



Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance was led by players of the Front Royal Little League U-12 All Stars

ROLL CALL BY CLERK OF COUNCIL

PRESENT: Mayor Lori A. Cockrell
Vice Mayor Amber F. Veitenthal
Councilwoman Melissa DeDomenico-Payne
Councilman Joshua L. Ingram
Councilman H. Bruce Rappaport
Councilman R. Wayne Sealock
Councilman Glenn E. Wood

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Joseph W. Petty
Town Attorney George M. Sonnett, Jr.
Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council approve the Council Meeting minutes of the July 28, 2025 Regular Meeting, the August 4, 2025 Work Session and the August 11, 2025 Work Session, as presented.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – Councilmembers Ingram and DeDomenico-Payne (were not in attendance at the August 4, 2025 Work Session)

ROLL CALL

ADDITION/DELETION OF ITEMS FROM THE AGENDA OR REVISION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS – None

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS/REPORTS

Proclamation Recognizing the Front Royal Little League U-12 All Stars – Mayor Cockrell recognized the team with a copy of the Proclamation and various news articles of their success. Along with Town Council she and those in attendance showed their appreciation and pride for the team.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Receive Public Comment Regarding a Request from Aaron & Harmony Hike and Aaron Hike Trustee, to vacate approximately 13,324 square feet of N. Royal Avenue and the alley between N. Royal and Virginia Avenues

David Silek, legal representative for the applicant, reminded Council that this was the third time this request had come before them. He explained the timeline and the issues that arose in the past by not fulfilling the request in a timely manner specifically noting faults of the Town. He encouraged Council to approve the request.

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing

Sarah Randolph, 1602 N. Royal Avenue, reminded Council that viewers were never appointed in the past and suggested Council consider appointing a Viewing Committee this time. She advised that Vice Mayor Veitenthal was an employee of Hike Construction, Inc. and voiced concern with her vote tonight. She advised that the Hikes did not currently live on the property but rented out the apartment over the garage. She felt there was plenty of land to erect a fence without purchasing the alley. She mentioned the concern of an adjacent property owner whose yard



was constantly flooded from rain. In conclusion Ms. Randolph advised that if the vacation were approved, she was interested in a 50% split.

Tyler Manson, 1602 N. Royal Avenue, stated that he should be "owed" what was touching his property whether that be 50% or 25%. He encouraged Council to fix the neighbors water issue and to keep the unimproved alley in the Town's possession.

Brian Pavlicek, Bluff Road, advised that he has known Ms. Randolph and Mr. Manson a long time and their children played in the unimproved alley. He voiced concern that the proposed fence was going to be three feet away from the children's bedroom window. He suggested that the Vice Mayor recuse herself during the vote.

Jacqueline Pavlicek, Bluff Road, agreed with the previous speaker.

Elizabeth Vaught, 1042 Harmony Hollow Road, advised that she grew up across the street from the unimproved alley and while playing there had no idea it was alley. She suggested that Council address Mr. Green's water issues and that everyone work together to come to amicable conclusion.

Akil Green, 101 W. 16th Street, showed Council a video of his water issues on his cell phone. He advised that it was creating two feet of water in his yard and voiced concern that in a few years it would be deeper. He suggested that Council pause the vote tonight until something could be figured out on his water issue. He mentioned buying a portion of the alley that was adjacent to his property.

Katherine Basic, 1516 N. Royal Avenue, advised she lived above the garage on the Hike property and just learned about the request to purchase the unimproved alley noting that she thought the alley was for emergency personnel. She advised that people walk on the property at night voicing safety concerns and hoped something could be figured out in the name of safety.

Mayor Cockrell closed the public hearing

David Silek, on behalf of the applicant, addressed concerns stated by the speakers. He advised that the applicant could not fix the water concerns noting it was a different issue. He believed there was a viewing committee the first time the request was brought before Council when at that time the applicant was willing to give 25% of the alley to the adjacent property owner. The proposed fence, he explained, would be eight feet from the house.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal confirmed that the applicant's property was owned by a trust.

Town Attorney explained a second public hearing would be held on the sale once the negotiations were completed and that the Town would no longer be involved once there was a conveyance of the property.

Councilman Rappaport confirmed that the trustee was Mr. Hike.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne moved seconded by Councilman Ingram that Council adopt an ordinance as presented conditionally approving the vacation and sale request from the applicant.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal read the following statement explaining her position.



