

Town of Odessa

**MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR TOWN MEETING OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2025 - 7:00 PM
OLD ACADEMY BUILDING
315 MAIN STREET
ODESSA, DE 19730**

Those present at 7:00 PM:

Mayor: Harvey C. Smith Jr.

Council Member: Lenny Aguilar

Council Member: John Freeman

Council Member: Yeni Ocampo

Treasurer: David Sheats

Secretary: Amy Marie Ottinger

Marcus Henry – County Executive – New Castle County

Art Lee – Senior Advisor to County Executive – New Castle County

Natalie Criscenzo – Director of Strategic Communications – New Castle County

Kevin Caneco – County Councilman – New Castle County

(4) community members

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- I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance – The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.
- II. Election Certification, attached hereto as Attachment A (*1-page certification*)
- III. Oath of Office
- New Castle County Executive Marcus Henry gave the oath of office to Mayor Harvey C. Smith Jr, treasurer David Sheats and council person Lenny Aguilar. Mr. Henry thanked the Mayor for providing him with the opportunity to swear in an official, as this was his first time. He said he is proud to serve as our County Executive and he looks forward to collaborating with all municipalities and jurisdictions in respect to governance and what they are doing. He looks forward to many meetings in the future and if there are any festivals or events, he would like an invitation.
 - Mayor Smith provided Mr. Henry with a Cats Meow replica of the Old Academy to be placed in his new office as a token of appreciation for administering the oath and attending the meeting.
- IV. Roll Call

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY LENNY AGUILAR, TO EXCUSE LIONEL HYNSON FROM THE APRIL 7, 2025 MEETING OF MAYOR & COUNCIL.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

- V. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes: Regular Meeting of Mayor & Council 3-3-25

MOTION BY YENI OCAMPO, SECONDED BY JOHN FREEMAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 3, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF MAYOR & COUNCIL.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION (AGUILAR)

- VI. Correspondence - Letter from John Shaw, member of Troop 125 in Middletown DE, inviting Mayor and Council to a dedication ceremony at the Veterans Watchmaker Initiative on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 11:00 AM for his Eagle Scout project, attached hereto as Attachment B (*1-page letter*)
- VII. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Balance Sheet / Profit & Loss as of 3-31-25, attached hereto as Attachments C & D (*3-page reports*)
 - b. Treasurer Sheats reviewed various expenses on the balance sheet. In the Odessa Community Account, the deposits consisted of rental income. Expenses consisted of normal operating expenses with the exception of two payments to Hawks & Company totaling \$10,342.00 for the new furnace installed on the council chamber side of the building. In the PNC Operating Account, the deposits consisted of property tax payments, franchise fees and JP court fees. There was also a large deposit from the State of Delaware in the amount of \$70,918.99 which was subsequently disbursed as agreed to the Odessa Fire Company for traffic safety vehicles. Expenses consisted of normal operating expenses. In the Municipal Street Aid Account, expenses included a payment to Austin & Bednash in the amount of \$1,000.00 for town-wide snow plowing on 2/12/25. Total assets are \$647,648.13.

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY LENNY AGUILAR, TO APPROVE THE TREASURER'S REPORT FROM 3-31-25.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

- VIII. Commission Reports
 - a. Historic – No meeting in March
 - b. Planning – No meeting in March
- IX. Old Business - None
- X. New Business
 - a. Arbor Day Proclamation – 2025 Arbor Day Proclamation, attached hereto as Attachment E (*1-page proclamation*)

MOTION BY LENNY AGUILAR, SECONDED BY YENI OCAMPO, TO PROCLAIM APRIL 25, 2025 AS ARBOR DAY IN THE TOWN OF ODESSA.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

- b. Resolution 2025-2: Resolution of the Town of Odessa Approving Draft Legislation to Authorize the Collection of Taxes and Other Charges Owed to the Town Using the Monition Method of Sale and Sending the Draft Legislation to Senator Hansen and Representative Hensley for Sponsorship, attached hereto as Attachments F (*1-page resolution*) and Attachment G (*1-page Charter amendment*)

MOTION BY LENNY AGUILAR, SECONDED BY YENI OCAMPO, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-2 AND SEND DRAFT LEGISLATION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE REQUESTING A CHARTER AMENDMENT.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

XI. Public Comment

- Jim Grant (103 High Street) asked if the Town will be using the assessment figures from New Castle County. He asked because his properties have been assessed at \$640,000 and he said he is not paying taxes on that.
- Mayor Smith stated that we are waiting on the County to provide us with official numbers for our reassessment. We have received some preliminary information, but the final numbers have not been provided. Once we are provided the final figures, we will work on making the tax figures tax neutral as best we can. That means that the residents will be paying close to what they were before. The tax rate will need to be adjusted as the current rate of \$0.25 per \$100 of assessed value will no longer work. The Town is required by our Charter to post the assessment data by May 1st of each year.
- The town secretary added that our Charter states that we must use New Castle County's assessed values to determine our town taxes.
- Kevin Caneco, New Castle County Councilman, stated that the reason why we are having the delay in getting the final assessment figures is because the County extended the appeals process two weeks until March 31, 2025 for those owners who filed formal appeals. He stated that the County's budget will be delayed, and that the Town may be able to use last year's assessments for this year's budget, but our town solicitor would have to make that determination. He stated that at the end of the day it will all be revenue neutral.
- Mayor Smith asked whether the County would postpone the assessment for another year, to which Kevin stated he does not believe they will. He added that the State Legislature now passed a law that we are to be reassessed every 5 years to make it a more "muscle memory" process.
- Kevin invited the community to a monthly meeting on April 23, 2025 @ 6:30 PM at the Appoquinimink Library on Main Street in Middletown where he and Councilman Dave Carter will be available to answer any additional questions about the reassessment or any other county-wide issues.
- Meghan Mahoney (220 Cantwell Avenue) invited the community to a yard sale event hosted by the Women's Club of Odessa on Saturday, April 12, 2025 from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM located at 205 Main Street here in Odessa. All proceeds from the sale will go to the Stockley Center and the Carol Pearl Scholarship.

XII. Next Meeting Date and Time: Next meeting of Mayor and Council will be Monday, May 5, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY LENNY AGUILAR, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:29 PM.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

Minutes Submitted: 4/10/2025

By: Amy Marie Ottinger
Town Secretary

Approved: _____