

*Minutes*  
**DAGSBORO TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Bethel Center**  
**Monday, April 20, 2026**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

In attendance were Mayor Jason Russell, Vice-Mayor Carol Thompson, Councilman CJ Shortridge, Councilman William Chandler, Town Manager Cynthia Brought, Chief Nicholas Disciullo, Det. Anthony Valenti, and Engineering Consultant Kyle Gulbranson. Councilman John Marvel was absent. See sign in sheet for others in attendance.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Karen Hurst, Shady Creek Lane, asked if the Town had a finance committee because at the last meeting the budget was discussed. Town Manager Brought stated "no, the financials are given for each meeting." Mayor Russell stated that every meeting the Council is given the finances from the previous month. Ms. Brought stated that the financials that Council receive are the transactions that took place does not include journal entries those are typically following the audit.

Mrs. Hurst asked about the timing of the lights on Main St. as she has difficulty getting in and out of her development with the three lights. Mayor Russell advised Mrs. Hurst that those main thorough fares are maintained by DelDOT, they are state maintained roads. She confirmed the light itself, Mayor Russell stated "yes, the light itself as well." Mrs. Hurst stated that she will follow up with them on that since she has a case number. Vice-Mayor Thompson stated that as past president of the COA of Woodlands that she had written DelDOT recommending an algorithm to be changed so that the pattern could flow differently and advised her that after research there are not enough accidents to warrant changing the algorithm. Mrs. Hurst stated that maybe it should be re-visited a times have changed. Mayor Russell stated that we could put an inquiry in.

Mrs. Hurst asked about a pole light near their home that has not worked correctly for over three years it just keeps going on and off. Ms. Brought stated that the office has reported it many times and the town office would need the pole number that she is referring to. Mayor Russell stated that it has been reported multiple times to Delmarva Power.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes March 23, 2026

Vice-Mayor Thompson asked what time Councilman Marvel left the meeting. Mayor Russell stated that it was after the impact fees discussion due to a fire on Power Plant Rd.

Vice-Mayor Thompson asked how the new grass cutting contractor was doing. Town Manager Brought stated that he is doing okay, it's difficult when you are starting somewhere new that you are not familiar with but that after a few times and he should be good. She stated that he started in Prince Georges Acres and apparently, they were not cut before which caused turmoil and residents asked him what he was doing and told him to get off their property. Ms. Brought stated that Joe had been helping him and getting him acclimated to the town.

Councilman Chandler stated that he wasn't at the last meeting, but he thinks it is required by FOIA that when a member of Council leaves a meeting early a presiding officer should say let the record reflect that Mr. Marvel left at 6:10 pm and if he returns that they can be inserted as well on the record.

Councilman Chandler made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilman Shortridge seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 with Councilman Marvel being absent.

#### **IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **a. Police Department Report**

Chief Disciullo stated that the stats were posted on Facebook which he plans to do quarterly. He stated that there was a decrease in vehicle collisions, but an increase in complaints and criminal arrests. He stated that the department is working several Office of Highway Safety Enforcements throughout the summer. Chief Disciullo stated that they did apply for and accepted for a Congressional Community Project Funding. Mayor Russell thanked Chief Disciullo for the work he put into the Grant from McBride's office.

Chief Disciullo stated that Cpl. Valenti is now Sgt. Valenti and he did pass all the Sargent testing. He has about a decade of law enforcement experience as well as a ton of specialized training experience. Chief Disciullo stated that he is looking forward to leading the department as Sargent.

##### **b. Fire Department Report**

Mayor Russell reviewed the Fire Department Report for Council.

##### **c. Treasurer's Report**

##### **d. Administrative Report**

Ms. Brought stated that she has a meeting with PFM because they have a draft of the valuation ready.

Mayor Russell stated that he had sent an email about the June meeting scheduled for June 22, 2026, but it should have been on June 15, 2026. Council agreed to move the meeting from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Russell and Vice-Mayor Thompson stated that they received multiple compliments on Justice Seal Coating filling the various potholes throughout the town.

Mayor Russell asked Ms. Brought if she did attend the online TAP (DelDOT Transportation Alternative Grant Program) meeting on March 12, 2026. Ms. Brought stated that "yes, she did and is attending one with University of Delaware to see if they could help with this since the deadline is April 17, 2026. Mayor Russell stated he liked the idea of the sidewalks and obviously they aren't going to help repair sidewalks but could use sidewalks in some areas. Ms. Brought stated that it would help with anything new, biking, safe school, and walkways. She stated that University of Delaware has been through it many times and knows what they are looking for.

