

COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Council Committee of the Whole met on July 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. with Council President Neil presiding. Members of Council present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Boggerty, Ms. Hall (via WebEx), Mr. Lewis (via WebEx), Dr. Pillsbury, and Mr. Rocha. Ms. Arndt and Dr. Sudler were absent. Mayor Christiansen was also present. Civilian members present for their Committee meetings were Mr. Garfinkel (via WebEx) (*Legislative, Finance, and Administration*). Mr. Shevock (*Legislative, Finance, and Administration*) was absent.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Rocha moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.

Mayor and Council Reports – May and June 2026

First District

Dr. Pillsbury had nothing to report.

Mr. Rocha reported that he had been working with staff regarding overgrown vegetation in the Maple Dale area, which is being addressed through the appropriate city departments. He also reported attending the African American Festival and noted that he continues to work on internal liaison matters with Mr. Boggerty and Ms. Arndt. Mr. Rocha stated that additional items remain under review pending further information.

Second District

Mr. Lewis had nothing to report.

Ms. Hall had nothing to report.

Third District

Ms. Arndt was absent; no report was given.

Fourth District

Mr. Anderson reported that he had assisted with several constituent matters and thanked city staff for their support in addressing those issues. He noted ongoing follow-up regarding a concern raised at a previous meeting and stated that information would be forwarded to the Police Chief when available. Mr. Anderson also reported increased public interest in the Alderman's Court. He highlighted his participation in the Juneteenth celebration, the African American Festival, and the Fourth of July event, and noted that updates regarding the Hamlet project would be provided at a future meeting.

Dr. Sudler was absent; no report was given.

At-Large

Mr. Boggerty reported that the Construction and Property Maintenance Code Board of Appeals has remained active and thanked the board members, council representatives, and citizen volunteers for their service. He also shared that he is participating in an initiative with the national Blacks in Government organization to support leadership development and encourage interest in government service. Mr. Boggerty noted that he continues to work with Mr. Rocha on pending matters and is collaborating with another organization to foster relationships within the community, with additional information to be shared at a later date. Lastly, Mr. Boggerty reported that he worked with the City Manager and Planning Department to expedite an emergent parking matter involving Calvary Baptist Church and expressed his appreciation for their prompt assistance. He also reported attending the Delaware House of Representatives for consideration of the Delaware John Lewis Voting Rights Act, stating that he attended to support efforts to protect voting rights and prohibit racial discrimination in voting procedures at the local level.

Council President Neil

Council President Neil reported participating in the Fourth of July parade. He stated that he and Ms. Arndt responded to a constituent concern regarding code enforcement and thanked Eddie Kopp for providing clarification. Mr. Neil also met with Richard Murphy, Director of Luther Village, regarding a dispute involving a proposed second emergency egress for a planned expansion and stated that the matter had been referred to City Manager Duca for further review.

Mr. Neil reported participating in the June 24 Construction and Property Appeals Board hearing with Mr. Boggerty and Mr. Rocha. He also worked with city staff to resolve a traffic sign concern in the Wild Meadows community and requested assistance with finalizing council approval of the annexation for 7 Nixon Lane, thanking Dawn Melson-Williams for her assistance.

Mr. Neil stated that he responded to numerous constituent emails regarding electric rate increases and encouraged residents to take advantage of the city's free DEMEC energy efficiency program. He also assisted with communications regarding issues involving the Persimmon Park Place manufactured home community and requested that City Manager Duca review the matter.

Mr. Neil reported responding to inquiries from the Delaware State News and Spotlight Delaware on various issues. He also shared information received from Chief Johnson regarding a traffic camera that had been removed, noting that it may have been part of a traffic study evaluating the feasibility of local speed cameras. Finally, Mr. Neil stated that he and Ms. Arndt received an inquiry regarding unfinished improvements at Dover Park and that Director Roger Ridgeway advised that several issues must be resolved before construction of the ADA-accessible playground can begin.

LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee met with Chairman Anderson presiding.

Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Pillsbury moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Garfinkel and unanimously carried.

Proposed Dual Employment Policy (Naomi Poole, Human Resources Director)

Ms. Naomi Poole, Human Resources Director, reviewed the background and analysis regarding the proposed Dual Employment Policy.

Staff recommended approval of the Dual Employment Policy.

Mr. Rocha moved to recommend acceptance of the staff recommendation for the approval of the dual employment policy. The motion was seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.

