

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Regular City Council Meeting was held on November 24, 2025, at 6:40 p.m. with Council President Neil presiding. Council members present were Ms. Hall, Mr. Boggerty, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Pillsbury, Ms. Arndt, Mr. Rocha (via Webex), Dr. Sudler (out at 7:39 p.m.), and Mr. Lewis (out at 7:40 p.m.).

Staff members present were Police Chief Johnson, Ms. Marney, Mr. Hugg, Fire Chief Carey, Mr. Griffith, and Ms. Bennett. Ms. Melson-Williams was absent. Mayor Christiansen was also present.

OPEN FORUM

The Open Forum was held at 6:20 p.m., prior to commencement of the Official Council Meeting. Acting Council President Hare 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, 136 Orchard Avenue, addressed council to express concerns regarding two (2) proposed ordinances that Mr. Anderson was advocating. The first ordinance addressed panhandling and the giving of money to individuals in need. He expressed concern that the proposed ordinance could create legal risks due to pending lawsuits and questioned what the city would gain from enacting it, noting the potential for negative publicity. He addressed Police Chief Johnson and asked whether the ordinance would be enforced even in cases where an individual was not actually in need of money. He also questioned when a Dover police officer last issued a ticket for jaywalking. Directing a comment to Mr. Anderson, he stated that the suggestion of placing “Strictly Enforced” signs under existing speed limit signs appeared to be merely a money-making tactic. He emphasized that there were appropriate ways to increase revenue, but he believed the proposed ordinance was not one (1) of them. His major concern was receiving clarification regarding questions he had emailed to Mayor Christiansen and council. He noted that only Mr. Lewis had responded and stated that Mr. Anderson had not answered his question in sufficient detail. He stated that if the ordinance passed and enforcement actions targeted the poor, and the city ultimately lost the resulting lawsuits, he wanted to know how much money would be wasted and whether council would reimburse the citizens for costs associated with frivolous and avoidable litigation. He stressed the need for the city to use its revenues wisely, noting existing issues with drugs, gun violence, and prostitution, and stating that resources should be allocated appropriately. He argued that having Dover police officers focus on removing individuals for panhandling was an unnecessary waste of resources and that their efforts would be better directed toward combating criminal activity such as drug dealing, prostitution, gun sales, and gun offenses. He also referenced the recent 10% increase in electric rates in the last budget, explaining that the increase was due to insufficient funds to replace transformers. He stated it was council’s responsibility to look out for the city’s most vulnerable residents, including individuals on Section 8, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. He emphasized that council often passed measures without considering how the most vulnerable residents would be able to afford essential needs, leaving some to choose between paying for food or medication.

Chelle Paul, 501 Silverside Drive, addressed the council to express concerns regarding the

proposed ordinances advocated by Mr. Anderson. She directed her comments to Mr. Anderson, noting that in the proposed Ordinance #2025-21, every section contained the word “median,” except for Section B, which referred instead to “city streets.” She questioned whether the term “city streets” was intended to encompass more than just the median. She emphasized that the current ordinance appeared to suppress citizens’ rights under the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments. She stressed that if the ordinance was intended to apply to a specific area, the council needed to clearly define that area and follow proper procedures in accordance with their responsibilities. By removing the ability to enforce Title 21, they were removing the means to identify the needs of those individuals and provide the resources they would need. She emphasized that the action was effectively stripping away enforceable laws for individuals living on the streets. She directed her comments to Police Chief Johnson, asking if there was a law for public intoxication, such as individuals nodding off out on the street and in danger. She concluded that they all needed to work together so that the community would not be affected, things would be done properly, and they could help the city as opposed to harming it.

Vonda Smack, 1001 White Oak Road, Apartment #F12, addressed council regarding misinformation circulating online. She directed her comments to Mr. Anderson, clarifying that the majority of bicycle incidents previously cited as “median pedestrian accidents” were inaccurate. She expressed her opposition to proposed Ordinance #2025-21, stating that it contradicted the values a community should uphold. She emphasized that the ordinance does not address safety, traffic, or homelessness issues. She shared that she had previously emailed the city suggesting a measure similar to one (1) in Newcastle, which involved placing a fence in the median to encourage the use of crosswalks, but her email went unanswered. She argued that Dover did not need additional punitive laws, but instead needed practical solutions such as affordable housing, mental health resources, expanded outreach shelters with available beds, tenant protections, and supportive services for families and returning citizens. She reminded council that they serve the citizens of Dover, many of whom are struggling, and questioned what actions would be taken to support the 455 children in Kent County experiencing homelessness.

Belinda Main, 142 Reese Street, expressed her support for the individuals who spoke during the open forum. She raised concerns about speeding issues and noted that, at the last meeting she attended, she spoke with Mr. Rocha and Mr. Lewis about possible speeding solutions. She emphasized the need to find practical solutions and review the city’s budget to remove what was not essential in order to address issues for the City of Dover and for its residents. That would include the homeless, speeders, and, personally, her own children, who want to play outside and not have to think about getting hurt. She expressed opposition to the proposed Ordinance #2025-21 directed to Mr. Anderson. She also noted that speeding occurred not only on her street but on highways where homeless individuals and those in need often sit to collect spare change. She stated that citizens have concerns that must be addressed, not just the items placed on the council’s agenda for their own purposes, but items that serve the needs of the city. She stressed that residents wanted their priorities added to the political agenda, even when others believed those concerns were unimportant. She concluded by emphasizing that citizens’ voices needed to be heard. She stated that they were being ignored and that council was not listening, and that it required effort to truly listen.

