



Town of Blades
OFFICE OF MAYOR & COUNCIL
20 W Fourth Street
Blades, Delaware 19973-4122
(P) 302.629.7366 (F) 302.629.0199

***Town Council Meeting
BVFC, East Fifth Street, Blades, DE
7:00PM
December 9, 2024***

Present: Mayor Nancy McAdams, Vice-Mayor Susan Seltzer, Councilwoman Sharon Alston, Councilman Gary Gallamore, Councilman Gary Miller, Councilman Donald Trice, Chief Martin Willey, and Town Administrator Lisa Marks.

Mayor Nancy McAdams officially opened the meeting at 7:02 pm
Lord's Prayer and The Pledge of Allegiance

CDBG Presentation – Brandon Hamilton, a rehabilitation specialist with Sussex County's Community Development Housing Department, is here to speak to residents about the CDBG program. His office applies for and administers the Community Development Block Grant program for Sussex County. The funds come from the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development and allocated to Sussex and Kent counties through the Delaware State Housing Authority. This year about 2 million was awarded. A requirement for CDBG is to hold a public holding which gives us an opportunity to explain the program. Also, it allows citizens to have input for upcoming applications. Eligible activities include housing rehabilitation (roof, doors, windows, electrical and plumbing upgrades, energy upgrades), sewer and water, and demolition projects. All citizens that apply must be persons of low and moderate income. This is defined as household with incomes at or below 80% of the leading income-single \$54,750; two person household \$62,550; four person household \$78,150. To be considered: must be owner occupied, primary residence, low or moderate income household, home must be insured, county taxes and utilities must be current. There will also be a lien put on the property. This protects the funding so a homeowner doesn't flip the home to make money after they rehabilitate it. Blades has received \$240,000 in funding. With this funding CDBG has assisted 8 households. That amount also includes 2024 that has just started to be used. Eight households are on the waiting list for the Town of Blades. If a citizen would like to apply, there is a one page application that can be filled out and returned. Our number is 302-855-7777 if there are any additional questions. This year's application for the Town of Blades is due the end of February 2025. Documents that need to be signed by the council and Mayor, along with the minutes from this meeting need to be returned.

- Resident made a comment regarding the limited funds available due to it already being used-That is correct because funding is applied for last year was received in July. CDBG works one town at a time and its Blades turn. One job has been completed and looking to help 3-4 more homes. This public hearing is for the 2025 year applications.
- Brandon Hamilton also explained the waiting list is for general home repairs. If there is an emergency, citizens are welcomed to contact the office to see what is able to be done.



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- Resident asked about a 10 year period to pay back the loan-There is no payback. The lien is for if the property was to sell. If the owners remain in the house, the lien will go away completely and it is removed.

Minutes from the November 11, 2024, Town Council Meeting. Motion to accept in written form, by Councilwoman Sharon Alston; Seconded by Councilman Gary Gallamore. Motion passed, Councilwoman Sharon Alston – Yes, Councilman Gary Gallamore – Yes, Councilman Gary Miller – Yes, Vice-Mayor Susan Seltzer – Yes, Councilman Donald Trice - Yes. Carried

Police Report – Submitted and read by Police Chief. Monthly statistics. Chief Willey thanked everyone that helped with the Breakfast with Santa, at the BVFC. There were 141 people served breakfast; with 71 of them being children. With the extra gifts that were left over, Blades school has been contacted for us to donation to Adopt a Family. Extra gifts will also be given to the hospital. Chief Willey also wanted to remind everyone to please carry a flashlight walking at night.

- Resident asked where the carjacking occurred-Market Street, east of High Street.

