



The Town of Fenwick Island

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REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Friday, September 26, 2025

MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE

MINUTES

In Attendance

Town Council Members:

Mayor Magdeburger, Treasurer Rymer, Council Member Brennan, Secretary Napolitano, Council Member Zanelotti, Council Member Wilder

Excused Absence: Council Member Wilson

Staff in Attendance:

Town Clerk Ellinger, Beach Patrol Captain Rykaczewski, Building Official Locke, Police Chief Morrissey, Finance Director Green, Administrative Assistant Grab

Others in Attendance:

Along with the Town Council and Staff, there were an additional 5 on Zoom and 5 in-person participants.

Call to order and flag salute at 1:00 PM.

1. President's Report - Mayor Magdeburger

- **Seasonal update** — Fall has arrived, and most of our summer visitors have gone home. September weather has been beautiful.
- **Weather watch** — There's a potential storm system forming. It could merge with other systems and cause significant issues, or it might move out to sea. Residents are encouraged to follow local news and the Town's Facebook page for updates.
- **Missing person safely found** — Mrs. Klein, who was reported missing, has been located and is safe. Special thanks to Chief Morrissey for immediate action and communication, and to the many agencies and volunteers who helped search, including Ocean View, South Bethany, Bethany Beach, the Bethany Volunteer Fire Department, the Coast Guard, and Ocean City, Maryland. It was a community effort, with missing person posters playing a key role in her safe return.

Wind Farm Updates

- The federal government has filed a motion to remand and revoke the permit for the Maryland Offshore Project. U.S. Wind, a party to the case, has requested the permit be upheld, so the matter will continue in court and could move to the appeals level.

- We're encouraged by current federal support to review and potentially revoke the permit permanently.
- Elsewhere, a stop-work order in Rhode Island was overturned by a lower court and may be appealed. Concerns remain about national security (radar/sonar interference affecting search and rescue and defense), supply chain issues with foreign-made components, environmental impact, and economic effects.

Route 54 Bridge Project

- The Delaware Department of Transportation provided an update on planned improvements to the Route 54 bridge. Work is expected to begin in **October 2026** and continue in phases through **May 2028**:
 - One span will be completed October 2026–May 2027.
 - The second span will follow October 2027–May 2028.
- The bridge is expected to remain open, though traffic will shift between sides and there may be one-lane periods.
- Upgrades will include improved turning lanes, a pedestrian walkway, and a wider shoulder for bicycles.

Motion: To proceed as discussed at the September 26, 2025, and August 22, 2025, Executive Sessions.

Moved by: Bill Rymer

Seconded by: Susan Brennan

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. Motion: To approve the minutes of August 22, 2025, Regular Town Council Meeting.

Moved by: Kurt Zanelotti

Seconded by: Bill Rymer

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

b. Motion: To approve the minutes of August 22, 2025, Executive Session.

Moved by: Natalie Magdeburger

Seconded by: Bill Rymer

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report – Bill Rymer

The Town's overall cash balance as of August 31 was a little more than \$4 million, which was a \$30,000 increase over July 31.

Property tax bills were mailed in early August and cash balances typically rise in September while taxes are collected but we no longer have full time lifeguard coverage on the beaches.

Realty Transfer Tax (RTT) revenues totaled \$41,000 in August.
Revenues and expenses for the first month of the fiscal year are consistent with budget.

Motion: To accept the August 2025 Treasurer's Report.

Moved by: Natalie Magdeburger

Seconded by: Lucy Wilder

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

4. Business & Residential Public Participation

None

5. For Discussion and Possible Action:

a. Bring You Own Device Policy

- Council reviewed a proposed Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy recommended by the Town's IT provider, for consideration as part of the personnel manual. The policy was previously shared with members for review.
- No vote was taken, as the policy is considered administrative. Council will continue to review and make any necessary modifications before potential adoption.
- It was also noted that an internal password management policy is being implemented to improve cybersecurity, including requiring periodic password changes (approximately every 30 days). This measure is part of efforts to address Zoom security concerns and strengthen overall system protection.

b. Committee Assignments

Mayor Magdeburger nominated the following:

Infrastructure Committee

- Susan Brennan to chair
- Dwight Scott Negley
- Geri Verlaque
- Thomas Tim Bergin
- Jon Miller
- Jay Ryan

- Tim Leahy
- Vicki Carmean
- Jack Armstrong

Motion: To accept nominations for the Infrastructure Committee.

