

MAYOR & COUNCIL
December 5, 2022
MEETING HELD IN-PERSON AND VIA TELECONFERENCE

Mayor Bauer called the regular scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council of Delmar, Delaware to order at 7:00 P.M. This meeting is available to the public, in person with limited seating and via teleconference. In attendance were Vice Mayor Odell Jones, Council Members Morris, and McClure, Town Manager Fleetwood, Police Chief Barkley, Clerk of Council Vondell Spencer and CDC Hardin. Guests: Vince Luca, Mike Jones and Nicole Riddick and Dhara Nakrani. Absent: Council Member Kemp.

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bauer called the meeting to order and Chief Ivan Barkley led the pledge of allegiance. A roll call was performed to confirm there was a quorum. A quorum was established.

Mayor Bauer commented our thoughts and prayers go out to the congregation of the First Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ on N. Second Street that received heavy damage from a fire yesterday morning. Thankfully no injuries were reported.

He expressed condolences from the Council and Town employees to Town Mgr. Fleetwood and his family on the passing of his younger brother Steve Fleetwood on Thanksgiving Day. He said to Town Mgr. Fleetwood we are truly sorry for your loss.

Mayor Bauer congratulated the Delmar ladies field hockey team for winning their seventh straight DE State Title and keeping the winning streak alive. He said the ladies will be honored in the near future by the Town.

He commented although the weather didn't cooperate for the tree lighting the festivities went well at St. Stephens Church.

Mayor Bauer further commented unfortunately this past weekend the parade had to be moved to December 17th starting at 2:00 p.m. kicking off from Pennsylvania Avenue.

He announced there have been a couple of meetings to acquire funding from different government agencies. This past Friday our United States Senator, Tom Carper, accepted his invitation to meet with himself, Town Engineer, Joshua Taylor and Town Mgr. Jeff Fleetwood to discuss acquiring federal funds to repair the wastewater lines in the Town, which are breaking down from decades of use. At the meeting we were also able to get contact information for our counterparts on the MD side to team up and have the wastewater pipes replaced in the ground to reduce the load on the WWTP. The plant is in fine shape but the pipes in the ground need to be replaced.

Lastly, Mayor Bauer wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to one and all.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Bauer called for a motion to approve November 7, 2022 meeting minutes with a correction to page 6, last name of Council Member Morris's last name. A motion seconded (Jones/McClure) and carried with a roll call vote of 4 Ayes and 1 Absent (Kemp).

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business –

Sussex County Community Housing, Mike Jones, presented the CDBG Grant Funding Program (Community Development Block Grant). He explained this grant applies and is administered to towns, cities and the county. The funding comes from HUD that is allotted through the DE State Housing Authority down through Sussex and Kent County. The funds are granted on a competitive basis.

He further explained the purpose of this funding is to allow low to moderate income residents for housing rehab. A requirement for the CDBG Program is to hold a public hearing which is what is taking place this evening and it gives an opportunity to explain the program and to give any updates. Also, to answer any questions that the Mayor or Council may have and the citizens to have a chance to have an input in the application process.

Mr. Jones discussed the requirements for the program. One of the requirements is the citizen must be a homeowner and live within the home, taxes have to be current (county and town), up-to-date homeowners' insurance, 1 person can make up to \$47,000.00 and it goes up to \$6,700.00 per person after that, 2 people can make up to \$53,800.00, 4 people can make up to \$67,000.00 and still be eligible for the program.

He further discussed there has to be a lien put on the property for the work that they do. The way HUD has set the lien up for the program, if they spend \$15,000.00 or less on the citizens home it's a five-year lien, noninterest bearing lien. The entire purpose is to keep citizens comfortable in their home. If the citizen is granted the loan, repairs are made and they sell the home they will have to repay the money. If the program spends over \$15,000.00 on the citizens home, then it will be a ten-year, noninterest bearing lien.

Mr. Jones said every month a percentage comes off of that amount, whatever that amount is and either five or ten years the amount goes away. CDC Hardin added if a citizen is 2 years into a 5-year lien then the prorated they pay is those last 3 years. Mr. Jones responded exactly.

He further said in the past seven years Delmar, DE has received \$144,000.00 from the CDBG Program which has helped 10 to 12 households. That is not from County Council. Also, they

receive County Council funding every year. They have done a lot with that money when Delmar did not receive any funds, handicapped ramps, furnaces, etc. Currently what could be a problem is they only have four people on their waiting list and four people is the minimum which makes it tough because it is a competitive basis, who gets the money; they are trying to get the money for Delmar.

