# REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Regular City Council Meeting was held on July 27, 2026, at 6:36 p.m. with Council President Neil presiding. Council members present were Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Ms. Arndt, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler (via WebEx), and Mr. Lewis.

Staff members present were Deputy Police Chief Kuntzi, Ms. Marney, Ms. Duca, Fire Chief Carey (via WebEx), Deputy Solicitor Lehman, and Mrs. Bennett. Mayor Christiansen was also present.

**<u>OPEN FORUM</u>**
The Open Forum was held at 6:15 p.m., prior to commencement of the Official Council Meeting. Council President Neil declared the Open Forum in session and reminded those present that Council was not in official session and could not take formal action.

William Faust, Jr., 136 Orchard Avenue, addressed the splash pad project, the Downtown Dover Farmers Market, the Fraternal Order of Police investigation, public safety, and costs associated with Proposed Ordinance #2025-21. He requested additional information regarding project delays, expenditures, enforcement efforts, and public records.

Belinda Main, 142 Reese Street, thanked Sharon Duca, City Manager, for addressing neighborhood traffic concerns through the installation of children-at-play signage and expressed concern regarding increasing utility rates.

Dante Daniel, Chief Operating Officer of the Get Work Foundation, presented a proposal for a youth community and sports center that would combine recreation, education, mentorship, workforce development, and wellness programming. He requested city support for funding a feasibility study and advised that the organization planned to return with additional information in September. **(Exhibit #1)**

Darlene Hitchens, Dover, Delaware, raised questions regarding the Downtown Dover Farmers Market, including funding, vendor fees, police presence, trash removal, and community benefits.

Bonnie Pennington, 200 North Kirkwood Street, expressed concerns regarding speeding, traffic safety, constituent responsiveness, and neighborhood equity, encouraging council to focus on traffic enforcement while allowing children opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Jeffery Taylor, Dover, addressed homelessness, addiction, and social services, urging additional efforts to assist individuals experiencing homelessness and substance abuse.

**<u>INVOCATION</u>**
The invocation was given by Elder Ellis B. Louden.

**<u>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</u>**
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Pillsbury.

## ADOPTION OF AGENDA

**Ms. Arndt moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Boggerty and unanimously carried.**

## ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

All Consent Agenda items are considered routine and non-controversial and will be acted upon by a single roll call vote of the Council. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of Council so requests, in which event the matter shall be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered a separate item.

**Mr. Rocha moved for adoption of the consent agenda, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis).**

## ADOPTION OF MINUTES - REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF JULY 13, 2026

**The Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of July 13, 2026, were unanimously approved by motion of Mr. Rocha, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury, and bore the written approval of Mayor Christiansen.**

### SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT - JUNE 8, 2026

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for acceptance of the Special Legislative, Finance and Administration Committee Report, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis). (Exhibit #2)**

### SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT - JULY 9, 2026

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for acceptance of the Special Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee Report, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis). (Exhibit #3)**

### COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT - JULY 14, 2026

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.**

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for approval of the Committee's recommendation, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis).**

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.**

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for acceptance of the Council Committee of the Whole Report, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis).**

## QUARTERLY REVIEW – CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN REPORT (CIP) (APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE)

Members were provided with the Quarterly Report for the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) as of June 30, 2026.

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for acceptance of the Quarterly Report for the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) as of June 30, 2026, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis).**

## QUARTERLY REVENUE REPORT AS OF JUNE 30, 2026

Members were provided with the Quarterly Review Report as of June 30, 2026.

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for acceptance of the Quarterly Revenue Report as of June 30, 2026, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis).**

## APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS – RECOMMENDED BY MAYOR CHRISTIANSEN

**By consent agenda, Mr. Rocha moved for approval of the following appointments, as recommended by Mayor Christiansen, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a roll call vote of seven (7) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Neil) and two (2) abstentions (Ms. Arndt and Mr. Lewis).**

**BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT – THREE-YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE JULY 2029**
Clarence C. Wagner, II

**CODE BOARD OF APPEALS – ONE- YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE MAY 2027**
Belinda Main
Steven LeBoon

**CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE BOARD OF APPEALS – ONE-YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE MAY 2027**
Matthew D. Campana, Representative of Homeowners
Charles C. K. Martin, Representative of Local Real Estate Industry Association

**DOVER PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION – FIVE-YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE JULY 2029**
Catherine A. Huffman (to fill the unexpired term of Shermaine E. Johnson-Moore)

**ELECTION BOARD – THREE-YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE MAY 2028**
Richard P. Gaydos (to fill the expired term of Mr. James W. Brockton)

**ETHICS COMMISSION – FIVE-YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE JULY 2031**
Dr. Samuel B. Hoff

**PROPOSED DUAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

Sharon Duca, City Manager, introduced the proposed Dual Employment Policy and recognized Naomi Poole, Human Resources Director, who was in attendance virtually.

Mr. Anderson noted that the policy consisted of clarifying language specifying that it applied to all employees, while council employees would receive authorization through their appointing authority.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Duca stated that Ms. Poole had worked with the State of Delaware, but she would need to clarify which agency and whether it was the Public Integrity Commission.

**Mr. Anderson moved for adoption of the Dual Employment Policy, seconded by Mr. Boggerty and unanimously carried by a roll call vote.**

**FINAL READING - PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2026-05**

The First Reading of the Proposed Ordinance was accomplished during the Council Meeting of July 13, 2026. Council President Neil reminded members of the public that copies of the proposed ordinance were available at the entrance of the Council Chambers or on the City's website at www.cityofdover.gov under "Government".

**Mr. Rocha moved that the Final Reading of the proposed ordinance be acknowledged by title only, seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and unanimously carried.**

Mr. Eddie Kopp, Chief Code Enforcement Officer, reviewed the proposed amendments.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Kopp stated that Code Enforcement addresses abandoned equipment during normal business hours, while the Police Department would be responsible for enforcement of activity occurring in the roadway.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Kopp stated that he did not recommend allowing games to be played within the public right-of-way because of safety concerns. He also noted that the policy should be applied consistently throughout the city rather than in certain areas.

Dr. Sudler explained that he would not support the ordinance due to the safety concerns for pedestrians and motorists.

Ms. Hall stated that she supported providing children with opportunities for neighborhood recreation, but she believed that the proposed 30-minute limitation for the equipment remaining in the street was too restrictive and suggested a longer time period.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Kopp stated that the complaints received primarily involved basketball goals and other recreational equipment being left in the street, creating potential hazards and obstructing the public rights-of-way, rather than complaints solely about children playing.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Kopp explained that violations involving equipment left in the street would be handled in the same manner as other property maintenance violations. Property owners would first be notified and given the standard compliance period of thirty days before a citation would be issued.

Responding to Ms. Arndt, Mr. Kopp noted that complaints had originated from neighborhoods throughout the city rather than from any one specific area.

Mr. Kopp clarified that under the current city code, playing ball in the street is prohibited. He explained that the proposed ordinance would instead create limited circumstances under which basketball and similar games could occur while regulating the storage of recreational equipment in the public right-of-way.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Kopp stated that although he did not know the original adoption date, he believed the ordinance had been enacted primarily for pedestrian and traffic safety.

