# Minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting

# Monday, June 1, 2024

1. **Call the Annual Town Council Meeting to Order:**

Bob Wood called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Council members in attendance were Bob Wood, Joanne Plescia, Jamie Draper, Ben Monastero and Harry Ward. Community members in attendance are on the attached sheets.

1. **Review of the Full Year ending June 30, 2024:**
2. Real Estate – Harry Ward advised the Realty Transfer Tax has stayed strong with home sales, and our inventory has picked up with approximately 8 properties for sale in the community.
3. Beach Grass – Ben Monastero advised we purchased one hundred bundles and were given almost 60 from DNREC after their planting.
4. Emergency Operations Plan – Joanne Plescia advised we updated this last year and all remains the same.
5. Seaside Envoy Program – Harry Ward stated with approximately 70 percent of our residents being vacation owners it is difficult to keep in touch with all owners in an emergency. The 15 volunteers have done an amazing job of gathering contact information and at the moment we have three that are open – one on Sawyer Road, one on Passwaters, and one in the 350 block of Bay Avenue – if you are interested, please contact Julia in the office.
6. Smart911 and DENS programs – Harry explained that this is time consuming to register with the County however, it could be a serious life saver for your family if you will take the time to sign up and note any issues in your home – special needs, pets, elevator, etc – these details can make the difference in minutes that are necessary to save a life.
7. Trash on the Beach / Adopt a Highway – Harry Ward was pleased to share that our street and beach are being kept clean primarily by residents that collect same on their walks, but we have had many high school groups that have made a day visit to the beach for clean ups and education. There are five Adopt a Highway groups that monitor Slaughter Beach, Bay Avenue and Cedar Beach Road going all the way to Route 1 – the town tries to share information when cleanups are organized and are very grateful to all the volunteers.
8. Boardwalk/Osprey – Ben Monastero advised that in town and surrounding areas we have 9 active nests for viewing the Osprey and the Boardwalk has attracted approximately 20 scheduled school group visits this summer so far.
9. Park Improvements Grant/ARPA funds – Joanne explained that the park is relatively complete with the fence work done just this past month. Plantings are being reviewed, and signs are being considered for education as well as to thank the Draper’s for the recreation area, and with 17,000 we are hoping to also include a bocce ball court. Bob Wood was offered a water cooler, and we are waiting for plumbing expenses to have it installed. Resident requested a windscreen be considered.
10. Street Resurfacing – Harry Ward shared that the access roads in town have all been completed but we will likely have to start the cycle again as the grass comes up fairly quickly. This work is almost exclusively paid for through grants.
11. Sewer District – Harry has continued to work with Sussex County on addressing questions from residents’ reference locations for hook ups. We expect an update from the County late August, possibly in September. A map is available for view showing the location of the pump house.
12. Finances – Joanne Plescia explained that she has a draft budget from our bookkeeper to share with Council members and this will be reviewed at our June meeting. Pointing out the expenses the town incurs and the fact that we have not raised taxes in approximately 15 years.
13. Cybersecurity/IT – Jamie Draper has been working with the state to improve the safety of our resident data and personal information. All employees and councilmembers use their personal computers and phones, so it’s a challenge but everyone of our employees have been taking classes offered through the state and Jamie has applied for a grant to help design a cybersecurity protection plan for the town.
14. Fire Department – Bob Wood said the fire company relationship continues to be strong and the Ambulance is fully staffed. Julia asked if everyone in the room had received the fundraising letters that were sent about one month prior and two people have not seen the same so this is something we will follow up on.
15. New Tax Assessments – Jamie Draper advised that the State has pushed back the final assessment for Sussex County again so it will be another six months before we are advised of our new assessments. While they have completed their review in Slaughter Beach, we are not going to be informed until Sussex County is complete.
16. Annual Town Yard Sale and Large Item Pickup – Ben Monastero said all appeared to go smoothly this year and there has been no negative feedback from residents.
17. Roll Off Dumpsters – Ben further advised the Bridgeham dumpster was filled within hours so he would suggest the council consider two dumpsters for the first pickup next year – one at each end.
18. Delaware Nature Society – Harry Ward reminded everyone that our boardwalk at Marvel is owned/managed by this Society, and it behooves all residents to support the Society if they are able. Abbott’s Mill is the closest park after the boardwalk, and this is a beautiful area for walks in nature with many educational opportunities for the public.
19. Slaughter Beach Historical Society – Joanne Plescia stated that the SBHS has been receiving donations of photos but also larger items for the future museum. This is a non-profit organization.
20. Pets – Jamie Draper reminded everyone that picking up after your pooch includes taking that same bag to a garbage can at your home, not dropping it on the grass when you get tired of carrying it.
21. July 4th, Slaughter Beach Sail Club Regatta – Harry Ward, the organizer of this annual event, advised all are welcome and competition/games are all organized for children as well as adults. If you have any questions, email Harry direct at [09sbsc@gmail.com](mailto:09sbsc@gmail.com).
22. Council Meetings – Ben Monastero updated everyone that our meetings are the second Monday of each month in the year. This past year we had one month when we couldn’t get a quorum, so we moved the May meeting, but typically this won’t happen. Always starting at 7pm in the firehall and on zoom.
23. Election – Jamie Draper was happy to report that there were three open positions for forecast year 2025, and three individuals submitted to run for office – so there is no need for an election. Bob Wood, Joanne Plescia and Ben Monastero are again on council for a 2-year cycle.
24. **Open Forum:**

The Red Knot Festival on May 25 was a terrific success. Council will be looking at how this might grow for next year.

1. **Adjournment:**

**A Motion was made by Harry Ward and seconded by Joanne Plescia to adjourn the meeting at 11:37am**

**Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.**