Mr. Jones mentioned he left some applications with Town Mgr. Fleetwood. He asked for anybody that knows someone that could benefit from their program, please give them a form and Sussex County will handle the rest, as long as he had the names of the applicant. Mayor Bauer asked Mr. Jones was that four people from just the Town of Delmar? Mr. Jones answered yes. A conversation ensued.

Mr. Jones offered his phone number (302) 855-7777 and said any questions, concerns or someone that would like their help, please give their office a call. Mayor Bauer asked Mr. Jones what the deadline was Mr. Jones answered February 1st. CDC Hardin asked Mr. Jones if the four applicants have already been evaluated for income eligibility? Mr. Jones answered no. CDC Hardin further asked if any of those applicants come off the list then that lessens the number? Mr. Jones further answered correct, that's why we want to get ahead of it now. A conversation ensued.

Mayor Bauer asked Mr. Jones if Habitat for Humanity was involved at all? Mr. Jones answered no because the CDBG Program uses HUD money and Habitat for Humanity uses state money.

Council Member Morris asked Mr. Jones for clarification on the different amounts qualified citizens would receive from the program and if he makes the assessments in the citizens house as far as what work needs to be done. Mr. Morris made those clarifications for her. He explained he makes the assessments with the homeowner present, with their permission and doing the walk through of the house with him. As far as the improvements to the houses mostly what they do is doors, windows, roofs, electric, plumbing, floors, electric, etc.

Mayor Bauer commented \$15,000.00 is not much. Mr. Jones responded that is the minimum amount. CDC Hardin asked what the maximum amount was on this coming round? Mr. Jones answered if the citizen does not have lead in the home they can go up to \$35,000.00, if the home has lead it goes up to \$25,000.00.

Mr. Jones said he left literature with Town Mgr. Fleetwood to be signed and CDC Hardin added he had applications as well.

Commissioner Shaffer asked Mr. Jones what he had for a social media campaign because social media is so popular it would be easier? Mr. Jones answered we would be glad to put it on our Facebook page. A conversation ensued.

The swearing in of Keith Abbott for Parks and Recreations was tabled because Mr. Abbott was not present at the meeting.

Student Advisory-

Dhara Nakrani reported: 1.) Next week is the last week of school. The holiday break starts December 17th. School will begin January 3rd. 2.) December 16th progress reports are sent out. 3.) December 17th is the Christmas parade. The set-up starts at 12:30 p.m. and the parade starts at 2:00 p.m. Town Mgr. Fleetwood complemented Ms. Nakrani on her monthly reporting.

Committee Reports:

Police Chief's Report

Chief Barkley informed the Mayor and Council if they have a particular question about something on the statistical report to send him an email, call him or stop by and see him. He said he will make sure he answered their questions or he will gather the information and bring it with him.

Chief Ivan Barkley reported: 1.) For the month of November there has not been any significant changes to personnel other than the hiring of two individuals who will go in the next police academy, they are currently working at PD. The next academy starts in January. 2.) There are two recruits that will be graduating on Thursday, December 15th at 11:00 a.m. at the Ocean City Convention Center and everyone is welcome to attend. 3.) Starting closer to the end of January PD will begin processing new applicants for the one opening that PD has at this time. Currently, PD has 16 applicants in the pool for the police officer position. PD has three PCO applicants which have been interviewed. Tomorrow PD will interview an additional three. From that pool of six PD will start going through and determining who the successful applicant maybe. Town Mgr. Fleetwood added it is for a full-time dispatcher. Mayor Bauer asked Chief Barkley what shift this PCO (Dispatcher) would be hired for? Chief Barkley answered 2nd shift. Keep in mind initially that individual will have to work alongside PCO, Ed Ferro III, for a while to train even if they have some experience with this job because this job comes with learning curves. If the individual is from MD, they have to learn the DE side and vice versa, the two sides are vastly different. Mayor Bauer further asked Chief Barkley if he had any idea/date when the new PCO would be hired? Chief Barkley further answered he would like to have them selected by the end of this year so PD will know who they are dealing with hopefully with the next few weeks. He said fortunately enough when PD looks at their Communications Officer (PCO/Dispatcher) that isn't as cumbersome as it is when we talk about police officers. It takes a much longer time. 4.) The new crossing-guard is doing an absolutely bang-up job. There is still a crossing-guard position open, it's been open for years. It is very difficult to recruit folks that want to do that. Mayor Bauer asked Chief Barkley is the crossing guard needed at the high school or elementary school? Chief Barkley answered it's still at the high school. The elementary school, PD are going to have to sit down and figure out because there is no crosswalk, no sidewalks and the area there is in the county. So, PD has to look at how they set that up. 5.) A few requests from citizens to address groups about Christmas safety, Christmas shopping safety, scams, etc. have been made. PD will address those as best as they can. Mayor Bauer asked Chief Barkley was PD still taking applications for ride-a-longs? Chief Barkley answered they take the applications for ride-a-longs. PD also partners with the schools: Wicomico County, Parkside High School, has a Criminal Justice Program and students are allowed to intern with Delmar PD to meet the requirements of that program.