James Owens, Dover resident, stated that if council was not listening, they would never learn. He

expressed concerns about individuals being fined for helping the less fortunate, noting that such actions conflicted with the core values he taught his children about helping those in need. He suggested that several empty buildings in the city could be converted into rehabilitation centers, where a large number of individuals could receive assistance, rather than trying to fit 15 to 20 individuals into small shelters. He emphasized that there were steps that the city could take to utilize those buildings for the public good. He concluded by sharing that he previously owned a clothing store on Loockerman Street, which was destroyed by a fire. He stated that he believed that the investigation was a sham. He described being brought to the police department and shown footage of the building, yet questioned why, if footage existed, there was no video from the night of the fire. He noted that he was told the cameras had not worked that night. He argued that whenever information was needed, the cameras seemed not to work, and he still does not know what happened to his building. He emphasized that he lost everything and had invested a lot of hard work in that building, yet to this day, no one (1) has explained what happened to the footage from the night of the fire, despite his having been shown other footage of the building.

Cody Canasa, Dover resident, expressed that she was encouraged by the last two (2) Regular Council Meetings she had attended. She referenced scripture, stating, “Do not let your mind be troubled over what your heart allows.” She emphasized that the message was meaningful to her and expressed gratitude for being part of a passionate community, one (1) that refused to let individuals be cast aside, and she was encouraged that everyone wanted to see change and something better. She acknowledged that while everyone may disagree on the path forward, she believed that, inevitably, they all want to reach the same goal.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Elder Ellis B. Loudon.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Boggerty.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

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 requests, in which event the matter shall be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered a separate item.

Mr. Lewis moved for adoption of the consent agenda, seconded by Dr. Sudler, and carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

PROCLAMATION – NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH

The City Clerk read the following Proclamation into the record:

WHEREAS, during the month of November, hospice and palliative care programs across the

nation raise awareness about the compassionate care that helps patients and families live as fully as possible despite serious or life-limiting illness; and

WHEREAS, hospice and palliative care providers offer the highest quality services focused on comfort and dignity, ensuring that patients facing serious illness receive care that aligns with their values and wishes; and

WHEREAS, these programs bring together professionals and volunteers, including physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and therapists, who provide medical, emotional, and spiritual support to patients and their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, hospice and palliative care improve quality of life, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and provide critical assistance for families coping with end-of-life challenges and grief; and

WHEREAS, the City of Dover recognizes and commends the dedicated caregivers, healthcare professionals, and volunteers who devote themselves to ensuring that our residents receive compassionate care when it is needed most;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROBIN R. CHRISTIANSEN, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE, do hereby proclaim November 2025 as **NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH** in the City of Dover and encourage all residents to increase their understanding and awareness of hospice and palliative care services and to observe this month with appropriate activities and appreciation for those who provide this essential care.

On behalf of the Mayor and Council, Mayor Christiansen presented the proclamation to Elaine Pinkowski.

Elaine Pinkowski, representing Compassionate Care Hospice, expressed appreciation for receiving the proclamation. She shared that it was both an honor and a pleasure to do the work they do each day, noting that she was now in her 24th year with Compassionate Care Hospice.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES - REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF OCTOBER 27, 2025

The Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of October 27, 2025, were unanimously approved by motion of Mr. Lewis, seconded by Dr. Sudler, and bore the written approval of Mayor Christiansen.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – ROBBINS HOSE COMPANY – YEAR 2026 FIRE LINE OFFICERS

The Fire Line Officers of the Robbins Hose Company are elected annually on the Third Monday of November. Members were provided the results from the November 3, 2025, Robbins Hose Company Election for consideration as follows:

Fire Chief

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David Carey

Deputy Fire Chief	-	James Iannucci
First Assistant Chief	-	Jason Boc
Second Assistant Chief	-	Chad Knotts
Third Assistant Chief	-	Troy Christiansen
Fourth Assistant Chief	-	Open
First Fire Line Captain	-	Drew Kuntzi
Second Fire Line Captain	-	Nikolas Senne

By consent agenda, Mr. Lewis moved for acceptance of the Fire Line Officers for Robbins Hose Company No. 1 for the Year 2026, as submitted. The motion was seconded by Dr. Sudler and carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

FINAL READING PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2025-18 – AMENDING CHAPTER 2 – ADMINISTRATION, ARTICLE V – FINANCE, BY ADDING SEC. 2-427 – NEW VEHICLE BILLABLE RATES

The First Reading of Proposed Ordinance #2025-18 was accomplished during the Council Meeting of November 10, 2025. The Ordinance is available at the entrance of the Council Chambers or the City’s website at www.cityofdover.gov under “Government”.

Ms. Arndt moved that the Final Reading of the proposed ordinance be acknowledged by title only, seconded by Ms. Hall, and unanimously carried.

Mr. Jason Lyon, Director of Water and Wastewater, reviewed the Proposed Ordinance #2025-18, Amending Chapter 2 – Administration, Article V – Finance, by adding Sec. 2-427 – New Vehicle Billable Rates.

