

Meeting Minutes
DAGSBORO TOWN COUNCIL
Bethel Center
Monday, September 8, 2025

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Chandler at 6:00 p.m.

In attendance were Mayor William Chandler, Vice-Mayor Jason Russell, Councilwoman Carol Thompson, Councilman CJ Shortridge, Councilman John Marvel, Town Administrator Cynthia Brought, Chief Nicholas Disciullo and Sr. Cpl. JP Cullen. See sign in sheet for others in attendance.

Vice-Mayor Russell made a motion to move into Executive Session. Councilwoman Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5-0.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Strategy session to discuss potential litigation and to discuss site acquisitions for publicly funded capital improvements, all in accordance with 29 Del. Code Section 10004 (b) (2)

Vice-Mayor Russell made a motion to move into Public Session. Councilwoman Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5-0.

III. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

a. Re-open Meeting – Results/Comments Regarding Executive Session

Mayor Chandler stated that based on the discussion in the executive session there is a plan in place.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval Town Council Meeting Minutes August 4, 2025

Approval Executive Session Town Council Meeting Minutes August 4, 2025

Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to approve all the minutes. Councilman Shortridge seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5-0.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Police Department Report

Chief Disciullo stated that Cpl. Craft was certified as a School Resource Officer (SRO) and had to use that training in a couple of investigations. He stated that an Office of Highway Safety Grant in the amount of \$20k was closed. It is Grant season therefore he has several upcoming meetings for grants.

Councilwoman Thompson asked Chief Disciullo what an SRO is. Chief Disciullo stated that it is an officer that is assigned to a school. He stated that we do not have a school to assign her to, but she is trained and has been at John M. Clayton quite often. Councilman Thompson asked what exactly it allows her to do? Chief Disciullo stated an SRO is assigned to a

school to handle all complaints that happen at that school and to ensure the safety of the students and the teachers. Mrs. Thompson asked how someone would apply if interested in having her assigned to a school. Chief Disciullo stated that the State Police have an SRO at Indian River High School who also handles John M. Clayton and Carver therefore until that SRO would no longer be there or the schools annex into town then we would not have a school to put her in. Mrs. Thompson asked about Lighthouse Christian School. Chief Disciullo stated that it would be a contract position so the school would pay for it. Mrs. Thompson asked Chief Disciullo to email her the details. Chief Disciullo agreed to do so.

Vice-Mayor Russell stated that he noticed at IRHS's orientation there were Dagsboro Police Officers there and asked if the relationship had improved. Chief Disciullo stated that they were there on another issue and that they are not there yet.

Chief Disciullo stated that he and the Town were contacted by Federal Copyright for Night Out to change the name and are not allowed to use their logo because we are not registered and they have restrictions on the date that you are allowed to have the event. The name has been changed to Community Night and has been updated on all flyers and social media.

Chief Disciullo stated that he does have a new police officer in the hiring process and is looking to hire him on September 30th. Chief Disciullo stated that the officer is in the background stages currently and is crash reconstruction certified as well as many other things that will benefit the town. Councilman Shortridge asked how much experience the officer has. Chief Disciullo stated ten years.

Chief Disciullo stated that John M. Clayton's constable contacted him about a security meeting held on September 2nd. Chief Disciullo stated that he contacted Frankford PD and requested that a representative be there since it is their school and received no response from them and no representative was there on Frankford's behalf. Chief Disciullo stated that Dagsboro did attend that meeting.

Mayor Chandler asked Chief Disciullo to explain the email exchange between him and Mr. Cook. Chief Disciullo stated that this is the second year that Mr. Cook and he have gone back and forth. Chief Disciullo stated that under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act Mr. Cook reaches out to the Dagsboro Police Department for stats for his school property which he has to submit federally for his Grant Funding. In the past Mr. Cook has been provided documents that Chief Disciullo cannot attest to the accuracy of. For the past two years Chief Disciullo has provided Mr. Cook with a very in-depth statistical report for every incident that has happened between Dagsboro PD and the DE State Police on and around his property. Chief Disciullo does not believe he is happy with the formatting that was sent in, unfortunately he cannot change the formatting. Chief Disciullo sent Mr. Cook an email with several of Dagsboro PD's policies and information about our ALERT Training which is for active shooter training to hopefully help him understand what Dagsboro PD does. Chief Disciullo stated that Mr. Cook asked him to approve his emergency response policies and procedures which he cannot approve for him. Chief Disciullo stated that we have our own response and our own training therefore Mr. Cook would need to handle that on his own. Chief Disciullo stated that under the Federal Law he did provide Mr. Cook the statistics that he had. Mayor Chandler asked what type of business The Salon Professional Academy is. Chief Disciullo stated that under Federal Law it is considered a school, but it is training for cosmetology.