Moved by: Bill Rymer

Seconded: Susan Brennan

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Bill Rymer – Aye, all candidates will be a positive influence on the committee

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, supports the nominations

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, supports the nominations and is looking forward to the year ahead

Susan Brennan – Aye, in support for the same reasons

Lucy Wilder – Aye, in support for the same reasons

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, supports for the same reason

Charter and Ordinance

- Natalie Magdeburger to chair
- Ann Riley
- Ben Waide
- John Nason
- Dave Reifschneider
- Tim Leahy
- Scott Mumford
- Jacque Napolitano
- Lucy Wilder

Motion: To accept nominations for the Charter & Ordinance Committee.

Moved by: Bill Rymer

Seconded: Jacque Napolitano

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Bill Rymer – Aye, an excellent slate of members

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, in support as this is a very important committee

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, she is happy to see new members with a business perspective

Susan Brennan – Aye, this is a good group

Lucy Wilder – Aye, fully supports nominations and looks forward to serving

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, in support for reasons above

Budget & Finance

- Bill Rymer to chair
- Natalie Magdeburger
- Jacque Napolitano
- Susan Brennan
- Kurt Zanelotti
- Lucy Wilder
- Colleen Wilson
- Ben Waide
- Julie Lee
- Tim Leahy
- Stuart Rubenstein
- Liz Lear

Motion: To accept the nominations to the Budget & Finance Committee.

Moved by: Bill Rymer

Seconded by: Lucy Wilder

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Bill Rymer – Aye, this is a great group

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, in support for same reason

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, in support for same reason

Susan Brennan – Aye, in support for same reason

Lucy Wilder – Aye, fully supports the responsible management of Council Treasurer Rymer

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, in support for reasons above

Audit Committee

- Bill Rymer to chair
- John Nason
- Greg DesRoches

Motion: To accept the nominations to the Audit Committee.

Moved by: Bill Rymer

Seconded by: Susan Brennan

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Bill Rymer – Aye, this is a very good team

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, thanks Bill Rymer for his leadership

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, audits have gone very well

Susan Brennan – Aye, in support for same reasons

Lucy Wilder – Aye, fully supports the function and its members

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, thanks Bill Rymer for a great job

Ad Hoc Dark Sky

- Rose Mary Hoy to chair
- Franklin Conklin
- Steve Ross
- Cindy Newton Kerns
- George Stone
- Megan Staczek

Motion: To accept the nominations to the Dark Sky Committee.

Moved by: Kurt Zanelotti

Seconded by: Bill Rymer

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Bill Rymer – Aye, a great committee and leadership

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, thanks Rose Mary for her leadership

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, looking forward to seeing what they do this year

Susan Brennan – Aye, it is an interesting concept

Lucy Wilder – Aye, fully supports and thanks Rose Mary for leadership

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, they have done a good job bringing this topic to our community

Environmental Committee

- Colleen Wilson to chair
- Pam Pridgeon
- Stuart Rubenstein
- Vicki Carmean
- Susan Brennan
- Cindy Kerns
- Liz Lear
- Lynn Zimmers

Motion: To accept the nominations to the Environmental Committee.

Moved by: Susan Brennan

Second: Lucy Wilder

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, agrees with the slate of the committee

Lucy Wilder – Aye, fully supports the slate and thanks Colleen Wilson for leadership

Susan Brennan – Aye, in complete support

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, this is a great committee and is looking forward to seeing what they do with big projects

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, fully supports and thanks Colleen for leadership

Bill Rymer– Aye, for previously stated reasons

Beach Committee

- Jacque Napolitano to chair
- Pam Pridgeon
- Anne Hodges
- Kelly Rymer
- Odis Braxton
- Claire Motter
- Kurt Zanelotti

Motion: To accept the nominations to the Beach Committee.

Moved by: Jacque Napolitano

Second: Bill Rymer

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, they have done great work

Lucy Wilder – Aye, fully supports the committee and thanks Jacque Napolitano for her leadership

Susan Brennan – Aye, they do a lot of work that is appreciated

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, every year has been a success and hope more people will volunteer

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, thanks the members who signed up

Bill Rymer – Aye, supports the slate and thanks Jacque Napolitano for her leadership

c. Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

- Erin Ellinger will lead planning for this year's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and is excited to make the event special. She is seeking ideas for musical performances, including singers or instrumentalists, to lead caroling. The Town has traditionally invited the local church choirs, and Reverend Jake has agreed to participate this year. Council suggested reaching out to other local musicians, including Jack Pyne.
- Community members with suggestions or who wish to help are encouraged to contact Erin. Volunteers would be warmly welcomed.