Mr. Anderson moved for adoption of Proposed Ordinance #2026-05 as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rocha.

Mr. Rocha stated that the ordinance specifically addressed games involving balls and similar objects rather than all forms of play in the street. He explained that he was supporting providing children with opportunities for neighborhood recreation while recognizing the importance of public safety.

Mr. Anderson moved to amend the ordinance at line 10 to read that it be unlawful on arterial roads, or non-residential roads, or between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Ms. Arndt asked if the motion could be repeated.

Mr. Anderson stated that the motion was to add on line 10 after unlawful on arterial roads or non-residential streets, or between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Anderson stated that the Police Department would enforce play occurring within the roadway while Code Enforcement would address equipment being left in the public right-of-way. He also clarified that the amendment would continue to prohibit recreational activities on arterial roads and non-residential streets while permitting limited recreational activity on residential streets.

Mr. Anderson moved to amend the ordinance to add on line 10 after unlawful "on arterial roads or non-residential streets, or between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rocha.

Mr. Kopp recommended that the term "arterial roads" be defined within the ordinance to improve public understanding.

Mr. Anderson noted that he was amenable to adding a clear definition or clarifying verbiage.

Mr. Anderson asked the Deputy Solicitor if he had a good legal synonym for arterial roads.

Deputy Solicitor Lehman recommended defining the term by reference to speed limits, such as roads where the speed limit exceeds 25 mph.

Mr. Anderson noted that many roads reach above 25 mph.

Mr. Rocha suggested identifying arterial roads as "high-capacity roads". Mr. Anderson accepted the modification without objection.

**Mr. Anderson moved to amend the ordinance to add on line 10 after unlawful "on arterial "high capacity" roads, or non-residential streets, or between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rocha and carried with Mr. Lewis, Dr. Sudler, and Ms. Arndt voting no.**

**Mr. Anderson moved for adoption of Proposed Ordinance #2026-05 as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rocha and carried by a roll call vote of five (5) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Rocha, and Mr. Neil) and four (4) no (Dr. Pillsbury, Ms. Arndt, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Lewis).**

Mr. Rocha moved for reconsideration of the ordinance for the purpose of revisiting the 30-minute equipment storage provision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously carried.

**Mr. Rocha moved for reconsideration of Proposed Ordinance #2026-05 to reconsider the 30-minute time limit. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and carried by a roll call vote of six (6) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Arndt, Mr. Rocha, and Mr. Neil) and three (3) no (Dr. Pillsbury, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Lewis).**

**Mr. Rocha moved to amend line 16 to reflect 60 minutes and strike 30 minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hall and carried by a roll call vote of five (5) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Rocha, and Mr. Neil) and four (4) no (Dr. Pillsbury, Ms. Arndt, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Lewis).**

**By motion of Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Rocha, Council, by a roll call vote of five (5) yes (Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Rocha, and Mr. Neil) and four (4) no (Dr. Pillsbury, Ms. Arndt, Dr. Sudler, and Mr. Lewis), adopted Ordinance #2026-05 with Staff Amendment #1 (SA#1), as amended, as follows:**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DOVER, IN COUNCIL MET:**

That Chapter 70- Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 70-4- Throwing and kicking objects and playing games in the streets and public places, be amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 70-4.** Playing games and storing equipment in streets and public places.

(a) It shall be unlawful on arterial "high capacity" roads, or non-residential streets, or between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. for any person to throw, kick, or project, in any manner whatsoever, any ball, or other object in the city streets and public places, or to play or practice athletic games, quoits, pitching pennies, and like games on the city streets and public places.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to store or leave unattended for sixty minutes or more play equipment or other similar objects in streets, public right-of-way, or any area where pedestrian or vehicular traffic could be hindered or impeded within the corporate limits of the city, unless those places are specifically designated for those purposes by lawful authorities.

(c) Play equipment is defined as any structure or object designed for recreational play use. This includes, but is not limited to, basketball goals, nets, ramps, swings, slides, and climbing frames.

**Charter reference** - Power of council to regulate use of streets, subpart A, § 29.

ADOPTED: July 27, 2026

## CITY MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Sharon Duca, City Manager, announced that the city's annual tax bills had been mailed and reminded residents that the payments could be made without penalty through August 31, 2026.

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Mayor Christiansen reminded residents that National Night Out would be held on August 3, 2026, at Dover High School and encouraged everyone to attend. He also announced that the Third Annual Baila Con Dover festival would be held on August 29, 2026, at Legislative Mall.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Mr. Boggerty addressed a matter concerning committee liaison assignments and withdrew his offer to serve as an alternate liaison for the Dover Human Relations Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

ANDRIA L. BENNETT
CITY CLERK

All ordinances, resolutions, motions, and orders adopted by City Council during their Regular Meeting of July 27, 2026, are hereby approved.

ROBIN R. CHRISTIANSEN
MAYOR

Exhibits
Exhibit #1 – Get Work Foundation Handout
Exhibit #2 – Special Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee Report of June 8, 2026
Exhibit #3 – Special Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee Report of July 9, 2026

GET WORK
FOUNDATION
From Potential to Purpose.

# DOVER CITY COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PATH

## $50,000 - $60,000 FEASIBILITY STUDY BUDGET AMENDMENT

### LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVE

Approve a one-time FY2027 budget amendment from the Economic & Community Development Fund for an independent feasibility and economic-impact study in the amount of $50,000 - $60,000. This does not authorize construction, property acquisition, debt, or future facility funding.

**$50,000 - $60,000**

### LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

1. **Secure two Council sponsors**
   A lead sponsor and co-sponsor introduce and advocate for the amendment.
2. **Submit the agenda request**
   Send the request to the Council President, City Clerk, City Manager, Controller/Treasurer, and City Solicitor.
3. **Obtain staff certification**
   Confirm the money is uncommitted, legally available, and eligible for this purpose.
4. **Refer to committee**
   Route through Legislative, Finance and Administration or the appropriate Committee of the Whole.
5. **Approve committee recommendation**
   Direct staff to prepare the ordinance, budget entries, consultant scope, and procurement process.
6. **Complete required readings**
   Announce and introduce the ordinance, then return it for final consideration at the required subsequent meeting.
7. **Approve the amendment**
   Secure at least five affirmative Council votes and written approval from the Mayor.
8. **Begin City procurement**
   The City competitively selects and contracts with an independent consultant.
9. **Require public reporting**
   The consultant delivers a final report and publicly presents findings and recommendations.

### REQUIRED CONTENT & APPROVALS

#### THE ORDINANCE MUST

- Appropriate an amount not to exceed $50,000 - $60,000.
- Identify the Economic & Community Development Fund as the source.
- Create a professional-services expenditure line.
- Authorize the City Manager to administer the contract.
- State that the action does not authorize construction or future funding.

#### THE STUDY SHOULD EVALUATE

- Market demand and sports-tourism potential.
- Community need and potential Dover sites.
- Construction and operating costs.
- Revenue, jobs, hotel stays, and visitor spending.
- Ownership, governance, and funding options.
- Whether the project should proceed, change, phase, or stop.

