

CITY OF MILFORD
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
August 12, 2024

The City Council of the City of Milford met in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers in Regular Session on Monday, August 12, 2024.

PRESIDING: Mayor F. Todd Culotta

IN ATTENDANCE: Councilmembers Daniel Marabello, Nadia Zychal, Lori Connor, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson and Jason James Sr.

ABSENT: Councilmember Madula Kalesis

STAFF: City Manager Mark Whitfield, Police Chief Cecilia Ashe, and Interim City Clerk Katrina White

COUNSEL: Solicitor David Rutt, Esquire

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Public Comment Period commenced at 6:00 p.m. after which Solicitor Rutt read the public comment rules into record.

Neyda Albarran, The Culture Club PR, 216 NW Front Street Milford, DE 19963, was present and expressed her gratitude to the Parks and Recreation Department for allowing a StoryWalk to be installed in downtown Milford. She explained that it is a book that will be displayed on several plaques so that children and families can walk along the Riverwalk and enjoy a book, translated in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole. The book is about celebrating community and those who work hard at making the community the best it can be. She further explained that The Culture Club PR is a multicultural club for kids that meets in Milford, Seaford and Georgetown that teaches kids about different cultures in hope of promoting peace, understanding and celebration of diversity. There will be a Ribbon Cutting and Unveiling of the StoryWalk event on Friday, September 6, 2024 at 6:00 pm starting at the North Pole Creamery and ending at the Memorial Park Playground.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Culotta called the regular meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Roll Call showed that there were eight members present.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

The invocation was given by Councilmember Wilson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Councilmember Wilson made the motion to approve the July 22, 2024 Council meeting minutes and July 22, 2024 Finance & Audit Committee meeting minutes. Councilmember Connor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

RECOGNITION

Introduction New City Employees:

Brian Jester, Building Operations & Refuse Supervisor, introduced new Public Works intern, Mason Watkins who began his two-year internship on July 16, 2024 and will be rotating through several departments, including Solid Works, Streets, Parks & Recreation and Water & Sewer.

City Engineer James Puddicombe introduced new University of Delaware summer intern, Kylie Short who is an environmental engineer. She will be working in the Engineering Department.

IT Director Bill Pettigrew introduced new IT intern, Nicolas Jones, who has brought specific IT skills to the Milford IT team such as Python Programming and knowledge of Tableau. He has been working with the recording of meetings and instrumental in the kickoff of the new document management software. Through the internship program he will receive a bachelor's degree with Wilmington College in Computer Science.

Special Recognition:

Finance Director Lou Vitola recognized Lucas David, Customer Service Cash Operations Clerk I, for completing the requirements of Wilmington University to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting with a major in finance through the city's Tuition Reimbursement Program.

STAFF REPORTS

All reports were included in the Council packet.

Police Department

Chief Cecilia Ashe deferred to Jenna Haines, Behavioral Health Unit Director, who gave a report on the Behavioral Health Unit activities for the month of July. Chief Ashe commended her on the work she has done and reported that she is being recognized on a national level for the work and commitment that she has put forth in the program.

Councilmember James thanked Ms. Haines for all she has done and for the growth of the department. He also thanked Chief Ashe for elevating and making the department great.

Councilmember Wilson moved to accept the Monthly Police Report. Councilmember James seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

City Clerk

Interim City Clerk Katrina White provided a recap of activities that occurred during the month of July, as well as an update on special events. She gave special thanks to Nicolas Jones who has kicked off the scanning for the new Docuware system.

Councilmember Katrina Wilson gave recognition to Interim City Clerk White for the packets and minutes being done in a way that Council has asked for in the past.

Councilmember James asked for an update on the new Diligent meeting software. Interim City Clerk White stated that the progress is moving forward. Users for the software were being added and she had a meeting the next day, July 23, 2024 with the Diligent representative. Councilmember James thanked her for the seamless transition from having a long-time serving city clerk.

Councilmember Zychal moved to accept the City Clerk Report, seconded by Councilmember Wilson. The motion carried unanimously.

City Manager

City Manager Whitfield highlighted a few of the monthly activities from the report that was included in the packet.

