



CITY OF MILFORD
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

April 28, 2025

The City Council of the City of Milford met in the Milford City Hall in Regular Session on Monday, April 28, 2025.

PRESIDING: Mayor F. Todd Culotta

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

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

COUNSEL: Solicitor David Rutt, Esquire

Public Comment

Solicitor Rutt read the public comment rules.

Kathy Stetson, 311 S. Walnut Street, Milford, DE 19963, spoke in favor of the Deep Branch Park project. She highlighted the benefits of parks for citizens of all ages, including beautiful spaces, outdoor gathering, and community building. She noted that the city had already taken significant steps, including purchasing the property, obtaining grant funding, and developing plans that appear beautiful and thoughtfully designed with various recreational opportunities. She encouraged the Council to continue developing the park for the benefit of all Milford residents

She also stated that May 1, 2025, was National Law Day and requested the Milford City Council to adopt a resolution affirming its commitment to the rule of law, a foundational principle of the United States celebrated nationally since 1958. She asked for the resolution to specifically state the city's commitment to due process for all accused individuals and the right to defend oneself in court before incarceration.

Call to Order - Mayor F. Todd Culotta

Mayor Culotta called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Roll Call

There were nine members present.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of the Agenda

Councilmember James made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Samaroo seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

Recognition

Proclamation 2025-06 Professional Municipal Clerks Week

Mayor Culotta read Proclamation 2025-06 for Professional Municipal Clerks Week.

[Proclamation 2025 06 Professional Municipal Clerks Week](#) 

Mayor Culotta acknowledged City Clerk White's coordination, and organization of the recent Special Election.

Public Hearings/Comments/Final Determination ©

Ordinance 2025-07 Personnel/Emergency Conditions

Solicitor Rutt read the public hearing rules into the record.

City Manager Whitfield introduced the purpose of Ordinance 2025 07 - Personnel/Emergency Conditions. He stated that this ordinance is being updated to reflect the city's increased capacity for employees to work from home, a change prompted by past emergency situations where buildings closed. Previously, employees who worked during emergency closures received time and a half. Now, with most employees able to work remotely, the ordinance is being adjusted to allow employees to work from home during such situations. For those unable or unwilling to work from home, the option of using benefit time for a day off will be available.

Human Resources Director Jamesha Williams explained that the proposed work-from-home policy aligns with the personnel manual, which was adopted in April 2018 and is regularly updated to reflect changes in the workforce and policies. This new policy enables remote work capabilities for both essential and non-essential employees. While some essential personnel will still need to report to the office, this policy aims to ensure the continuity of

daily operations for the majority of the workforce, even during weather events or other emergencies.

There were no public comments.

Councilmember Samaroo made the motion to adopt Ordinance 2025-07. Councilmember Wilson seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

[2025 07 Personnel Section 6.08 Emergency Conditions](#) 

Communications & Correspondence

Councilmember Zychal reported that she had a resident who wanted to thank the city for its involvement in the Bug and Bud Festival that went off flawlessly with the inclement weather and appreciated the addition of the city trucks blocking off the areas along with the barriers.

City Clerk White thanked numerous individuals and departments for their crucial assistance in the recent special election/referendum. She thanked the Public Works Department, Charlie Nordberg, Brian Jester for set up, Parks & Recreation for the downtown banner, the IT Department for morning set up, Customer Service, Finance, Milford PD, Milford Library, Milford Chamber (for posting notices), Lauren Swain and Valerie Heritage (for website and online postings), Lou Vitola and Kevin Gaboriault for behind-the-scenes financial work, the Board of Election - Karen Boone, Carlene Wilson, Donna Merchant, and the election day workers, Kayla Boone, Laurie Earhart, William Hughes, Shanika Kirby, Lisa Levis, Sean O'Neill, Tommy Henderson, RJ Skinner, and Deputy City Clerk Milanie Velazquez. She stated that the success of the special election/referendum was a collective effort.

She then read the Special Election Report for April 26, 2025.

The Board of Election for the city of Milford met on Monday, April 28, 2025, to certify the results of the 2025 Milford Water Utility Project Funding Special Election. Upon completion of the audit and certification of machine and absentee votes, cast the Board members hereby certify the following results:

For the proposed borrowing - 135

Against the proposed borrowing - 21.

The total votes: 157

1 undervote and 0 rejected absentee ballots.

Therefore, the proposal is hereby approved by the city of Milford Board Members, Karen Boone, Carlene Wilson, and Donna Merchant.

Councilmember Samaroo reported that she had a resident from the 3rd ward complain about the smell from Seawatch.

City Manager Whitfield reported that the Council on Development Financing with the State approved an additional \$1.4 million in Site Readiness funds for the Milford Corporate Center. This brings the total Site Readiness funding received by the city for this project to \$2.5 million. He acknowledged and thanked Lauren Swain, Rob Pierce, Lou Vitola, and Kevin Gaboriault for their work in preparing and applying to obtain the funding.

Councilmember Wilson reported that they held the first meeting for the annual Juneteenth Celebration, which will take place on June 19, 2025. They are actively planning for what they hope will be a wonderful event, aiming for it to be as good as or even better than the previous year, and they encourage everyone to come out and show their support.

