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
Various members of the staff and public

CLOSED MEETING

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal 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)(7) of the Code of Virginia, for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body, more specifically, Downes, Trustee v. Town of Front Royal, 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

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

ACTION ITEMS

Set Order of Business for 2026 Regular Council Meetings

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal that Council approve the order of business for regular Council meetings for 2026 as presented.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal requested that Council consider reinstating two readings for public hearings on an upcoming work session.

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

Appointments of Council Members to Various Committees
*Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Wood by that Council approve the following appointments, said terms to expire December 31, 2026. **2026 Audit and Finance Committee** Councilmen Sealock and Ingram; **2026 Town Scholarship Committee** Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne and Councilman Rappaport; and **2026 Joint Town/County Transportation/Infrastructure Committee** Vice Mayor Veitenthal and Councilman Wood.*

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

Annual Approval of the Remote Participation by Electronic Means Policy
Councilman Wood moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council readopt the Town's Remote Participation by Electronic Means Policy for the calendar year 2026 as presented.

Council voiced concern about giving more information pertaining to medical conditions than what was required, especially about another person in need of care.

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

NEW BUSINESS
FY27 Budgetary Items for Review – Finance Director BJ Wilson highlighted various items to include: medical insurance increase; part-time positions in the offices of the attorney, police and fleet maintenance; and additional officers under the **Staffing/Salary Changes (Operating Expenses**); Central Square Software, Univerus Software, condemnation expense, July 4th fireworks, seed money for FREDA, Retail Strategies, and tree canopy under **Services (Operating Expenses)**; storage cabinets for site plans under **Machinery & Equipment (Capital Projects)**; additional police vehicles and replacement of garbage truck under **Vehicles (Capital Projects)**; Town Hall air conditioner replacement under **Buildings & Structures (Capital Projects)**; Company 1 Fire Department meter vault, additional funds for Criser Road Sidewalk and additional funds for Shenandoah Avenue streetlights under **Infrastructure (Capital Projects)**; and, Centrifuge, Riverton Pump Station and United Bank 30 Year Amoritization under **Debt Service (Capital Projects)**.

Council questioned the justification of the part-time positions in the offices of the attorney, police and fleet maintenance and whether the attorney and police positions were being funded by the monies derived from the speed cameras. Mr. Wilson explained that the speed camera funds were allocated to the General Fund with no specific purpose. Town Attorney George Sonnett explained the request for a part-time position in his office was to create backup for the current legal assistant when she was out of the office and to assist with DUI enforcement within Town limits explaining citations were written under the state code statute therefore the Town was not keeping the revenue. Chief Brian Whited explained that his part-time position would assist with getting an officer back on the street because now an officer was being taken off the road to vet speed camera citations. There was much discussion regarding the funds derived from the speed cameras noting that the public wanted to know where the money was going. It was suggested to add a note to the budget as to what the money was going towards. Chief Whited also explained the request for additional officers explaining that a comparison with other localities was not feasible since it was determined by call volume for the locality. He continued explaining that increasing staff makes for a more predictable budget. The position for the fleet maintenance part-time position was to have the department manager back in the shop, as of now he is doing all the paperwork.

There was much discussion on the condemnation expense, with suggestions back and forth to leave it in the budget or use it where it could be a bigger impact on the community. Discussion ensued about purchasing fireworks since it was noted that there were other big fireworks events planned in 2026. Chief Whited explained that the request for two police vehicles would come with the additional police officers. Town Manager Joe Petty explained that there no longer seems to be a need for the Shenandoah Avenue Streetlights since it would be replacing lights for lights. He advised that he would be discussing the Town's options with VDOT since this was a revenue sharing project. Mr. Wilson explained the purchase of the meter vault for the Fire Department was to justify the water loss because even though they received free water the Town needed to know how much they were using.

<u>FY26 Budget Amendment for Grant Award Operation Ceasefire Forensic and Analytical Technology</u> – Mr. Wilson advised that the Police Department was approved for a grant in the amount of $110,143.00 to purchase technology equipment for rapid accurate, 3D documentation of crime scenes and crash sites allowing the ability to create a "digital twin" for forensic analysis, evidence preservation and court preservation. Council agreed to add to the 26th consent agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

<u>Request for a Two (2) Year Extension of the Automated Systems Speed Enforcement Systems Agreement with Blue Line Solutions LLC</u>– Mr. Petty gave an overview of the previous meetings Council had on this subject highlighting the statistical data before them tonight. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne voiced concern over who owned the equipment specifically directing attention to page 5 of the agreement. Staff explained that Blue Line Solutions owned the equipment and what the Town was paying for was continuous maintenance, noting the Town will never own the equipment as Blue Line Solutions was the sole owner. Mayor Cockrell questioned how many citations were appealed and how many were unpaid. Mr. Sonnet advised it was an average of five a month and his office did not keep track of unpaid citations. Council agreed to add to the 26th consent agenda.

<u>Retail Strategies Agreement Review</u> – Mr. Petty advised that Council approved the renewal of the contract on December 8, 2025 but it was suggested at that time to have meetings with Retail Strategies to include representation from Council and FREDA. He suggested that the meetings be held one hour before the monthly FREDA meetings, with the first one occurring on February 2nd at 11:00am. He noted that the meeting would always be virtual so participation would be convenient for everyone. He advised that Aiden Miller from FREDA has agreed to represent FREDA. Vice Mayor Veitenthal advised she could attend the first meeting.

<u>Repayment of Economic Development Access Grant</u> – Mr. Petty explained that the Town owed VDOT the remaining $106,558.26 of the Economic Development Access Grant. Council agreed to add to the January 12th work session as an action item.

Request to Vacate a Portion of the Unimproved Alley Between W. 13th & 14th Streets – Mr. Petty advised that the applicant West Brown was requesting to vacate an 1,800 square foot portion of the unimproved alley between W. 13th and W 14th Streets, noting that this section of the alley had been utilized since 2002. He suggested advertising for a public hearing to give the public a chance to speak, and he would provide a written report to be placed in the packet. He voiced concern about commercial activity in the area, not only the existing businesses but two that are currently vacant and not knowing what the use may be in the future. He also voiced safety concerns exiting onto W. 14th Street advising that that staff would be reviewing this request more thoroughly. Council agreed to schedule a public hearing in February to hear from the public on this request.

LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING ITEMS FOR JANUARY 15th – Mayor Cockrell reviewed the items from the October meeting. After some discussion the following items were agreed to be placed on the agenda: Joint Tourism, Tipping Fees Update, Shenandoah Battlefield Foundation Update; Update on Well Ordinance; Discussion on Economic Development; Fiscal Impact Model. Councilman Rappaport agreed to attend the meeting with the Mayor.

Adjourned at approximately 9:30pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 2/2/26