Councilmember Wilson asked if there was a timeline for the construction on Church Street. City Engineer James Puddicombe answered that they are going through the process with the utilities right now. So, it will probably be two or three weeks before they are done with that. Then they are going to come back and mill out then get into the paving. He said it is a pretty large section of road so it's going to be under construction for a few more weeks at least.

Director Brad Dennehy reported that Milford has been voted as having the Best Dog Park in downstate Delaware in Delaware Today magazine.

Councilmember James moved to accept the City Manager's report and his staff reports, seconded by Councilmember Zychal. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS & CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Stewart reported that he had a complaint from resident about the condition of the rental property next door that had trash outside and uncut grass for a long period of time. There was also the complaint of a tree that hangs over onto the resident's property. He stated that he would like to see some assistance for her on these issues.

City Manager Whitfield stated that he thought the proper way to handle this was to take it to the Code Committee because there are some suggestions with regard to rental housing permits. The committee should take a look at what opportunities are there to change the code.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Authorization/ Purchase Replacement Equipment/Public Works/Backhoe-2024 Caterpillar

Public Works Director Willis Shafer reviewed the memo and proposal that was included in the packet. (Pages 46-50) He stated that staff recommended City Council to authorize a purchase order in the amount of \$175,383 to acquire the backhoe through Carter Cat pursuant to the Sourcewell/Delaware State Contract.

Councilmember Samaroo made a motion to authorize a purchase order in the amount of \$175,383 to acquire a backhoe through Carter Cat pursuant to the Sourcewell/Delaware State Contract GSS23750-EQUIPMENT. Councilmember Stewart seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Authorization/Purchase Replacement Vehicle/Public Works/101-E/2024 Ford F150 Lightning Electric Vehicle

Electric Director Tony Chipola reviewed the memo that was included in the packet. (Page 51) He stated that staff recommends City Council to authorize a purchase order to Hertrich Fleet Services, Inc, in accordance with the State of Delaware contract, with funding coming from Electric Operating funds, specifically Capital Vehicle Replacement.

Councilmember Wilson made the motion to accept the recommendation of the staff to purchase the vehicle from Hertrich Fleet Services, Inc, in accordance with the State of Delaware contract, with funding coming from Electric Operating funds, specifically Capital Vehicle Replacement in the amount of \$59,394. Councilmember James seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Authorization/Utility Bill Inserts/Milford Community Parade/Solicitation Flyer

City Manager Whitfield stated that each year the city receives a request from the Milford Community Parade to put an insert for monetary sponsorship into the utility bills. This has been done for a number of years.

Councilmember Zychal made a motion to accept the request for the insert seeking sponsorship to be placed in the utility bills. Councilmember Wilson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction/Ordinance 2024-08

*Application of Ribera Development, LLC on behalf of Westwood Subdivision
for Final Major Subdivision*

*130.5 +/- acres of land located on the north side of Williamsville Road
approximately 2,300 west of the Route 14 intersection*

Comprehensive Plan Designation: Low Density Residential

Zoning District: R-2 (Residential District)

Present use: Vacant Proposed Use: Planned Unit Development

Tax Parcel: MD-16-182.00-01-11.00 thru 21.00

City Manager Whitfield introduced Ordinance 2024-08 which will be reviewed by the Planning Commission on August 20, 2024, after which it will return to Council for a final public hearing and determination at the August 26th meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember James made a motion to go into Executive Session reference the below statutes. Councilmember Samaroo seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §10004(b)(9) Personnel matters in which the names, competency and abilities of individual employees or students are discussed

Mayor Culotta recessed the Council Meeting at 7:33 pm for the purposes as permitted by the Delaware Freedom of Information Act. Council relocated to the Conference Room for the closed session discussion.

Return to Open Session

At 7:46 p.m., Councilmember James moved to return to Open Session. Councilmember Zychal seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Potential Vote-Personnel Matter/City Clerk

Mayor Culotta stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Adjournment

Councilmember Marabello made the motion to adjourn. Councilmember Zychal seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Culotta adjourned the meeting at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katrina L. White, MMC
Interim City Clerk/Recorder