The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda. This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com for a limited time.

"I have been approached over the last couple of months by not one but two of my council members about my position on multiple action items, asking why I didn't call them prior to the meeting to discuss my position, how long I knew what action I would decide to take that night, why I don't always use the proposed motions in our agenda, etcetera, etcetera. This is gravely concerning to me for a multitude of reasons. We were elected to motion what is right. That is the job of this council, not the staff, although I do respect them and appreciate their hard work. Staff give us their proposals as a basis. Being able to think for yourself, decipher information timely, and take action is each of our individual responsibilities. I was elected not once, but twice, by the people of Front Royal to serve this town, and I do not take my position for granted. The purpose of a public hearing is to hear the public's input, gather the facts, opinions, and concerns of a matter, before we take action. Therefore, I do not make up my mind prior to a public hearing. Furthermore, I ran self-funded campaigns for my seat on this dais. I cannot be bought or bargained. Others have had campaign support which, in my opinion from adjacent property owners, could have affected their positions on the matter before us tonight. The merits of the situation did not change but an election took place since the last time this item was before us in which support was offered unanimously based on their stance. All of this to say, the matter before us tonight caused some lobbying, some that former elected officials would have called 'backdoor meetings', counting the votes, if you will, making a plan before tonight's meeting, all prior to hearing the public's input here. With this, my integrity has come into question. I find myself once again reminding my fellow council members what an alley vacation application is. It's an applicant who can apply to vacate an alley. That does not guarantee that the applicant will be granted the purchase or include any negotiations of the contract. It simply directs our Town staff to begin negotiations. Therefore, any adjoining property owner can attempt to make the purchase of the vacated alley after the action is taken. I have publicly taken action on this specific item three times in the last several years. My stance, the facts of the matter, nor the alley have changed in any of these years. I work multiple jobs, not just for Hike Construction, Inc. One of those jobs is for Hike Construction, Inc. Hike Construction did not apply to vacate the alley, Hike Construction does not own the home, and most importantly, my job at Hike Construction is not based on any merits or matters pertaining to this alley vacation and never has been and never was. My job at Hike Construction is in project management, for those who wish to know, not in the finance department, not as a partner, no ownership, and I do not owe a single person on this dais any of that information that I just shared. But because I have been transparent in the past and I always have the preservation and success of the Town of Front Royal's interest at heart, I am defending my position. Several months ago, as noted by a council member, I recused myself from a vote on a curb and gutter waiver on Virginia Avenue, which was submitted by Hike Construction, Inc. Again, my job was not contingent on this, but I worked specifically on that project and for the company in which that applied. It is not comparable to the application that is here before us tonight. A work session would have been an appropriate time to address any questions or concerns to me or my position and my professional work, not an email, not a text message, not a conversation behind my back seeking legal advisement on my behalf. Now, typically, I cannot be bullied, intimidated, or threatened, despite great efforts. For those of you who know me, you know that I left the federal government in the first quarter of this year. During my time at the federal government, someone associated with this council reported me to the federal government to try to have me lose my job under the Hatch Act, which I won, that fight, in federal hearings. However, for the sake of innocent people in this community and on this staff, I will forego my earned right to vote in tonight's matter just heard before us. Recusing myself from any vote is a really hard pill to swallow. I see it as a cowardly move when people recuse themselves, oftentimes. I am here, and I was elected to be decisive. A former mayor and former councilman always said: 'As long as you can wake up and look at yourself in the mirror the next day, knowing that you made the best decision with the information you had, that's all that matters in your position.' More than two thousand people went and cast their vote for me, not once, but twice, to sit here and make unbiased decisions. But at the threat of another baseless lawsuit against the Town of Front Royal, I am going to set my pride aside. Anyone who knows me knows I would much rather fight this fight and be sued. But I digress, and I hope those who do not understand our roles as elected officials work on their due diligence, understand the processes and roles of this municipality. And I hope the willful or weaponized, whichever it is, incompetence, will be shamed and not applauded."

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne suggested that staff continue to work with Mr. Green to solve his water issues noting that it was a separate issue. She encouraged the neighbors to find a way to co-exist stating that "we are all connected in some way" giving the Little League All Star Team as an example.

Councilman Ingram agreed with Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne stating that no new information had been provided therefore his stance remained the same as in the past.

