



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 Deputy 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.
Deputy Clerk of Council Hillary Wilfong
Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley
Various members of the staff and public

Advertisement of 2026 Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Rate-Finance Director BJ Wilson presented a request for Council to provide direction on the tax rates to be advertised for the 2026 real estate and personal property taxes, in order to schedule a public hearing at the April 27, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Wilson noted that the 2025 real estate tax rate was \$0.068 per \$100 of assessed value and the personal property tax rate was \$0.64 per \$100 of assessed value, with a Personal Property Tax Relief Act (PPTRA) rate of 43%. The FY27 Proposed Budget is based on an equalized real estate tax rate of \$0.082 per \$100 of assessed value, while maintaining the current personal property tax rate and PPTRA rate.

Council engaged in discussion regarding potential adjustments to cost-of-living (COLA) and merit increases, and the corresponding impact on the tax rate. Suggestions included various combinations of COLA and merit increases, with some members supporting up to a 3% COLA and 2% merit increase to assist employees with rising costs, including health insurance. It was noted that such adjustments could require an increase to the advertised tax rate.

Councilman Sealock emphasized the importance of remaining competitive with surrounding localities to retain employees and suggested a 3% COLA and 2% merit increase especially within the Police Department, however, include all town staff. Councilman Wood also spoke in support of employee compensation, referencing prior budget discussions, staffing needs, and reductions in overtime within the Police Department.

Councilman Wood further discussed infrastructure needs identified during the Council retreat, noting that while utility-related infrastructure is supported through enterprise funds and rate structures, other needs, such as transportation infrastructure, ADA-compliant sidewalks and crosswalks, bridge improvements, and roadway projects that require dedicated funding. He proposed the creation of a Transportation and Infrastructure Fund, potentially supported by an additional four-cent tax increase, which could generate approximately \$900,000 annually. He stated that such a fund would allow the Town to begin setting aside resources for vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure, and to better plan for both current and future capital needs. Councilman Wood cautioned against delaying necessary improvements, referencing past infrastructure decisions that resulted in significantly higher costs over time.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal expressed concerns regarding raising taxes and questioned the long-term sustainability of the approach, noting that the proposed funding level may have limited impact relative to the Town's overall infrastructure needs. She emphasized the importance of economic development as an alternative revenue source, stating that a significant project could generate comparable or greater revenue without increasing the burden on taxpayers. She also referenced prior Council discussions regarding one-time bonuses as an alternative to permanent salary increases, which could provide



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more immediate financial relief to employees, and questioned whether any future tax increases would be reduced if additional revenue is realized.

Mayor Cockrell and other members raised questions regarding previously discussed staffing increases, infrastructure needs, and overall budget priorities. Council also sought input from staff, including the Human Resources Director and Police Chief, regarding employee retention, turnover, and departmental needs.

There was general discussion acknowledging that the budget and associated figures had been presented multiple times, and that significant changes at this stage could delay the required advertisement timeline.

Following discussion, Council reached consensus to proceed with advertisement of the FY27 tax rates as proposed, including a real estate tax rate of no less than \$0.082 per \$100 of assessed value, and maintaining the personal property tax rate at \$0.64 per \$100 of assessed value with a PPTRA rate of 43%.

New Business

Purchase of Replacement Water Plant Pickup- Michelle Campbell presented a request for Council approval to purchase a 2026 Ford F-250 4x4 pickup truck to replace Unit #635, a 2008 Ford F-250 with 145,163 miles currently used by the Water Treatment Plant.

The vehicle will be procured through the Virginia Sheriffs' Association cooperative contract in the amount of \$57,402.70 from Haley Ford Commercial and Fleet Division. Funding is available within the FY26 Water Treatment Plant operating budget, which includes \$65,000 for this replacement, with the remaining balance to be used for necessary upfitting.

Council agreed to place this item on the April 27, 2026 Consent Agenda.

2026 Sanitary Sewer System Inspections- Michelle Campbell presented a request for Council approval to award a task order to CHA Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$240,000 for 2026 sanitary sewer system inspections. These services are required to maintain compliance with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's 2020 Consent Order and will include field inspections, smoke testing, manhole inspections, and CCTV work to identify sources of infiltration and inflow (I&I) within the system.

CHA Consulting, Inc. was previously awarded an environmental engineering services contract by Town Council on June 27, 2022. In accordance with the Town's procurement policy and the Virginia Public Procurement Act, Council approval is required for engineering services exceeding \$50,000.

Council agreed to place this item on the April 27, 2026 Consent Agenda.

Extra Work Authorization – 2025 Sanitary Sewer Collections System Flow Monitoring- Michelle Campbell presented a request for Council approval of an Extra Work Authorization to CHA Engineering in the amount of \$117,800 to continue permanent flow monitoring services as outlined in the previously approved Task Order 5-2024 Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring Program (approved November 25, 2024).

