

Town of Bowers

November 2025 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:55 pm on November 13, 2025, by Mayor Puzzo. Council members present include Mayor Ada Puzzo, Bob McDevitt, Chris Telles, and Marty Manning.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

The October minutes were presented. A motion was made by Chris and seconded by Marty to approve the minutes. All in favor.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Marty. A motion was made by Chris and seconded by Mayor Puzzo to approve the report. All in favor.

A recess was called at 7:06 pm.

A motion was made to reconvene by Marty and seconded by Chris at 7:11 pm. Mayor Puzzo introduced council, some members of the audience and the guest speaker: Dr. Joy McCusker. Mayor Puzzo was first introduced to Joy when she began working with the Coastal Resilience Design Studio (CRDS) in 2022. Since then, Joy has focused her dissertation on the Town of Bowers. Mayor Puzzo turned the meeting over to Dr. McCusker.

Dr. McCusker introduced herself and her dissertation which she successfully defended. It is titled "From the Shore to the Screen: How Virtual Reality and Collective Vulnerability Influence Perceptions of Sea-Level Rise in Bowers, Delaware." Dr. McCusker pinpointed three questions to influence the trajectory of her study: does virtual reality simulation of localized, future SLR projections in a small-town influence participants' perceived psychological distance from SLR; how do communities perceive collective vulnerabilities and barriers that limit their adaptive capacity to SLR; and how does participants' perceived psychological distance of SLR affect their perceptions of collective vulnerability?

Dr. McCusker concluded the presentation with key findings from her study. Historical government failures, such as a lack of engagement from larger government agencies and inequitable policies at the local and state levels, was a perceived vulnerability from residents. Urgency was placed on tangible social issues like drainage and dune restoration rather than chronic issues like rare flood events. She then gave an introduction to the in-person activity with the VR simulation of Bowers. Mayor Puzzo announced the zoom session would no longer participate with the in-person session while the in-person members were immersed in the simulation, visualizing the effects of flooding on Bowers.

The formal meeting was reconvened at 8:18 pm after the in-person activity ended. Mayor Puzzo congratulated Dr. McCusker and thanked her for her presence at the meeting and for the study. Mayor Puzzo then gave updates to the town. This was the last interactive zoom meeting for virtual participants. If residents would like to attend virtually that will be possible moving forward, but there will not be the ability to comment. Only residents that attend in-person will have the ability to comment unless specified on the agenda. Marty is moving out of town and will be vacating the position of Treasurer. Shirley Pennington has submitted a letter of interest. If anyone else is interested, it must be submitted before the December Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Marty and seconded by Bob to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jalen Rogers