PD also allows interns from Wor-Wic Community College Criminal Justice Program to intern with them as well. Vice Mayor Jones asked the progress with the DE side body cameras with communicating with each other? Chief Barkley answered he received an email from them today. He discussed the email he received today in reference to the body cameras in its entirety. He further answered they have not informed PD when the body cameras are coming or how they are coming just that they are still in the process.

Chief Barkley mentioned a note that is on the end of the email that read they are still working on the backend requirements, please bare with us. This is a huge undertaking and they will keep PD updated. Robert Hudson, DE Department of Safety and Homeland Security is heading up this project.

Council Member Morris asked for clarity from Chief Barkley about how he was going to give out information about Christmas Safety involving holiday shopping and scams. Chief Barkley answered in some cases he would go out to the site and talk to a group of individuals. Usually there are older citizens who are not spending a lot of time on social media looking at stuff like that. The things they want to know is what can they do to keep themselves safe. She further asked are they inviting him to do so. Chief Barkley answered yes and he is taking that on himself.

Code Enforcement Officer Report – The report is included in the mail packet.

Mayor Bauer commented Starbucks is moving along slowly. Town Mgr. Fleetwood agreed. CDC Hardin added he has done the footer foundation for the inspection. He further added he noticed there has not been much activity over the last week. There was some concern that was clarified about the entrances onto the highway by DelDot. DelDot did confirm that they have approved egress and ingress onto Rt.13.

CDC Hardin stated that is not a concern anymore it is at the discretion of the contractor. He is aware it is a different contractor doing the structural building itself verses the masonry contractor that did the foundation. They will call him for the next inspection once they get the frame up.

Town Mgr. Fleetwood added a lot of that building is prefab so it will go quick. He further added he has had conversations with the State Line Plaza Shopping Center owner and he has agreed with this process. There is going to be a restriping of the parking lot. Right now, especially on the egress going out to State St. there is a wide area between the bank and the liquor store that is just a big area of pavement with no lines, an accident waiting to happen. Council Member Morris asked Town Mgr. Fleetwood if he could get them to take the bushes out by the stop sign? Town Mgr. Fleetwood agreed and answered we cut that way back but that is next on the list.

CDC Hardin added the structure is a national design, so it's dictated by Starbuck's corporate. The interesting part is going to be the ins and outs of the delivery trucks. It was a question before but it got approved. A conversation ensued.

Mayor Bauer mentioned a couple weeks ago they met with Sussex County administrators about economic development which went pretty well, in his opinion.

Public Works – The report is included in the mail packet.

Mayor Bauer thanked WTP Superintendent, Sophia Oberton. He mentioned she is still teaching at Delmar High School for the Water Operator Pre-Apprenticeship Program. He said we appreciate her effort.

