COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Council Committee of the Whole met on September 15, 2026, at 6:05 p.m. with Council President Neil presiding. Members of Council present were Mr. Anderson, Mr. Boggerty, Ms. Hall, Mr. Lewis, Dr. Pillsbury, Mr. Rocha (via WebEx), and Dr. Sudler. Ms. Arndt was absent. Mayor Christiansen was also present. Civilian members present for their Committee meetings were Mr. Wilson *(Utility),* Mr. Garfinkel (via WebEx), and Mr. Shevock (via WebEx) *(Legislative, Finance, and Administration.* Mr. Iriowen *(Utility)* was absent.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Boggerty moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Lewis and unanimously carried.

Children & Family First – Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) Program (Kristen Dricken, Kesha Alston-Shields, and Kiera McGilvray)

Ms. Kesha Alston-Shields and Ms. Kristen Dricken reviewed the presentation entitled "Nurse-Family Partnership.

Mr. Boggerty introduced the representatives and spoke about attending a recent graduation program. He emphasized the value of early engagement with first-time mothers, including support during pregnancy, postpartum care, and the first two years of a child's life.

Ms. Alston-Shields and Ms. Dricken explained that Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based home-visiting program serving eligible first-time mothers from pregnancy until the child reaches two years of age. The Delaware program began in 2010 in response to concerns regarding infant mortality. Specially trained nurses provide regular home visits and education regarding maternal health, labor and delivery, postpartum recovery, breastfeeding, infant health, child development, and family goals.

Eligibility generally includes Delaware residency, a first pregnancy, enrollment by no later than 28 weeks of pregnancy, and income eligibility consistent with programs such as Medicaid or WIC. They explained that nurses also conduct developmental and social-emotional screenings, screen mothers for anxiety and depression, and connect families with medical care, childcare, employment, continuing education, legal resources, and other community services. Families who do not meet NFP eligibility may be referred to Healthy Families Delaware. Language assistance is available when needed.

Ms. Alston-Shields and Ms. Dricken reported that 89% of participating babies were born full term, 80% were participating in mother-initiated breastfeeding, and 85% of participating children were immunized by age two. They also reported improvements in maternal employment and child-development outcomes and stated that research associated with the program estimates future public savings of approximately $5.80 for each dollar invested.

Responding to Mr. Neil, Ms. Alston-Shields stated that referrals are received through self-referrals, word of mouth, obstetric and pediatric practices, WIC, hospitals, and other community partners.

They noted that referral practices vary and that stronger relationships with healthcare providers could increase participation. Nurses also work to empower participants to ask questions and advocate for themselves during medical appointments.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Dricken stated that they would like to work closely with hospitals, but hospital referrals are not always consistent

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Alston-Shields identified transportation, housing insecurity, and food insecurity as common challenges for participating families.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Dricken advised that nurses generally maintain caseloads of approximately 25 to 30 clients while also completing required medical documentation and administrative work.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Dricken explained that the reported average annual income of approximately $6,000 reflects income at the time of enrollment and that many participants are unemployed, working part-time, or are minors.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Dricken stated that they would like stronger ties with WIC but that they do make sure all of their moms get WIC assistance. She also noted that the offices are familiar with their program and they can collaborate if needed.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Alston-Shields said the relationship with WIC is a little more one-sided at the moment, but they hope it improves over time.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Alston-Shields explained that referrals are received from the Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. (DAPI), particularly at the beginning of the school year when newly enrolled students are identified as needing services and do not have a home nurse. Staff meet with participants wherever services are most accessible, including in their homes or at school. Following the birth of a child, staff make efforts to conduct home visits; however, when a mother is attending school, staff may meet with her at school and separately visit the child's daycare to monitor the baby's weight and overall well-being.

Responding to Dr. Pillsbury, Ms. Alston-Shields explained that first-time mothers who are under 28 weeks pregnant should be referred to the program for nursing services. She emphasized that the focus is not simply on program participation numbers, but on ensuring expectant mothers receive appropriate nursing care and education. Nurses are able to monitor indicators such as blood pressure and weight and recognize potential concerns that may fall outside the scope of practice of staff from other programs. The nursing staff also works collaboratively with physicians by reinforcing medical guidance and educating expectant mothers about recommended care. As an example, staff discussed educating mothers about the Tdap vaccine, including explaining its purpose and the protection it can provide newborns against pertussis (whooping cough), rather than simply asking whether the mother has received the vaccine. She emphasized the importance of providing education that helps mothers understand the reasons behind recommended prenatal care and make informed decisions.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Ms. Alston-Shields stated that as long as the mother is participating in the program, they are eligible to receive assistance through the programs medical-legal partnership.