By motion of Mr. Anderson, seconded by Ms. Arndt, Council, by a unanimous roll call vote, adopted Ordinance #2025-18 as follows:

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

That Chapter 2 – Administration, Article V – Finance, be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-421. – Bond financing approval.

Whenever approval of the jurisdiction where real property is situated is required as a condition of bond financing for the acquisition, operation, or renovation of real property in the city by any state or federal law prior to the approval and issuance of such bonds, no such approval shall be complete until approval is sought and granted by the city, and agreed upon and acted upon at the discretion of the council, even though approval may have been granted by the county.

Sec. 2-422. – Tax increment financing, purpose, and findings.

- (a) The city council of the City of Dover has determined that a need exists within the city for improvements and reinvestment throughout the city. Such improvements will enhance the

taxable base of the city, directly and indirectly, encourage the development and redevelopment of commercial and residential areas of the city, increase commercial activity, increase employment, and benefit the general health and welfare of residents; and

- (b) The city council on February 14, 2017, passed Resolution #2017-02 supporting changes to the Delaware Code to enable Dover and Kent County to utilize the provisions of the TIF and Special District code provisions; and
- (c) 22 Delaware Code, Section 1703 provides "In addition to whatever other powers it may have, and notwithstanding any limitation by law, any municipality may borrow money by issuing and selling bonds, at any time and from time to time, for the purpose of financing the development of an industrial, commercial or residential area."; and
- (d) Delaware Code was amended to authorize the City of Dover to use the provisions of 22 Delaware Code, Chapter 17, Municipal Tax Increment Financing Act, including specific Dover provisions in 22 Del. C, Section 1716; and
- (e) Tax increment financing (TIF) is a financing method that allows the use of future tax revenues generated by economic development projects to help pay for the project; allows for the issuance of revenue bonds for such purposes, such bonds being tax-exempt and not a pledge of good faith or credit of the city; and by capturing the tax revenue increment between the original assessed value and the value resulting from the project; and
- (f) Due to the condition, age, and design of buildings and infrastructure, configuration and size of parcels, competition from commercial activities throughout the city, and other factors, the costs and complexities of development, redevelopment, and reinvestment tend to limit investment; and
- (g) Tax increment financing is frequently used by local governments to enable funding of certain development and infrastructure projects but the availability of alternative financing options for these projects might not occur otherwise.

Sec. 2-423. – Authorization to consider issuance of tax increment financing (TIF) district bonds.

- (a) Before issuing bonds under the Municipal Tax Increment Financing Act, the city must designate by resolution, an area as a TIF District, obtain from the city assessor an assessment of the original assessed value in the district, create a special fund for the purpose of receiving the tax revenue increment, and comply with all other provisions of the Municipal Tax Increment Financing Act.
- (b) By enactment of this Ord. No. 2022-22 the city council indicates its intention to issue bonds, notes, or similar instruments in one or more series from time to time for projects and amounts to be determined in the future, prior to the bond offering, for the purposes set forth in the resolution and as allowed under Municipal Tax Increment Financing Act.

- (c) "Council shall have the power by Resolution to establish terms of the bonding and financial arrangement and enter a cooperating agreement with other taxing entities such as State, County, and school districts."

Sec. 2-424. Effective date.

This ordinance shall be effective immediately upon final passage by the city council of the City of Dover. Passed on December 12, 2022.

Sec. 2-425. Sale and disposition of real property.

- (a) *Authorized.* Except as otherwise provided and upon approval of the city council, the city manager is hereby authorized to sell or dispose of excess property.
- (b) *Determination of excess status.* The city manager, upon determining that a city owned parcel of land is excess in nature and that the disposal of such land would be beneficial to the City of Dover, will request, through the legislative, finance, and administration committee, that city council consider disposal of such land.
- (c) *Costs of conveyance.* Unless otherwise specified by the city council, all fees and costs, legal or otherwise, associated with the sale and conveyance of all excess lands shall be paid by the purchaser.
- (d) *Standard method of disposition.*
- (1) The legislative, finance, and administration committee, upon receiving a request to dispose of excess real property, shall, prior to making a recommendation to city council, request all pertinent information including, but not limited to, the following:
- a. Determination that subject parcel is not required by any other city department.
 - b. Written explanation of why subject parcel is now surplus.
 - c. Determination of whether a zoning change would enhance the sale value of subject parcel and recommend said change if warranted.
 - d. Determination if the parcel's exact location and size is known and, if not, recommend whether said parcel should be surveyed by the city prior to any sale attempts.
- (2) City council, after receiving a positive recommendation from the legislative, finance, and administration committee to dispose of a surplus parcel of land, shall, as part of its deliberations:
- a. Determine if disposal of the parcel is in the city's best interests.

- b. Determine if disposal by sale, gift, or some other means would best serve the city's interests.
- c. Determine if the city planner should be requested to initiate rezoning procedures.
- d. Publicize the pertinent information concerning the surplus parcel and its availability for purchase to the general public at least once a week for two weeks in a local newspaper.
- e. Make public, and a part of the record, all written correspondence received and, after the publicizing requirements of subsection (2)d. are met, hold a public hearing to receive any other citizen input.