Utility Commission Report –

Town Mgr. Fleetwood reported: 1.) WTP Superintendent, Sophia Oberton, Office Manager, Kimberly Layton, Town Engineer, Joshua Taylor and himself met today to discuss the EPA Lead and Copper Rule mandate. The Town has until October 2024 to identify every property in Town that has potential lead piping and copper piping. Seventy percent of the homes have already been identified as not having lead and copper. There is a property owner dilemma which is residents unaware if they have lead and copper pipes but we still have to make the attempt to evaluate the residents piping. Town Mgr. Fleetwood explained the attempts/steps that the Town will have to make. From Senator Carper's visit to Town Hall there is money out there that DBf is making applications for. 2.) York St. had an 8-inch watermain valve replaced last week. 3.) MD Rural Water Association and the WTP are working on chlorine valves this week. 4.) A.C. Schultes will be here this week for well #3B to do a wellness inspection which is located at the PW yard on York St. After the inspection they will give us recommendations on what we need to do. Council Member Morris asked is this an annual inspection? Town Mgr. Fleetwood answered every two years. 5.) Parts for the PAC tower at the WTP will get maintenance we are just waiting on parts. The parts should arrive soon. The interior will be done first then the exterior. 6.) CES has started the skimming process for the six lift stations in Town following the Thanksgiving Holiday due to about 3 inches of grease that is not liquified.

Planning & Zoning

None.

Town Manager's Report

Town Mgr. Fleetwood publicly thanked the Mayor and Council for the employee holiday luncheon at Camelot Hall which was well received by the employees. The letter that the two mayors wrote went a long way with the employees and he has heard a lot of good comments along with the other gifts with the letter. He said, in his opinion, Mayor Bauer and Mayor Jorden taking the time crafting, penning that letter goes along way with the employee group.

CDC Hardin mentioned Code Enforcement previously received an automatic report from the FD when a fire would happen because eventually, they would be involved in doing the repairs and so forth which they are not receiving now. He further mentioned it would be helpful if they could start receiving them again. Sometimes the property owners do not contact them for a building permit, they just start building.

Council Comments

Vice Mayor Jones commented it was very positive about the Christmas dinner. He said he missed it because he was cooking dinner for his own class for kids who do not get to enjoy that. He further commented the tree lighting ceremony went well and he enjoyed attending it.

He further commented he is looking forward to welcoming our 7-time State Field Hockey Champions to Town Hall. They have 115-0 game winning streak. Town Mgr. Fleetwood added if we do it on January 9th that is a MD meeting and he will extend the invite to the Mayor and Council for the plaque.

Vice Mayor Jones mentioned he had the pleasure of visiting Santa at the guard shed and has heard nothing but positives from the community about this project.

Council Member McClure commented he attended the November Chamber of Commerce Meeting. The main thing discussed was the parade which is December 17th. Also, January 31st will be the deadline to nominate citizen on the year and the banquet will be in March.

Council Member Morris commented she had the opportunity to visit Santa and Mrs. Claus. She said if anyone hasn't been out there the next two weekends they should attend. She described the shack that they are in. Chief Finance Officer, Heather Chandler's spouse put a new cedar shake roof on the shack and PW Superintendent, Robert Buck put in some landscapes and mulch. She further said it is really nice, 3 C's Church painted the shack.

Council Member Morris further commented she had an opportunity to visit the Railroad Club, it's fascinating and they also do a scavenger hunt in which her whole family got involved and they all enjoyed it. The youth group from the church runs the lunch counter and they serve hotdogs, soup, etc.

Council Member Morris mentioned she had a resident on Grove St. mention to her that speeding and running the stop sign on Eighth St. and Grove St. is still a problem. The resident made a suggestion that is worth exploring, painting stop on the road. Council Member Morris suggested painting slow down, arrows, etc. maybe a reminder, a big stop sign in the road? Chief Barkley responded he can sit with Mr. Buck and see what is legal for them to do. The residents have also noticed that people are going the wrong way on the last portion of Eight St. where you hit State St. A conversation ensued.

Public Comments: -

1. Vince Luca suggested a blinking light to Council Member Morris.
2. Vince Luca commented the Pledge of Allegiance has been said incorrectly and suggested how it should be said.
3. CDC Hardin shared the Town has a food pantry that was started just before Thanksgiving,

12 North Pennsylvania Avenue. He has not had an opportunity to visit it but he will be checking it out. They got a permit from the Health Department to serve meals at Thanksgiving and he said he thought they are planning to do so for Christmas. It is a 501 (c) (3) organization, they are working in conjunction with the Masons. Council Member Morris added Renovate Church also has a food pantry on Monday nights from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and with other things besides food, such as, toiletries and household items. CDC Hardin said he was going to contact the gentleman that heads the food pantry on Pennsylvania Avenue to see if we can add it to the Town's website.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made/seconded (Jones/Morris) and carried by roll call vote of 5 Ayes.

Submitted by:

Clerk of Council