##### **e. Cemetery Report**

##### **f. Code Enforcement Report**

##### **g. Water Department Report**

##### **h. Correspondence**

Vice-Mayor Thompson made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilman Shortridge seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 with Councilman Marvel being absent.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Sandy Surfaces Update**

Tiffany Ryan advised that she and Mayor Russell spoke the day of the last meeting, and he asked her to attend this meeting and give an update. Mrs. Ryan stated that following conversation Mr. Benton, their contractor, dropped off the plans and two days later, he applied for the permit. Mrs. Ryan stated that they then had to wait for AECOM approval to submit the permit. The permit was picked up today. Mrs. Ryan stated that Mr. Benton had to respond to everything that AECOM had been asking them to do. She stated that Mr. Benton is a respected contractor in the area and has been doing work all over the area. Mrs. Ryan stated that Mr. Benton's response to AECOM was upsetting to her because while she understands that AECOM is in place to help make sure that all the T's are crossed and I's are dotted, but she is paying them thousands of dollars to review items and without having Mr. Benton on her side prior to now, it is coming to light that she's been paying all this money for things that were not even needed. Mrs. Ryan stated that in his response to Christine, Mr. Benton told her that all the things listed were not needed and she received approval later that day after pushing back. Mrs. Ryan continued to express their frustration with AECOM.

Mayor Russell stated that it is his understanding that they are now waiting for the County permit. Engineering Consultant Gulbranson stated that you must get the Towns' permit before you can obtain the County permit. Mr. Gulbranson stated that they are now waiting for the County permit and the Fire Marshal's final approval. Mayor Russell stated that the Town was concerned because the initial contractor did not seem to be well versed, ultimately leading them in the wrong direction and misunderstanding. Mayor Russell stated that it is the intention of the Town for the process to move forward so the business can open. Mayor Russell stated that they were told multiple times that you were operating illegally and business continued to operate as usual. A cease-and-desist order was then sent because at that point the Town wasn't even sure that fire codes were being adhered to and asked for Mrs. Ryan's comment in reference to that. Mrs. Ryan stated that the only two main concerns from the Fire Marshal were the stair tread and fire exits and those were fixed. Mrs. Ryan advised that they were given business licenses to start operating, but states that the person operating in the business is the nail salon, not Sandy Surfaces stating they do not need that office to operate. She stated that the office was put there to have signage for when their business expands and they would have a professional space for meetings, training and for employees to work in the office to help with phones. Mrs. Ryan advised that Ada, who uses the business space upstairs, has had her nail business going for the last four years. She stated that the Town issued them business licenses in 2025 and that is when Ada moved her business there. Mr. Shapiro advised that Ada had been working out of a room in another one of his businesses outside of town. He recommended the space in Town of Dagsboro as it was near completion, and he was under the impression that with a business license they could operate. He stated that it being a small nail salon business, they cannot just stop operating. When the letter was received in 2025 that the Town was going to pull their business licenses, he went to Town Hall the next day and paid the AECOM fee and 1% town fee for the building permit, in an attempt to expedite the process. Mr. Shapiro stated that he wasn't told until January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, that the Fire Marshal had just received the information, which was two days before the deadline. He continued that he did not tell Ada to shut down her nail business and advised her to continue operating and if they are fined from the Town, then they are fined from the Town. Mrs. Ryan stated that they bought the property with Ada in mind. They knew they needed the space for Sandy Surfaces signage and to eventually expand, but with her being family they wanted her to be there. Mrs. Ryan continued to explain that the property needed hundreds of thousands of dollars in renovations, to bring it back to life. Mrs. Ryan felt they had done all the asked requirements in a timely manner. Mrs. Ryan expressed regret for hiring the initial contractor, despite his best efforts. Mrs. Ryan advised that the paving project with DelDOT was started in April 2025, and that is how long it took to get it done, again something completely out of their hands. She stated that they paid \$50k for the driveway to make it compliant and safe. Councilman Chandler asked Mr. Gulbranson if they were copasetic with the Town. Mr. Gulbranson stated "yes, at this point." Councilman Chandler stated that all they need is the County permit and asked if they had submitted to the