Mr. Anderson stated that an item regarding opioid settlement funds had been removed from the agenda due to the need for additional information. He explained that the committee needed documentation regarding the funds, including how much had been received, how the funds were being spent, and the meeting minutes establishing the criteria for approval. He stated that the requested information was expected to be available for the next meeting.

Mr. Anderson emphasized that the city has established processes for allocating public funds, including economic development funds, CDBG funds, ARPA funds, community development funds, and other grant programs. He stated that recommendations should proceed through the appropriate council committee before final approval by council. Mr. Anderson noted that maintaining a transparent and objective process allows the public to understand how public funds are being used and provides equitable opportunities for organizations to apply for available grants.

Mr. Boggerty questioned whether an item that had been removed from the agenda could still be discussed and whether the public would have an opportunity to comment on the matter. He expressed concern that allowing discussion before the necessary information was available could limit the public's ability to provide informed comments when the item is formally considered at a future meeting.

Responding to Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson stated that the public would still have an opportunity to comment when the item is brought forward because agenda items are open for public comment. He explained that the item had been removed from the agenda approximately six hours before the meeting, which was why the matter was addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Boggerty stated that he wanted to ensure members of the public would have the opportunity to comment again once the requested information was available. He emphasized that residents should have access to sufficient information to allow them to provide informed questions and comments.

Mayor Christiansen thanked Mr. Boggerty for raising the concern and emphasized the importance of adhering to public transparency requirements. He requested that discussion on the matter cease until the committee established to review the opioid settlement funds could present the necessary information to council and the public. Mayor Christiansen stated that the public should have the

opportunity to review the information and understand the basis for the grant and funding decisions before providing input. He expressed concern that proceeding without the complete information would not serve the public interest and stated that the matter should be thoroughly reviewed before further action is taken.

Responding to Mayor Christiansen, Mr. Anderson stated that his concern was not with presenting the information but with ensuring that required documentation and transparency measures were followed. He referenced concerns regarding delays in posting meeting minutes and prior FOIA-related issues and stated that the public should have the opportunity to review information and ask questions. Mr. Anderson invited members of the public with questions or comments to come forward.

Michelle Walls, 34 N. Governors Avenue, Dover, stated that she came to speak regarding the opioid settlement funding item that had been scheduled for discussion by the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee and questioned why the item had been removed from the revised agenda and when it would return for consideration. She emphasized the importance of timely use of the settlement funds to support community needs while also stating that the delay provided an opportunity to ensure the process was transparent and properly reviewed. Ms. Walls requested that future discussions regarding the funding include clear public information regarding the amount of funding received, organizations receiving funds, and the intended use of those funds. She suggested creating a publicly accessible resource on the city's website to provide updates and promote accountability. She also encouraged the city to evaluate the effectiveness of funded programs to ensure resources are being used efficiently and producing meaningful results.

Dawn Meija, Dover, expressed concerns regarding the transparency and accountability of the process used to allocate opioid settlement funds. She acknowledged that the item had been removed from the agenda but stated that the public still has the right to ask questions regarding the process and criteria used to develop the proposed allocation. She requested clarification on how recipients were selected, what criteria were used, whether qualified organizations had an opportunity to apply, and what measurable outcomes would be required. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that opioid settlement funds are used effectively to address community needs, including treatment, recovery, and prevention efforts. She encouraged council to provide transparency regarding the selection process, funded organizations, and expected results before the funds are allocated.

Jeanie Anderson, Dover, expressed concerns regarding the transparency of the process used to evaluate and select organizations for opioid settlement funding. She requested information regarding how applicants were vetted, what qualifications were considered, which organizations participated in the process, and whether related meeting minutes and documentation would be made available to the public. She stated that she supports efforts to address drug-related issues in the community but emphasized the importance of an open and transparent process. She requested clarification on whether funds had already been allocated and stated that residents should have access to information regarding the use of public funds.

Mayor Christiansen addressed concerns regarding the transparency and accountability of the opioid settlement funding process. He stated that the item was removed from the agenda because

the necessary information and meeting documentation were not available and emphasized the importance of ensuring the public and council have complete information before further discussion. He stated that, following notification that the city had received opioid settlement funds, meetings were held with city staff to establish a process for tracking and reporting expenditures. He explained that, in addition to the State of Delaware's reporting requirements, the city intends to implement its own accountability measures to monitor awarded funds and require regular reporting from recipients. He noted that the organizations receiving funding were subject to a review process and that additional information would be provided to the public and council once compiled. He expressed his commitment to transparency and accountability and stated that he would work with the committee and staff to make the information available as soon as possible.