Council Reports – August 2026

First District

Dr. Pillsbury reported that she had received several concerns from First District residents and referred the matters to the appropriate departments.

Mr. Rocha reported that he followed up with Andrew Cottone following his presentation at the previous meeting to learn more about workforce development opportunities. He invited Harold Stafford of the HELP Initiative, Dr. Jalaal Hayes of Delaware State University, and others to discuss creating a training pipeline that would prepare Dover residents for future employment opportunities. He noted that the discussion identified opportunities for curriculum development and that he connected Mr. Cottone with Dr. Hayes to explore establishing a training program for local residents focused on hydrogen technology and the qualifications necessary for related high-paying jobs. He also reported meeting with Dr. Sudler and Ms. Duca regarding infrastructure and Priority Based Budgeting, which was included on the evening's agenda. He attended a back-to-school event hosted by the IMA at Booker T. Washington and coordinated a school supply donation from Walmart to the Academy of Dover Charter School. He spoke at the Haven House Academy grand opening and participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Dover Mall with Mayor Christiansen and Councilmembers Boggerty, Arndt, and Anderson. He also attended the Capitol School District's kickoff for the school year. Mr. Rocha further reported visiting the hydrogen laboratory at Delaware State University's Wesley campus with Dr. Jalaal Hayes and Representative Kerri Evelyn Harris. During the visit, he learned about DSU's work related to hydrogen storage and its potential use in power generation, including possible future applications as a backup power source for developments within the city. He noted that additional information would be forthcoming. He also attended the DEMEC Annual Dinner at Bally's Casino with City Manager Sharon Duca and Councilman Anderson. Lastly, Mr. Rocha reported assisting with hurricane relief efforts and working with city staff, particularly Kay Sass and Code Enforcement Officer Eddie Kopp, advocating for displaced families from hotels that sustained damage. He also acknowledged assistance provided by Vonderlear Smack and Justina Brinkley in supporting those efforts.

Second District

Mr. Lewis reported addressing various constituent concerns during the past month related to crime, code enforcement, and Public Works matters. He attended the Latin Festival on the last Saturday in August, where he presented a Certificate of Appreciation. He also attended a community event and book bag drive on West Loockerman Street sponsored by local proprietor Rico. Mr. Lewis attended the Community Resilience Initiative held at the Dover Public Library. He also attended a gathering at Tropical Delight on Bay Road involving various community organizations. The organizations discussed opportunities to collaborate in addressing issues affecting the City, including homelessness and other community concerns.

Ms. Hall reported receiving several constituent calls regarding debris remaining from the recent storm. She thanked city staff for their continued efforts in assisting residents with the removal of storm-related debris and expressed her appreciation for their work. She also reported assisting the committee organizing the inaugural Veterans Day Parade. The committee has obtained the necessary permit and continues its preparations for the event. She noted that the committee was still seeking individuals to serve as Grand Marshals and encouraged members to submit recommendations. Ms. Hall further reported meeting with members of the business community and constituents who shared concerns regarding the moratorium, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

Third District
Ms. Arndt was absent; no report was given.

Fourth District
Dr. Sudler reported assisting with temporary housing for residents displaced by the recent severe weather and meeting with downtown business owners regarding walkway infrastructure concerns. He also met with Councilman Rocha and City Manager Duca regarding infrastructure vulnerabilities and with Councilman Anderson regarding the proposed Capital Area Municipality Sustainability Act (CAMSA) and a potential RFP to evaluate the City's infrastructure service costs. He attended a Candidates Night hosted by Mount Zion Church, where he raised questions regarding CAMSA and infrastructure funding. He reported subsequently connecting with Senator Coons' staff regarding potential federal funding, grants, community outreach, and other municipal collaboration opportunities. Dr. Sudler also reported receiving and forwarding constituent concerns regarding a Code Enforcement inspection, unfinished road infrastructure in the Nottingham development, and fluctuating utility bills for further review. He noted that the constituents with infrastructure and utility billing concerns wished to address the Utility Committee. Lastly, Dr. Sudler reported attending the Hispanic Festival.