County yet? Mrs. Ryan stated that they picked up the Town permit today after waiting a month for approval. She clarified that she went "in person and paid another \$700 hundred dollars over the \$5,000 escrow account for AECOM to review all these things in a building that had already been done and got my permit today." Councilman Chandler asked Mr. Gulbranson what they need to do to be in compliance with all government bodies and be able to operate. Mr. Gulbranson stated that once they receive the County building permit, the contractor will go in and "do what he needs to do" and then the Fire Marshal would come back out and perform an inspection. Councilman Chandler asked if they had a business license with the Town of Dagsboro? Mayor Russell stated they currently do not for 2026, for either of the businesses. Mr. Shapiro expressed frustration over confusion of operating versus having a business license. Mrs. Ryan expressed frustration over daily fees assessed and AECOM's long timeframes of review, with little alternative. Mr. Shapiro reiterated that he submitted all requested fees mid-December 2025 but felt that it's unfair that the Town failed to submit until two days before the deadline, then not renewing their business license, is not in good faith. Mayor Russell wrapped up the conversation by encouraging Mrs. Ryan and Mr. Shapiro to submit their paperwork to the County the following morning and show support from himself and others at the meeting for Sandy Surfaces but showed concern for the lack of business licenses. Mrs. Ryan and Mr. Shapiro rebut that they were given a business license for both Sandy Surfaces and the nail salon in 2025. Mayor Russell questioned why the business licenses were issued in 2025. Ms. Brought advised that the license was reviewed by Kyle Gulbranson and what was in the application packet and that it was a legal business but stated that they should have come before Planning and Zoning, making an exception for the businesses. Once the town realized all the problems going on and things that they did not know about, is when the town investigated. Mr. Gulbranson stated that the building permit was submitted to the Town of Dagsboro and the County was for replacing windows, to which the County did not do any inspections of the building. Ms. Brought advised they were unaware that Mrs. Ryan had put in an apartment until they advertised it on Facebook. Mrs. Ryan rebuts that she advised at the first meeting that she was putting an apartment in the structure. Ms. Brought stated that Mrs. Ryan never came back to the town for any permits. Mrs. Ryan continued that the apartment was never rented out. Ms. Brought addressed that the Town cannot give a business license until they see a CO and the work is all done. Councilman Chandler summed up that Mrs. Ryan can go to Georgetown the next day and get the CO and drive back to Dagsboro to the Town Hall and can get a business license. Mrs. Ryan advised that she can't get the CO until the work is completed, and she can't do that until the County approves the permit. Councilman Chandler inquired about a provisional business license. Councilman Chandler recommended to the Town Council that a provisional license be granted with a stated deadline of fifteen days on it. Councilman Chandler addressed Mrs. Ryan and Mr. Shapiro that they follow-up with the County on the permit status and that they keep the Town of Dagsboro apprised of the status and any delays that arise which could cause the need for an extension of the provisional business license. Councilman Chandler stated to them that if something does happen it is their obligation to notify the Town to possibly extend the provisional license. Ms. Brought inquired about charging the regular fee for this provisional license and Councilman Chandler confirmed that the cost would be the original fee, and that the provisional license would convert to a regular license and an additional fee would not be collected. Mayor Russell requested that the update from the County be in written format. Mrs. Ryan stated that she understood. Mayor Russell advised that they would get a provisional license as long as the requested documents are submitted to the Town in writing.

#### **b. Tax Assessments County vs Private Assessments**

Ms. Brought addressed prior discussion from the Council referencing the County by doing their reassessment and asked if the Council wanted to think about using the County assessments since they are fresh; there has not been an assessment since the 90's with the private contractor. Town Hall has obtained a copy of the County assessments and has compared the County's assessment to the Town's. Ms. Brought addressed Artesian typo possibility. When looking at the information, it was initially suggested to use .56 cents on 100 of value for our taxes, which is what the town currently uses. The County uses a much less formula which would cause town citizens to receive bills in excess of thousands of

dollars extra. Ms. Brought advised that the tax rate would have to be adjusted, and it does not seem feasible for it to be done this year since taxes have to go out July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Until a formula is figured out that is reasonable that citizens are not heavily impacted, there will not be a change. Councilman Chandler inquired if an annual assessment is done, to which Ms. Brought advised that the town does not, and advised that it would be costly to do so, so older data is utilized for existing homes. Ms. Brought advised that only newly built homes and additions are assessed to establish value. Councilman Chandler inquired on the cost to do annual assessments. Ms. Brought advised that the Town currently pays a private company to do the assessments. She inquired from them about what it would cost to reassess the entire Town. A representative from the company stopped into Town Hall and advised that they would not do a reassessment as they would rely on the County assessment. Ms. Brought suggested creating a formula where the tax rate is taken down, but they utilize the County assessment numbers. Councilman Chandler advised that he's reviewed the calculations himself and they are "all over the place"; Mayor Russell confirmed this with his own findings. Mayor Russell is in favor of utilizing the County values for assessments, as residents have had a year to dispute them with the County. He continued that based on those values; they need to determine where the tax rate needs to be. Ms. Brought has researched other town rates to compare in the area. Mayor Russell agreed that the tax rates would not be changed this year and look ahead to next year for changes. Councilman Chandler confirmed that if the Town chose to use the County assessment, then every new house built in town would be assessed by the County and the Town would go by the same value, and this would save the almost \$15k a year.