❖ Committee Reports:

- P&Z – Vice-Mayor Susan Seltzer’s reported there were 5 items on the agenda, 4 properties were approved. 304 E Seventh Street and 305 E Fifth Street were approved after corrected setback due to front steps and easement that is required. Two new constructions with a shared driveway on Concord Road were also approved. The property on West Third Street was tabled because it did not meet square footage requirements for R2 zoning. There is also a question about a property behind the lot. There is no right of way for the property. Marcus is speaking to both parties, they seen amendable for compromise. The restaurant is coming along fine. The owner is hoping to be opened in February 2025. This past weekend a tree took out part of the fence and landed on a car. Nobody was injured or inside the car. Barry Calhoun turned in his resignation to Planning & Zoning Commission as of 12/31/24. Vice-Mayor Seltzer thanked Barry for his years of service. Bob Francavage accepted appointment to commission starting in January.
- Housing/Code – Report submitted by Code Enforcement Officer, Marcus Trammell and read by Vice-Mayor Susan Seltzer - Monthly statistics.
“On November 23th, I assisted handing out 20 chickens and box of food for Thanksgiving, Thanks to Marcus and Crystal for taking point on this. Perhaps next year, the town can do more. November 25th was a public meeting for the charter revision. I attended our team meeting on December 3rd in the morning, with the public workshop in evening. December 6th, I attended the SCAT breakfast. This monthly program was on town financial workshop. And on December 7th was the Breakfast with Santa. We had over 120 people attended, including volunteers. It was good to see so many working together for the town.”



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- Water – Monthly statistics report submitted by Chris Glasgow. Councilman Gallamore’s report as submitted:
“In my report given during the November monthly Town Council Meeting, I failed to report that on 11/5, I attended a team meeting and questioned why there were four residents of the town who owed the town an uncollected combined water bill, including fines, of over \$23,000. I’m happy to announce that subsequent to that meeting Crystal, our administrative assistant, was able to recover a back due water bill plus fines from one resident and added over \$10,000 to our finances. I wish to congratulate her on her work. As of today, we now have only three remaining residents with past due water bills, and I have been assured that Crystal is working on those past due invoices as we speak.

On 11/13 I met with Chris Glasgow, our water and maintenance assistant, and our newly hired certified water systems operator, Sean O’Brien, for an in-depth tour of the water facilities plant. Sean indicated to me that he was familiar with almost all of the equipment that we have here in the Blades water department, and that his transition to our department will be seamless.

On 11/14 Mayor McAdams and I met with Rep. Danny Short to discuss our current and future water supply needs. I presented him with a copy of the 2021 Water Facilities Plan and with that report the Mayor and I explained our current and future needs to include a 4th well, a new pumping station and an additional water storage tank. This is all based on the Blades plans for expansion and the need for additional water services infrastructure to provide for both immediate and future growth. Our discussion was in-depth and Rep. Short informed us of the procedures we need to follow to apply for funding for this project. He assured us that both he and Sen. Richardson would help us in this endeavor. More information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.

On 11/18 I again met with Chris Glasgow and observed the process of testing the water samples from our wells. The new assay instrument recently obtained which, incidentally, is the same instrument used by The Delaware Rural Water Association, simplifies and significantly reduces the time necessary to assay each sample. This instrument also performs its own quality control to assure the accuracy of each sample that is tested. And it does assay for each substance that is required and performed in our laboratory.

On 11/19 I along with Mayor McAdams attended an informational meeting presented by EPA representatives Katie Page and Alan Geyer. Their main discussion was explaining the superfund ground water contamination in the area along River Road and the proposed addition of water service from the Blades Water Department to those residents who live in that area. It was explained that the EPA would provide “hook-up” services to the Blades Water system to any resident who wants to participate and this hook-up would be done without charge to the resident. The wells that currently supply each residence would be disconnected from service to the potable water outlet. But irrigation and non-potable systems would not be affected. Applications for residents to sign up were available and several residents did complete their application at the end of the discussion. It was also explained that if any resident failed to sign up before the construction was completed and they decided to join after the work was completed, the EPA would not cover the cost. The Mayor and I discussed with the



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representatives the impact of these additions to the water service and we again emphasized the need for an additional well, pumping station and storage tank.

On 11/25 I participated in a public hearing concerning proposed revisions of the Blades Town Charter.

On 12/3 I attended a team meeting. I then attended, with Sean O'Brien and Chris Glasgow, a teaching session presented by Chuck Powley from PFASolutions and Amber Bataille from DNREC for the purpose of giving instructions on how to obtain water samples for testing for PFAS Substances in our water. This testing will be performed quarterly.