Responding to Mayor Christiansen, Mr. Anderson stated that the criteria used by the committee for evaluating opioid settlement funding applications had previously been presented to the Council Committee of the Whole for consideration and approval. He noted that the criteria established objectives, vision, and general guidelines for how the funds would be allocated. Mr. Anderson stated that the committee would need to review the documentation, including meeting minutes, to confirm that the approved criteria were properly applied and that the information would be made available to the public prior to the next meeting. He emphasized the importance of the opioid crisis issue and stated that addressing its impacts remains a significant concern for the city and the broader community.

Bonnie Pennington, Dover, questioned Mayor Christiansen regarding his statement that it was unclear where money went that was given out by the state.

Responding to Ms. Pennington, Mayor Christiansen stated that no money was given to the City of Dover from the first two opioid settlements. He also noted that they would provide a check. He further noted that due to the lack of accountability, he and Mayor West left the committee.

Mayor Christiansen stated that, based on his prior experience with the opioid settlement funding, he believes strong accountability measures are necessary to ensure the funds are used for their intended purpose. He reiterated his support for monthly reporting and oversight by the City Manager and Finance Director, stating that more frequent reporting would provide greater transparency and accountability than quarterly reporting alone. He also noted that additional opioid settlement funding may become available in the future and emphasized the importance of establishing a clear process and accountability framework for the evaluation, award, and monitoring of those funds.

Responding to Ms. Pennington, Mayor Christiansen stated that many of the funds he was referring to were never allotted to the City of Dover; instead, they were provided to entities within the State of Delaware. He reassured her that the City of Dover would not let any money walk away. He reiterated that some of the people who received the funding had high political connections and there was no accountability, which is why he refused to be a part of the disbursements.

Mr. Anderson stated that, despite differences of opinion, he agreed with the Mayor regarding the importance of accountability for opioid settlement funds. He stated that concerns had been raised regarding the State's prior administration of opioid settlement funding, noting that the State

Auditor became involved, and that the new administration made changes to the program's management. Mr. Anderson stated that those concerns related to the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office, not the City of Dover.

Mr. Anderson further explained that the city had expected to receive a share of the opioid settlement funds because the City of Dover was the original party to the litigation. He stated that the state subsequently established a process under which the settlement funds were placed into a statewide fund for distribution to Delaware entities, including municipalities and counties. He noted that the current allocation represents a portion of those settlement funds that will be distributed over ten years and emphasized that the funds now being discussed are the city's share of that statewide allocation.

William G. Faust, Jr., Dover, questioned when the settlement funds would be received and what the total amount to be allotted would be.

Responding to Mr. Faust, Mr. Anderson stated that the City of Dover was to receive \$258,000 in quarterly installments.

Mayor Christiansen noted that, to the best of his knowledge, the disbursements would be quarterly, but the ultimate decision rested with Bradley Owens, the Delaware Opioid Settlement Commission Director. He also noted that one applicant for the City of Dover funds did not qualify, leaving a \$68,000 balance available for an organization to apply for in quarter two and be awarded funds in quarter three.

Responding to Mr. Faust, Mayor Christiansen reiterated that he sat down with staff, and they guaranteed that the funding would be accounted for quarterly.

Responding to Mr. Faust, Mayor Christiansen stated that there are city staff who are on board to ensure the city will receive its funding. Also, the City of Dover was one of the first parties to bring forth litigation and deserves to receive the funding. He noted that he would not agree to serve on the committee if there was no accountability.

Doug Hall, North Dover, began by apologizing to council for the manner in which he addressed the body at a previous meeting. He stated that he attended the meeting to speak about the opioid settlement funding and shared his family's personal experience with substance use disorder. Mr. Hall described his nephew's repeated struggles with addiction, multiple attempts at rehabilitation, and recent relapses, emphasizing the challenges his family has faced in obtaining effective treatment. Mr. Hall expressed concerns regarding the enforcement of drug-related offenses and the availability and effectiveness of local addiction treatment services. He stressed the importance of ensuring that opioid settlement funds are awarded to organizations that provide meaningful treatment and measurable results for individuals struggling with addiction. Mr. Hall also encouraged the city to include individuals with lived experience in substance use recovery when evaluating programs and making funding decisions. He stated that their firsthand knowledge could provide valuable insight into addressing the opioid crisis. Mr. Hall concluded by emphasizing the urgency of the issue and the need for the city to take meaningful action to combat addiction and overdose in the community.

Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Mr. Neil moved for adjournment of the Council Committee of the Whole meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Fred A. Neil
Council President