Councilmember Zychal thanked the Carlisle Fire Department for writing a letter emphasizing the importance of public safety regarding water infrastructure and the necessity of passing the recent referendum

City Solicitor Comments

City Solicitor Rutt submitted a letter of resignation. He stated that it has been his pleasure to serve the city council and offered well wishes as they determine Milford's place in the future.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Charter Change Update

City Manager Whitfield gave an update on the charter change, as directed by the Council. He contacted Representatives Shupe and Postles to attend the meeting. While Representative Postles did not respond, Representative Shupe did. After discussing the Council's concerns and deliberations regarding the charter change, Representative Shupe stated that he would endorse and champion it in the House if a single change was made. This change involved restricting the use of eminent domain for recreational purposes both inside and outside the

city. Currently, it only restricted outside the city. Representative Shupe also indicated that he spoke with Representative Postles, who would also support this change.

Councilmember James made the motion that the charter change that was presented to the state legislators be amended to remove the language "of outside of city limits" so that it included inside and outside. Councilmember Wilson seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

Authorization/Change Order/ 2024 Utilities and Street Rehabilitation Contract 2023-EN/ST-002

Public Works Director Shaffer explained the change order that was included in the packet. He stated that staff would like Council's approval to create a change order to the contract for an additional \$500,000 to do additional roadways.

Councilmember James made the motion to authorize a change order to contract 2023-EN/ST-002 in the amount of \$500,000 to proceed with additional road improvements. Councilmember Samaroo seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

[Change Order Utility and Street Rehab Contract](#)

Authorization/Purchase/Public Works/Gas Chlorine System

Director Shaffer explained the need for the purchase of the gas Chlorine System. He stated that staff would like to get Council's approval, to purchase the first chlorine scrubber for 10th Street at a contract price of \$75,000.

Councilmember James made the motion to authorize a purchase order in the amount of \$75,000 to acquire the chlorine scrubber system to replace the chlorine tablets to move to gas. Councilmember Zychal seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

[Water Treatment Chlorine Scrubber Purchase](#)

Authorization/S. Washington Street Well-3R/Additional Maintenance

Director Willis explained the S. Washington St. Well project. City Manager Whitfield stated that they were requesting Council's authorization to do the change order to do the relining.

Director Willis explained that relining is a process like what's done with sanitary sewers, where a thin layer is installed inside the existing pipe or casing.

Councilmember James made the motion for Council to approve the total cost to rehabilitate Well-3R in the amount of \$77,720 to come out of O&M budget and CIP \$42,000 and \$35,000 out of O&M Budget. Councilmember Marabello seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

[Required Additional Maintenance Well 3-R](#)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Culotta thanked Councilmember Samaroo. He acknowledged her four years of service and noted that this was her last council meeting before the Annual Organizational Meeting.

Motion to Recess into Executive Session

Mayor Culotta asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:47 pm.

Councilmember James made a motion to go into Executive Session. Councilmember Connor seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

Councilmember James made the motion that the Executive Session would include Solicitor Rutt, City Clerk White, HR Director Jamesha Williams, and City Manager Whitfield.

Councilmember Marabello seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

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

Return to Open Session

Mayor Culotta asked for a motion to return to open session at 7:31 pm.

Councilmember James made a motion to return to open session. Councilmember Kalesis seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

Clarification on City Manager Recruitment Process

[City Manager Recruitment Process Memo](#) 

Potential Vote/Personnel – City Manager Recruitment Process

Councilmember James made the motion that all motions and votes after March 24, 2025, be rescinded related to the City Manager Recruitment. Councilmember Wilson seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

Councilmember Connor stated that she would like to reaffirm her motion from March 24, 2025, to make it clear.

City Clerk White read Councilmember Connor's motion from March 24, 2025, for the record: *I'd like to make a motion to rescind the motion from March 20th and to have the recruiter reevaluate the most current documents for candidates, 1, 2, 3, and 4, and then for any candidates that are determined to meet all qualifications, return for a second round of interviews with council and city department panel, and have the recruiter prepare our documents and to oversee the process and kind of lead the way. I amend my prior motion to say that we will be rescinding all 3 motions from March the 20th.*

Councilmember Connor made the motion, “I'd like to make a motion to rescind the motion from March 20th and to have the recruiter reevaluate the most current documents for candidates, 1, 2, 3, and 4, and then for any candidates that are determined to meet all qualifications, return for a second round of interviews with council and city department panel, and have the recruiter prepare our documents and to oversee the process and kind of lead

the way. I amend my prior motion to say that we will be rescinding all 3 motions from March the 20th. Councilmember Kalesis seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

Councilmember Marabello asked if HR Director Williams would be in charge of the recruitment process.

Councilmember Connor stated that her motion clarified that they would like HR Director Williams and the recruiter to be a part of the process and lead the way.

The council was all in agreement.

Adjournment

Mayor Culotta asked for a motion to adjourn.

Councilmember Kalesis made the motion to adjourn. Councilmember Zychal seconded.

Yes Madula Kalesis, Daniel Marabello, Lori Connor, Nadia Zychal, Michael Stewart, Nirmala Samaroo, Katrina Wilson, and Jason James

The motion carried unanimously. 8-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katrina L. White, MMC

City Clerk/Recorder