



The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence

Pledge was led by Sofie Kerns

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 Hillary Wilfong

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Rappaport moved, seconded by Councilman Ingram, that Council approve the minutes of the June 22, 2026, Regular Meeting, July 6, 2026, Work Session, and July 13, 2026, Work Session as presented.

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

No– None

Absent–None

Abstain– None

ROLL CALL:

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

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS/REPORTS- None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Request to discontinue the use of motor vehicles on a portion of Church Street between East Main Street and East Jackson Street- The Town of Front Royal's request to discontinue the use of motor vehicles on approximately 1,932 square feet of Church Street located between E. Main Street and the parking lot behind 201 E. Main Street, pursuant to Virginia Code §§ 15.2-2001 and 15.2-2006.

Mr. Petty reported that the one-way alley has been closed since late 2025 due to the redevelopment of the former Murphy Theater building at 131 E. Main Street, and the Town has received little to no feedback regarding the closure and its impact on traffic. He also noted that the 2019 Downtown Parking Study conducted with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission recommended converting this section of Church Street into a pedestrian walkway to provide connectivity between Jackson Street and Main Street.

If approved, the Town would continue to own and maintain the area as a public pedestrian walkway. The current proposal does not include improvements to the space but would include barriers to prevent vehicle access. Mr. Petty noted that the Town will continue to work with downtown stakeholders to identify opportunities for future planning and funding of a pedestrian walkway.

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing.



- **Ellen Aders- 219 Prospect Street-** spoke in support of discontinuing motor vehicle use on Church Street. Ms. Aders stated that closing the alley would improve safety and provide an opportunity to create a pedestrian-friendly gathering space. She noted the need for improvements to the area, including lighting, seating, and landscaping, and expressed Downtown Front Royal Inc.'s willingness to assist with future funding efforts.
- **Kevin Cuddeback- 112 Luray Avenue-** spoke regarding the 2019 Downtown Parking Study and its recommendations. Mr. Cuddeback noted that the study identified a pedestrian connection from Jackson Street parking to Main Street as a recommended improvement and stated that the Jackson Street parking area could serve as a similar pedestrian access point to the downtown area.

Mayor Cockrell closed the public hearing.

Councilman Ingram moved, seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve the discontinuance of the use of motor vehicles on approximately 1,932 square feet of Church Street located between E. Main Street and the parking lot behind 201 E. Main street, pursuant to Virginia Code section 15.2-2001 & 2006.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal discussed questions regarding the proposed closure, including future use, maintenance, permitting, and potential impacts to adjacent businesses. Town Manager Petty explained that the Town would continue to own and maintain the area as public property and that any future use would require appropriate Town approval or permits. Discussion was held regarding future improvements, access for businesses and deliveries, and the need for a public process involving downtown stakeholders.

Councilman Rappaport questioned the reasoning behind selecting Church Street for closure and why other downtown streets were not considered. Mr. Petty explained that the 2019 Downtown Parking Study identified Church Street as a recommended pedestrian connection due to its location, connection between the Jackson Street parking lot and Main Street, and the opportunity to create a continuous pedestrian corridor through downtown. Discussion continued regarding traffic circulation, the age of the parking study, existing conditions, and impacts to surrounding businesses.

Councilmember Wood expressed support for discontinuing motor vehicle use on Church Street, noting that the area had been closed for nearly a year with little feedback or complaints received. He stated that the closure would provide an opportunity to create a gathering space that would complement the Murphy Theater redevelopment and benefit downtown businesses.

Councilman Rappaport reiterated concerns regarding the selection of Church Street, traffic circulation, and feedback received from some property owners, while expressing support for downtown improvements. Mr. Petty noted that the closure would not permanently vacate the property, as the Town would continue to own the area and could evaluate reopening it in the future if necessary. Mr. Petty further noted that future improvements would depend on available funding opportunities.

Councilman Rappaport moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal to delay action on the closed public hearing until Monday, August 24, 2026.

Vote: Yes– Councilmembers Rappaport, Ingram, Vice Mayor Veitenthal

No– DeDomenico-Payne, Wood, Sealock

Absent–None

Abstain– None

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Cockrell voted yes.