Councilman Wood advised that he approved this request last year under the former Town Manager; however, the new Town Manager [Joe Petty] has a planning background and has recommended not selling any of the Town's alleyways as they may be needed for future infrastructure. He suggested taking Mr. Petty's advice.

Councilman Rappaport agreed with Councilman Wood that the alleyways have some purpose potentially redirecting water so that it does not affect properties. He commended Vice Mayor Veitenthal for her courage to recuse herself.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal pointed out that the tax card stated the trust was located behind 1516 N. Royal Avenue.

Councilman Sealock noted that he voted for this request last time but advised that he may have to think more on his decision this time. He offered Mr. Hike an apology for the confusion that may have been caused by the Town.



Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne clarified that it was not an intentional mistake by the former Town Manager as mistakes do happen. Mayor Cockrell agreed that errors were made.

Mr. Sonnett clarified that the ordinance states 120 days with numerous conditions otherwise it will be declared void.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne, Sealock

No – Councilmembers Wood, Rappaport

Absent – N/A

Abstain – Vice Mayor Veitenthal

ROLL CALL

Receive Public Comment to Request the General Assembly to Grant the Town an Amendment to Town Charter, Chapter IV – Town Manager §14, Removing a Residency Requirement for the Town Manager

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing since there were no speakers closed the public hearing

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council approve a request of the Virginia General Assembly to amend the Town Charter, Chapter IV – Town Manager §14, by removing the residency requirement for the Town Manager, as presented, and direct the Town Attorney and the Clerk of Council to forward the request to the elected representatives of the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren in the Virginia General Assembly, along with the required publisher's affidavit showing that the public hearing was advertised, along with a certified copy of the Town Council's minutes showing the action taken at the advertised public hearing.

Mayor Cockrell stated that this section of the Town Charter was written in 1937 when transportation looked different than it does today and noted the challenge of finding housing within the town limits.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ellen Aders, 219 Prospect Street, voiced concern on the most recent proposed zoning text amendment related to the historic district. She advised that she lived in this district and felt it was not unsafe; however, allowing fifteen people to live in one dwelling could look to be potentially unsafe. She voiced concern that investors were purchasing homes in the historic district who were not interested in preserving architecture. She hoped that the text amendment would attract homeowners who wanted to preserve the architecture of the homes. As a member of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR), she advised that the BAR was currently working on guidelines but felt like if Council was not in support of this, they should consider dismantling the BAR.

David Silek, 215 W. Main Street, agreed with Ms. Aders noting that in the 1970's the area was zoned multi-family. He suggested it be brought back to R-1 making the historic district single family to not allow houses to be "carved up". Mr. Silke also voiced concern about stormwater issues at Main and Cloud Streets [217 E. Main Street].

Louisa Lloyd, 1149 Happy Ridge Dr. accompanied by her father Scott Lloyd since she is a minor, asked Council to consider allowing her to keep her chickens and/or raise the limit to allow more than six chickens at a residence. She explained how she acquired so many and how, with her large family, they were beneficial.



REPORTS

Town Manager Report – Mr. Petty gave an update on the N. Royal Avenue [between 6th Street to Commerce Avenue] infrastructure work and the 8th Street Bridge replacement. He advised that the Town Business Offices would be closed on Monday, September 1st for Labor Day and that registration was open for the Citizens Academy to begin in October.

Town Council Reports

Councilman Sealock advised he received appreciation from the Deputy Chief of Regent University for cooperation they received from the Chief and his department.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal clarified that while walking on Cloud Street squatters tried to attack her, advising that she was not discrediting the historic district. She concurred with Miss Lloyd as she too wished she could have more chickens. She clarified that she was project manager for custom homes not commercial projects.

Councilman Ingram recognized the Little League All Stars and their accomplishment giving a shout out to the Town for their support of them.

Councilman Rappaport showed pride in the Little League All Stars as being the best in Virginia. He attended the “Remember When Block Party” hosted by Reaching out Now (RON). He also attended the VML Infrastructure Policy Committee Meeting giving an overview of the many topics discussed including stormwater, funds, sludge disposal, speed cameras, and more.