Tonight, I am happy to report that the water testing performed daily during the month of November failed to detect any abnormal concentrations of substances that are required to be tested. All test results fell well below EPA and DNREC maximum allowable concentrations.”

- Streets – Report read by Councilman Gary Miller:
Councilman Gary Miller stated it has been a busy month. Chris and Sean have found the parts for the salt spreader to be fixed. We will look into getting a new one next year. Chris and Sean have also been busy reorganizing the shop. They did a fantastic job. I got to walk with Sean and I look forward to working with him. Good things are going to come from him. Christmas lights have been up and turned on. The reindeer was put up on pole of the resident that requested it near their house. That day, Councilman Miller helped as a flagman since there was only one person. There is a leak on Sixth Street that is getting fixed.
- Parks & Cemeteries – Report submitted as and read by Councilwoman Sharon Alston:
“Good evening. Since our last Council meeting, I have participated in a number of activities including working with my fellow council members and our Town Administrator on the budget, I participated in the special Council meeting regarding revisions to the Town Charter and attended the annual Sussex County Association of Towns annual holiday dinner. But the bulk of my time has been spent planning our inaugural wreath laying ceremony at Blades Memorial Cemetery.

I have the good fortune of working with a highly motivated and generous group of volunteers on planning for this event. They include:

Gary and Pamela Gallamore
Robert and Susan Agin
Mark Buras
Bill and Mary Knauss
Bill and Francine Kay
Kathleen Whittaker
Jerry and Celeste Dorsey
David and Susan Seltzer



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David and Nancy McAdams
Roger Joseph
Trisha Todd
Joe and Nell Donahue

Community support for this inaugural event has been truly heartwarming. Thanks to their generous support, we will have 84 wreaths to lay in honor of our veterans.

I will close by inviting all of you to join us on Saturday, December 14th at 11:30 for this first- of-its-kind event in our town.”

- Police – Report submitted as and read by Councilman Donald Trice.

“1. I HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH CHIEF WILLEY EVERY DAY TALKING ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN TOWN AND WHAT DO WE NEED HAS FAR HAS EQUIPMENT.

2. THE CHIEF AND I ARE STILL ADVERTISING FOR POLICE OFFICERS

3. WE ARE DOING A BACKGROUND CHECK ON ONE CANDIDATE AND IF HE PASSES THE BACKGROUND CHECK. WE WILL BE BEING HIM IN FRONT OF THE COUNCIL AT JANUARY MEETING. I BELIEVE THE DOVER CLASS STARTS IN MARCH OR APRIL. WE ARE HOPING TO HAVE ANOTHER CANDIDATE FOR THE FALL CLASS. IT WILL TAKE ABOUT 6 MONTHS BEFORE THE NEW OFFICER WILL BE ON THEIR OWN.

4. WE RECEIVED 1 NEW APPLICATION SO FAR. THE CHIEF IS GOING UP TO DOVER AIR FORCES BASE IN DOVER TO TALK TO THEM.

5. ATTENDED A WORKSHOP GOING OVER THE NEW CHARTER CHANGES

6. ATTACHED A WORKSHOP ABOUT THE BUDGET

7. ATTENDED A TEAM MEEETING AT TOWN HALL.

8. THE DELAWARE STATE POLICE ARE STILL HELPING US OUT.

9. PUT IN FOR GRANT FOR SOME MORE NEW EQUIPMENT. WE ARE WAITING FOR THAT TO COME THRU.

10. THE CHIEF AND I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE THAT CAME OUT TO HELP US WITH BREAKFAST WITH SANTA CLAUS ON DEC 7TH. I WANT TO THANK THE BUSINESSES THAT DONATED TO OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM AND THE MEMBERS OF BLADES FIRE CO FOR THEIR SUPPORT. WE HAD ABOUT 143 ATTEND THE BREAKFAST.WE COOKED OVER 6 LBS SCRAPPLE IT WAS DONATED BY RAPA SCRAPPLE OF BRIDGEVILLE DE AND 10 LBS OF SAUSAGE DONATED BY KIRBY & HOLLOWAY OF



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HARRINGTON DE, 2 & 1/2 CASES OF LIQUID EGGS, 60 REG EGGE AND ABOUT 200 PANCAKE. I THINK EVERYONE HAD A GOOD TIME. THIS WILL BE A YEAR EVENT BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE BLADES FIRE CO.