- b. Treasurer's Report**
- c. Administrative Report**
- d. Cemetery Report**
- e. Code Enforcement Report**

- f. Water Department Report**
- g. Correspondence**

Vice-Mayor Russell made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilwoman Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5-0.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Michael Wolfe – 204 Chapel of Ease St, Prince George's Acres – Discuss possibility of Changes to Chapter 61, Animals, Possession of Certain Animals Prohibited**

Michael Wolfe expressed his support for the proposed zoning amendment to allow state registered home schools and families to keep up to five female ducks for educational purposes. This amendment is limited in scope, and it is not open to just anyone, it applies to families that are formally registered in the State of Delaware as home schools. That ensures the program remains tied directly to legitimate educational purposes and not hobby farming or casual ownership. He stated that for these families this change is about barest and opportunities, they pay taxes that support public school agricultural programs such as FFA but cannot access them. Allowing a small flock of ducks gives their children the same chance to learn responsibility, animal care, and sustainable living skills that enrich education and strengthen community values. The amendment also has strong safeguards, only female ducks, no more than five per family and to be kept in clean secure enclosures with no commercial use allowed. Families must obtain a town permit, submit enclosure plans and comply with inspections to ensure the health, safety and character of the neighborhood and community. He stated that this is a thoughtful and carefully written amendment that balances educational enrichment with community protection. He respectfully asked Town Council to adopt it. He stated that he also had a petition from his neighbors to submit for public record.

Councilman Shortridge asked what prompted the violation in the first place, was it a neighbor complaint? Mr. Wolfe stated that "yes, his next-door neighbor complained." Vice-Mayor Russell asked if Mr. Wolfe was aware of the Code before. Mr. Wolfe stated that "no, he wasn't actually" and he was looking for words and things related to the school, but he did not see the code violation in there. Councilwoman Thompson stated that she home schooled her girls and knows that home schoolers are very resourceful with trying to make the best with the curriculum you have. She stated that they are also resourceful when it comes to participating in sports because she helps facilitate encouraging home schoolers to be part of the sport program at Lighthouse Christian. She asked Mr. Wolfe if he had applied the resourcefulness to work with farmers where the kids can get the true animal experience. Mr. Wolfe stated that they have done some field trips in the past to local farms but it is more about the continued experience. He stated that they could take a field trip and the kids can do a few things for a day, but really, they are trying to build responsibility of taking care of these animals. He stated that it is more of a long-term education instead of a single lesson. He stated that it is not feasible for the school to organize or partner with somebody to be at a farm every day whereas his son wakes up in the morning at 6:30 or 7 o'clock and goes out, lets the ducks out, feeds them, and freshens the water. That is not something you could do at another location. Councilwoman Thompson stated but couldn't you use other animals to practice that same responsibility? Mr. Wolfe stated that they have a dog and a cat that live in the house but it's not a beast of burden. They have to go out and clean the ducks enclosure, give them food and vitamins, it is more hands on growth as opposed to an animal that sleeps 20 hours a day inside the house and barks at you when he wants to go outside.

Councilman Shortridge stated that he also home schooled his kids, and he understands what Mr. Wolfe is saying. He asked Mr. Wolfe if the ducks lay eggs. Mr. Wolfe stated that "yes, they will but they are only three months old."

Councilman Shortridge asked if they were going to eat the eggs. Mr. Wolfe stated that “yes, which in turn could lead to home economics type classes.”

Vice-Mayor Russell stated that the proposed Ordinance that you submitted states that a permit shall be required. Mr. Wolfe stated yes. Vice-Mayor Russell asked if he was proposing any fees involved with that permit. Mr. Wolfe stated that he felt it better to leave that up for discussion as he is not versed in writing permits or what fees should be but would see it fair if the Town had to request a fee for such permit. Vice-Mayor Russell asked why there were five ducks, is it because that is what you currently have? Mr. Wolfe stated “yes, when you order online you have to order three at a time and we did, and one did not make it and with the insurance they sent him three more for a total of five.”

