



Moment of Silence

Pledge was led by the Skyline High School Sports Teams

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 Sealock that Council approve the minutes of March 23, 2026 Meeting, April 6, 2026 Work Session and April 13, 2026 Work Session as presented.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

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

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS/ REPORTS

Mayor and Council recognized Boy Scout Troop 52 led by Councilman Sealock and awarded three Town Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to the following students: Sidney Engleking, Carmen Pond and Brady Thompson.

Public Works Director Robbie Boyer and Wastewater Plant Manager Robbie Hodges recognized Lena Fugatt for obtaining her Class 1 Wastewater Operators License and introduced the new Town Engineer Nick Bass. The Mayor and Council applauded and expressed their appreciation.

Mayor Cockrell read the following Proclamations: National Police Week, National Public Works Week and Professional Municipal Clerks Week. The Mayor and Council applauded the efforts of these departments.

Brief reports were given by Planning Commission Chairman Allen Neel and Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Cody Taylor. The Mayor and Council thanked them for their hard work.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Consider Real Property/Personal Property Tax Rates for FY2026-2027 and Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 75-44
Mayor Cockrell open the public hearing, and since there were no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council adopt the Real Property Tax rate for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at \$0.082 per \$100 assessed value, which represents an increase of \$0.014 over the current year's rates; the Personal Property Tax rate at \$0.64 per \$100 assessed value, which represents no increase over current year's rates; the personal property tax relief rate (PPTR) for qualifying vehicles at a rate of 43% of value on the first \$20,000 of assessed value for qualifying vehicles with an assessed value greater than \$1,000; and a personal property



tax relief rate of 100% for qualifying vehicles with an assessed value of \$1,000 or less, pursuant to Virginia Code §58.1-3524; and, adopt an ordinance to amend Front Royal Town Code §70-44.C to reflect the increase as presented.

Councilman Rappaport advised that last year the Town was given numbers from the County that were significantly less than what was needed to balance the budget: therefore, creating an adjustment to this year's budget.

Councilman Ingram understood that there was a scramble to rectify last year's oversight but was having a hard time voting for a tax increase.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal stated that the marginal tax increase was no fault of Council or Staff but understood Councilman Ingram's sentiment.

Councilman Wood reminded Council that tonight's tax rate was advertised as such. He encouraged citizens to look at ways the budget could be cut and to express their ideas to Council.

Councilman Rappaport reiterated that the rate was an equalization.

Mayor Cockrell voiced displeasure in recent newspaper articles and social media stating that "words matter". She reiterated that the incorrect numbers given by the County to the Town created a significant amount of loss revenue to the Town. She also gave an explanation about the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield's offer on the McKay Spring property stating that "no offer was made from the Town" and "this Council is willing to sit down and talk."

Vice Mayor Veitenthal agreed with the sentiment of the Mayor noting that the sale of the McKay property would be a one-time addition to the budget and would not correct the oversight spoken of tonight.

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

No – Councilmen Ingram and Sealock

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Ordinance Amendment to Chapters 12 & 134 Pertaining to Septic Haul Waste Rate and Water/Sewer Rates

Mayor Cockrell open the public hearing, and since there were no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Wood moved seconded by Councilman Ingram that Council adopt an Ordinance to amend and re-enact Front Royal Town Code §12-2 to adjust the Septic Tank Waste Fee and pursuant to Virginia Code §§15.2-2119, 15.2-2111, 15.2-2122, and 15.2-2143 to amend and re-enact Front Royal Town Code §§134-22.1, 134-22.4, 134-30, 134-31.1 and 134-31.2 to Increase Water and Sewer Service Rates effective July 1, 2026 as presented.

Councilman Ingram explained that this impacted the Enterprise Fund and reflects the cost of doing business.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal stated that there were numerous Council discussions and the figures were more than fair.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL



Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 4 Pertaining to Meetings, Required Training, Public Records and Designation of Records and FOIA Officers

Mayor Cockrell open the public hearing, and since there were no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that adopt an Ordinance to Amend Front Royal Town Code §§4-1, 4-5, and 4-44 through 4-51, pertaining to Meetings, Required Training, Public Records and Designation of Records and FOIA Officers as presented.

Councilman Rappaport thanked Clerk of Council Tina Presley for her hard work on revising the ordinance.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO PUBLIC HEARINGS

Cody Taylor, 749 W. 16th Street – Mr. Taylor reminded Council of the Roberts Rules of Order.

REPORTS

Town Manager Report – Mr. Petty reminded citizens that No Parking signs would be posted on Main Street April 29th – April 30th for an upcoming event; and the trash collection would be affected in this area on Thursday. He also noted that the next regular Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26th due to the Memorial Day Holiday.