(3) City council, after voting to proceed with the sale of surplus land, shall determine:

- a. If an unbiased appraisal is needed to establish a minimum acceptable price.
- b. Whether to sell the parcel by public auction or by sealed bid, and what the minimum acceptable offer will be.
- c. The degree and scope of advertising, with a minimum of exposure being advertisement once a week for two weeks in a newspaper of general circulation within the county.
- d. Whether the circumstances of and surrounding a particular sale may be such that the best interests of the city would be served by listing the property for sale with a licensed real estate agent.

(4) City staff shall, with city council's direction:

- a. Arrange for advertisement of the sale.
- b. Draft the sale bill setting out a description of the parcel to be sold, time, date, and place of sale or bid opening, the terms and conditions of sale, and the city's reservation of acceptance or rejection of any or all bids received at the time of sale or bid opening.
- c. Order and distribute a sufficient number of sale bills for posting and distribution in the county courthouse, at the site, and in the general area of the parcel.
- d. Obtain the services of a professional auctioneer if said sale is to be a public auction.
- e. Conduct the sale and submit the results to city council.
- f. Obtain the services of a licensed real estate agent if the sale is to be brokered.

- (5) City council, after confirming the sale, shall:
 - a. Request the city solicitor to prepare a deed for execution and to arrange for final settlement with the purchaser, at which time the city will deliver the deed, the purchaser will pay all balances due, and the city solicitor will record said deed in the Recorder of Deeds Office for Kent County.

(e) Exceptions to standard method of disposition.

- (1) Exception A—Sale to an abutting owner. When, in the opinion of city council, a public sale would be detrimental to the lands of an abutter, and/or that a public sale would place the abutter at undue risk; or that the combination of abutter's land and city's land would be substantially greater in value than that of the sum of the parcels considered individually, city council may direct the city assessor to have prepared one or more unbiased fee appraisals of the parcel. Thereafter, the subject land will be offered for sale to the said abutter at the appraisal price, plus the appraisal fees, plus the legal costs. In the event the offer is not accepted, a public sale may be ordered.

Examples of detrimental affect might be when the surplus city parcel lies between an abutting property and the street and development of the parcel would obstruct visibility of the abutter's property, or when the surplus parcel is zoned multi-family and abuts a single-family parcel.

- (2) Exception B—Trade of lands. Trade of lands may be approved when it is shown beyond doubt that such a trade will be equal to or better than the lands to be traded either on a "square foot for square foot" measure and/or on a "dollar for dollar" measure.
- (3) Exception C—Conveyance of odd shaped and/or unbuildable parcels. City acquisitions for roads, utility usages, etc. may, after such usage is accomplished, leave a small strip of land that is odd shaped and unbuildable. City council may approve the conveyance of this strip of land to an abutting property owner on request of said owner. The price for these lands shall be at the same cost basis as that paid by the city. If conveyance is made in excess of two years after the date of city acquisition, then the consideration shall either be based on a price established by an unbiased fee appraisal made on the basis of the value added to the abutting property by the acquisition of said lands, or on the city's cost basis for the parcel adjusted for inflation, whichever city council shall select. All fees, legal or otherwise, associated with the conveyance are to be paid by the purchaser.
- (4) Exception D—Sale of small or irregular shaped lot to an abutting owner. If any excess parcel of land is too small or irregular in shape to be of any value to anyone other than an abutting owner, it may be sold to such owner at either its fee appraised fair market value, or at its fair market value as established by the city's assessment records, whichever city council shall select. The costs of the appraisal and all legal costs shall be paid by the owner requesting the conveyance.

- (5) Exception E—Donation of land to non-profit organizations. If, in the opinion of city council, the donation of a parcel of excess land to a non-profit organization would be in the best interest of the city, council then reserves unto itself the right to make such donation.

Sec. 2-426. – Credit card processing fees.

A credit/debit card processing fee, as provided for in Appendix F—Fees and Fines, shall be imposed for any tax, fee, fine, summons, utility bill, or any other payment made with a credit, debit, or charge card accepted by the City of Dover.

Sec. 2-427. – New vehicle billable rates.

At times, the City of Dover provides services that are deemed billable. When equipment is used for said billable event, the city shall utilize the most recent published schedule of equipment rates provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This schedule will be calculated on an hourly basis and will not include any labor or material costs for the service. If the city utilizes a piece of equipment that is not included in the FEMA schedule of equipment rates, city staff will utilize industry standards for the hourly rate.

Sections 2-428 – 2-500. Reserved.

ADOPTED: November 24, 2025

FINAL READING PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2025-20 – AMENDING CHAPTER 106 – TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES, ARTICLE I – IN GENERAL, BY ADDING SEC. 106-18 – STRICTLY ENFORCED

The First Reading of Proposed Ordinance #2025-20 was accomplished during the Council Meeting of November 10, 2025. The Ordinance is available at the entrance of the Council Chambers or the City’s website at www.cityofdover.gov under “Government”.

Ms. Arndt moved that the Final Reading of the proposed ordinance be acknowledged by title only, seconded by Ms. Hall, and unanimously carried.

Mr. David Anderson, Council member, reviewed the Proposed Ordinance #2025-20 – Amending Chapter 106 – Traffic and Vehicles, Article I – In General, By Adding Sec. 106-18 – Strictly Enforced.