#### COUNCIL IS APPROVING

- A limited planning appropriation up to $60,000.
- Independent professional due diligence.
- A City-controlled consultant process.
- A public report and recommendation.

#### COUNCIL IS NOT APPROVING

- Construction or site acquisition.
- City debt or future operating subsidies.
- A grant paid directly to GetWork Foundation.
- Automatic funding after the study.

### KEY MESSAGE FOR COUNCILMEMBERS

Council is not being asked to approve or build the facility. Council is being asked to fund independent due diligence so Dover can determine whether the project is viable, sustainable, and capable of producing measurable economic and community benefits.

## SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

A Special Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee Meeting was held on June 08, 2026, at 5:01 p.m. with Chairman Anderson presiding. Members of Council present were Council President Neil, Ms. Arndt, Mr. Boggerty, Ms. Hall (in at 5:12 p.m.), Mr. Lewis (in at 5:06 p.m.), Dr. Pillsbury (via WebEx), Mr. Rocha, and Dr. Sudler. Mayor Christiansen was also present. Civilian members present were Mr. Shevock and Mr. Garfinkel (in at 5:11 p.m.).

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Ms. Arndt moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Shevock and unanimously carried.**

**Proposed Ordinance #2026-12 – Amending Chapter 2 – Administration, Article V. – Finance, by adding Sec. 4-428. – Public Safety Fee (Sharon Duca, Acting City Manager)**

Ms. Sharon Duca, Acting City Manager, reviewed the background for Proposed Ordinance #2026-12.

Staff recommended forwarding Proposed Ordinance #2026-12 to council for approval.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Duca stated that the ordinance is structured to mirror processes similar to sanitation, sewer, etc., where rates are included in the rates and tariffs. She noted that once council has taken action, the residential rates would be set at zero. The commercial rates would be divided into three groups: small, medium, and large, which coincide with the electric designation for sizing commercial properties. Those rates would be $10, $20, and $40 a month.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Duca stated that it is set up so that residential could be included in the future if it were needed.

Mr. Anderson noted that the commercial numbers apply to businesses, nonprofits, and so forth.

Responding to Mayor Christiansen, Ms. Duca stated that the funds would be allocated for specific expenses related to police and fire. The funds for the fire department would be used towards fire truck debt services and purchases. The police department funds would be used in relation to their administrative expenses and capital costs. Therefore, establishing a separate fund would ensure that the money is going directly to where it is supposed to, due to the additional accounting standards that are required to monitor those funds.

Responding to Mayor Christiansen, Ms. Duca stated that it is important for the public to understand that the city does not cover their full expenses outside of the allotment provided once a year. Most of the funding is gathered through the volunteer fire department. She explained that the city covers fire truck purchases, which are being focused on. The needs of the fire department are not negated by the creation of the fee.

Mr. Anderson noted that he spoke with Chief Carey of the Dover Fire Department who did not raise any objections.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Duca stated that the proposed fund's allocations should be discussed during the budget hearing process so that council is aware of how the funds will be used. She noted that if $600,000 is budgeted, the intended uses of those funds should be identified during budget deliberations. Ms. Ducas further stated that any additional funding needs or newly identified expenditure should be brought back before council for discussion and consideration.

**Mr. Rocha moved to accept the staff recommendation for Proposed Ordinance #2026-12. The motion was seconded by Dr. Sudler and unanimously carried.**

**Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.**

## SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

A Special Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee Meeting was held on July 09, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. with Chairman Anderson presiding. Members of Council present were Council President Neil, Mr. Rocha, Mr. Lewis, Dr. Pillsbury, and Dr. Sudler. Ms. Arndt, Mr. Boggerty, and Ms. Hall were absent. Mayor Christiansen was also absent. Civilian members present were Mr. Garfinkel and Mr. Shevock *(Legislative, Finance, and Administration)*.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
**Mr. Neil moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.**

**Discussion on the FY2026-27 Long-Term Fiscal Solvency, Wealth, and Health Optimization of The Capital of Delaware (Councilman Sudler and Councilman Lewis)**
Before the discussion began, Council President Neil read into the record a statement regarding the proposal (**Attachment #1**).

Dr. Sudler thanked Mr. Anderson for allowing the presentation to be included on a special meeting agenda for an extensive discussion.

Dr. Sudler requested that Ms. Arielle Rivera, Assistant City Clerk, read the questions submitted by Mr. Anderson and the responses provided by Dr. Sudler (**Attachment #2**).

Mr. Garfinkel thanked Dr. Sudler for the presentation and commented on the thoroughness of the presentation. He emphasized the importance of planning for the future. He stated that the costs of providing services should be shared by those who benefit from them, either directly or indirectly, rather than relying primarily on taxpayers.

Mr. Rocha expressed appreciation for initiating the discussion early in the fiscal year rather than near the end of the budget cycle. He commended Dr. Sudler and Mr. Lewis for listening to both the community and council's concerns. He stated that the proactive approach would better position the city to prepare for future fiscal challenges.

Mr. Lewis stated that the proposal had been made available online. He encouraged the public to review the proposal and stated that the city should address the issue rather than continue delaying action. He explained that the proposal, developed with Dr. Sudler, was intended to help reduce the financial burden on residents and taxpayers.

William Faust, Jr., Dover, stated that he had reviewed the proposal and questioned how existing tax abatements for downtown development projects would affect it. He expressed support for the proposal, stating that it was intended to reduce the financial burden on residents and that no alternative proposal had been presented. He also shared concerns about rising utility costs, the economic challenges facing residents and local businesses, and encouraged council to work together to identify a long-term solution.

Bonnie Pennington, Dover, thanked Mr. Lewis and Dr. Sudler for developing the proposal and expressed her support for the idea. She stated that the proposal would benefit residents broadly and acknowledged the financial challenges many individuals face with increasing costs of living, including household expenses, medical costs, and utility bills.

Vonderlear Smack, Dover, thanked Mr. Lewis and Dr. Sudler for listening to constituents and bringing forward the proposal. She stated that she had been raising concerns about increasing electric rates for several years and shared that she has received calls from elderly residents seeking assistance with utility bills. Ms. Smack asked whether the city could consider rolling back the most recent rate increase to provide relief for residents on fixed incomes.

Responding to Ms. Smack, Dr. Sudler stated that the proposal would provide a mechanism for reallocating surplus funds back to residents and constituents in future years, pending council's approval and the proposal's implementation. He stated that the plan would increase baseline revenue or reserves in the first year and, if projections are met, could allow for reductions in utility costs and potentially help offset future tax increases. He acknowledged that relief would not occur immediately but stated that the proposal represented a step toward addressing long-term financial concerns. Dr. Sudler also noted that the city has customer assistance programs available and referred residents to Customer Service for additional information.

Dr. Sudler reviewed the presentation entitled "Growth Pays for Growth" (**Attachment #3**).