Town Council Reports

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne advised that her and Councilman Rappaport were on the Scholarship Committee and thanked all those who applied. She attended a VML Webinar regarding the new laws and encouraged everyone to review. She worked at the polls. She voiced her appreciation on what the Mayor was saying earlier about social media and suggested for those with questions to go straight to the source and to reach out to Council directly.

Councilman Wood echoed Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne's suggestion on communication.

Councilman Sealock – No Report

Vice Mayor Veitenthal gave the following statement:

It feels like it has been quite some time since I've given a report, and honestly, it feels like we've experienced all four seasons since last month's meeting. On Good Friday, I had the opportunity to help distribute 119 Easter baskets to the boys and girls of our community alongside the Easter Bunny through the Hike Kidz Foundation. It was a wonderful reminder of how strong and giving this community truly is. I too worked the polls on Election Day. It was not the results I had hoped for. However, it was a reassuring to sit out on a beautiful day having such polite dialogue with democrats, republicans, libertarians, and independents alike. This past Sunday, I also had the privilege of helping host Opening Day for Warren County Girls Little League Softball. Thank you to our Mayor for joining us as an honorary guest and helping make the day even more special for our players and families. Since the first day I stepped into these council chambers as a councilwoman, I have consistently advocated for property owners' rights and urban agriculture. In fact, the topic of chickens has become so frequently discussed that it's almost comical at this point—but my position has always gone far beyond chickens. There are a few things I'd like to address tonight because, despite my efforts to reiterate my positions during work sessions, there are often important details the general public may miss. At the December 1st Work Session, when council received progress updates regarding zoning text amendments related to data centers—specifically defining data centers in town code and adding them as a special use permit with performance standards—I suggested that staff and our legal department draft a text amendment to ban data centers in Front Royal altogether. I cited



similar concerns and prior discussions in Warrenton. This can be found by reviewing the meeting video or on page 4, paragraph 4 of the official minutes. Unfortunately, that suggestion did not receive majority consensus and therefore was not pursued. I want to be very clear: I have remained opposed to data centers in the Town of Front Royal since before my time on council, and that position remains unchanged today. As for taxes, I have also remained consistently opposed to raising them. We have many residents in our community living on fixed incomes. While energy costs rise, refuse costs rise, real estate reassessments increase, and taxes continue to climb at both the local and state level, these individuals do not have the ability to simply make more money to keep up. That said, I do recognize the very real needs our town faces. There are rising costs being placed on us that should not be subsidized. There are infrastructure needs—not wants—that have been neglected for generations or temporarily patched with band-aid solutions. The timing, however, is critical. Until we have a functioning and robust economic development system in place that generates meaningful tax revenue, we should not place that burden on the backs of taxpayers. We need manufacturing. We need living-wage jobs. We need to ensure that those who are benefiting most from our community are contributing fairly to it. We have entities that own significant portions of our commercial real estate, profit greatly from this town, and yet pay little to nothing in taxes. We have offered handouts for long enough to the largest private employer in the northern Shenandoah Valley—an institution that has monopolized opportunity and burdened many of our constituents. I do not care whether that amount is \$50,000 or \$500,000—it is due, and it is overdue. Those should be the first people in line to pay their fair share. No matter what happens with this council at the end of this year, I will continue advocating for a PILOT—Payment in Lieu of Taxes—for those who place a significant burden on our community while operating under the protection of nonprofit status. Because the reality is this: if raising taxes becomes our first solution, then even if we eventually solve the underlying problems, will we ever truly reduce those taxes? Or will we simply become dependent on the additional revenue and continue collecting it indefinitely? As long as I am here—in Front Royal, whether on council or not—I will continue to stand for the values that seem like common sense to me: Limited government. Providing the public with necessary resources. Supporting and unburdening small businesses and working families who choose Front Royal. At this point, it is not just about preservation—it is about restoration. Respectfully, Amber Veitenthal

Councilman Ingram agreed with Vice Mayor Veitenthal's sentiments regarding data centers.

Councilman Rappaport worked with Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne on the Scholarship Committee. He attended the Rotary Club of Front Royal Century of Service Celebration and Lone Pine Day. He stated that as a councilmember he tries 1) his best to do what's right, 2) to be the best he can be and 3) to show you all I care. He asked if there were any questions or concerns to email him.

