

**City of New Castle Delaware
Regular Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday, September 9, 2014, 7 p.m.**

Call to order: 7:00 pm

Roll Call:

Councilperson Megginson
Councilperson Cochran
Council President Ratchford
Councilperson Vannucci

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator
Donald Reese, Mayor
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official & Fire Marshall
Daniel Tjaden, Chief of Police

Approval of Minutes by Date: 8/12/14 Regular Monthly Meeting; 8/19/14 Public Workshop
Councilperson Vannucci motioned and Councilperson Megginson seconded approval of the minutes without changes. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Carlin reported on the balances of the city's accounts as of August 31, 2014. The total cash on hand in all accounts is \$3,921,646.11.

Councilperson Cochran motioned to accept the report and Councilperson Vannucci seconded. The council unanimously accepted the report.

Report of the City Administrator

City Administrator Barthel reported that a train stopped on the tracks within the city limits blocking several roads in early August. The response from the railroad to the city's request for information regarding the cause was that the incident was only a delay with no related accident or damage and that no explanation or reason would be given. The City police and Fire Company responded to the incident.

On December 13th the New Castle Historical Society will present A Dickens Christmas. They will be requesting street closures to accommodate the event.

Approval of Staff Reports

Police Chief Tjaden reported that the train that stopped in the City referred to earlier by Mr. Barthel was supposed to stop in the train yard due to construction farther down the tracks. The conductor failed to stop in the train yard as requested resulting in an investigation by officials that extended the length of the stop. There was no derailment, leakage or accident.

As a result of the incident, the Police Chief and City Administrator met with Dave Carpenter, the State Coordinator from DEMA and asked the National Guard to participate. They looked at potential evacuation plans by sea and air in case the city roads are blocked. Many good ideas and plans resulted from the meeting. The group will meet again to further consider needed plans and responses to potential incidents.

Chief Tjaden reported that a couple more heroin arrests have made by New Castle City Police. One was at Airport Plaza and another resulted from a stop at a DUI Checkpoint. The good news is that citizens are starting to trust the police to call with tips.

The police will sponsor a drug take back event at BJ's from 10 am to 2 pm on October 25th.

Grant Review

Councilperson Cochran reviewed the grant receipts for August 2014.

Council Communications

Councilperson Cochran announced that the planning for River Towns Ride and Festival on October 4th is coming along well. They are still looking for volunteers. There will be many events in both towns.

Councilperson Cochran reported that road paving in the areas of South and Washington Streets is complete and cleanup is underway. Signs are being installed and are being reviewed.

Councilperson Megginson reported that the Broad Dike was finished on Friday and is ready for inspection. All dikes are 99% complete.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)

Rick Pennell of 28 The Strand asked what was the elapsed time from the train incident to notification of the New Castle Police? Chief Tjaden responded that they were notified within seconds. The elapsed time that the train blocked access to city roads was approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Business from the Mayor

The White House is sponsoring a phone round robin to discuss health, education and public safety.

Former City Councilperson John Gaworski is leading the observance of Patriotism Week by the Elks Club.

Old Business

None

New Business

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution 2014-47, in recognition of The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Newark Lodge #2281 observance of Patriotism Week.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-47 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-47 passed unanimously.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-48, regarding request from Board of Election to change poll hours.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-48 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

The President recognized Election Commission Chair, Marianne Caven and thanked her for her efforts on behalf of the city residents.

Resolution No. 2014-48 passed unanimously.

FEMA Floodplain Presentation and Discussion

City Building Official Jeff Bergstrom introduced Greg Williams from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC).

All towns including New Castle participating in the federal flood insurance program must pass a new ordinance as a result of FEMA's new coastal study. New Castle is one of the first cities to prepare the new required ordinance.

Council President Ratchford asked about any impact on the city's flood insurance rates? Mr. Williams responded that the maps only impact new construction and new insurance policies. The new ordinance must be passed to keep the current discounts.