- The event will include hot chocolate and cookies as in previous years, and Erin is exploring additional touches to make it memorable.
- The ceremony is scheduled for Friday, December 5, immediately following the Town Council meeting (setup beginning around 3:30 - 4:00 PM). Residents and Council members are encouraged to attend and join the festivities.

d. **Bill Rymer request for excused absence from the October Town Council meeting**

He may attend virtually if possible.

Motion: To excuse Bill Rymer from the October Town Council meeting.

Moved by: Natalie Magdeburger

Seconded by: Lucy Wilder

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

6. **Committee Reports - Audit, Beach, Budget & Finance, C&O, Dark Sky, Environmental, Infrastructure, Planning Commission**

Audit – Bill Rymer

No report.

Beach – Jacque Napolitano

- **Fenwick Freeze Event** — The annual *Fenwick Freeze* will be held on January 1, 2026, at Bayard Street. Registration runs from 9:00–10:00 a.m., and the plunge into the ocean will take place at 10:30 a.m. Participants are invited to bring family and friends to celebrate the New Year. EMS personnel from Bethany will be on site for safety. The event will feature commemorative t-shirts for sale (cash and credit accepted), free hot chocolate, a small warming bonfire, and lifeguards on duty.
- **Recognition of Beach Patrol** — Appreciation was expressed to Captain Ryk and the entire Beach Patrol for an excellent and safe summer season. Special recognition was given for their response to a recent medical emergency on James Street, where a beachgoer was successfully stabilized and transported by helicopter to Christiana Hospital for surgery and is now recovering well.
- **Fenwick Flicks 2026** — *Fenwick Flicks* will return for summer 2026 with three family movie nights and one classic movie night planned. Movie titles and dates will be announced soon.

Beach Patrol Storage Upgrades —

- A larger storage shed is being installed at the end of Essex Street to support the Beach Patrol's equipment needs. The existing smaller shed will be relocated to the Police Department for additional storage.
- The site on Essex Street has been prepped, and the new shed is currently being built. Installation is expected later this fall.
- Electrical work is also planned to run power to the Bayard Street shed to improve functionality.

Next Beach Committee Meeting — Scheduled for Friday, November 7, at 9:30 a.m.

Budget & Finance – Bill Rymer

No report.

C&O – Natalie Magdeburger

A meeting of the newly formed committee will be scheduled in **October**. There are several items that need to be discussed. A proposed date will be shared with members, and the committee will be convened once availability is confirmed.

Dark Sky – Rose Mary Hoy

Dark Sky Symposium Follow-Up

- The committee met on September 3, 2025, following the successful Dark Sky Symposium. Thanks were extended to Kathy, Erin, and Mike's team for their efforts in making the event a success.
- Recordings of the symposium have been posted on the Town's website and Facebook page for those who could not attend.

Lighting Resource Guide

- Work has resumed on creating a lighting resource guide for contractors, developers, and residents. The guide will outline considerations and requirements for outdoor lighting when applying for permits.

Education and Outreach

- Plans are underway to build a library of educational materials to support the Town newsletter and future symposium events.
- The committee emphasized that public education on lighting and dark sky initiatives remains a key focus.

Lighting Ordinance Review

- The committee is exploring the process for revisiting the Town’s lighting ordinance. Members are gathering information on the most effective approach to update ordinances and will coordinate with the Charter & Ordinance Committee and Council.

Town Survey Results

- Responses to the Town survey, especially the four Dark Sky Initiative questions, will help guide next steps and determine community interest in further education and policy updates.

Next Meeting

- The next DarkSky Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 5, 2025**. The previously planned October 1 meeting was canceled and removed from the Town website.

Environmental – Susan Brennan

Pollinator Park

- It was an active summer with many daily visitors enjoying walks along Bunting Avenue. The park received positive feedback and additional donations.
- Activities included a Summer Soirée in June and two Children’s Story Time sessions sponsored by the Barefoot Gardeners, both well received by the community.
- Ongoing maintenance work by the Barefoot Gardeners continued throughout the summer. Another maintenance opportunity will be held next month, including enhancement of plantings and soil improvements for next season.

Faucett Okie Family Nature Preserve

- The preserve remains a calm and inviting setting. Three small benches have been added, with plans for natural barriers and a potential large “nest” feature.
- Ideas to improve visibility and access were discussed, including repositioning a parking space and creating a more defined entrance.
- The new Faucett Okie Family Preserve sign has been ordered and paid for; estimated delivery is 4 to 6 months. The sign will feature a dark green background with gold lettering to match other Delaware signage styles.

