

The regular meeting of Mayor and Council was held on the above date with Councilman Bruce Orr, Jim Royston, and David Thomas. Mayor Kenneth Branner presided. Town Manager Morris Deputy and Town Solicitor Scott Chambers were also present.

**1. Call to Order****2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Branner deviated from the regular agenda to provide information on the Town's new Floating Solar Energy Project, located at the wastewater treatment plant, highlighting its significance as the first floating solar installation in Delaware.

- The project is located on one of the wastewater treatment plant lagoons near the Amazon facility.
- Approximately 5,000 solar panels are being installed on floating platforms across the lagoon.
- The project is being completed in partnership with the Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), which serves nine Delaware municipalities and has been in development for approximately 10 years.
- Once operational, the system is expected to generate about 3 megawatts of electricity, enough to power approximately 600 homes.
- The electricity produced will be sent back to the grid, helping lower power costs for DEMEC member municipalities.
- The Town is planning a future expansion that would utilize the larger wastewater treatment lagoon for additional floating solar panels. The expansion is expected to include 15,000 to 20,000 solar panels and generate an additional 10 megawatts of electricity, bringing the total solar output to 13 megawatts. This energy would be sent back to the grid to help keep electric rates low for DEMEC members.
- The floating solar arrays are designed to rise and fall with changing water levels in the lagoon.
- The current installation covers roughly 60% to 70% of the lagoon's surface.
- Construction is expected to continue through September and October, with electricity expected to begin flowing to the grid by the end of the year.

Mayor Branner invited residents to visit the site by arranging a tour through Town supervisors and the Public Works Department.

**3. Minutes Approval:** Moved by Mr. Orr and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve the minutes of July 6, 2026 as presented in printed form. Motion Carried Unanimously.

**4. Treasurer's Report:** Moved by Mr. Royston and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve the treasurer's report in printed form. Motion Carried Unanimously.

**5. Bills Payable:** Moved by Mr. Royston and seconded by Mr. Orr to approve the Bills Payable and pay as funds become available. Motion Carried Unanimously.

## **6. Police Report: Chief William Texter**

The MPD responded to 1,241 Calls for Service during the previous month.

- 1 District: 6/20/26 – Middletown: 400 Block of N. Broad Street – Theft of Motor Vehicle & Attempted Theft.
- 2 District: Nothing significant to report.
- 3 District: Nothing significant to report.
- 4 District: Nothing significant to report.
- Dispositions: Traffic Summonses: 284 (3 DUI); Criminal Arrests: 64 (Felony – 15, Misdemeanor – 44, Civil Penalty – 0, Violation – 5); Warnings – 112, Reports Written: 253; FSR – 349; Property Checks: 176.
- Collaborative/Community Meetings:
  - 30 young men graduated from the Boys Youth Academy and 24 young ladies are enrolled in the Girls Youth Academy.
  - A meeting was held with residents of Middletown Village to discuss E-Bikes and E-Scooter safety due to an increase in accidents. Parents will be cited for any child operating an E-Bike or E-Scooter in an unsafe manner. Information is listed on the Town's website and at the Middletown Police Station.
- Speeding and failure to obey traffic signals, including red lights and stop signs, remain ongoing concerns. Active enforcement is in place to improve public safety.
- Collisions are ongoing due to driver inattention and unsafe usage of E-Bikes and E-Scooters.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Royston to approve the Police Report as presented by Chief Texter. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

## **7. Middletown Main Street Update: Kate Rokosz**

- The Middletown Family Fun Fest scheduled for July 18, 2026 was canceled due to weather.
- Middletown Main Street will be represented at the Annual Peach Festival.
- Girls Night Out event is planned to take place in September

Ms. Rokosz encouraged the community to follow Middletown Main Street on Facebook to stay up-to-date on all upcoming events.

***Moved by Mr. Orr and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve the Middletown Main Street Update as provided by Kate Rokosz. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

## **8. Public Hearings:**

**8-A. Motion to approve a Public Assembly Permit for a community event on E. Lake Street on Saturday, August 29, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Ashley Brown presented this request. The event will feature the following:

- This will be an end-of-summer, back-to-school community event held in the parking lot of Dale's United Methodist Church, at the corner of N. Catherine Street and E. Lake Street.
- This goal is to promote community engagement and distribute back-to-school supplies.

- Planned activities will include moon bounces, face painting, balloon artists, line dancing, and family-friendly entertainment.
- Free health screenings will be available to include blood pressure screenings, cholesterol, and A1C checks.
- The event is a collaborative effort between Hands of Favor Foundation and Feeding 5,000 Ministries.

Ms. Brown inquired if the Town would provide portable restrooms and trash receptacles. Mayor Branner replied that this request will be forwarded to Councilman Aaron Blythe to provide these items.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Royston to approve the Public Assembly Permit for a community event on E. Lake Street on Saturday, August 29, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-B. Motion to approve a Public Assembly Permit for Middletown Main Street's Family Fun Fest on Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Parking Lot.**

Kate Rokosz presented this request. The event will feature the following:

- The event was originally scheduled for July 18, 2026 but was canceled due to weather. The new date has an earlier start time due to it taken place in the fall.
- The event will have a DJ, family-friendly activities, food trucks, and is free to the community.