Councilman Wood congratulated former Warren County Planning Director Matt Wendling on his retirement. He attended the New Teachers Luncheon, Coffee & Conversation, National Night Out, Community Fun Day at Warren County High School, the NCAAP Picnic, Hike Kidz Foundation School Supplies Distribution, and Skyline High School Football Fundraiser. He gave a shout out to former Councilmember Skip Rogers and wife for celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. He expressed condolences to the family of Debbie Llewellyn, a lifetime resident of Warren County who was an inspiration to the community for many years; and to the family of former Councilmember/Mayor Hollis Tharpe on the passing of his wife.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne participated in the Hike Kidz Foundation School Supplies Distribution and thanked everyone who donated.

Report of the Mayor – Mayor Cockrell participated in sending the Little League All Stars to their tournament in Georgia along with being there when they returned a week later. She participated in the many events planned for the new teachers. She attended Jane Reynolds 90th birthday party, National Night Out, Hike Kidz Foundation Ribbon Cutting and School Supplies Distribution, Community Fun Day at Warren County High School, Parade for the Little League All Stars, “Remember When Block Party” hosted by Reaching Out Now (RON) and the Community Input meeting for the new superintendent and encouraged the public to fill out a survey. She invited everyone to the Warren Coalition’s Celebrate Kids Day on September 28th. She mentioned the Hometown Heros Banners noting the unveiling is proposed around Veterans Day.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Purchase of a 20-foot Tilt Trailer for Public Works Department

Council approved the purchase of a 20-foot hydraulic tilt trailer to replace Asset #706, a 2004 16-foot manual tilt trailer from Huffman Trailer Sales, Inc., located in Rockingham, Virginia, in the amount of \$9,278.00.



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Purchase of a 12-foot Dump Trailer for Public Works Department

Council approved the purchase of a 12-foot dump trailer to replace Asset #607, a 2006 8-foot utility trailer from Huffman Trailer Sales, Inc., located in Rockingham, Virginia, in the amount of \$7,778.00.

Purchase of Secondary Clarifier Launder Covers Installation and Warranty for Wastewater Treatment Plant

Council approved the purchase of two (2) Secondary Clarifier Launder Covers installation and an additional 3-year warranty from Sherwood Logan of Richmond, Va., as a sole source procurement in accordance with V.P.P.A. guidelines, in the amount of \$99,700.

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal that Council approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

BUSINESS ITEMS

Update to Town Employee Handbook - Section 5: Paid Time Off and Other Absences

Councilman Wood moved seconded by Councilman Rappaport approve the updates to Section 5 of the Town of Front Royal Employee Handbook regarding paid leave and absences, incorporating the PTO Policy as presented.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal read the statement: *“The Town’s Budget would not be affected by these proposed changes.”*

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Resolution Authorizing the Town Manger to Execute the Participation and Release Form for the Town to be Considered for Initial Participation Calculations and Payment Participation Under the Purdue Direct Settlement of Opioid Related Claims

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne that Council resolve to authorize the Town Manager to execute the Participation and Release Form so that the Town will be considered a Participating Subdivision in the Governmental Entity & Shareholder Direct Settlement Agreement, as presented

Mr. Petty was directed to investigate whether Warren County was participating.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL



Task Order for Engineering Services Related to the Replacement of the E. Prospect Street Bridge

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve a task order with Mattern & Craig, Inc. for engineering services related to the replacement of the E. Prospect Street Bridge, in the amount of \$135,700.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Repayment of Economic Development Access Grant

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Councilman Rappaport that Council approve repayment to the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation in the amount of \$452,466.04 for an Economic Development Access Grant.

Mayor Cockrell gave a brief background on how the \$650,000.00 grant was received by the Town and how money had been put aside in anticipation of having to pay it back since the project did not happen. She expressed hope that continued negotiations would bring back less payback as money was still owed.

Councilman Rappaport voiced disappointment that the project did not happen since it would have created access to the other side of Town instead of having to use W. Main Street.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal stated that this was a “direct result of corruption”.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

CLOSED MEETING

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Town Council convene a closed meeting, pursuant to Sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, for the following purpose: 1) pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, more specifically, Clerk of Council; and, 2) pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) of the Code of Virginia, for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, more specifically, the insolvency and disposition of assets of the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren, Virginia.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL



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Due to personal matters Councilman Sealock did not stay for the closed meeting.

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilman Ingram that Council certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, as recognized by each Council member's affirmative vote, that only such public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the Closed Meeting by Council, and that the vote of each individual member of Council be taken by roll call and recorded and included in the minutes of the meeting of Town Council.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:58pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 9/22/25