11. PAPERWORK HAS BEEN STARTED FOR NEXT YEAR GRANTS.

12. THE CHIEF APPLIED FOR AN OFFICE ASSISTANT PROGRAM TO HELP THE CHIEF WILLEY IN THE OFFICE DOING PAPER WORK, FILING AND TAKING PHONE CALLS. THIS PROGRAM IS THRU FIRST STATE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY. THE PERSON HAS TO BE 65 OR OLDER. THEY CAN ONLY WORK 18 HOURS A WEEK AND WILL BE PAY \$15.00 PER HOUR. IF ANYONE KNOW OF ANYONE THAT MIGHT WANT A LITTLE EXTRA MONEY AND HELPING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OUT. HAVE THEM CALL CHIEF WILLEY AT BLADES POLICE DEPARTMENT.

13.. THE CHIEF IS STILL WORKING ON CREDIBILITY CERTIFIED FOR THE STATE.

14. WE ARE STARTING A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM IS CALL NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY. NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY IS USING THE RESIDENCE OF BLADES SECURITY CAMERAS SYSTEM TO HELP THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. NOT ONLY PROVIDES EXTRA EYES FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN KEEPING WATCH FOR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, BUT IT ALSO HELP MONITOR THE SAFETY OF OUR RESIDENTS AND OUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR. CHIEF WILLEY WILL BE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHO SIGNS UP FOR THIS PROGRAM. IT IS WORKING IN OTHER TOWNS WITH GOOD SUCCESS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS PROGRAM CONTACT CHIEF WILLEY.

15. THE CHIEF AND I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE TOWN COUNCIL AND THE RESIDENCE OF BLADES FOR YOUR SUPPORT. THE CHIEF AND I WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEARS.”

- Mayor's Report – Report submitted as and read by Mayor Nancy McAdams.
“Good evening, Blades Residents and Friends,
In your interest we are working daily:

Hardin Hall now has a floor. Hunter Creek Contractors are now working on the walkways on the outside and woodwork inside. They are awaiting the cabinetry.
Property Tax bills will be mailed the first week of January and should be paid by January 31,2025 without penalty. After February 15 with late penalties.

Town Council agrees to hold a monthly Workshop on the third Tuesday of each month beginning January 25, 2025. Check the Town Website for time, place, and occasional cancellations.



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November 14: Gary Gallamore and I met with Rep. Dan Short concerning a fourth water pump, processing facility, and tower on the east side of Route 13. We must get the applications in for funding as soon as possible.

Also, that week, we did research and planned procedure for the Sheriff Sale of the old dry-cleaning property on Market Street. Marcus represented the Town at the sale in Georgetown on November 19, 2025. We will have ownership and the extremely expensive responsibility of cleaning the dirty soil, yet please know we will be applying for EPA funding and State and Federal Bonds to do so. We paid \$475.00 for the property in hopes of developing businesses on Market Street.

November 19: The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) gave a presentation about the quality and quantity of our Blades water to assure the residents of River Road that it is of their best interest to allow the EPA to facilitate their hook-ups to Blades water since in the future they will pay for the hook-up themselves. Some of them signed for Blades water that evening.

Both on November 25 and December 3, the Town Council met for the second and third Workshops on updating the Town Charter. We listened to and considered all the public concerns. We will present the final draft to the town residents before sending it to Dover.

December 3: Team Meeting of all employees, the mayor and four of the five Councilpersons to reiterate:

- The set hours of work, process for requesting at least one week before the dates of absence.
- The imperative use of Purchase Orders with respected signatures and receipts from the vendors.

Everyone at the Team Meeting had the opportunity to voice their concerns and questions.

December 4: Sharon Alston and I accompanied by our husbands attended the SCAT Dinner in Rehoboth.