***Moved by Mr. Orr and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve the Public Assembly Permit for Middletown Main Street's Family Fun Fest on Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Parking Lot. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-C. 306 N. Cass Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a financial planning and legal services business (The Ready Group) in an R-1A zoned area. CU-13-26. Tax Parcel No. 23-005.00-011.**

Ryan Davis presented this request. The proposed business will provide:

- Financial planning services.
- There will be no more than 3 employees at a time working on site.
- There are 8 off-street spots along with street parking
- Business will be conducted by appointment only with a max of 2-3 people at a time.

Mayor Branner noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended that this request be granted.

***Moved by Mr. Royston and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve 306 N. Cass Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a financial planning and legal services business (The Ready Group) CU-13-26. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-D. 601 S. Broad Street – Conditional Use Permit Request for a home-based flooring business (Varnes Flooring) that would be office use only, no customers, in an R-1A zoned area. CU-15-26. Tax Parcel No. 23-011.00-068.**

Aaron Varnes presented on this request.

- All flooring work will be performed at the specific job sites.

- The owner's wife will use a small space in the home to correspond with customers.
- The Planning and Zoning commission raised concerns of storing flammable materials in the detached garage of the home. Mr. Varnes stated he will not be storing materials over 10 gallons at any given time. The materials will also be kept in the manufactured containers at the advice of the Fire Marshal.

Mayor Branner inquired whether the Fire Marshal's recommendation limited flammable material storage to a maximum of 10 gallons. Mr. Varnes responded the recommendation was for 10 gallons or less, stored in manufacturer containers. Mayor Branner noted the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the request, contingent upon confirmation from the Fire Marshal on the allowed amount of materials to be stored.

***Moved by Mr. Orr and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve 601 S. Broad Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a home-based flooring business (Varnes Flooring). CU-15-26. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-E. 613 Tower Lane – Record Major Land Development Plan for Lot S, Middletown Auto Park, for three (3) warehouse/flex space buildings with a combined 37,194 square-feet and associated parking and improvements, in an M-I zoned area. Tax Parcel No. 23-010.00-049.**

Matt Brickley with Morris & Ritchie Associates, presented this project.

- The plan is before Mayor and Council for final approval.

***Moved Mr. Royston and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve 613 Tower Lane – Record Major Land Development Plan for Lot S, Middletown Auto Park, for three (3) warehouse/flex space buildings with a combined 37,194 square-feet and associated parking and improvements in an M-I zoned area. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-F. 528 W. Main Street – Preliminary Major Land Development Plan for a 5,425 square-foot car wash to be developed within the existing Wawa parcel to include three (3) pay stations, vacuum stations and interparcel access, in a C-3 zoned area. Tax Parcel No. 23-008.00-001.**

Steve Fortunado with Bowler Engineering presented this project.

- The site will have 22 parking spaces.
- The intent is to serve existing Wawa customers as they visit the convenience store, so the increase in traffic flow is believed to be minimal.
- The car wash will be membership based.

Mayor Branner noted the Planning and Zoning Commission voted 7-1 to recommend approval by Mayor and Council.

Mr. Royston asked if Wawa will own the car wash. Mr. Furtunado replied, yes. This will be the first Wawa gas station to incorporate a car wash.

Mr. Orr asked what the timeline was for the car wash to be built. Mr. Furtunado believes it should be complete in approximately 6 months.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Royston to approve 528 W. Main Street – Preliminary Major Land Development Plan for a 5,425 square-foot car wash to be developed within the existing Wawa parcel in a C-3 zoned area. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-G. Motion to ratify an agreement for police physical examination services.**

Morris Deputy: The agreement is to renew a two-year contract with CardioKinetics for police physical examinations, including incremental fee increases outlined in the memorandum for various services provided to the Police Department.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Orr to ratify an agreement for police physical examination services. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-H. Motion to ratify an agreement for employee health assessments.**

Morris Deputy: This agreement is to renew a two-year contract with CardioKinetics for non-police employee physical examinations. The agreement includes no changes to the existing terms or pricing and serves solely as a two-year extension.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Orr to ratify an agreement for employee health assessments. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**8-I. Motion to ratify an addendum to an agreement with Axon Enterprises, Inc.**

Chief Texter: The Police Department received a refresh of its body camera equipment as part of the original contract with Axon. The new body cameras include real-time language translation capabilities, which will allow officers to communicate more effectively with individuals. A 26-month addendum to the existing contract would total \$35,120 over the next two years.

Mayor Branner noted the new technology will offer flexibility to the officers, as the device can translate a variety of languages.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Royston to ratify an addendum to an agreement with Axon Enterprises, Inc. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

**9. Unfinished Business: None**

**10. New Business (Public Comment Section): None**

**11. Executive Session:**

***Moved by Mr. Orr and seconded by Mr. Royston to move into Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters of individual employees. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

No action or notes were taken.

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Royston to exit the Executive Session and return to the regular meeting. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

***Moved by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Royston to adjourn. Motion Carried Unanimously.***

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.