Grant and Training Initiatives

- Committee members will begin training next month through the Center for the Inland Bays, supported by a Town grant. Materials included in the grant — approximately 60 native shrubs and trees — will be received in the spring. Members will then help with planting and training others in proper installation.

- Discussion confirmed support for moving forward with the Pocket Forest Grant, which includes both receiving materials and committing to training and education.

Community Suggestions

- Some residents suggested a special day for the community to harvest parsley from the pollinator plantings. Caution should be taken due to the presence of butterfly eggs and caterpillars.

Next Meeting

- The next Environmental Committee meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, October 16, 2025** (updated from the original agenda due to scheduling changes).

Infrastructure – Susan Brennan

Coastal Projects Update

Straughan Environmental Coastal Study

- Tim Leahy and Susan Brennan met with Straughn for a kickoff meeting prior to today's session. Data collection has begun, and Straughan staff have already been in Town to gather additional information. A representative from Straughan will attend the next meeting to provide an update.

Farmington Street Berm Demonstration

- The demonstration project for the Farmington Street berm is progressing. Both affected property owners at the street end have granted approval for the work, as the new retaining wall will connect to their existing walls using sandbags.
- A survey is required before construction can fully proceed. We currently have 233 sandbags filled, with another sandbagging date planned for Sunday at 8:30 a.m. on Essex Street.
- Preliminary work that does not impact private property can move forward. However, once work approaches property lines, formal easements will be needed. The Town solicitor has been contacted to prepare easement documents that will be filed with Sussex County and run with the land for clarity in the future.
- The original survey company for these properties is no longer in business. A new survey company is being contacted for estimates, which will require photographs of the area before pricing can be provided.

Planning Commission – Susan Brennan

- The Planning Commission met in early September following Council’s decision to consolidate several committees and update the committee matrix. The Commission is comfortable with the new structure and implementation plan.
- The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, October 9, 2025**.

7. Department Highlights

Public Works – Mike Locke

Seasonal Transition — The Public Works team completed summer mowing and transitioned to fall tasks, including cleaning up the beaches and removing lifeguard stands.

Shed and Dune Protection — Two new retaining walls were built to protect the new shed from shifting sand on the dune. Materials have been received for construction of the berm, which is planned to begin Monday.

Stormwater System Maintenance — Staff are reviewing and maintaining stormwater valves, including those on Farmington Street, to ensure they are functioning properly. Most valves have been upgraded to **ProCo** models and are on a regular inspection and cleaning schedule. Some areas, such as Farmington Street, have limited drainage due to flat elevation, but the team is monitoring and addressing concerns as possible.

Future Improvements — Additional valves will be ordered with the new budget cycle to continue system upgrades. Strong Engineering is assisting with stormwater and berm planning to improve flood resilience.

Police Department – Michael Morrissey

Accreditation Achieved

- The Police Department has completed all requirements for state accreditation. Formal approval is expected at the DPAC Commission meeting in Dover on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, **making the department officially accredited as of Wednesday, October 15, 2025**.
- This milestone follows a two-year process that began when Chief Morrissey assumed leadership. Work included creating and implementing a full policy and procedure manual, improving station organization, updating safety equipment, and strengthening the evidence chain of custody.
- Fenwick Island Police Department is now well ahead of the state’s mandatory accreditation deadline of 2028. Only about half of police departments statewide are currently accredited.

Military Vehicle Return

- The department's final military vehicle will be returned to the Susquehanna Military Base on Friday, October 3, 2025. The vehicle will be transported by trailer to avoid risk of breakdown during the three-hour trip. This completes the removal of military surplus vehicles from the department's inventory.

AED Donation

- Thanks were extended to Laura Ashby, founder of the Dave's Dewey Dash Foundation, for donating an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to the Town.
- The new AED matches the models currently in all police vehicles and Town facilities. Plans are being made to mount it publicly near the lifeguard shed on Bunting Avenue, an area with heavy pedestrian use.
- Staff have completed CPR and AED training. The device is user-friendly and designed to guide an untrained bystander safely through use in an emergency.

Grants and Funding

- The department recently secured **\$37,844.20** in grant funding to support police operations and safety equipment. A summary of grant-supported projects was shared with Council.

Agency Support and Staffing

- The need to assist Delaware State Police has decreased compared to last year, likely due to additional troopers now assigned to the local area. This has improved response efficiency.
- The department congratulated a former Fenwick Island lifeguard who recently graduated from the Delaware State Police Academy and will now serve locally.

