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.

Roll Call by Clerk of Council

PRESENT: Mayor Lori A. Cockrell
Vice Mayor Amber F. Veitenthal
(Remote – Medical Emergency in Beliz requiring hospitalization and extradition back to the states – Council had no objection)
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
Various members of the staff and public

FREDA Update – Director of Community Development and Tourism Lizi Lewis gave an overview on what the Front Royal Economic Development Authority (FREDA) was working on specifically focusing on a pamphlet for new businesses [New Business Blueprint-Mapping Your Success in Starting Something New]. She advised that this pamphlet was intended to assist those navigating the process of starting a new business in Front Royal. Mayor Cockrell questioned when Retail Strategies would be ready to share what they had been working on. There was discussion about their contract, noting December would be the end of the first year and specific accomplishments were required to have been met at that time. Ms. Lewis hoped to have an update for Council soon. Council agreed that the pamphlet would be beneficial for small businesses.

Ms. Lewis continued with a Tourism Update drawing attention to three rack cards she provided [Discover Warren County Watering Holes; Discover Front Royal Wine and Bottoms Up Beverage Trail]. She advised that the Bottoms Up Beverage Trail was a collaboration with Clarke County noting it was a FREE program for people to participate in to earn prizes at zero cost to partners participating. Councilman Wood stated that Discover Warren County Watering Holes and Discover Front Royal Wine were promoting and advocating County businesses and advised that he took rack cards to some of the participating businesses to let them know what the Town was doing to promote their business. Ms. Lewis continued updating Council on the statistics of the Tourism Department that included the Visitor Center, Partnerships, Marketing Spots, Virginia Tourism, Open Projects and the Appalachian Trail. There was discussion about County Tourism confirming that there was currently no County Tourism Director and their website was not active. Councilman Wood questioned what was needed to take Front Royal to the next level. Ms. Lewis advised that putting more money into marketing and advertising would make the Town competitive with other localities. Councilman Wood stated that Front Royal had the Visitor Center, advertisements on I-66 and possessed a great collection of rack cards all on the backs of the taxpayers. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne suggested exploring how small businesses could contribute since it benefited them. Discussion ensued as to how the County was required to spend a portion of their Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) on Tourism. They suggested pooling money together to create more funds necessary for marketing and advertising. Ms. Lewis advised she was looking into grants. Council agreed to add Tourism to the next Liaison Committee Meeting in October.

NEW BUSINESS

Construction Services to Restore Creek Bank at 8th Street Bridge – Purchasing Manager Michelle Campbell advised that the bank of Happy Creek was damaged as a result of heavy rains and flooding a few months ago. She noted that contingency funds were being used for this project. Infrastructure Manager Steve Scheulen advised that water was carving a deep and wide path around the bridge on the southeast bank. He confirmed that Muller Inc. had been used for other Town projects. Council agreed to add to the consent agenda for September 22nd.

Connectivity with Vice Mayor Veitenthal seemed to be lost.

FY26 Budget Amendment for Electric Transformer Reimbursement – Finance Director BJ Wilson requested a budget amendment to receive funds from a customer to reimburse the Energy Services Department for the purchase of an electric transformer. Council agreed to add to the consent agenda for September 22nd.

Purchase of Replacement Refuse Truck – Mr. Wilson requested Council to approve the purchase of a replacement of a complete International Freightliner M2106 Chassis with a 25-yard rear loading refuse truck. He reminded Council that they previously requested staff to review potential options for replacing the Town's current refuse truck with an auto-loading truck. Staff obtained a quote of $390,000 for a 2025 Peterbilt with a 2025 Labrie Automizer. The cost of the auto-loading truck would be approximately $123,760 more than the current type of truck used by the Town. He explained that potential implementation of an auto-loading truck would require additional analysis, noting that MSW Consultants would cost approximately $25,000 to perform the analysis. He advised that they would use previously acquired information from the rate study, obtain information from observing some of the Town's collection routes and model potential changes to convert to an automatic collection system. Council Wood questioned the life of a truck. Eric Jorgenson, Supervisor of Solid Waste, explained that the differences in chassis and motor options determined the life of a truck. He advised that staff had been experiencing issues with specific models and the transition to a better model, such as the Freightliner, would prove to be better in standardization moving forward.

Councilman Wood opined that auto-loading would be a better return on investment since laborers on the back of trucks would not be needed. Discussion ensued about the concern that auto-loading trucks would not be able to travel down specific narrow streets and areas with overhead lines. Town Manager Joe Petty advised that the study would help with these concerns. He stated that auto-loading trucks would require phased training for staff, citizens and fleet maintenance. Councilman Wood suggested factoring in workman's comp claims into the study stating that he supported this purchase only if the study was performed for the auto-loading truck. Councilman Rappaport agreed with Councilman Wood stating that newer developments were coming online where everything was being placed underground. There was discussion about auctioning off the old truck and the tub grinder confirming that all proceeds go back into the purchase of another truck. Mr. Petty advised that the turnaround, once purchased, was approximately five months. Council agreed to add to the agenda of September 22nd under Business Items.

7:44pm - Vice Mayor Veitenthal's connectivity was confirmed to be offline.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Calendar – Mr. Wilson gave a summary on the 2026-2027 budget calendar noting the scheduling conflict with the public hearing advertisements for tax rates and the appropriation ordinance giving Council four options to choose from. He suggested Option D, which schedules a Special Meeting on May 11th. There was discussion about getting the tax information from the County in a timely manner and suggested adding it to the next Liaison Committee Meeting in October. Option D was the consensus for staff to move forward.