Responding to Mr. Anderson, Mr. Griffith clarified that there were no legal issues with Dr. Sudler’s amendment to the ordinance. He explained that the primary focus of the amendment concerned the definition of residential districts, and one of the questions they examined was whether local municipalities have the authority to establish that definition in a manner consistent with state law. He stated that, after reviewing state law, it was clear that municipalities do have the authority to define residential districts on their own.

Mr. Anderson requested unanimous consent to incorporate Dr. Sudler's amendment into the ordinance.

Mr. Neil stated that he would call for a vote based on unanimous consent.

By unanimous consent, Dr. Sudler's amendment was incorporated into the ordinance.

Mr. Anderson moved to adopt Ordinance #2025-20. The motion was seconded by Mr. Boggerty.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Police Chief Johnson explained that he had spoken with Judge Wilson the previous week, and Judge Wilson indicated that he could not speak for the discretion of other judges or the deliberative factors they might consider in hearings related to speeding citations. He noted that nothing in the law prevents a conviction at the Justice of the Peace (JP) Court level for driving 26 miles per hour in a 25-mile-per-hour zone. He further explained that, due to timing devices and other variables, as well as whether the motorist has an attorney, there were several factors that influenced why officers typically did not issue citations unless a driver was traveling more than 10 miles per hour over the posted speed limit. Those factors often created reasonable doubt related to the accuracy of timing devices and other evidence that judges must weigh when determining whether to convict someone of speeding. He emphasized that nothing prohibited an officer from issuing such a citation; however, each case that went to court presented unique circumstances and may be heard by different judges, each of whom has the discretion to evaluate the evidence and any mitigating factors. He stated that he could not provide a more definitive answer about specific outcomes because the judiciary has broad discretion in that area.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Police Chief Johnson explained that, for a case to be placed on the Justice of the Peace (JP) Court docket, the violation must be converted from a city ordinance violation to a state-level offense. While that was not difficult to do, he noted that if an individual wished to contest a ticket, they could come to headquarters, where the department followed a standard process using on-duty resources to prepare the case for the docket. He stated that the department participated in what was known as the Police Prosecution Project, which allowed a supervisor to appear in court on behalf of all pending citations on the docket that day. He further explained that if a reasonable disposition could be reached between the police department and the motorists appearing in court, a series of plea bargains often occurred. That would help save the city money by reducing the need for every officer who issued a ticket to be present and on the clock to testify. He added that if they reached an impasse and a motorist requested a formal hearing, the officer who issued the citation would be called in if they were working the day shift. If the officer was not on duty, the case would be scheduled for a future date when the officer could appear. Based on his experience, he stated that only a small minority of cases go to a full hearing, as most motorists prefer to reach a disposition the same day and work out an agreement in front of the judge.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Police Chief Johnson stated that, based on his earlier comments, he does not anticipate his officers enforcing speed violations under five (5) miles per hour over the posted limit. He noted that it would fall under the concept of discretion, and if council intended to begin enforcement between one (1) and five (5) miles per hour over the limit, it would represent a new approach. As with any new ordinance or rule, the department would likely begin

with several warnings to help motorists understand the new expectations. He added that driving was habitual, and it would be unfair to change the rules abruptly without giving citizens time to adjust. He explained that the department maintained electronic records of all traffic stops. Most reasonable officers would review those records and issue warnings if a motorist had been stopped previously, particularly in the same zone. In strictly enforced zones, however, officers might need to issue citations to ensure compliance if verbal warnings proved ineffective. He added that as those cases entered the court system, the department could observe how the judges handled such offenses, which in turn informed training and enforcement practices. He noted that, even before statutory law, case law from appellate courts provided guidance, and local-level case law often favors motorists, especially at low-level speeds.

Responding to Police Chief Johnson, Mr. Lewis stated that if that was the case, based on what had been discussed, then the ordinance would be frivolous.

Mr. Lewis stated for the record that Police Chief Johnson's officers typically did not pursue such cases, and those cases did not hold up in court.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Police Chief Johnson clarified that, in his conversation with Mr. Lewis, he had noted that, due to staffing shortages, officers would rarely be able to conduct speed traps or dedicated speed enforcement. He explained that this was somewhat of a subjective assessment, noting that the department utilized a rotating speed-enforcement posture based on data. He added that they were now receiving enough officers back from the academy to reassemble the motorcycle unit, which served as their traffic enforcement arm. When deployed, the unit focused on locations that have historically generated the most accidents and the highest number of violations. He noted that if someone expected officers to be present in a specific location every day, that would not be statistically possible in a city covering 24 square miles. Such enforcement represented a proactive traffic posture and was a resource-dependent activity. He explained that when census numbers or authorized strength were low, it was more difficult to maintain proactive enforcement because officers were focused on responding to 911 calls. Once staffing approached authorized levels, they would have the resources to conduct more effective enforcement and cover a wider area. He noted that enforcement priorities would change with conditions, but even at the high watermark, the department focused on covering school zones in the mornings and afternoons during the school year, as well as high-accident areas where injuries were most likely to occur. He explained that if they were to ask DelDOT, highway safety, or other partners to address traffic safety issues, every roadway would receive attention. However, given the ratio of officers to the size of the city, the coverage might not feel extensive.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Police Chief Johnson stated that the number of officers would likely change with every other Regular Council meeting. He noted that four (4) officers were nearly finished with field training, a lateral hire would begin on December 1st, and five (5) officers would start at the academy in January. He added that, assuming minimal attrition, their speed enforcement capabilities should be significantly improved by the second quarter of 2026. However, he cautioned that if there were unexpected attrition, staffing levels might remain somewhere between the current level and their optimal strength.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Marney clarified that the cost of the signs could be covered either by the police budget, which was taxpayer-funded, or through grant funding. She cited a previous example in which grant funding was used to pay for signs when a no-smoking policy was implemented on city grounds. She added that, depending on whether the ordinance was enacted and where the signs could be placed, they would need to calculate the costs to determine the appropriate source of funding.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Marney clarified that the cost of the signs would most likely be covered by the police budget.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Police Chief Johnson explained that a moving offense was treated as a local ordinance violation, where the individual would come to police headquarters to resolve the fine with the city. He noted that mailers were sent after specific timelines, similar to any other Dover city ordinance, whether a traffic or other ordinance under city control. He added that the process was comparable to parking violations such as if no response was received after a certain number of mailings, the matter would be forwarded to collections in accordance with city financial policies.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Marney clarified that the city utilized a third-party collections agency after attempting in-house collections. If those efforts were unsuccessful, the case was referred to the third-party agency, which charged approximately 20% of the amount collected. She further noted that funding for signs was available within the Streets Division and Highway Safety budget. She added that there were different avenues for funding sources for the signs.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Marney clarified that funding could potentially be used for signage, possibly through Highway Safety, but noted that this would need to be looked into.

Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Marney clarified that there was no guaranteed alternative funding and that the cost of the signage would likely come from the police budget.

Mr. Lewis stated that he did not believe the ordinance would have a significant impact. Regarding the cost of the signs, he felt those funds could be better used for initiatives that might make a difference, such as hiring another police officer or installing cameras on electronic speed devices. He emphasized that he could not support the ordinance.

Mr. Anderson highlighted that the “strictly enforced” designation was based on Title 21, § 4169 of the Delaware Code. He explained that under that section, enforcement and the applicable penalties vary depending on how much a motorist exceeded the speed limit. For example, if a driver was traveling 50 miles per hour in a 25-mile-per-hour zone, the violation and corresponding penalty are specifically outlined in the state code. He noted that Ms. Marney was correct that street-related issues, including the purchase of signs, fall under the direction of the City Manager as stated in the ordinance, and not under the Chief of Police’s authority. He added that for other types of signs, such as speed limit signs, yield signs, stop signs, or strictly enforced signs, case law gave greater recognition to whether an individual was warned, rather than whether they were not warned. He noted that he supported the police department maintaining that discretion when evaluating an area. He personally believed that five (5) miles per hour over the limit was sufficient, but acknowledged that unusual situations could arise. He stated that he

wanted to clarify those two (2) technical areas to ensure that the discussion focused on what was actually stated in the ordinance.

Dr. Sudler stated that he would like to hear from two (2) constituents who have been faithfully attending the Regular Council Meetings to share their perspectives on the proposed ordinance and its potential impact on the community.

Belinda Main, 142 Reese Street, stated that motorists were unlikely to heed signs marked “Strictly Enforced” or “STOP.” She suggested that stronger enforcement measures than signage were needed, rather than relying on signs at every location.

Responding to Dr. Sudler, Ms. Main stated that the ordinance would not be effective because signs alone cannot direct or control traffic. She noted that traffic could be controlled if there were more “STOP” signs in certain areas or if traffic patterns were changed, but simply posting a sign stating “Strictly Enforced” would have no real impact.

Ms. Hall stated that, given the resources required for enforcement, those funds could be better used exploring options that created physical barriers to slow traffic. She noted that she would be more amenable to supporting measures that addressed that strategically, as it would represent a better use of funds.

Ms. Arndt acknowledged the limited ability to enforce the ordinance and expressed appreciation for the nuances in Police Chief Johnson’s responses. She stated that signs do contribute to public awareness, noting that individuals perceive signs differently. From a public awareness perspective, she recognized that signs have a limited effect on changing driver behavior in certain circumstances, and some drivers may ignore them. However, she noted that she had no opposition to the ordinance, describing it as fairly benign. She added that the proposed sign would simply be placed under an existing speed limit sign, and if it could help even slightly, it would be beneficial and would not cause any harm.

Mr. Lewis stated for the record that he agreed with Ms. Main’s comments 100%. He noted that if the proposal involved speed cameras or dips in the road, which would prevent or have repercussions for individuals exceeding the speed limit in those neighborhoods, he would fully support it. He added that if the proposal involved hiring another police officer to assist with enforcement, since Police Chief Johnson had indicated staffing limitations, he would also support that. He emphasized that Ms. Main raised valid points regarding the proposed ordinance and expressed a desire to see measures that were more cumbersome and useful to stop the speeders.

Responding to Police Chief Johnson, Mr. Lewis stated that after the meeting, he could show photos and videos of vehicles speeding through his neighborhood. He noted that he has a camera in front of his house that captures how quickly vehicles travel down his street. He added that, despite the presence of 25-mile-per-hour speed limit signs and an electronic speed-monitoring system, he was uncertain how a “Strictly Enforced” sign would have any meaningful impact.

Mr. Anderson raised an objection, stating that the open forum had already concluded.