Mr. Garfinkel moved to accept the Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (CAMSA) presentation and authorize City Manager Sharon Duca and the municipal budget team to conduct a rigorous sustainability, feasibility, and validity appraisal of the "Growth Pays for Growth" conceptual model, establishment of Section 49A (Municipal Services Impact Fee) by August 24, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shevock.

Mr. Rocha asked how the proposal would impact the city's budget structure and enterprise funds, specifically, and whether utility fees associated with electric and water services would remain in place or be restructured under the proposed method.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Dr. Sudler stated that, to his understanding, the enterprise fund fees would continue but could potentially be reduced. He stated that further discussion and review would be needed to determine the specific impact and suggested that additional information could be provided by the Controller and Treasurer.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Patricia Marney, Controller/Treasurer, stated that the proposal would require further review, including research and discussions with other municipalities regarding similar approaches. She explained that enterprise funds and the General Fund must remain separate and that utility fees would continue because they cover the costs associated with operating and maintaining specific utilities. She clarified that the proposal could potentially provide an alternative funding source for certain capital and infrastructure costs, which could help reduce portions of utility charges. Ms. Marney noted that usage-based fees would remain in place, while the proposal could potentially impact customer charges associated with infrastructure costs.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Marney used the example of an electric bill. She stated that the customer charge covers the cost of bringing the transformers and putting the infrastructure in place. The usage fee is the amount the customer has used. She noted that, from her interpretation, it would be reducing the customer fee.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Marney stated that the implementation details would need further development if the proposal moved forward. She explained that the structure of any potential transfer between funds would need to be clearly defined, documented, and aligned with each fund's designated purposes, with final decisions to be made by council.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Marney stated that the city receives approximately $450,000 from the State of Delaware and 1.6 million from the Grant-in-aid funding, which was allocated to public safety and higher education funds.

Ms. Marney stated that she believed the proposal was worth exploring but that it would require additional discussion and could present implementation challenges. She advised that implementation may not be feasible until Fiscal Year 2028 and explained that the approach would depend on how council chooses to structure and bill the proposed fee. Ms. Marney noted that changes to the city's billing and accounting systems could be required, resulting in implementation costs and additional time before the proposal could be put into effect. She explained that Seattle uses their tax billing system to bill their fee.

Responding to Mr. Rocha, Ms. Marney stated that there appears to be a path to establishing the proposed revenue as a restricted fund dedicated to specific purposes, such as reducing utility costs and funding infrastructure improvements. She explained that the implementation would depend on how the proposal is structured and drafted and would require amendments to the City Charter and Code of Ordinances, along with further evaluation of the proposal's details.

Mr. Anderson stated that the proposal represented the beginning of a longer process and noted that it would require a fiscal note, which distinguishes it from many other charter amendments. He expressed support for placing the matter on a future agenda to allow for further consideration and potential coordination with the state's budget process. Mr. Anderson encouraged public engagement and support for the proposal, stating that its advancement would require participation from both city officials and residents. He also referenced examples from other municipalities that receive state support through similar funding mechanisms, such as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which received $5 million from the State of Pennsylvania for its PILOT.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Marney stated that Wilmington received millions in PILOT funding because of the language in the state code governing PILOT. She explained that they received one hundred percent of their taxable value, whereas, by code, the City of Dover receives only thirty percent. Additionally, she noted that the amount billed exceeded the state budget, so the City of Dover PILOT was reduced by $885,000. However, Mr. Anderson was able to recoup those funds.

Mr. Anderson explained that he questioned the city's PILOT funding and was told it was awarded to Wilmington because its taxes increased. He thanked Senator Paradee and Senator Pettyjohn for their assistance, noting that Georgetown was affected as well. He stated that the proposed legislation could provide greater statutory predictability for future funding but emphasized that it would require thorough legal and fiscal review, broad support, and significant advocacy to secure the necessary approval.

Dr. Pillsbury expressed concern that the proposal could shift costs to other entities, which might result in increased costs elsewhere. She noted that, while she was not opposed to the proposal, she believed it was important to consider the potential broader financial impacts of reallocating those costs.

Responding to Dr. Pillsbury, Dr. Sudler stated that the proposal was designed to protect residents by providing a mechanism to reduce and potentially freeze residential utility costs over time. He stated that larger institutions have additional resources and funding mechanisms, such as grants and bond bill money, available to offset increased costs. In contrast, individual residents often have fewer options for financial relief. He emphasized that the proposal would provide residents with additional support in managing their monthly financial obligations.

Mr. Neil stated that he would support moving the proposal forward to allow staff to evaluate its feasibility, identify potential challenges, and provide a report to council. He acknowledged that the proposal may receive significant feedback and discussion from various stakeholders due to its potential impact. Mr. Neil stated that he believed the proposal warranted further review, particularly given that a portion of the city's population does not pay property taxes. He emphasized the importance of understanding the proposal's practicality and potential outcomes before proceeding further.

Mr. Anderson requested that Ms. Rivera read back the motion.

Ms. Rivera stated that Mr. Garfinkel moved to accept the Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (CAMSA) presentation and authorize City Manager Sharon Duca and the municipal budget team to conduct a rigorous sustainability, feasibility, and validity appraisal of the “Growth Pays for Growth” conceptual model, establishment of Section 49A (Municipal Services Impact Fee) by August 24, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shevock.

Mr. Anderson noted that the second set of meetings in August would be canceled, and the intention is to have the item back on the agenda in September so that a Resolution can be adopted by council before the end of September, allowing the General Assembly to begin lobbying for the city. He also recommended an amendment to add a legal review to the motion.

Mr. Garfinkel stated that he was in favor of the amendment. Mr. Shevock, the seconder, was in favor of the amendment. The amendment to add a legal review to the motion was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Faust expressed support for the proposal and encouraged those with concerns or alternative viewpoints to present other solutions. He stated that the city must continue working toward making Dover an affordable and safe place to live and expressed concerns about the impact of rising costs on residents. Mr. Faust commended Mr. Lewis and Dr. Sudler for developing and presenting the proposal and encouraged continued discussion and consideration of solutions to address the city's financial challenges.

LaChelle Paul, Dover, stated that she had reviewed the proposal in detail and provided comments regarding potential legal, funding, and implementation considerations. She stated that the proposed charge would likely need to be structured as a fee rather than a tax due to limitations related to taxing nonprofit organizations. Ms. Paul expressed concerns regarding the sustainability of grant funding and recommended establishing a cap on potential charges to ensure the proposal remains manageable for affected entities and other municipalities. She noted the importance of carefully structuring the proposal to avoid shifting costs to residents through other organizations and stated that additional safeguards could improve the likelihood of legislative approval.

Responding to Ms. Duca, Dr. Sudler stated that MSIF was intended to be a municipal service infrastructure fee strictly for infrastructure.

Responding to Ms. Duca, Dr. Sudler stated that he initially proposed using the gross square footage. However, he noted that they can continue additional research into how other municipalities are implementing it.

Ms. Duca stated that staff had initiated the process of reviewing priority-based budgeting for Fiscal Year 2028. She explained that department heads had begun evaluating Fiscal Year 2026 operations and that additional work would be needed to analyze programs and priorities under this approach. Ms. Duca stated that staff intends to bring forward a proposal to council early in the process for review and consideration by both council and the public.