December 6: Gary Miller, Sharon Alston, Susan Seltzer, and I attended the SCAT Breakfast in Georgetown to hear the speaker on finance.

Sharon and her volunteers have our gratitude and respect for the wonderful program of the “Wreaths Across America” to be held at the Blades Cemetery on December 14.

Please try to attend.”

- Town Administrator Report – Report submitted as and read by Town Administrator Lisa Marks. “Door Hangers and Shutoffs: We put out 49 door hangers in October, there were 4 shutoffs. We will be putting door hangers out Wednesday, December 18th for all accounts with a past due amount for water.

Marcus and Crystal handed out 20 Thanksgiving Dinners on Saturday, November 23, 2024.



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November 15, 2024, I submitted the Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) grant. The primary purpose of this grant is to address one or more emerging contaminants, including PFAS, in drinking water. We received \$8,000 last year to cover mandated testing costs. We have requested \$8,000 for 2025 testing costs.

For those who received a Notice of Unknown Service Line Material, please contact Town Hall to inform us of what type of pipes you have throughout your house. 302-629-7366

HydroCorp mailed the next batch of Cross Connection Control Program Inspection Notices last week. The notice explains what the resident needs to do with step-by-step instructions and websites.

Town Hall will be closed Wednesday, December 25, 2024 and Wednesday, January 1, 2025.”

❖ New Business:

- Sussex County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Public Hearing Announcement-presentation during January 2025 meeting. Sussex County website includes 360 pages regarding the Hazard Mitigation. The town needs to adopt a resolution before May 2025 to have funding in case of an emergency.

Entered into Executive Session: 8:07pm

Exited Executive Session: 8:27pm

- 2025 Budget Approval - Read by Mayor Nancy McAdams. Motion to accept the 2025 Budget with the new wage increases, by Councilman Donald Trice; Seconded by Councilman Gary Miller. Motion passed. Councilwoman Sharon Alston – Yes, Councilman Gary Gallamore – Yes, Councilman Gary Miller – Yes, Vice-Mayor Susan Seltzer – Yes, Councilman Donald Trice - Yes. Carried
- Christmas Light Contest – Deadline Friday, December 20, 2024
 - Judges cannot compete.
- Water Rate Increase Resolution R4-11.2024.11 – First Reading – Read by Mayor Nancy McAdams. Second reading and Public Hearing December 9, 2024.

❖ Old Business:

- Water Rate Increase Resolution R4-11.2024.11 – Second Reading / Public Hearing
 - Resident objected the increase of water bills due to new construction and River Road coming into town-construction will not be completed for another 1-2 years. Chemicals and expenses have also increased for the water department. Last reading will be in January 2025.



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- Charter Discussion –
 - Resident had concerns about the day of the elections. Objection is to not have it on a Saturday. Would like during the week with extended hours.
 - Resident asked if there is any more discussion on the charter of council positions and terms.
 - Mayor Nancy McAdams announced vote will be next month after reconsideration of the two issues.
 - Resident asked about public hearing before the charter goes to the council.
 - Resident wanted to make sure public hearing is advertised.

❖ Good of the Community

- A resident noted a call from a resident on Concord Road was received about a sign that was placed when Little Meadows was being built. People see the sign and drive in their driveway. People are also turning around in driveway and messing up the yard. The caller would like the sign to be taken down. This would have to be checked with DelDot.
- A resident noted the fire hydrants are faded.
- Resident asked about JBS and if he was going to offer help with the water issue on Fifth Street.
- A non-resident inquired about the 2025 Property Taxes and if they would be with the new assessments.
- Resident asked about the 3-year terms for council; would it be possible to have two candidates each year be elected.

Entered into Executive Session: 9:19pm

Exited Executive Session: 10:26pm

Councilman Donald Trice motioned to adjourn the December 9, 2024, Blades Town Council Meeting, Seconded by Councilwoman Sharon Alston.

Mayor Nancy McAdams adjourned the Blades Town Council Meeting at 10:52pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Crystal Gregor
Admin Assistant

Reviewed and amended by:
Nancy W. McAdams
Mayor, Town of Blades

Town Council Meeting Minutes