CHA Engineering was originally awarded an environmental engineering services contract on June 27, 2022, in accordance with the Virginia Public Procurement Act, and Council approval is required for services exceeding \$50,000. Funding is available within the existing project, with \$475,408 remaining in contingency for I&I abatement projects.

Council agreed to place this item on the April 27, 2026 Consent Agenda.



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Sanitary Sewer Hydraulic Model Development-Michelle Campbell presented a request for Council approval to award a task order to CHA Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$150,000 for the development of a sanitary sewer hydraulic model. The model will assess system capacity, support future development planning, and identify areas of limited capacity that may contribute to system surcharging. The Town's last sewer model was completed in 2009.

CHA Consulting, Inc. was previously awarded an environmental engineering services contract on June 27, 2022. In accordance with the Virginia Public Procurement Act and Town procurement policy, Council approval is required for engineering services exceeding \$50,000.

Council agreed to place this item on the April 27, 2026 Consent Agenda.

FY26 Budget Amendment for Street Maintenance Building Repairs Insurance Reimbursement- BJ Wilson presented a request for Council approval of a FY26 budget amendment in the amount of \$4,496 to appropriate insurance reimbursement funds from the Virginia Risk Sharing Association for repairs to the Street Maintenance Building due to weather-related damage.

Council agreed to place this item on the April 27, 2026 Consent Agenda.

2026 VML Policy Committee Nominations- Council discussed nominations for Councilmembers and staff to serve on various committees, with terms expiring December 31, 2026. The proposed appointments reflect updates from the 2025 committee assignments.

The following appointments were agreed upon:

- **Community and Economic Development:** Councilman Ingram and Lizi Lewis
- **Finance:** Councilman Rappaport and Finance Director BJ Wilson
- **General Laws:** Councilman Sealock and Town Attorney George Sonnett
- **Human Development and Education:** Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne and Town Manager Joe Petty
- **Infrastructure (Environmental, Natural Resources, Transportation):** Vice Mayor Veitenthal and Director of Public Works Robbie Boyer

Councilman Wood will not serve on a committee for this term.

Liaison Committee Meeting Items for April 16, 2026- Council discussed items to be included on the upcoming Liaison Committee Meeting agenda. Topics identified include:

- **Joint Towing Advisory Board** – Council noted prior discussions regarding the number of towing companies permitted, which did not progress further. With board member terms set to expire August 31, 2026, the Liaison Committee should determine next steps, including outreach to current members regarding continued service and responsibility for managing the reappointment process.
- **2027 Reassessment Process** – Council requested discussion on the overall process and anticipated timeline for when updated assessment values will be available.
- **Septic Tank Waste Fee Update** – Council noted that fees are expected to increase and should be communicated as a courtesy.
- **Tourism Collaboration** – Continued discussion regarding coordination between Town Economic Development and the County EDA, as regularly addressed at Liaison meetings.
- **Fiscal Model Impacts** – Request for any updates related to fiscal modeling.

Councilman Wood and Mayor Cockrell will attend the April 16th meeting.

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 purposes:



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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, a) the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), b) Town Manager, c) Town Attorney; 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 Amendment to the Voluntary Settlement Agreement Between the County of Warren, Virginia and the Town of Front Royal, Virginia, Regarding the Compromise for PILOT Meals and Lodging Taxes, entered into April 11, 2018; and, 3)pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia, consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body, more specifically, between the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren, Virginia, United Bank, First Bank & Trust and the Town, and, 4)pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(5) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community, more specifically, properties located at 0 Winchester Road and Identified on Tax Map IDs: 12N-----1, 12N-----2, 12N-----3.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Councilman Rappaport 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 Rappaport, DeDomenico-Payne, Ingram, Wood, Sealock, Veitenthal

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

First Action Coming Out of Closed

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve An Amendment to Voluntary Settlement Agreement Between the County of Warren, Virginia, and the Town of Front Royal, Virginia, Regarding a Compromise of the Collection of PILOT Meals and Lodging Tax Fees, dated April 6, 2026, as presented, with the Mayor to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Town, and directing the Clerk of Council to forward an executed copy of the Agreement to the Warren County Board of Supervisors for approval.

Council clarified who would be sending the amendment to the County and the County Attorney, it was clarified that the Clerk of Council would send over the amendment to the Board of Supervisors and Mr. Sonnett would send it to the County Attorney.

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

No –Wood

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL



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Second Action Coming Out of Closed

Councilman Wood moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal that Council approve the Settlement Agreement, dated April 6, 2026, between the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia and the County of Warren, Virginia, First Bank and Trust Company, United Bank, and the Town of Front Royal, as presented, with the Mayor to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Town.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Adjourned at approximately 11:09pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 04/27/2026