**Mr. Garfinkel moved to accept the Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (CAMSA) presentation and authorize Sharon Duca, City Manager, and the municipal budget team to conduct a rigorous sustainability, feasibility, and validity appraisal of the "Growth Pays for Growth" conceptual model, establishment of Section 49A (Municipal Services Impact Fee), and a complete legal review by the first meeting in September. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shevock and unanimously carried.**

Mr. Anderson noted that the Legislative, Finance, and Administration meeting of July 28, 2026, would be canceled.

**Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.**

David L. Anderson
Chair, Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee

<u>Attachments</u>
Attachment #1 – Council President Neils' remarks
Attachment #2 – Mr. Anderson and Dr. Sudler's email correspondence
Attachment #3 – Presentation Entitled "Growth Pays for Growth"

## Special Session Remarks for July 9, 2026 FY 28 Budget Proposal
## By Dover City Council President Fred Neil

During my years as a news reporter, I learned to be wary of politicians who arrive with a handful of seeds promising to grow money trees and free citizens from taxes increases. That experience shapes how I view the eleventh hour financial maneuver attempted by two of our members—an effort the General Assembly would not act on unless this Council, as a whole, formally requested it. That is not fiscal policy. That is politics.

The timing alone reveals the political nature of the proposal. Previous attempts to impose a PILOT —Payment in Lieu of Taxes—on the 45% of Dover properties that are tax exempt triggered a loud and forceful backlash from the legally not taxable. The Council stepped back. Yet here we are again, with grandiose assertions reported in the Delaware State News on July 6, 2026, claims as debatable as the old question of what came first, the chicken or the egg.

Even if one accepted the premise, the practical hurdles are enormous. Securing agreement from the affected institutions would require extensive negotiation, but negotiation has not been mentioned —likely a session or two of legislative work—and there is no guarantee of success. The article suggests private non-profits could simply obtain grants to cover the additional costs. But grants to municipalities are drying up nationwide, a trend driven by decisions in Washington. Is that realistic, or is that politics talking?

Meanwhile, the State and City have already demonstrated what real investment looks like.

Downtown redevelopment is producing the tax base Dover needs: 120 apartments and retail at the former Acme site, and 42 apartments with retail at the old Post Office. These projects are just a start. They will bring residents, activity, and long-term revenue—without gimmicks.

And none of this touches the core issue: Delaware's fractured revolving door justice system. Endorsing changes to Dover's budget process will not cure a system that releases arrested drug dealers on unsecured bail the same day or allows individuals struggling with addiction and mental illness to avoid accountability. Our kindhearted legislators have unintentionally created conditions that undermine public safety. Budget changes do not fix that.

Despite the political origins of the proposal, I value the discussion. There may be elements staff can examine and adapt—ideas with practical merit once stripped of political packaging. Council members are not the financial experts; we set the theory. Staff reports on the practicality.

Our responsibility is to separate political theater from fiscal reality.

**From:** Roy Sudler Jr.
**To:** Anderson, David; Lewis, Brian; City Clerks Office
**Cc:** Duca, Sharon; Marney, Patricia
**Subject:** EXTERNAL: Re: Proposal
**Date:** Thursday, July 9, 2026 4:45:16 PM



Chairman Anderson,
Thank you for the inquiry!
Provided for your review and submission to the Legislative Finance and Administrative Committee is the response to your questions.

1. **The state of Delaware isn't just tax-exempt like the other entities; it is tax-immune. We have no authority to tax it. That means the fee must relate to costs incurred.**

**Pg. 6 and 7PDF**
**The Fee Distinction:** This is why frameworks such as the Municipal Services Impact Fee (MSIF) are transitioning away from **ad valorem structures [2026-CAMSA-07].** Because the MSIF is classified as a regulatory service fee calculated strictly on Gross Square Footage (GSF) rather than an ad valorem tax based on valuation, it bypasses traditional tax-exempt protections [2026-CAMSA-07]. It legally compels large institutions to pay for the exact physical utility and emergency assets they consume, creating structural fiscal equity [2026-CAMSA-07].
As these entities expand, they absorb geographic territory, removing valuable acreage from the taxable land base while driving up service demands [2026-CAMSA-04]. CAMSA resolves this paradox by shifting from property valuation to a regulatory service fee of $1.00 per gross square foot (GSF), ensuring that non-residential mega-structures pay their fair share [2026-CAMSA-07].
**Pg. 6 and 7PDF**

2. **Where did you get the fee level? How do you back it up based upon costs?**

The fee structure is based on Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB), which connects municipal costs to specific infrastructure and public safety needs created by large developments. The entry-level billing rate is set at $1.00 per Gross Square Foot (GSF) per the CAMSA financial framework. PBB focuses on the city's core goals, such as resident safety and utility repairs, ensuring funding is directed towards programs that achieve these objectives [2026-CAMSA-07]. To address the city's structural deficit without raising property taxes or imposing administrative costs on residential utility accounts, a target of $12,990,000 in annual revenue is required from Dover's 12,990,000 GSF tax-exempt institutional tier.
**Pg. 9 and 10PDF**

3. **Is the possible loss of PILOT and Higher ed public safety grant in your calculations?**

YES!
The potential loss of traditional state Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) programs and the Higher Education Public Safety Grant are key reasons the CAMSA framework totals $12,990,000. This framework channels MSIF revenues into dedicated infrastructure funds through Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB), eliminating unpredictable deficits in the general fund.
Instead of relying on uncertain state allocations, CAMSA is designed to overcome the loss of these grants by establishing a stable, legally binding local fee. Traditional PILOT and higher education grants are unreliable and do not cover the actual costs of maintaining infrastructure for 12.99 million square feet of tax-exempt property. CAMSA secures an independent revenue stream that benefits local taxpayers and reduces dependence on these inconsistent grants.
**Pg. 9 and 10PDF**

4. **How will this impact the hospital expansion needed?**

It will have a positive impact on the hospital's expansion because the CAMSA proposal is designed to decisively support and stabilize the infrastructure necessary for the hospital expansion, which is essential to accommodate large-scale medical developments. It ensures that these advancements can proceed without overburdening Dover's public utility networks or straining local residential taxpayers. Given that regional medical centers, like Bayhealth, are generally tax-exempt, their substantial expansions can impose significant structural stress on the city's infrastructure while failing to contribute to the property tax base.