Administration – Erin Ellinger

- Administrative staff attended 19 meetings in August, including weekly staff sessions, Council and committee meetings, and Quickbase project meetings.
- **FOIA requests** — Four Freedom of Information Act requests were processed and fulfilled during the month.
- **Quickbase Update** — Ongoing review continues, with current focus on business licensing and building permits.
- **Property taxes** — Payments are being processed. Late fees will begin on Wednesday, October 1, 2025.
- **Cybersecurity grant** — Funding was approved for new technology. Five workstations will be installed next week.
- **Planning ahead** — Work has begun on the 2026 Town schedule.

Beach Patrol – John Rykaczewski

- Captain Ryk reported that the 2025 summer season was safe and successful, with strong staffing and excellent retention of lifeguards. The patrol was well trained and equipped, which contributed to effective rescues and medical responses.
- Season statistics: 83 rescues and assists, 141 minor medical responses, 6 major medical incidents, 2 enforcement actions, 18 missing persons (all located safely), and 268 public beach transports provided to assist individuals with mobility needs.
- Council noted that Fenwick Island’s accessibility efforts, including Mobi Mats and beach transportation services, remain an important community asset and are well appreciated by residents and visitors.
- Recruiting for next season is already underway, with several early candidates identified, including some from the Junior Lifeguard Program.

Recognition

- Council congratulated Captain Ryk on his recent national championship achievement and thanked him for his leadership and dedication to both safety and community engagement.

AED Availability

- Discussion was held regarding the winter use of Beach Patrol AED equipment by Public Works staff.
- It was noted that Public Works currently borrows an AED from Beach Patrol during the off-season. Council suggested evaluating whether a dedicated AED should be purchased for Public Works vehicles rather than borrowing from Beach Patrol to ensure readiness for both departments.

8. Old Business

Committee Appointment

Jacque Napolitano requested inducting Jody Hayden to the Beach Committee.

Motion: To nominate Jody Hayden to the Beach Committee.

Moved by: Jacque Napolitano

Seconded by: Lucy Wilder

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Bill Rymer – Aye, Jody is wonderful for the committee.

Jacque Napolitano – Aye, Jody has served on the committee for several years.

Natalie Magdeburger – Aye, in support

Susan Brennan – Aye, in support

Lucy Wilder – Aye, in support for previous reasons

Kurt Zanelotti – Aye, in support

Discussion about AED availability in Public Works vehicles

It was again noted that during the winter months, Public Works sometimes borrows an AED from the Beach Patrol and keeps it in their trucks in case of emergencies. Bryan Reed, who is with the fire department, shared that he prefers having one available in the vehicle. However, concern was raised about the practice of borrowing the Beach Patrol's AED — specifically the risk of it not being returned or maintained properly before the summer season. Members agreed it would be better for Public Works to have its own dedicated AED rather than rely on borrowing. Staff will look into the possibility of obtaining one for Public Works vehicles.

9. New Business

Public Notice

- It was noted that Artesian Water Company will be conducting water testing in the area over the next few weeks. This may cause temporary discoloration, with water appearing brown. While the water is not considered unsafe to drink, residents may wish to flush their lines after testing is completed.
- Staff were advised that residents may call Town Hall with concerns or questions during this period.

Public Comment - Bob Clark, Schulz Road

Mr. Clark suggested that residents be notified when speed limits are changed. Mayor Magdeburger responded that the speed limit on Schulz Road was changed eight years ago under a previous council and noted the current council is working to have it changed back to 25 mph. She advised Mr. Clark to speak with Chief Morrissey, who is working to have tickets issued under the current limit voided. The Mayor also stated that the previous change did not go through the proper channels.

Mr. Clark shared photos with Council showing flooding on the bayside during two past storms. He expressed concern that rip rap would not be effective in holding back the water. Mayor Magdeburger explained that the Town is developing a master infrastructure plan with Straughan Engineering, which will include recommendations and potential ordinances. She noted that Schulz Road and Dagsboro Street will be key areas of focus.

10. Upcoming Events and Meetings:

October 3	Beach Committee	10:00 AM
October 9	Planning Commission Meeting	9:00 AM
October 14	Infrastructure Committee Meeting	10:00 AM
October 16	Environmental Committee	9:00 AM

October 24	Town Council Executive Session	11:00 AM
October 24	Town Council Regular Meeting	1:00 PM

11. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 2:21 PM.

Moved by: Lucy Wilder

Seconded by: Susan Brennan

Result: Motion passed unanimously.