilperson Megginson said he really does not like the concept as it looks as if it is not being cared for and this does not look good.

Councilperson Vannucci agreed with Councilperson Megginson that he was not happy at all. He also stated that he was not happy with Dobbinsville. We have a lot of children in Dobbinsville. I get a lot of complaints from the families. We have had a big problem with snakes near the playground. We finally got it cut. It is not safe for it not to be cut by the playground. I am very concerned that children play in these areas. A lot of people are complaining. This is not a good area to have a meadow.

A public meeting was suggested. Councilperson Megginson said this would need to be handled by the Trustees. Council suggested that the Trustees hold a public meeting and conduct much more public outreach so people can understand what they are doing and so residents can voice their concerns. Per Councilperson Megginson, citizens need to know this is the Trustees program and not the Council's program. Council thanked the Trustees and Drew Hayes for coming to the meeting.

**Council Discussion concerning City Summer Recreation Program. (Council President Ratchford– posted 4/09/14)**

President Ratchford stated the next agenda item was discussion on the City Summer Recreation program. The City has been offered, by New Castle County, to take over our summer program. Children from New Castle would have the advantage of being on the list first. The County has many more resources than the City to put on the program. The fee would be \$25.00 per week. Councilperson Cochran thought it was a great idea to partner with New Castle County and we wouldn't have the headache of hiring the people and being involved in the issues at the park. It would also save the City over \$27,000.

President Ratchford stated the County would run the program and the City would be a partner. Other than providing some services like water and a refrigerator, the County would use a lot of our model. Councilperson Petty stated that she didn't see what the County would do that the City doesn't already do. President Ratchford felt the County had more resources. Councilperson Petty asked what resources the County had. Mr. Cochran said they have the personnel and the knowledge. Councilperson Cochran said he ran into George Smiley, from the County, and discussed the program. It would save the City time and money. Councilperson Megginson asked Ms. Delaney how many hours a week she spent on the recreation program work. Ms. Delaney

responded about twenty hours a week for the six week program and the HR Coordinator spends about ten hours. Ms. Delaney said for the twenty hours worked on Recreation, she would stay after hours for her work.

Mayor Reese was advised that City children would have the first option to participate in the program. Councilperson Megginson stated that every year we go through the same thing bringing in new people.

President Ratchford felt Council needed to make a decision on this item as the County needed to know if the City wanted them to take over the program.

President Ratchford was in agreement with the County running the program and wanted to ask each Councilperson what they thought. Councilperson Petty said she had a question and asked how the City children would be given first choice. Councilperson Cochran said we have the list from last year.

Mrs. Petty felt the decision was already made and she was not voting. Councilperson Cochran said he was in favor. Councilperson Megginson agreed to New Castle County taking on the Recreation program and Councilperson Vannucci agreed with Mr. Megginson.

**Executive Session to discuss FOP contract negotiations.**

President Ratchford asked for a motion to end the meeting and adjourn to executive session to discuss FOP contract negotiations. Councilperson Megginson motioned and Councilperson Vannucci seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted

Sally Denton