5. **Our current billing system is not set up for this proposal. Is software and staffing costs considered for the first year? How much will administration cost?**

**Pg. 7 and 8PDF**
**Yes,** the proposal includes first-year software and staffing costs through an Administrative Cost Recovery Carve-Out within the core allocations. CAMSA uses verified Municipal GIS Division datasets to identify non-residential, tax-exempt structures over 50,000 GSF, establishing a billing baseline of 12,990,000 GSF, which generates $12,990,000 annually in cost-recovery revenue [2026-CAMSA-07]. Following Revenue Policy Mandate 7, CAMSA sets strict budget controls, allocating the $12.99 million into sub-accounts: 50.04% for safety, 34.56% for grid repair, and 15.40% for reserve stabilization [2026-CAMSA-07].
Importantly, the proposal doesn't require new taxpayer dollars so that it won't impact Dover's General Fund. Instead, it creates a self-funded administrative launch to finance the software integration and staffing needed to modernize our billing systems, turning IT and GIS into revenue-generating assets at no cost to local taxpayers.
**Pg. 7 and 8PDF**

6. **What is an example of a place with this proposal?**

Footprint-based impact fees are legally recognized across a range of jurisdictions, from Oklahoma to California, to offset infrastructure expenditures. Priority-Based Budgeting is currently enhancing fiscal sustainability in over 200 municipalities across the United States. The CAMSA initiative integrates these established, legally sound mechanisms into a comprehensive framework designed to safeguard the interests of working families in Dover.

**Intergovernmental Precedent: Alternative Legislative Instruments**

This framework leverages successful legislative strategies from other progressive municipalities, thereby promoting structural equity. For instance, it adopts the model used by Seattle, Washington, which implements direct structural and service fees based on non-residential property footprints. This approach ensures 100% compliance with existing legal standards.

**Pg. 13 and 14PDF**

**XII. Comparative Fiscal Analysis**

The table below contrasts Dover's current financial exposure against the structured mitigation frameworks active in other capital cities. Without the passage of CAMSA or a dedicated Bond Bill allocation, Dover remains the only listed capital city that forces local residential utility users to absorb the full cost of state-driven infrastructure decay.

On 07/09/2026 12:14 PM EDT Anderson, David <david.anderson@dover.de.us> wrote:

Gentlemen, I apologize for not sending you questions yesterday as I intended, but life took a different path. I have several questions. I want you to be prepared for them because that makes better discussion.

Off the record, I am in favor of the direction that you wish to take here. I think that there is brilliance in the proposal. It is however a radical departure from the way things work in Delaware. That's not bad, it just means a lot of adjustments will need to be made and questions answered. I don't think every question needs to be answered to advance the resolution, but several do need to be answered. I want legal review to help craft the charter change and bring that back in August. That's what I will be looking towards. I don't want you blindsided by that. Because we're not always in lockstep politically, I want you to know in advance what my thoughts are and why so we have no misunderstandings.

First batch of questions

The state of Delaware isn't just tax exempt like the other entities, it is tax immune. We have no authority to tax it. That means the fee must relate to costs incurred.

Where did you get the fee level? How do you back it up based upon costs?

Is the possible loss of PILOT and Higher ed public safety grant in your calculations?

How will this impact the needed hospital expansion?

Our current billing system is not set up for this proposal. Is software and staffing costs considered for the first year? How much will administration cost?

What is an example of a place with this proposal?

Respectfully,

The Honorable David L. Anderson

4th District Councilman, Dover, DE
Phone: (302)339-1047
Council Office: (302)736-7006

Thank you for your email. Please be advised that the City of Dover email domain has changed to @doverde.gov as part of our ongoing efforts to improve communications. Our new domain is part of a long-range initiative to increase security and by switching to a .gov domain it provides further assurance to the public that the communications received from @doverde.gov is official, trusted information. Messages sent to our old email addresses will still be received until the conversion is completed. Kindly update your records accordingly, we appreciate your attention to this update.

**ATTACHMENT #3**

Special Legislative, Finance, and Administration Meeting of 07/09/2026

# "Growth Pays for Growth"

Sponsored By: Roy Sudler, Jr., Ph.D. District 4 Councilman and Brian Lewis District 2 Councilman

# Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (CAMSA)

**CAMSA** successfully reduces regressive tax burdens on residents, secures the city's revenue engine, and promotes the long-term fiscal and structural sustainability of the Dover community.

Backing this revenue pipeline is an optimized Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB) model ensuring 100% compliance with Revenue Policy Mandates 1 and 7 of the city budget.

# PROBLEM

## ECONOMIC GAP

No matter how massive tax-exempt physical footprint grows or how much market value their buildings command, their ad valorem property tax bill remains exactly **$0.00.**

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT AND ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

“Incremental budgeting" **represents the ultimate failure of goal-setting theory.** Shifting the cost burden back to the entities driving the asset exhaustion restores the psychological contract, driving a sense of institutional equity and shared community purpose.

## SYSTEMIC STRUCTURAL GAP:

**45% of the real property footprint is tax-exempt**, forcing the remaining **55% of taxable properties** (working families and local shopkeepers) to absorb 100% of the financial burden for public assets utilized by the entire state.

## NON-TAX-EXEMPT FOOTPRINTS

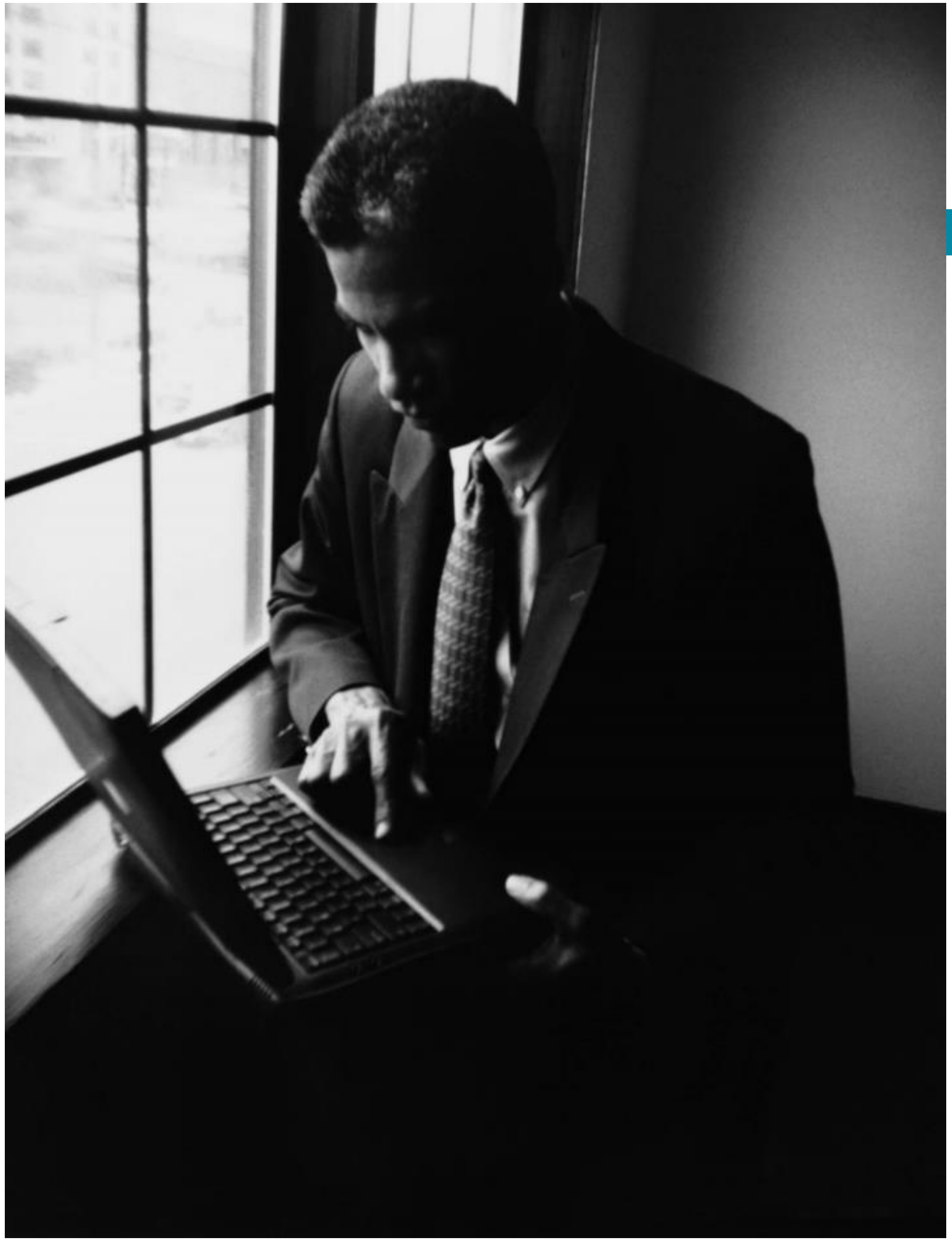
Traditional municipal budgeting models are failing mid-sized capital cities because they lack modern regulatory frameworks to recover infrastructure wear-and-tear costs from the mega-scale, tax-exempt institutional growth driving those very costs.