Mr. Anderson reported attending several community events, including the Latino Festival and the Carry the Light event at Blackshear Park, where approximately 100 backpacks and school supplies were distributed. He thanked fellow Councilmembers, community donors, and others who contributed to the effort. He also participated in the City Hall backpack giveaway and thanked the city employees who assisted with collecting, packing, and distributing approximately 100 backpacks. Mr. Anderson recognized the collaborative response to the recent tornado, including the efforts of city staff, Human Relations Commissioner Justina Brinkley, community members, and partner organizations. He encouraged continued support for the Dover Tornado Relief Fund established through the United Way to assist individuals displaced by the storm. He reported that several constituent concerns had been successfully addressed during the month and thanked city staff for their responsiveness. He also recognized the Dover Police Department for its response to the West North Pine Circle shooting and noted that additional matters resulting from recent discussions would be brought forward on future agendas.

At-Large
Mr. Boggerty reported attending the Haven House Academy event and expressed interest in having representatives provide a future presentation regarding vocational opportunities available to young people. He also spoke at Delaware State University regarding voter education, registration, and

mobilization. He attended a Labor Day community event at Owens Manor, where he spoke with residents and addressed questions and concerns. He also participated in the Carry the Light event at Blackshear Park. Mr. Boggerty thanked the City Clerk's Office for its assistance with the recent increase in appeals. He also reported receiving a constituent concern regarding trash collection on streets designated as courts where city vehicles may have difficulty maneuvering. The matter was referred to City Administration for review. Lastly, he reported assisting a downtown property owner by connecting them with resources and information regarding opportunities for their property and the city's vision for downtown.

Council President Neil

Council President Neil reported speaking with a constituent regarding event planning in the downtown area and sharing her concerns with Councilman Anderson, Kay Sass, and the Kent County Tourism President. He attended a meeting of the Delaware Manufactured Homeowners Association regarding leased-land communities throughout the State. He also received constituent concerns from the East Lake community regarding a downed stop sign, shopping carts, and debris, which were referred to Code Enforcement and Public Works and subsequently addressed. He reported meeting with Karen Speakman for an overview of Neighborhood Good Partners programs and attending an event where he presented a proclamation honoring a longtime retiring staff member of the organization. Lastly, he reported serving on Construction and Property Maintenance Code Board of Appeals panels and attending an additional Code appeals hearing via WebEx.

UTILITY COMMITTEE

The Utility Committee met with Chairman Rocha presiding.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Evaluation of Bids – Heatherfield Pump Station Replacement (Jason Lyon, Assistant City Manager)

Mr. Jason Lyon, Assistant City Manager, reviewed the background and analysis of the evaluation of bids for the Heatherfield Pump Station replacement. He explained that the pump station is more than 25 years old and has exceeded its useful life. Two bids were received and evaluated.

Staff recommended awarding the contract to Eastern States Construction Services, Inc. for the Heatherfield Pump Station Replacement Project, Bid #27-0001WW, for the amount of $497,139.17.

Dr. Sudler moved to recommend approval of the staff recommendation to award the contract to Eastern States Construction Services, Inc for the Heatherfield Pump Station Replacement Project, Bid #27-0001 WW, for the amount of $497,139.17. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and carried by a unanimous roll call vote (Arndt, Iriowen absent).

Cartanza Substation Foundation Change Order (Shawn Burgett, Engineering Services and System Operations Superintendent, Electric Department)

Mr. Shawn Burgett, Engineering Services and System Operations Superintendent, Electric Department, reviewed the background and analysis of the change order for the Cartanza Substation foundation. He explained that the foundations beneath two major transformers have deteriorated and require replacement. The original plan contemplated using a rental transformer while one transformer was removed for foundation work; however, staff determined that a suitable rental unit was unavailable.

Mr. Burgett explained that operating with only one transformer during construction would eliminate the city's normal backup capability. Staff therefore developed an alternative approach under which one transformer would be temporarily relocated and re-energized while its foundation was reconstructed, preserving system redundancy during most of the project.

Staff recommended approval of Change Order No.1 to SEL Engineering Services in the amount of $71,750, increasing the total contract from $155,629 to $227,379, funded within the approved EE2616 project budget.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Mr. Burgett stated that the primary disadvantage of the revised approach was the additional cost, while the operational benefit was maintaining redundancy and reducing the potential duration of an outage should a transformer fail during construction.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Burgett stated that concrete work would require approximately 30 days to cure and that the periods of increased outage vulnerability associated with moving the transformer would be limited.