City Building Official Bergstrom served on a state-wide advisory committee created by the legislature and helped to devise the new recommendations to mitigate funding.

On the new FEMA maps, there is "Velocity Zone" which indicates areas impacted as a result of wave action. It is a very small strip of land impacted by 3 feet of waves. It is considered an additional risk area, but is not regulated.

The new FEMA flood plain map is published but is not in effect. A paper copy of the map is available in the City office and can be viewed by contacting Mr. Bergstrom. The New Castle Weekly will cover the issue to help inform the residents. Information can be found at the FEMA web site, www.maps.riskmap3.com which will be posted on the City web site.

Dan Bungy of East 4th Street received a notice from FEMA regarding their flood insurance and is unclear of the meaning. Mr. Bergstrom invited Mr. Bungy to come to the City office to look at the maps and discuss the FEMA notice.

Mr. Williams commented that the holder of the mortgage requires flood insurance for houses in the flood plain. If there is no mortgage, there is no requirement for flood insurance. It is advantageous to get flood insurance based on current ratings before the new map goes into effect early next year.

The City wants all residents to be informed and aware of the risks and options for insurance.

Marianne Caven of West 3rd Street commended Mr. Bergstrom for his assistance to residents and potential home buyers regarding the regulations and flood insurance.

First reading of Ordinance 499 FEMA Floodplain Ordinance to revise and restate Chapter 130 of the City Code.

The Motion to consider Ordinance 499 with first reading was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

Council President Ratchford, City Administrator Barthel and City Solicitor Losco took turns reading the 31 page Ordinance.

Discussion and Decision on Curb painting on 4th Street across from the Goodwill Fire Department and on South Street next to Tennis Courts.

Council President Ratchford asked for comments.

Councilperson Megginson explained that the Goodwill Fire Department requested more space for the hook and ladder truck to exit their property.

Mayor Reese advised that stop signs have been added at 4th and South Streets.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-49, a Resolution to accept an offer to buy surplus City property at 708 Clark Street and 601 Center Street.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-49 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

The City Administrator received one written offer for both properties from one person which is the basis for the resolution. Since then another offer was made for a lower price for the Clark Street property and today another offer was made for a higher price for 601 Center Street. The City Administrator seeks the ability to negotiate a sales at a price no lower than the prices from the first offer.

Resolution No. 2014-49 passed unanimously.

Councilperson Vannucci commended Mr. Barthel's efforts to sell surplus city properties.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-50, Appointment of committee to review HAC guidelines, processes and procedures.

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-50 was made by Councilperson Cochran and seconded by Councilperson Megginson.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-50 passed unanimously.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2014-51, a Resolution Establishing a Policy for the Naming of Public Buildings

The Motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-51 was made by Councilperson Vannucci and seconded by Councilperson Cochran.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Resolution No. 2014-51 passed unanimously.

Comments from the floor

Martin Wright, West 7th Street: Announced his proposal regarding the location of Visitor Center currently proposed to be in the Sheriff's House with the National Park Service office. The proposal has been presented to the Trustees of the Common. Mr. Wright does not believe using the Sheriff's House as an office and visitor center is appropriate. He proposes that the vacant B&E home center on South Street be used for the visitor center. Benefits are the reduction of vehicle traffic on Delaware Street and the availability of parking. The Sheriff's office is appropriate as an administrative office for the National Park Service. Locating the Visitor Center on South Street brings attention to an area that the city has identified for development.

Dominic Hanna, President of New Castle Jaycees: Announced that the New Castle Jaycees will be awarded the Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award for an organization providing community service. Mr. Hanna thanked the City Administrator for his letter of recommendation and asked that a representative of the City attend the award presentation. President Ratchford acknowledged the contributions of the New Castle Jaycees to the City of New Castle.

The motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Cochran, seconded by Councilperson Megginson and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Council met in Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel
Clerk of the City of New Castle