A. ACTION ITEM - An ordinance to amend sections of Front Royal Town Code Chapter 175 - Zoning by adding the definitions of auxiliary dwelling unit (ADU) and revising the definitions of accessory building/accessory structure, accessory use, garage, private, garage, public, lot, lot coverage, and principal permitted use contained in §175-3- Definitions; and, to amend §175-11 – Statement of Intent (R-1) to include ADU'S; to amend §175-12(A) – Uses Permitted by Right (R-1), §175- 18.2(A) – Use Regulations (R-1A), §175-20 – Uses by Right (R-2); §175-29(A) – Uses Permitted by Right (R-3), and §175-37.3(A) – Permitted Uses (PND); and, add §175-115 – Auxiliary Dwelling Unit (ADU) as performance standards for ADU'S. – Mr. Petty reminded Council that at the last meeting Council asked that this item be discussed further tonight to determine whether suggested changes be referred to the Planning Commission for further review or accept the changes that Planning Director Lauren Kopishke had made. Councilman Wood questioned whether the ADU would have separate utility connections. Mr. Wilson explained that it would be a separate meter [submetering] where property owners could tap off at their main meter but would be billed separately. Discussion ensued about meters and taps and their differences. Ms. Kopishke emphasized that the owner had to live on site [owner occupied] and that both dwellings could not be rented confirming that enforcement was complaint based. She confirmed that the surrounding localities had ADUs with most having provisions. Councilman Rappaport voiced concern that this amendment defeated the purpose of R-1 because it was adding density. He voiced concern that R-1 would have to be re-evaluated since more vehicles would be on the road creating parking situations. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne opined that ADUs would more than likely go in R-1 since they had more property than other residential districts.

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Town Council refer the item back to the Planning Commission to make potential changes.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne
No – N/A
Absent – Vice Mayor Veitenthal
Abstain – N/A ROLL CALL

B. Request for Water and Sewer in the Rt. 522 Corridor for Industrial Use from Stafford One Investments, LLC (522 Properties LLC) at Winchester Road and Winners Court – Mr. Petty passed out the revised Water and Sewer System Excess Capacity Charts from CHA explaining that this item was brought before Council on May 27, 2025 for action but the motion did not receive a second therefore it was not considered. After speaking with Council, he determined that the concerns were available capacity and volume. He reminded Council that on July 18th CHA presented an excess volume determination, and the numbers had been revised to accommodate all possible future development. Mr. Petty read through various numbers listed in the chart, noting it did not include in-fill lots. He read from the Town Code [134.C.1.] *Extension Policy Beyond Town Limits … "Such request must be made prior to a rezoning…."* He explained that these water requests were speculative, not knowing every detail. He suggested they consider revising the Town Code at a later time to state, *"prior to site plan development rather than prior to rezoning",* but right now the Code had to be followed. He confirmed that it was a 220,000 square foot warehouse with their rezoning request coming before the County next week. He reminded Council of the motion made at the May 27th meeting noting the various safeguards to protect the Town's interest: *I move that Council, based upon a finding of sufficient excess capacity, approve a joint request from Warren County and Stafford One Investments LLC (522 Properties LLC, Owner) for water and sewer service, not to exceed 4,500 gallons per day, within the Route 522/340 North Corridor on property identified as Tax Map 12-6F, 4-44B, 4-43A, 4-45Bp and located on the west side of Winchester Road at its intersection with Winners Court for use as an industrial warehouse and distribution center, conditioned upon conveyance to the Town of any necessary easements and the execution of an out-of-Town excess capacity utility agreement and direct the Town Manager and Town Attorney to execute the necessary agreement with the Owner in compliance with all Town Code requirements, with rates and charges at one hundred percent (100%) more than the in-town rates and charges.* Councilman Sealock noted that the application needed to have the correct address of the property listed. Councilman Wood voiced concern on what effect this would have on one of the pump stations slated to be replaced. Mr. Petty advised that there were upgrades reflected in the chart for the future. Councilman Rappaport questioned the tenants work shifts and how many on each shift. Mr. Petty explained there were different scenarios, and everything was speculative right now stating that tenants have different interests with different work levels but must fall in line with 4,500 gallons a day. Town Attorney George Sonnet confirmed that the Town did not have to approve more than that stated in the required utility agreement. Councilman Ingram asked for better numbers on the application. Mr. Petty mentioned that the Inland Port was dictating the need for warehouses and distribution centers. Mr. Petty advised he would get information on the maximum capacity that could be pushed through a two-inch line. Mayor Cockrell encouraged Council to ask Mr. Petty any questions before September 22nd. Council agreed to move forward and place on the September 22nd agenda under Business Items.

CLOSED MEETING

Councilman Wood moved seconded by Councilman Sealock 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 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 2011 McKay Springs MOU between the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren, Virginia.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne
No – N/A
Absent – Vice Mayor Veitenthal
Abstain – N/A ROLL CALL

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilman Sealock 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, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne
No – N/A
Absent – Vice Mayor Veitenthal
Abstain – N/A ROLL CALL

Adjourned approximately 9:45pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 9/22/25