PROBLEM

# BAYHEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

# THE DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY


LEGISLATIVE HALL
DELAWARE STATE CAPITAL



# SOLUTION

## CLOSE THE GAP

By shifting our budget mindset to ***an external revenue-generating framework***

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Mega-scale Institutional, Medical, and educational footprints.

## COST SAVINGS

Under CAMSA's framework, financial resources will ne returned back to residents in the form of lower utility bills.

## PREDICTABLE CAPITAL FORECASTS:

Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB) channels MSIF revenues directly into dedicated infrastructure funds, removing unpredictable capital project deficits from the general fund.

# Comparative Fiscal Analysis

## UNIQUE

CAMSA breaks this cycle by generating **$12,990,000 annually**, immediately transferring $2 million in Year 1 to permanently raise the city's emergency reserve floor to an unassailable **11.35% statutory baseline ($6.78 million)**

## TESTED IN OTHER CAPITAL CITIES

**Hartford, CT Olympia, WA and Albany, NY.**

Dover **remains the only capital city listed that forces local residential utility users to entirely absorb state-driven infrastructure decay.**

# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- **Section 1. Formal Charter Amendment Petition**
- **Proposal:** A petition by City Council to the General Assembly of the State of Delaware to enact legislation amending the Charter of the City of Dover by adding "SECTION 49A."
- **Subsections:**
- **(a)** Legislative Findings and Declaration of Structural Tax Asymmetry
- **(b)** Statutory Definition of Ad Valorem Tax vs. Regulatory Service Fee
- **(c)** Establishment of the Footprint Threshold and Billing Baseline
- **(d)** Priority-Based Budgeting and Strict Anti-Supplanting Mandates
- **(e)** Severability and Enforcement

**WHEREAS**, the City of Dover exhibits a profound structural fiscal asymmetry, driven by a highly constrained municipal tax base where forty-five percent (45%) of the total real property aggregate is encumbered by statutory and valorem tax exemptions granted to state administrative complexes, public higher education systems, and non-profit 501(c)(3) healthcare networks; and

**WHEREAS**, this narrow private tax base is forced to entirely internalize the operational and capital expenditures required to maintain the high-capacity utility grids, transit corridors, and emergency networks that support regional, state-wide macroeconomic activity daily; and

**WHEREAS**, empirical engineering data verified by the Department of Public Works and Public Safety GIS analytics confirms that non-residential mega-footprints exceeding 50,000 gross square feet (GSF) inflict severe localized stress points on municipal infrastructure, including hyper-volumetric fire flow containment demands of 3,450 gallons per minute (GPM), an 8.1 million gallon peak stormwater runoff surge per 1-inch precipitation event, and continuous power draws driving a 2.8x accelerated substation overhaul timeline; and

**WHEREAS**, opponents rely on an outdated defense, arguing that their economic presence and job creation should buy them a lifetime exemption from local infrastructure costs, when the hard reality dictates that job creation does not pave roads, institutional growth does not clear stormwater networks, and prestige does not fuel emergency rescue vehicles; and

**WHEREAS**, Article III, Section 18 of the Dover Charter vests City Council with the explicit legislative authority to pass ordinances and set penalties for violations, providing the legal foundation to transition from value-based taxation to a strict, footprint-based regulatory cost-recovery model; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council seeks to establish an Asset Preservation Capital Allocation of **$7,110,000.00** via the State Bond Bill to protect state agency operational budgets while generating a total predictable, non-residential revenue pipeline of **$12,990,000.00 annually** to eliminate regressive local tax increases, freeze utility rate hikes at a strict 0%, and execute direct residential utility bill reductions;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DOVER, IN ELECTED CHAMBER ASSEMBLED:**

The City Council of the City of Dover hereby formally petitions the General Assembly of the State of Delaware to enact legislation amending the Charter of the City of Dover by adding **Section 49A**, to read as follows:

**"SECTION 49A. CODIFICATION OF STRUCTURAL TAX ASYMMETRY MITIGATION AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES COST RECOVERY**

**Subsection (a) Legislative Findings and Declaration of Structural Tax Asymmetry**

# Hard Reality & Technical Validity

# BUSINESS MODEL

## RESEARCH

**Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (CAMSA)** is built upon data-driven municipal finance strategies designed to shift the burden of infrastructure costs away from everyday taxpayers.

## ABSTRACT

**Equity in Growth**
Large-scale, tax-exempt entities must generate the capital required to sustain the public infrastructure they exhaust.

## DESIGN

**Biopsychosocial Model** is not treated as an abstract healthcare theory.

Instead, they operationalize it as a concrete **municipal fiscal strategy**.

# Clarifying the Council’s Legal Mandate

A. **Legal Incontrovertibility Article III, Section 18 of the Dover Charter vests City Council with the explicit legislative authority to pass ordinances, ensuring the power to set penalties for violations**

B. **Fixing a Structural Injustice:** City Council and the Budget Team cannot ignore the math: **45% of Dover’s property footprint is tax-exempt**, forcing the remaining **55% of taxable properties** (residents and small businesses) to shoulder **100% of the maintenance burden** for public grids.