Report of the Mayor – Mayor Cockrell attended Young Life Wing-a-Thon and later their Banquet; Front Royal Little League Opening Day; Citizens Academy, Liaison Meeting, Rotary Club of Front Royal Century of Service Celebration; Lone Pine Day and Girls Softball Opening Day.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Purchase of Replacement Pickup for Water Plant

Council approved the purchase of a 2026 Ford F-250 regular cab, 4x4 pickup truck with an 8-foot fleet bed and snowplow package for the Water Treatment Plant, from Haley Ford Commercial and Fleet Division in the amount of \$57,402.70, to replace Unit #635.

Purchase of 3D Laser Scanner Software & Equipment Package for Police Department

Council approved the purchase of a Leica Geosystems BLK360 G2 3D laser scanner, including software, training, and related equipment, from Leica Geosystems in the amount of \$69,396.00 to document crime scenes, serious motor vehicle crashes, and other incidents requiring accurate scene reconstruction.



Award of a Task Order for 2026 Sanitary Sewer System Inspections

Council approved the award of a task order to CHA Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$240,000.00 for the 2026 Sanitary Sewer System Inspections, to support compliance with the 2020 Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Consent Order.

Extra Work Authorization to Continue Permanent Flow Monitoring Services

Council approved an Extra Work Authorization to CHA Engineering in the amount of \$117,800.00 to continue permanent sanitary sewer flow monitoring services under Task Order 5-2024.

Award of a Task Order for Sanitary Sewer Hydraulic Model Development

Council approved the award of a task order to CHA Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$150,000.00 for Sanitary Sewer Hydraulic Model Development.

FY26 Budget Amendment to Receive Funds for Repairs of Street Maintenance Building

Council approved a FY26 Budget Amendment in the amount of \$4,496.00 to appropriate funds received from the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA) as reimbursement for expenses incurred for repairs to the Street Maintenance Building due to weather-related damage.

FY26 Budget Amendment for Sale of Tub Grinder

Council approved a FY26 budget amendment in the amount of \$18,100 to allocate proceeds from the sale of the 1997 W.H.O. Tub grinder toward the future purchase of a replacement solid waste truck.

2026 VML Policy Committee Nominations

Council approved the nominations for appointment to the 2026 VML Policy Committees for terms expiring December 31, 2026, as follows: Community and Economic Development – Councilman Ingram and Community Development/Tourism Director 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; and Infrastructure (Environmental, Natural Resources, and Transportation) – Vice Mayor Veitenthal and Director of Public Works Robbie Boyer.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Member Recommendation

Council recommend Timothy Brogan to the Judge of the Warren County Circuit Court for re-appointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to a five-year term ending May 1, 2031.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Smithsonian Institution and the Town for Conservation, Restoration and Preservation of Town-owned Land on Remount Road to Include Sloan Creek Pond

Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Smithsonian Institution on behalf of the Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) as presented for the conservation, ecological restoration, and preservation of Town-owned property on Remount Road, to include Sloan Creek Pond.

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

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL



BUSINESS ITEMS

Resolution Authorizing Execution of the 2026 Power Pool Participant Schedule with AMP

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal that Council approve a Resolution Authorizing Execution of the 2026 Power Pool Participant Schedule with AMP as presented.

Councilman Rappaport explained that this would help the consultants to alleviate spikes and pay market prices.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Repeal Ordinance Adopted February 2, 2026 Approving to Vacate 12,914 Square Feet of an Unimproved Street Located Between 218 E. 4th Street and Norfolk Southern Railway Company

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council repeal the Ordinance adopted February 2, 2026, approving to vacate 12,914 square feet of an unimproved street located between 218 E. 4th Street and Norfolk Southern Railway Company

Repeal Ordinance Adopted February 2, 2026 Approving to Vacate 14,188 Square Feet of an Unimproved Street Located Between 5th Street and Norfolk Southern Railway Company.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council repeal the ordinance Adopted February 2, 2026, Approving to Vacate 14,188 Square Feet of an Unimproved Street Located Between 5th Street and Norfolk Southern Railway Company

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Repeal Ordinance Adopted February 2, 2026 Approving to Vacate 14,442 Square Feet of a Unimproved Street Located Between 412 North Commerce Avenue and Norfolk Southern Railway company.

Councilwoman De-Domenico-Payne moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council repeal the Ordinance adopted February 2, 2026, which approved the vacation of 14,442 square feet of an unimproved street located between 412 North Commerce Avenue and Norfolk Southern Railway Company

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

CLOSED MEETING

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Ingram 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 §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia, discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property



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.

for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, more specifically, a) the sale of vacated 6,235 square foot portion of the unimproved Randolph Avenue between Washington Avenue and Lot 5, and, b) the sale of vacated 1,800 square foot portion of the unimproved alley located between W. 13th Street and W. 14th Street.

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

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal 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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: May 26, 2026