Responding to Mr. Neil, Mr. Anderson clarified that, while other individuals had been invited, Ms. Main was specifically invited by a member of the Council.

Mr. Anderson called the question, stating that it was time to go into a vote because the time had come to decide on the particular issue.

Mr. Neil stated that residents had asked for help, and that the ordinance was at least a gesture toward providing that help. He added that saying it would not help was incorrect, because it was something actionable that officers could enforce when resources were available. He also noted that if an individual were stopped, they would have to appear in court. Even if the case were ultimately dismissed, the requirement to take time off and appear before a judge to explain the circumstances would still have an impact. He pointed out that having to sit in court for an offense, even if an individual may have committed only occasionally, had an impact. When an individual must wait in a long line of cases and explain to a judge why they are there, it has a deterrent effect. He added that if someone believed that it had no impact, they are mistaken. Therefore, if an officer issued a citation marked "Strictly Enforced," it would carry more weight, because it would lead to a court appearance and, in itself, served as a form of enforcement. He added that if an individual had to appear in court and spend their time going through that process, that alone served as sufficient punishment.

Mr. Lewis moved to suspend the rules to allow public comment. The motion was seconded by Dr. Sudler.

Ms. Arndt called for a point of order, noting that once the request was made to call the question, that request took precedence.

Responding to Ms. Arndt, Mr. Griffith stated that if the request has already been made to call the question, the question has been called.

Responding to Ms. Arndt, Mr. Griffith clarified that under Robert's Rules of Order, once the question has been called, the question has been called.

Mr. Neil stated that Mr. Griffith had called for the roll to be taken.

Responding to Ms. Hall, Ms. Bennett clarified that they were voting on Ordinance #2025-20.

Dr. Sudler stated that prior to the call for the question, individuals were not allowed to have a discussion about the ordinance. He pointed out that after the call for the question was made, council was supposed to allow individuals to have a discussion. For the record, he stated that once a motion was made, a discussion should have been made. He added that a call for the question applied only to the vote on the items, but did not allow to have individuals and members of council to have a discussion. He noted for future reference that anytime a call for the question or a second to the motion, they needed to allow for discussion. As in this instance, discussion was not allowed, and because of that, he believed that stifling the voice of the community, he could not support the proposed ordinance.

By motion of Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Boggerty, Council, by a roll call vote of six (6) yes (Boggerty, Anderson, Pillsbury, Arndt, Rocha, Neil) and three (3) no (Hall, Sudler, Lewis), adopted Ordinance #2025-20 as follows:

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

That Chapter 106 – Traffic and Vehicles, Article I – In General, be amended as follows:

Sec. 106-18. – Strictly Enforced

- (a) Residential district speed limits shall be consistent with Title 21, Chapter 41, §4169 and be strictly enforced.

{For purposes of this section, “residential district” shall mean any area designated and posted as a residential speed zone on public roadways maintained by the City. This section shall not apply to private driveways, parking lots, or property not constituting a public roadway. Enforcement shall apply only to traffic movement and operation occurring on the vehicular travel portion of public streets.}

- (1) This section applies exclusively to public roadways, intersections, medians, shoulders, and vehicular travel lanes under the jurisdiction of the City of Dover.
- (2) This section does not apply to or authorize enforcement upon public sidewalks, private property, private roads, private communities, parking areas, or driveways.
- (3) Enforcement authority is confined strictly to the public right-of-way intended for vehicular travel. No enforcement shall occur outside such areas.
- (b) The City Manager shall cause proper signage announcing strict enforcement in residential neighborhoods to be placed in accordance with state law.

{Such signage shall be installed only on public rights-of-way under the City’s jurisdiction and shall comply with all requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). No signage shall be placed on private property without the owner's consent.}

- (c) Penalties. Whoever violates this section shall be fined as provided for in Appendix F – Fees and Fines.

{Any enforcement under this section shall be limited to conduct occurring on public streets or highways within the City of Dover and shall be applied in a viewpoint-neutral, non-discriminatory manner consistent with the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and applicable

This ordinance shall take effect on the first day of July after passage and approval.

Secs. 106-19 – 106-50. – Reserved.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED:

That Appendix F – Fees and Fines, be amended by inserting the text indicated in bold, blue font as follows:

Chapter 106. – Traffic and Vehicles

Chapter 106. Traffic and Vehicles	Fees and Fines
<i>Article I. In General</i>	
Fines not paid within 14 days of the day the fine was issued, including the day the fine was issued, shall be automatically doubled in amount.	
Sec. 106-7. Obedience to state law; violation of any provision of 21 Del. C. § 101 et seq. (except Sec. 106-7(1)—Handicapped parking and Sec. 106-7(2)—Fire lanes)	A fine of not less than \$25.00, nor more than \$1,000.00
Subsec. (1) Handicapped parking	Minimum fine, as defined in 21 Del. C. § 4183, at the time the violation occurs
Subsec. (2) Fire lanes	Minimum fines, as defined in 21 Del. C. § 7001(a), at the time the violation occurs
Sec. 106-14. Off-road motor vehicle regulations	
Subsec. (d) Penalties	A minimum fine of \$25.00 and a maximum fine of \$100.00
Sec. 106-15. Failure to stop for a red traffic signal; traffic light signal violation monitoring program; penalties	
Subsec. (b)(3) Traffic light signal violation monitoring program; civil or administrative assessment	
Failure to comply with a traffic light signal	\$75.00

