

City of New Castle Delaware
Regular City Council Meeting at Town Hall
201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday, January 14, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to order 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Councilperson Suzanne M. Souder
Councilperson Russell P. Smith
Council President Linda Ratchford
Councilperson Michael M. Platt
Councilperson Valarie W. Leary

Also present:

Mayor Michael J. Quaranta
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
William Barthel, City Administrator
Richard McCabe, Chief of Police
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor

Vincent Barbone, of Whisman Giordano & Associates, presented the 2019 Audit Review (compared to 2018). A copy of the report was provided to Council. The presentation included the following highlights:

- “Unmodified opinions” were issued at all report levels.
- Total assets from 2018 went from \$5.9 million to \$5.7 million (rounded to \$5.8 million), with a drop of approximately \$140,000. The drop was in cash; the reason being due to some major capital projects.
- Total long-term assets increased from \$31.9 million to \$32.8 million.
- Total liabilities increased from \$2.9 million to \$3.3 million.
- In summary, the report indicates that the city is fiscally responsible, demonstrating good custodial stewardship, and is considered to be “healthy but not wealthy.”

After a motion and second, the Council President read Resolution 2020-01, A Resolution to approve the FY 2019 City Audit, as presented by City Auditor (Council President Ratchford – posted 01/07/2020) into the record. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

The unaudited Treasurer's report was presented by Janet Carlin, City Treasurer; as of December 31, 2019, reported \$4,438,572.30 in unrestricted finds, and \$2,546,674.68 in restricted funds, for a total of total cash in accounts \$6,895,246.98.

At 50% of the year, the city is at 69% of projected revenue, and has spent 51%.

After a motion and second, the unaudited Treasurer's report as of December 31, 2019 was approved unanimously.

Reports from the City Administrator & Staff

The City Administrator reported:

- Regarding the Delaware Street project, the work starting at the wharf will begin on Monday, January 20. This phase will take about six weeks. Delmarva is expected to begin their part of the project end of January/early February. Final word from MSC is expected on Thursday or Friday, January 16 or 17, as to whether utilities will be put underground.
- Regarding the Delaware Street traffic light, DelDOT has pushed this back to late summer or early fall.
- Regarding the railroad crossing safety improvement project, DelDOT has pushed this project back to July of 2021.

The Police Chief reviewed the report provided to Council, including the following items:

- 2019 criminal arrests were at 866, up from 658. Traffic arrests increased from 2,200 to just over 3,100. Crime reports increased from 1,679 to 1,803.
- Part One crimes have decreased by approximately 20. Part Two crimes have increased, as well as Part Three. The Chief does not consider the increases alarming.

Council Communications

Councilperson Smith thanked MSC for their partnership with the city, and for their assistance to the city with the holiday lights.

Mr. Smith also advised that a letter had been sent to the Postal Service, requesting a new zip code for the city of New Castle, as part of an effort to not have crime reports within the current zip code be attributed to the city of New Castle, when they occur outside of the city. The USPS has 60 days to respond. Other efforts include working with legislators, Police Departments and the media.

Business from the Mayor

The Mayor's comments included the following:

- He expressed appreciation for the city's new calendar for 2020.
- He requested that the media report neighborhood designations when reporting crime locations, as opposed to "New Castle."
- He encouraged all who would like to see MSC install more utilities underground to reach out to the MSC Commissioners.
- He would like the City of New Castle to request a municipal credit rating.

- He expressed appreciation to the Trust for their assistance and support related to the Delaware Street project.
- He requested that more citizens open their homes as part of the home tour event portion of the Spirit of Christmas.
- He reminded residents to clear sidewalks in front of houses, of ice and snow.
- He would like to see the city address sidewalk repair and replacement needs.
- He recognized the recent passing of William “Erve” Thatcher, Jr.

Business from the Council President

The Council President and the City Administrator had attended a meeting with Gail Seitz, related to a resolution that had been passed previously, to look at the corridors going through New Castle. WILMAPCO recommends that the city update the Transportation Plan from 1999. The cost to the city will be discussed at the financial meeting on January 30th.

The Council President and Councilperson Smith had met with DelDOT’s Byways section. They will be installing some new Byway signage, as well as making some changes to existing signage.

The Council President expressed agreement with the Mayor, related to contacting MSC about underground utilities.

The Council has a reappointment to MSC that is due by March. The current Council appointment is Daniel Knox.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only)

No items.

Old Business

After a motion and second, the second reading of Ordinance No. 524, An Ordinance to amend Section 230-50 A (1) (c) of the Code of the City of New Castle to require Council Confirmation of Mayoral Appointments to the Historic Area Commission (Councilperson Leary – posted 12/23/2019) was passed.

Ordinance 524 was passed by a vote of four to one (Councilperson Platt voting no).

New Business

The City Solicitor provided a brief explanation of the purpose of Ordinance 525, An Ordinance to Amend Zoning Code §230.38 to Require Newly Installed Telephone, Electric and Transmission Lines to be Placed below Ground (Council President Ratchford – posted 12/23/2019).

After a motion and second, the Council President read Ordinance 525 into the record.

After a motion and second, the Council President read Resolution 2020-02, A Resolution to Approve the Sale of 615 Clymer Property (Council President Ratchford – posted 01/07/2020) into the record.

The City Administrator and the City Solicitor provided some background information on Resolution 2020-02.

Resolution 2020-02 was passed unanimously.

The City Solicitor provided background information on Resolution 2020-03, A Resolution to Authorize Execution of an Easement Agreement with the Trustees of the New Castle Common to Facilitate the Construction and Maintenance of the Proposed Dobbinsville fishing pier (Council President Ratchford – posted 01/07/2020).

After a motion and second, the Council President read Resolution 2020-03 into the record.

After discussion, Resolution 2020-03 was passed unanimously.

Public Comments

No items.

After a motion and second, the meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 8: 29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Whitaker, Clerk of the City of New Castle

Next Regular Meeting Date: February 11, 2020

Posted: 12/23/2019

Final: 01/07/2020