

Town of Little Creek Council Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2024

The meeting of the Little Creek Town Board was called to order at 7:03 pm by Mayor Edward Strouse. Four Commissioners were present in person. Commissioner May declared that four out of four members of the Board of Commissioners were present in person, therefore, the Town Council had a quorum and was free to conduct business and begin the meeting. The four members of the Board of Commissioners present for the Town of Little Creek Council Meeting: Commissioner Edward Strouse, Commissioner Jason Arrington, Commissioner Adrienne Hegman, and Commissioner Theresa May. Twelve members of the public were in attendance in person for the general meeting: Dennis May, Michael Rinehart, Levy Court Commissioners Terry Pepper and Allan Angel, Penny Gentry, Judith Hegman, Terry Gentry, Sam Gentry, Clay Crommett, Joseph McGonigal, Shawn Brighenti, and Scott Bundek. One member of the public attended the meeting via Zoom: Ed Angwin.

The meeting minutes from the previous month were electronically sent to the commissioners for their review prior to this meeting. These minutes were also made available to all in attendance as hard copies. A motion was made by Commissioner Arrington and seconded by Commissioner Hegman to accept the minutes as received from the secretary/clerk. The motion was put to a full board vote where it was passed unanimously.

The Treasurer's report covering the period from December 4, 2023, to January 8, 2024, was presented as hard copies to the members of the Board of Commissioners prior to the meeting. The report was presented in printed form to those in attendance and read aloud by Commissioner Hegman. Since there were no questions posed by the residents, Commissioner Arrington made a motion to accept the report as presented and the motion was seconded by Commissioner May. When put to a full vote by the board it was passed unanimously.

The current bills were distributed to the Council members as hard copies and in print form to attending residents. The formal motion to pay all the current bills was made by Commissioner Arrington. This motion was seconded by Commissioner May and put to full board for a vote. The Board unanimously passed the motion to pay the current bills.

Committee Reports

- a) **Planning Commission** – Carol Williams and Commissioner Arrington
 - Nothing new to report
- b) **Parks and Recreation** – Commissioner Hegman
 - Nothing new to report.
 - i) **Dog Park** - Mr. Hegman/Ms. Freese
 - Nothing new to report.
- c) **Code Enforcement** – Commissioner Strouse
 - Two letters pending.
- d) **Little Creek Fire Company Report** – President Frazier/Chief Scott Bundek
 - No report.

Old Business –

- a) **Northern Flood Study** - Commissioner Strouse
 - Waiting for FEMA Award Letter. An agreement was reached for the Town's matching funds to be paid with CTF. A CTF check in the amount of \$99,000.00 is being sent toward the project.
 - Need to follow the State Laws and secure 3 competitive bids prior to hiring a company to do the work.
- b) **ARPA** – Commissioner Strouse
 - There is no change from the report at the November meeting.
- c) **Community Partnerships** - Commissioner May
 - Nothing new to report.
- d) **Southern Flood Study** – Commissioner Strouse
 - Study continues.
- e) **ORPT** – Commissioner Strouse
 - The Town was awarded the ORPT grant in the amount of \$75,000.00. The matching funds the Town needs to produce are in the amount of \$25,000.00. \$5,000 of this can be paid in kind. \$10,000.00 will come from ARPA funds. Town can use \$30,000 additional CTF funds toward amount needing to match.
- f) **Cameras for Town Hall and Park** - Commissioner Arrington
 - The Little Creek Town Council has opted to table this topic until February 2024 while awaiting more information from Kyle Tribbitt on affordable systems with the specifications that will provide the best coverage for these areas.
- g) **Traffic Calming** – Commissioner Strouse
 - The Town has paid DeIDOT for the installation of the proposed Stop signs on Main Street near the intersection of Main and Port Mahon. The agreement has been signed and the check has been sent to DeIDOT.
- h) **Future of Town Board of Commissioners** – Commissioner Strouse
 - There are three full-term (2 year) positions on the Board of Commissioners that are up for election in March of 2024. Additionally, there is one partial term (1 year) position that has remained vacant since March of 2023. The current Commissioners are in need of assistance. There is a need for additional members and anyone interested in running for a Town Council position needs to submit a letter of interest to the President of the Board and send it to the Town of Little Creek P.O. Box 298, Little Creek, Delaware 19961. All letters of Intent to run for office of Commissioner must be received by the February 2, 2024 deadline.
 - If residents do not become more involved, the Town Council may need to explore the option to unincorporate, thus going back to governance by Kent County.
 - As of this Town Board of Commissioners meeting, four letters of intent to run for an open seat on the Town Board had been received by Mayor Strouse.
- i) **Town Newsletter**
 - The newsletter is currently being reviewed by Mayor Strouse

j) Comprehensive Plan – Commissioner Arrington

- The Town of Little Creek is currently in compliance with the Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Plan. However, the existing plan will need to be updated. The process involved in re-writing this plan takes approximately 18 months and will be started in April of 2025 for acceptance in 2026.

New Business – Commissioner Strouse

a) Well Testing

- A resident had their well tested for forever chemicals. The numbers were higher than those deemed safe for consumption. The resident reported this to authorities and the well was tested by the state. The numbers came back with similar results prompting DNREC to question the number of wells in the town that may also be affected.
- This public meeting was designed to provide information to residents and ask people to consider getting their well tested in order to determine how wide spread the contamination is and come up with solutions to make the water safer to drink.
- Testing of wells was not mandatory. DNREC began testing wells today, January 8, 2024. A number of people from all areas of Town asked to have their wells tested. The results of the tests conducted will help DNREC to devise a plan of action.

b) New Tax Assessments – Levy Court Commissioners Terry Pepper and Allan Angel

- The property tax assessments process began 4 years ago. The assessments that were sent out reflect the full value of the property. Formerly taxes were assessed on 60% of the property value. By law, Kent County cannot bring in more money next year to make up the amount that was spent on the study. Levy Court Commissioners fought the increases and lost in court. The actual tax rate cannot be determined until after all appeals are heard. Properties will need to be assessed every 5 years. Kent County has to remain neutral and cannot make money through this tax increase.
- The Town of Little Creek will also remain neutral and the taxes will remain unchanged. There will be no increase or decrease to what residents pay in Town property taxes. The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Little Creek is working with an expert, in town, to make sure the property taxes and process for assessment stay fair.

Public Comment

- No Comments.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner May and seconded by Commissioner Hegman. Motion was carried, and the meeting officially ended at 7:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa May

Secretary