

**City Council Special Meeting
201 Delaware Street, New Castle
Thursday, September 4, 2014
10:00 a.m.**

President Ratchford called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Roll call followed.

Councilperson Megginson
Councilperson Cochran
Council President Ratchford
Councilperson Petty
Councilperson Vannucci

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator
Donald Reese, Mayor
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
James Nolan of Management Consultant Services

Council President Ratchford called for a motion to consider Resolution No. 2014-45, a Motion was made by Councilperson Petty and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci. President Ratchford asked for a background on these vehicles from the City Administrator.

City Administrator William Barthel stated the 2001 Buick Lesabre that was seized as a result of a criminal drug investigation, the other is a 2003 Dodge Stratus which is currently owned by the City and is no longer needed, and can be sold as part of the City's fleet improvement.

Mayor Reese asked how the vehicles would be sold, would bids be submitted or would they be sold through an ad or auction.

Mr. Barthel stated that the City intends to advertise the vehicles and sell them in this manor, if that is not successful the City can send them to an auction. Mr. Barthel added that there is the possibility that the Chief of Police might want to keep the Lesabre for Code Enforcement to use, as the vehicle that is presently being used by Code Enforcement might be better suited to a K-9 unit that is being considered by the City Police Department.

Resolution No. 2014-45 was read by Council President Ratchford. On a vote called by the Council President, Resolution No. 2014-45 passed unanimously.

Council President Ratchford called for a motion to consider Resolution No. 2014-46, approving the sale of City owned surplus property located at 907 Clayton Street for 19,000.00. A Motion was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci. The Council President read the resolution, and then asked for an update on this property from the City Administrator.

City Administrator William Barthel stated that 907 Clayton Street is a property that was offered to the City by Wells Fargo Bank. The City initially declined the offer, ultimately Wells Fargo offered the City the property and \$25,000.00. The City accepted this offer.

The Property was offered to the Trustees of the New Castle Common, and MSC, as stated in the City Code. The property was appraised at a value of \$18,000.00. The City received a cash offer of \$19,000.00, with \$1,000.00 deposit. A contract of sale was signed contingent on City Council's approval.

Since that time there have been additional offers on the property. One of these offers is for \$30,000.00 with \$5,000.00 deposit and the property closing within 10 days of Council Approval.

The City Administrator explained that if Council decides to reject the offer on the table another meeting would be called in 7 days to vote on one of the other offers. The meeting could not take place earlier than 7 days from this date, in accordance with FOIA laws.

Council President Ratchford commended the City Administrator for bringing the City to a position where it will receive \$55,000.00 for this property from bank and the buyer. In addition, once sold it will return to the tax base.

Councilperson Cochran asked if the offer was submitted with the timeframe.

Mr. Barthel said there was no timeframe stated, the interested parties knew that the final offers had to be presented before the Council meeting.

Council President Ratchford stated that if Council voted to reject Resolution No. 2014-46, which would in effect deny the \$19,000.00 offer, that would leave the City open to accept a higher offer.

Council President Ratchford called for a vote; Resolution No. 2014-46 was unanimously denied.

City Treasurer Janet Carlin asked if the party who made the original offer could come back with another offer. President Ratchford stated that yes; anyone could still make an offer on the property before the next meeting.

Council President Ratchford introduced James Nolan of Management Consultant Services, Inc. President Ratchford stated that City Council had been working with Mr. Nolan through the hiring of the new Chief of Police and an evaluation of Police Department policies, procedures and staffing.

Mr. Nolan stated that while there are opinions in this report, his presentation is based on quantifiable analysis. He gathers statistics in each area and uses those statistics for the analysis. Mr. Nolan feels that this method backs up any findings with numbers, statistics and events.

Mr. Nolan stated that his initial perception of the department was that the New Castle Police Department appeared to be well funded, with excellent salaries and benefits for the officers, a

new police facility and a fine reputation within the community. There also existed internal strife within the ranks of the department.

Mr. Nolan stated that he interviewed the officers, the Mayor and Council Members, and City residents regarding various aspects of Department operations.

Mr. Nolan presented his report to Council, discussion followed.

Council President Ratchford summarized, the report shows the City Police Department has a lot of positives; it is doing a good job for the citizens. There are some areas that need improvement, and that was the reason for this study.

Mr. Nolan added that he felt the City of New Castle has one of the finer departments in the State of Delaware.

The motion to adjourn into executive Session was made by Councilperson Cochran, seconded by Councilperson Petty and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Burgmuller
City Council Secretary