**c. Capital Replacement Fund Rolled to Checking Account from a CD; Roll over Emergency Reserve CD July 2026 to Checking Account for Police Overtime New Budget Year**

Ms. Brought advised that she moved the Capital Replacement Fund into a checking account since it was up, which is how Justice Seal Coating was paid, to replace out of the General Fund. In July the Emergency Reserve CD will be up for renewal and Ms. Brought would like to move that into a checking account to be used for Police overtime. Councilman Chandler advised that it is his understanding that the Capital Replacement Fund, the Transportation Fund and the Emergency Fund, all have built in replenishment factors, based on a percentage of transfer taxes that the Town receives. Ms. Brought advised that while that was the intention, that did not happen. Ms. Brought advised that the replenishment under transfer taxes at one point was stagnant but anticipated that it would increase with new sales.

**d. Discussion on rate increases Site Plan Application (Fees, Escrow), Zoning Application (Fees, Escrow), Change of Use Application (Fees, Escrow), Sign Permit Applications (Fees), Subdivision Applications (Fees, Escrow); any other fees**

Mayor Russell addressed all other fees, noting that they are extremely outdated. Mayor Russell admitted that this is not something he planned on moving on tonight, nor did he think the Council should. Mr. Gulbranson stated that fee schedule was last updated in 2008. Mayor Russell expressed a desire to have a fee schedule with a list of all the fees, which should be readily available to the public, as other municipalities have on their websites. Mayor Russell also suggested creating some type of check list for the public for processes, whether it be a building permit, business license, etc. outlining what documents they need to obtain a license or permit. Mayor Russell requested the Council to review the fees within their packets and notate where they think they should be. Town Hall can give costs of processing to recommend where the fees should be as well, for the Council to review. Mr. Gulbranson stated that since the annexation fees were updated two years prior, they are not included in this packet.

Councilman Chandler addressed the Franchise Contracts with the Mediacom and Chesapeake Gas. The town gets a percentage of their gross revenues from the Town. Ms. Brought confirmed that the companies adhere to their contracts and send a report to the Town yearly. The Town reviews fees sent. Councilman Chandler inquired about the renewal of

said contracts, and Ms. Brought confirmed. Councilman Chandler advised that the contracts have a clause that the Town can enter negotiations with the franchise company one year prior to the renewal (September 2026) and suggested adding them to the list of fees to be discussed. Mr. Gulbranson stated that the Public Works Agreement needs to be added to the list. Ms. Brought stated that the escrow fees need to change as it is a problem. She realizes that the developers think that \$2500 is a lot, but that amount might cover one or two invoices. The fees collected currently do not cover the AECOM invoices and then the need to follow up with businesses to replenish escrow funds for additional costs. Ms. Brought confirmed that any unused escrow funds get returned to the company who funded them. Councilman Chandler pointed out that many of these changes can be made by a Resolution rather than an Ordinance or Public Hearing.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Business Development Committee Update**

Mayor Russell stated that the Business Development Committee met for the first time in April 2026. Mayor Russell felt it was a very productive meeting. The committee members invited all alternate members (those not picked as the seven), to the next meeting. An invite was extended to the Town Council, to serve as a liaison to the committee for reference to Town Codes.

### **b. Moratorium Ending April 21, 2026**

Mayor Russell advised that impact fees are now up to date and confirmed that the moratorium will end April 21, 2026. Vice-Mayor Thompson questioned how people will know the moratorium is over. Mayor Russell and Ms. Brought advised that it would dissolve, and it would be advertised online.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tom Morse advised that the Business Development Committee meets the first Wednesday of every month. Mr. Morse commented on the Town's diplomacy and compassion toward Sandy Surfaces in resolving their issue. Mr. Morse commented on his planned development and is willing to help with calculations of fees if needed. Mayor Russell asked the results of fighting the County Assessment and Mr. Morse advised him that his taxes went down and it was a simple process.

Karen Hurst requested to make a correction to her statement – she advised that she went back and the liaison from DeIDOT Dover told her that their records indicate that Main Street and Clayton Street, located within the municipal limits of Dagsboro, is a shared jurisdiction and any concerns or requests for signs and such should be initiated with the municipality prior to DeIDOT's involvement.

Mr. Shapiro inquired about additional technology to speed up processes and said that he would be willing to help for free. He expressed concern that AI could better perform the functions of AECOM.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Chandler moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Mayor Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The vote was 4-0 with Councilman Marvel being absent.

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy West, Finance Clerk