Mayor Christiansen asked about the city's existing 69-kV system improvements and generating capability. Mr. Burgett confirmed that those resources provide additional system resiliency and explained that the proposed engineering work would allow the city to maintain redundancy using equipment it already owns.

Mr. Neil moved to recommend approval of the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Pillsbury and carried by a unanimous roll call vote (Arndt, Iriowen absent).

Mr. Rocha moved for adjournment of the Utility Committee meeting; hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE, FINANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

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

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Neil moved for adoption of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Shevock and unanimously carried.

Presentation and Discussion of SJR* Regulatory Barrier Analysis (Jason Lyon, Assistant City Manager and Ann Marie Townshend, Rossi Group)

Mr. Jason Lyon, Assistant City Manager, and Ms. Ann Marie Townshend, Rossi Group, reviewed the presentation entitled "City of Dover DSHA Technical Assistance for Housing and Land Use Reform". Mr. Lyon explained that Rossi Group had completed an analysis identifying potential regulatory barriers to housing development and possible strategies for addressing those barriers. Ms. Townshend stated that Dover is one of nine jurisdictions participating in the voluntary statewide SJR8 initiative and that the project was moving from regulatory analysis into public engagement.

This item was informational; committee action was not required.

Mr. Boggerty discussed barriers residents may encounter when qualifying for rental housing, including credit history and screening requirements.

Ms. Townshend acknowledged that zoning reform alone would not resolve all affordability issues but stated that increasing housing supply could help address some pressure on housing costs.

Mr. Anderson discussed smaller homes, cottage-style developments, accessory dwelling units, and other housing types that could provide additional steps within the housing market. He suggested reviewing bulk, accessory-use, and parking requirements to determine whether they unnecessarily inhibit development of smaller housing options.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Ms. Townshend stated that many missing-middle housing types are already part of Dover's older neighborhoods and that the concepts under consideration generally contemplate incremental increases in density. She agreed that public outreach should include methods beyond online communication. Regarding parking, Ms. Townshend clarified that the analysis did not recommend elimination of residential parking requirements. Rather, staff and the consultant were considering whether requirements could be tailored to particular housing types.

Responding to Dr. Sudler regarding Code Enforcement, she stated that additional rental units would require rental inspections and that ordinance drafting should consider practical matters such as trash-can storage, alley access, and neighborhood design.

Mr. Neil discussed broader affordability pressures affecting low- and fixed-income renters, including changes in rental-property ownership and market rents.

Ms. Townshend stated that those broader market issues were outside the scope of the SJR8 regulatory analysis but noted that facilitating smaller infill and missing-middle projects could create additional opportunities for smaller property owners and developers.

Additional strategies identified for consideration included allowing conversion of certain larger existing homes into multiple residential units while protecting neighborhood character; reviewing minimum lot sizes and allowable building heights; expanding mixed-use development opportunities; and considering whether certain residential uses currently requiring conditional-

use approval could instead be permitted by right in appropriate zoning districts. Inclusionary zoning and pre-reviewed housing plans for certain housing types were also discussed as possible strategies.

Ms. Townshend reiterated that parking requirements could be adjusted to correspond with the size and type of housing being constructed rather than eliminated. She noted that staff would also be reviewing whether available data supports establishing different water and wastewater impact-fee levels for different housing types, but no recommendation had been reached.

Ms. Townshend announced that a public workshop regarding the SJR8 initiative was scheduled for October 14, 2026, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Dover Public Library.

Dr. Sudler suggested distributing information regarding the workshop to area churches to broaden community participation.

Proposed Legislation Regarding Data Centers (Councilwoman Hall and Paul Waddell, Electric Director)

Councilwoman Hall reviewed the background and analysis for the proposed legislation regarding data centers. She presented a proposed 18-month temporary moratorium on the acceptance and approval of applications for new large energy-use facilities within the City of Dover. She explained that the purpose was not to permanently prohibit data centers or other large energy users, but to provide the city time to study potential impacts and establish appropriate regulations before committing substantial utility or public-infrastructure capacity.