Councilman Shortridge asked what the age group of his kids were. Mr. Wolfe stated that Liam is eleven, Dean their oldest son is thirteen, Natalie their current youngest, is seven, and his wife is about 9 months pregnant with their fourth. Councilwoman Thompson asked how long they had been home schooling. Mr. Wolfe stated that they had been home schooling for thirteen years. Councilwoman Thompson asked if this was the first time he had ever done the approach that they are doing now. Mr. Wolfe stated “yes.” Councilman Shortridge asked if he planned on his kids ever going to public school at all. Mr. Wolfe stated, “probably not, as his wife is a phenomenal teacher, not until they encounter college.” Councilwoman Thompson stated if this were to pass it would apply to anyone who is in home school, and the town would have to manage all of that. Mr. Wolfe stated that “they are required to register with the state any student that comes to their house for home school, but he is not sure how you would find out how many home schools there are in the area, but he can’t imagine there are that many.

Mayor Chandler stated to Mr. Wolfe that he would agree that he didn’t do any research or diligence. Mr. Wolfe stated, “no he did not and for that he apologized.” Mayor Chandler stated that could have been a lesson to instill in your children about how to do research and find out what the laws require. Mr. Wolfe agreed. Mayor Chandler stated that the Ordinance is drafted very well, but that the town will have to police it and enforce it. Therefore, the town would have to go around and check that someone is actually a state registered home-schooling program. That they only have ducks, that there are not more than five ducks, and that they are maintained inside some kind of contained or fenced area. The town would have to do all of that enforcement and Mr. Wolfe didn’t disagree with Mr. Russell that is going to cost the town and the town’s people, therefore there should be some type of fee that would be assessed for anyone who wants to do this. Mr. Wolfe agreed. Mayor Chandler asked if Mr. Wolfe is leaving it up to the town to decide what that fee should be. Mr. Wolfe stated yes because he doesn’t feel he is in any position to determine it. Councilman Shortridge stated he felt it would be open to negotiation with him.

Vice-Mayor Russell stated that it is also mentioned in the Ordinance that the area should not interfere with neighboring properties; have you talked to your neighbors because neighbors have reached out to him personally that say that they do hear the ducks and there has been some concern. Vice-Mayor Russell stated that there is some gray area and asked Mr. Wolfe what he considered interfering. Mr. Wolfe stated that he supposed that in the sense that they are not excessively noisy, if you consider the animals that are around the neighborhood. He stated that just outside the neighborhood there is a rooster that crows all hours of the day, there are dogs left outside that howl the moment anyone walks around. Mr. Wolfe stated that you cannot actually hear them even when they are at their loudest from even a house or two away. Theresa Ulrich stated that she could vouch for that as she lives across the street from Mr. Wolfe and never even knew that he had them. Mr. Wolfe stated that the neighbor closest to where the ducks are housed agreed with them and signed the petition. Vice-Mayor Russell stated that Mr. Wolfe came forward with regard to the ducks. How does this prevent someone else coming to the town stating that they want chickens or goats, etc? Mr. Wolfe stated that the reason they decided to go with ducks is because of their “poop” it is not near as toxic as chickens and is a really good fertilizer for plants. The environmental impact was the lowest with the ducks. Councilman Shortridge

asked Mr. Wolfe how big his lot is and the square footage of the house. Mr. Wolfe stated that the lot is a third of an acre and roughly 1800 sq. feet.

Mayor Chandler stated that whether the complaint was in retaliation or not it is still a violation of the Ordinance. The fundamental question is the risk of the slippery slope because once you allow one species that you think is the least environmentally threatening, then others will say that chickens are not that threatening or a couple of goats will work well, he can just see where there will be a constant set of town hall meetings to amend the Ordinance to allow other people to have other kinds of animals that they want. Mayor Chandler stated that he empathized with Mr. Wolfe with his desire to home school and teach your kids leadership and responsibility. He stated that he did not home school his kids, but he had a menagerie of parakeets, hamsters, guinea pigs, and dogs and found that he could teach them certain responsibilities and obligations using those animals all of which are not prohibited from having under Town Ordinances. Mayor Chandler stated that he respectfully disagreed with Mr. Wolfe that only ducks are the ones that teach those kinds of good qualities and characteristics in our youth.