If not paid within 14 days, an additional assessment shall be added to the original assessment	\$10.00
Additional assessment shall be increased if the assessment is not paid within 45 days	\$20.00
Additional assessment shall be increased if the assessment is not paid within 90 days	\$30.00
Court costs or similar administrative fees may also be assessed if the owner requests a hearing to contest the violation, and is ultimately found to be in violation or fails to pay or contest the violation in a timely manner	Maximum \$30.00
Sec. 106-16. Violations; except as otherwise provided	
Subsec. (a)(1) Moving offense	Minimum of \$10.00
Subsec. (a)(2) Nonmoving offense	Minimum of \$15.00
Subsec. (a)(3) Parking violation	\$20.00 for each offense, if the fine is paid within 72 hours from the date the offense is recorded in time, the fine shall be \$15.00
Sec. 106-18. Strictly Enforced	As defined in 21 Del. C.§ 4169, at the time the violation occurs

ADOPTED: November 24, 2025

Mr. Anderson stated that he was waiting for the vote on the point of order. He noted that part of the question applied in the debate, and therefore, no further discussion was needed. He added that it was the opposite of what Dr. Sudler had stated.

CITY MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hugg had no announcements.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Christiansen announced that the Home for the Holidays Celebration will take place on December 4th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. He noted that several events will be held that evening, including one (1) of the premier events featuring council singing. He also highlighted another premier holiday event in Downtown Dover, the Dashing Through Downtown Dover Parade, which will be held on December 13th, beginning at 5:30 p.m. He concluded by wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Lewis wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reminded everyone not to forget those in

the community who were suffering, disadvantaged, or living on the streets. He encouraged everyone to get involved with local shelters and volunteer their time. He added that this applied not only to individuals but also to animals, noting that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) offered a program where individuals could feed the animals on Thanksgiving. He concluded by urging everyone to keep their hearts open during the holiday season.

Dr. Sudler announced that the Mayor's Blue Ribbon OUD Task Force is planning its first outreach initiative to assist individuals off the medians through peer support staff and partners, including the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) and the Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC). He noted that the state has now joined the effort, providing additional resources to help transition individuals off the medians and connect them to services that can assess their external challenges and provide needed support. He added that they are looking forward to a productive outreach initiative and encouraged any individuals or organizations interested in helping to contact the Mayor's Office, as they welcome everyone's assistance.

Mr. Boggerty announced that on Thanksgiving morning, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., he, along with the World Church Omega Psi Phi Silent Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated, 100 Black Men of Delaware, and a partnering catering company, will be providing breakfast to 200 individuals. He expressed gratitude to those who have already donated. The breakfast will be carry-out only and will be distributed at 300 Loockerman Street, the future home of the Well Life Center.

Mr. Anderson stated that he fully supported Dr. Sudler's efforts in organizing the outreach initiative. He announced that Small Business Saturday will take place on Saturday, November 29th, at The Hive on Loockerman from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. He noted that artisans and other businesses will participate, offering the public unique experiences with local creators and the opportunity to purchase special Christmas gifts. He encouraged everyone to come out to support their local community and keep their dollars local. He added that the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) has received a grant that allowed the public to purchase gift cards that could only be used at downtown businesses. He encouraged everyone to buy and use those gift cards to further support the downtown community. He also announced that Dashing Through Downtown Dover will be held on December 13th, beginning at 6:00 p.m., and that registration was now open. He urged anyone interested in participating to register. He noted that this would also be one (1) of the final opportunities to donate to Toys for Tots, with donations accepted until December 13th. He reminded everyone that many young individuals in the community may not have gifts to receive for Christmas and emphasized the importance of supporting Toys for Tots, adding that the Salvation Army also does a wonderful job serving families in need. He encouraged citizens to attend the Council Committee of the Whole Meeting on November 25th, where important ordinances, including those related to pedestrian safety, will be discussed. He expressed gratitude to the many individuals who have shown support, acknowledging that the community recognized the seriousness of those issues, not only in Dover but across Delaware. He thanked those who contacted him through social media, the news stories, next door, and through petitions. He emphasized that it was vital for the community to take a stand, do what was right for all citizens, preventing harm and harassment, and help restore a sense of community.

Ms. Hall expressed gratitude to Reverend Loudon for setting the tone and tempo in Council Chambers, noting that his words encouraged and uplifted everyone at the start of the meeting. She then addressed Ms. Canasa, expressing her appreciation for her willingness to come forward during public comment, emphasizing that the spirit of the chamber should be one (1) of constructive conversation. She added that while members do not always agree, they must work together to find common solutions. She also addressed Ms. Main, acknowledging that they do not always see eye to eye, but expressed her love for her and gratitude for her attendance at the meeting. She encouraged everyone to embrace a spirit of gratitude during Thanksgiving, recognizing that some members of the community were less fortunate. Finally, she announced that a local business will begin a new tradition, "Friendsgiving," at 329 Loockerman Street with Al Nore, providing meals to residents between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

ANDRIA L. BENNETT
CITY CLERK

All ordinances, resolutions, motions, and orders adopted by the City Council during their Regular Meeting of November 24, 2025, are hereby approved.

ROBIN R. CHRISTIANSEN
MAYOR

/AB