

Town of Odessa

**MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR TOWN MEETING OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MONDAY, MAY 5, 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 (arrived late at 7:04 PM)
Council Member: John Freeman
Council Member: Yeni Ocampo
Treasurer: David Sheats
Secretary: Amy Marie Ottinger
(1) community member

- I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
- II. Oath of Office – Councilman Lionel Hynson is still recovering from kidney surgery and his oath will be delayed another month.
- III. Roll Call

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY YENI OCAMPO, TO EXCUSE LIONEL HYNSON & LENNY AGUILAR FROM THE MAY 5, 2025 MEETING OF MAYOR & COUNCIL.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Minutes: Regular Meeting of Mayor & Council 4-7-25

MOTION BY YENI OCAMPO, SECONDED BY JOHN FREEMAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 7, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF MAYOR & COUNCIL.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

- V. Correspondence – Letter from the Women’s Club of Odessa requesting a Proclamation to recognize May 13, 2025 as the Women’s Club of Odessa Day in celebration of the club’s 70th anniversary, attached hereto as Attachment A (*1-page letter*)
- VI. Treasurer’s Report
 - a. Balance Sheet / Profit & Loss as of 4-30-25, attached hereto as Attachments B & C (*3-page reports*)
 - b. Treasurer Sheats reviewed various expenses on the balance sheet. In the Odessa Community Account, expenses consisted of normal operating expenses with the exception of a payment to Tree Inc. in the amount of \$650.00 for tree trimming at the tennis courts. In the PNC Operating Account, the deposit consisted of transfer taxes, property tax payments and JP court fees. Expenses consisted of normal operating expenses with the

exception of a payment to Tree Inc in the amount of \$300.00 for maintenance tree trimming at the Memorial Park. Total assets are \$639,883.75.

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY YENI OCAMPO, TO APPROVE THE TREASURER’S REPORT FROM 4-30-25.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTAIN

COUNCILMAN LENNY AGUILAR ARRIVED LATE TO THE MEETING AND JOINED THE OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS IN CONDUCTING BUSINESS AT 7:04 PM.

- VII. Commission Reports
 - a. Historic – Meeting was 4-10-25 (Historic Odessa Foundation, K. Hovnanian & Olde Odessa Ventures)
 - b. Planning – No meeting in April
- VIII. Old Business - None
- IX. New Business
 - a. Commission Appointments, attached hereto as Attachment D (*1-page document*)

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY LENNY AGUILAR, TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENTS FOR 2025-2028 AS SUBMITTED.

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

- b. New Castle County Tax Assessments & Town of Odessa 2025-2026 Tax Rates - Mayor Smith informed council that the new 2024 New Castle County assessments were going to force the town to recalculate our tax rates. The current rate of \$0.25 per \$100.00 of assessed value for residential and \$0.90 per \$100.00 of assessed value for commercial would have increased each property owners’ taxes exponentially and it was his intention to make it as revenue neutral as possible. Late last month the County sent the town a spreadsheet with (10) properties that are “At Risk”. An “At Risk” property is a property in which the homeowners are challenging their assessed values. New Castle County’s response was that they could take up to 6-8 months to settle on a final property value for those parcels. The Mayor reached out to the town solicitor for guidance and his response was that due to the delay in final assessed values, council would be able to vote to use the 1983 assessed values for one additional year until final valuations are completed by the County on all properties. This would only be a one-year extension as the County should have their values determined by the next tax year (2026-2027). Using the prior assessed values will allow the council to create a budget and move forward with sending out tax bills on time.

MOTION BY LENNY AGUILAR, SECONDED BY JOHN FREEMAN, TO USE THE 1983 NEW CASTLE COUNTY ASSESSEMENT PROPERTY VALUES FOR ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR TO DETERMINE TOWN OF ODESSA 2025-2026 TAX RATES .

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

- c. Resolution 2025-03: Recognize Carla Pyle, attached hereto as Attachment E (*1-page resolution*)

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY YENI OCAMPO, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-03 RECOGNIZING CARLA PYLE.

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

- d. Women's Club of Odessa 70th Anniversary Proclamation, attached hereto as Attachment F (*1- page proclamation*)

MOTION BY LENNY AGUILAR, SECONDED BY YENI OCAMPO, TO PROCLAIM MAY 13, 2025 AS THE WOMEN'S CLUB OF ODESSA DAY IN CELEBRATION OF THE CLUB'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY.

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

- X. Public Comment – There were no public comments.
- XI. Next Meeting Date and Time: Next meeting of Mayor and Council will be Monday, June 2, 2025 at 7:00 PM with a Budget Workshop being at 6:45 PM.

Miscellaneous:

- The Mayor informed council that he recently received recognition from the Governor's Office as one of the adult honorees for the 2025 Governors Volunteer Service Awards. He was nominated by our planning commission chairperson Amanda Russell and graciously accepted the award at a dinner last week at Bally's Casino in Dover.

XII. Adjournment

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY LENNY AGUILAR, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:24 PM.

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

Minutes Submitted: 5/12/25
By: Amy Marie Ottinger
Town Secretary
Approved: _____