Mayor Chandler stated that the Council cannot change an Ordinance without having a Public Hearing which has to be advertised in the newspaper and give notice to the public to attend and hear the pros and cons and then the Council could act on that. Therefore, the Council cannot act tonight, and Mayor Chandler suggested an informal poll to see if Council is interested in having a Public Hearing on this proposed amendment to the Ordinance. Councilman Shortridge asked what the zoning is. Town Administrator Brought stated that it is Residential. Mayor Chandler stated that he isn't sure how many residents are in Prince George's Acres. Chief Disciullo stated that he would say 60-80. Councilwoman Thompson asked who would be the one to investigate how many ducks or chicks there are and that they are in an enclosed area; what personnel does that, would that be the police? Mayor Chandler stated that it would be the Code Enforcement Officer which is Christine Bennett. Vice-Mayor Russell asked Mr. Wolfe if July 30th was the initial notification of this violation. Mr. Wolfe stated "yes, that is correct." Vice-Mayor Russell confirmed that typically it's 10 days to remedy the violation and was there an extension given? Town Administrator Brought stated that Christine Bennett did give an extension. Mr. Wolfe stated that they were given 10 days from today (9/8) to re-home the ducks if it was unfavorable. Councilman Shortridge asked if there was a way to do an exception to the Ordinance? Mayor Chandler stated that if that happened then the law would say that you waived that Ordinance not only with respect to ducks but perhaps waive it completely to all animals at that point. Because you failed to enforce an Ordinance in one case, someone else comes and you want to enforce it against them, that is inequitable and the courts would agree that it is unfair.

Councilman Shortridge made a motion to convene a Public Hearing with respect to this proposed Ordinance at the next scheduled meeting of the Town Council. Mayor Chandler stated that since there is no second to the motion that the motion fails.

Mayor Chandler stated to Mr. Wolfe that there is more concern about adopting an amendment like this than we can justify as much as he felt the Council understood his situation, but changing an Ordinance is going to have future implications like imposed costs on the town and would lead to future meetings like this where people want other animals. Mayor Chandler stated that Mr. Wolfe would be given time to make other arrangements. Mr. Wolfe thanked the Council for their consideration.

b. Appointment of P&Z Commissioner – Fill Vacancy

Mayor Chandler stated that he felt Mr. Truitt was good for the appointment because of his previous experience being on the Town Council and P&Z Commission. Mr. Truitt is retired and has the time. Vice-Mayor Russell stated that he felt Mr.

Truitt was qualified. Mayor Chandler stated that there is going to be another vacancy as well very soon on the P&Z Commission. Mayor Chandler asked Town Administrator Brought to advise Mr. Truitt that he was appointed to the P&Z Commission.

c. Report/Progress Charter Committee

Councilwoman Thompson stated that it is not a quick process but that they are updating things based on the law. She stated that they have been drawing the new laws in and trying to update them to make it apply to what is really going on. They meet monthly and have a meeting this Saturday. She stated that it is a lengthy process but that it was needed to update things and get them into alignment with current laws. She stated that they have looked at other towns' documents to help them figure out what might be realistic for Dagsboro.

Mayor Chandler asked Councilwoman Thompson if there was a time frame in sight. Councilwoman Thompson stated that they were aiming to be done by November. Mayor Chandler asked if the Committee would give a written or oral report. She stated both and the written will have in red the changes that have been made so you could see what has been changed.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Revised Resolution Rental and Business License Fees – Discussion/Vote

Mayor Chandler stated that this was voted on at last month's meeting, but a provision needed to be made because the one approved did not specify the exact provisions that were being amended, and this updated version is clearer.

Vice-Mayor Russell made a motion to approve the amended Resolution Rental and business license fees. Councilwoman Thompson seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 and Councilman Shortridge abstained.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Theresa Ulrich, 201 Chapel of Ease St, asked if there was an update on the wall at Prince George's Cemetery. Town Administrator Brought stated that it has been scheduled. Mrs. Ulrich asked if anyone had thought about putting pilings in front of the wall. Mayor Chandler stated that we need bollards installed in front of the cemetery wall otherwise we keep replacing the wall and its expensive. He stated that he could ask DelDOT to do that but his past experience with DelDOT and bollards is not a positive one, but he will make another effort.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Marvel made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Shortridge seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy West, Finance Clerk