The proposed ordinance would temporarily suspend acceptance, processing, review, or approval of new applications involving applicable permits, site plans, conditional uses, rezonings, subdivisions, building permits, utility-service agreements, and certificates of occupancy for facilities meeting the ordinance's large energy-use thresholds. The draft also addressed applications already deemed complete and contained limited exemptions, including certain governmental, healthcare, educational, public-safety, telecommunications, utility, clean-hydrogen, maintenance, and existing industrial activities.

During the proposed moratorium, the city would evaluate electrical-system capacity and redundancy; protections for existing utility ratepayers; allocation of infrastructure costs; water, sewer, stormwater, and roadway impacts; land-use standards; environmental and quality-of-life considerations; and potential economic benefits and costs. The review would also consider emerging technologies and appropriate permanent regulations regarding zoning, utility-service requirements, capacity reservations, water consumption, environmental protections, decommissioning obligations, financial security, community-benefit agreements, and public reporting.

It was recommended to forward the proposed ordinance to Council and the Planning Commission for review.

Dr. Sudler expressed support for forwarding the proposed ordinance and stated that the issue reinforced the need for a comprehensive assessment of the City's infrastructure and municipal-service capacity.

Dr. Sudler moved to recommend forwarding the proposed ordinance to Council, the Planning Commission, and to have the City Solicitor make technical recommendations as needed.

Mr. Lewis stated that he would support forwarding the moratorium for consideration while expressing concerns regarding potential impacts on electrical, water, and other infrastructure and the environment.

William Faust, Jr., Dover, expressed concerns regarding infrastructure capacity and who would bear the cost of improvements required to accommodate a data center. He encouraged extensive due diligence and consideration of financial safeguards, utility reliability, environmental impacts, drought conditions, and protections for existing residents.

Bonnie Pennington, Dover, expressed opposition to locating a data center in Dover and raised concerns regarding electricity and water consumption, utility costs, environmental impacts, backup generation, and effects on wildlife.

Reginal Daniel, Townsend, expressed opposition to data-center development and raised concerns regarding emissions from diesel-powered backup generators, air quality, water and electricity consumption, utility rates, infrastructure capacity, environmental impacts, and the number of permanent jobs such facilities may provide relative to their resource demands.

Dr. Sudler moved to recommend forwarding the proposed ordinance to Council, the Planning Commission, and to have the City Solicitor make technical recommendations as needed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously carried.

Priority-Based Budgeting Discussion and Information (Sharon Duca, City Manager)

Ms. Sharon Duca, City Manager, reviewed the presentation entitled "Priority-Based Budgeting (PBB) Overview. She explained that priority-based budgeting is intended to provide greater transparency regarding how city resources are allocated to programs and services. Traditional line-item budgeting remains necessary for financial management but does not always clearly demonstrate the programs and services being funded or their relationship to Council priorities.

Under the proposed approach, expenditures would be associated with specific city programs and services and connected to identified priorities. She proposed using the FY2027 operating budget as a pilot project. Because the initial process would be completed manually, the pilot would focus on the operating budget while the city evaluates potential expansion of its financial system to include a program-based budgeting module.

She noted that they had begun working with department heads to identify existing programs and services and associate them with city priorities. Departments would allocate operating expenses among those programs, with information submitted to the City Manager's Office monthly and summarized for Council in quarterly reports.

The six initial priority areas identified were Economic Development and Public Policy; Public Safety; Community Livability; Land Use and Urban Design; Administrative Services and Support; and Public Utilities and Infrastructure. She noted that staff identified approximately 95 city programs within those priority areas. For FY2028 and future budgets, the process could be expanded to include ranking programs as part of budget development.

This item was informational; committee action was not required.

Ms. Duca explained that the quarterly budget presentation would provide an overview of the budget through the lens of Priority Based Budgeting and the programs being provided by the city. She noted that the Finance Department would continue to provide its traditional financial reports in accordance with required reporting procedures, allowing both reports to be reviewed together.

Mr. Anderson supported periodic budget reviews to allow Council to better understand variances, cost overruns, revenue trends, and changes in operating expenses.

Dr. Sudler suggested that the process eventually identifies high, medium, and lower-priority programs to assist Council in evaluating budget decisions and monitoring progress.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Ms. Duca advised that Community Development had been identified as its own program under the Community Livability priority.

Mr. Anderson moved for adjournment of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Mr. Neil moved for adjournment of the Council Committee of the Whole meeting, hearing no objection the meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Fred A. Neil
Council President