## Legal and Mathematical Distinction

To withstand constitutional scrutiny and avoid classification as an unauthorized municipal tax, the MSIF maintains a rigid structural distinction:

| Fiscal Metric | Ad Valorem Property Tax | Municipal Services Impact Fee (MSIF) |
|---|---|---|
| **Calculation Base** | Assessed market value of property. | Total Gross Square Footage (GSF) of building footprint. |
| **Legal Framework** | Wealth-based revenue generation. | Cost-recovery for regulatory services used. |
| **Exemption Eligibility** | 100% exempt for state, educational, and 501(c)(3) entities. | Zero exemptions; applies to all physical structures. |
| **Dedicated Use** | Dispersed into General Fund operations. | Fenced exclusively for public safety and capital assets. |

# FIVE-YEAR ALLOCATION FORECAST

## XV. 5-Year Revenue & Allocation Forecast

| Fiscal Metric | Year 1 (FY27) | Year 2 (FY28) | Year 3 (FY29) | Year 4 (FY30) | Year 5 (FY31) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gross Projected Revenue | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 |
| Emergency Reserve Allocation | ($2,000,000) | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Net Infrastructure/Safety Funds | $10,990,000 | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 | $12,990,000 |
| Resident Tax/Fee Increases | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 |

| SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL OFFSETS BY ENTITY SECTOR | | |
|---|---|---|
| ENTITY SECTOR | TOTAL FOOTPRINT | MAX OFFSET CAP |
| 🎓 Higher Education Institutions | 5,100,000 GSF | $5,100,000.00 |
| 🏥 Healthcare Systems | 3,260,000 GSF | $3,260,000.00 |
| 🏛 State of Delaware Complexes | 2,960,000 GSF | $2,960,000.00 |
| 🗺 Local Gov. & Civic Foundations | 1,450,000 GSF | $1,450,000.00 |
| 🏠 Public Housing Authorities | 220,000 GSF | $220,000.00 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM PORTFOLIO | 12,990,000 GSF | $12,990,000.00 |

# FORMAL REQUEST FOR STATE BOND BILL CAPITAL ABSORPTION

To prevent the Municipal Services Impact Fee from draining individual institutional and agency operational budgets, the City of Dover formally requests that the **Joint Capital Improvement Committee utilize its statutory authority to issue a direct cash premium or a general obligation bond allocation paid directly to the City of Dover**.

This dedicated capital allocation will seamlessly absorb the infrastructure wear-and-tear costs generated by the following state-supported footprints:

```
                          ┌── Higher Education Footprints (Ranks 1, 3, 5, 9, 14)
                          │   Combined GSF: 5,100,000 GSF ➔ $5,100,000.00 State Bond Allocation
                          │
STATE LEVEL EXPOSURE ─────┼── State Executive & Agency Complexes (Ranks 4, 6, 12, 19)
 [Total: $8,310,000]      │   Combined GSF: 2,230,000 GSF ➔ $2,230,000.00 State Bond Allocation
                          │
                          └── Legislative & Judicial Complexes (Ranks 10, 15)
                              Combined GSF: 730,000 GSF ➔ $730,000.00 State Bond Allocation
```

CAPITAL ABSORPTION

# CAMSA Master Structural Overview

**$12.9M**

**Year 1**

**Permanently raise the city's emergency reserve floor** to an unassailable 11.35% statutory baseline ($6.78 million).

**$12.9M**

**Year 2**

**Sunset Target** sweeping subsequent surpluses into direct residential utility bill reductions

**12.9M**

**The Year 3**

**Upward Capital**

**Re-allocation** direct, proportional reductions in existing residential utility bills for Dover's working families.

# (MSIF)- BENEFITS

- **Capital City 2030: Strategic Master Plan for Downtown Dover Partnership**

- **State-Sanctioned Sovereignty Section 49A's Municipal Services Impact Fee**

- **Biopsychosocial Optimization (Optimal Health & Financial Stability)**

- **Concrete Immunity Against Corporate Litigation**

- **Protected Asset Environments**

- **Transparent Valuation**

BENEFITS

# MARKET COMPARISON

| Funding Metric | Resident Tax Hike | Proposed MSIF |
|---|---|---|
| Annual Cost | $841.29 | $0.00 |
| Monthly Cost | $70.11 | $0.00 |
| Utility Rates | +12% to 15% Spike | Frozen (0%) |
| Small non-profits | Burdened | 100% Exempt |

# Infrastructure Works & Workforce Stability


# The "Lockbox" Funding Model

**Fire Department:**
**Operational Solvency**


**Police Department:**
**Operational Solvency**

**Utility Grid Stress ($0.22 / GSF)**

**Metric:** Thermal Transformer Aging. Continuous high demand (12.5 VA/GSF) overheats substation transformers, reducing equipment lifecycles by 35%.

# REBUTTAL & DEFENSE MATRIX (CAMSA PROPOSAL)

| **When the Opposition Claims:** | **Your Unified Counter-Stance Is:** |
|---|---|
| *"It is an illegal, unconstitutional property tax."* | **"It is an engineered footprint cost-recovery fee based on home-rule police powers."** |
| *"We are hurting colleges and medical care budgets."* | **"The state bond cushion absorbs costs to protect agency operations."** |
| *"A flat $50,000 cap is a fair compromise."* | **"A flat cap forces residential taxpayers to shoulder 55% of the property burden."** |
| *"Restricted line items tie the city's hands."* | **"Restricted accounts end the practice of diverting utility funds to cover deficits."** |

# MATHEMATICAL FORMULAS FOR CAMSA MATRIX

**The Scenario**: Let's look at a group of Dover residents.

- **Baseline (Start)**: 100 ER visits and 100 checkups.
- **Year 1 (After CAMSA)**: ER visits drop to 80, and regular checkups rise to 120.

- **The Simple Math**:
  - ER visits dropped by \(20\%\) (80 out of 100).
  - Checkups increased by \(20\%\) (120 out of 100).

## 1. Healthcare Utilization Shift ($H_{util}$)

Measures the percentage change in emergency stress-induced events ($E_{stress}$) versus preventive care visits ($P_{prev}$) relative to baseline values ($B_{stress}, B_{prev}$):

$$H_{util} = \left( \frac{E_{stress,t}}{B_{stress}} - \frac{P_{prev,t}}{B_{prev}} \right) \times 100$$

# The Dover Biopsychosocial Health & Stability Survey

**In the past 30 days, have you experienced physical symptoms of chronic stress (such as frequent tension headaches, unexplained chest tightness, racing heart, or severe sleep disruption) brought on by worrying about your household finances?**

- Daily or almost daily (4)
- A few times a week (3)
- Once or twice a month (2)
- Rarely or never (0)

**When walking through your immediate neighborhood or using local public parks, how safe do you feel from open-air illicit drug activity, vandalism, or poorly lit public pathways?**

- Very unsafe; I actively avoid public areas in my neighborhood. (4)
- Somewhat unsafe; I only use public spaces during specific peak hours. (2)
- Completely safe; I utilize local parks and walkways confidently. (0)

# Councilman Sudler & Lewis's Recommendation:

CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE

**MOVE to accept** the

Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (**CAMSA**) Presentation and Authorize City Manager Sharon Duca, and the Municipal Budget Team to conduct a rigorous Sustainability, Feasibility, and Validity Appraisal of this **"Growth Pays for Growth"** Conceptual Model and **ESTABLISHMENT OF SECTION 49A (MUNICIPAL SERVICES IMPACT FEE) by August 24, 2026.**