Ordinance Amendment to Town Code Chapter 72-Special Events Held on Town Streets and Public Property-Council is requested to consider adoption of an ordinance to amend and re-enact Town Code Chapter 72-Special Events Held on Town Streets and Public Property as presented. The Town adopted and updated a Special Events Policy in 2021 that set guidelines



for events held on Town property or streets. In the following years, many successful events have been held creating new economic and community development. During this time Town staff has also been reviewing and strategizing the process, operations, and fiscal impact of special events. The provided draft amendment transforms a Town policy into Town Code. In an effort to provide better accountability for the Town and Event Organizers, the code identifies new procedures that may ensure events are successful and safe for our residents, businesses, and visitors.

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing and closed the public hearing.

Councilman Rappaport moved, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne that Council adopt an ordinance to amend the re-enact Chapter 72- Special Events Held on Town Streets and Public Property as presented, effective upon adoption.

Councilman Ingram and Vice Mayor Veitenthal noted they had not received any additional feedback or concerns since the previous discussion during the work session and asked whether the Town Manager had received any further input. Mr. Petty stated that limited feedback had been received following the initial discussion; however, no additional concerns were raised after the public hearing and subsequent work session. Vice Mayor Veitenthal noted that the Town continues to subsidize the cost of hosting events on Town streets and public property, including associated staff time and operational expenses, and clarified that the purpose of the amendment was not to generate revenue from event organizers but to establish appropriate procedures and accountability for the use of public resources.

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

No– None

Absent–None

Abstain– None

ROLL CALL:

PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO PUBLIC HEARINGS

- **Ellen Aders- 219 Prospect Street-** Spoke regarding a historic district property and expressed her support for preserving the architectural character of the area. She stated that the Board of Architectural Review previously denied the same request and required the original windows to be restored, noting that the Certificate of Appropriateness had since expired and the request had returned. Ms. Aders encouraged Council to uphold the Board's decision and emphasized the importance of following established preservation processes, citing previous examples where applicants worked through the process to achieve outcomes that benefited the historic district.
- **Kevin Cuddeback- 112 Luray Avenue-** Spoke regarding downtown parking, land use processes, and historic preservation. He noted that previous parking studies included recommendations to improve bicycle parking availability downtown, particularly along Main Street, and suggested that additional bicycle facilities could help address concerns regarding e-bike parking. Mr. Cuddeback also discussed the importance of maintaining a balanced and consistent process for land use decisions, including the use of established review procedures such as special use permits and the Board of Architectural Review process. He emphasized the value of meaningful dialogue between applicants and review boards and expressed concern that repeatedly revisiting decisions without additional changes or compromises could undermine the effectiveness of those processes.

REPORTS

Report of Town Manager- Mr. Petty provided a reminder that the August Town Council meeting will be held at Town Hall instead of the Warren County Government Center due to scheduled ceiling maintenance in the meeting room. He stated that public notice regarding the location change would be provided. Mr. Petty also reminded Council and the public of National Night Out scheduled for Tuesday, August 4.

Report of Council Member s- Councilman Rappaport and Councilman Wood did not have anything to report.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne reported attending a webinar regarding the Ebola outbreak, the one-year anniversary celebration at Cottonwood Ranch, the Virginia Municipal League Human Development and Education Committee meeting,



and various community events, including a Warren Coalition fundraiser, Dueling Disco with Hike Kids, and the Town employee picnic. She also commented on e-bikes, noting their potential as a transportation option for individuals who may not have access to other forms of transportation and sharing examples of how e-bike programs have been utilized in other communities.

Councilman Ingram reported on the recent Virginia Municipal League Finance Committee meeting, noting that the discussion focused on routine financial matters and that additional information would be presented at the upcoming VML Fall Conference. He also reflected on the conclusion of the Front Royal Cardinals baseball season and encouraged motorists to use caution as the new school year approaches, noting that increased traffic is expected near local schools.

Councilman Sealock commended the Front Royal Police Department for its professionalism and positive interactions with the community. He also reported that he had recently been elected Chairman of the Front Royal Police Foundation following the resignation of the previous chair. Councilman Sealock explained that the Foundation raises private funds to support the Police Department by purchasing equipment and other resources that help reduce costs to taxpayers. He noted that the Foundation is planning several upcoming fundraising events.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal reported on her participation in community and civic activities since the previous meeting. She recognized the Warren County Girls Little League All-Stars for their successful season, attended former Clerk of Council Tina Presley's retirement celebration, and participated in the Town employee appreciation picnic. She also volunteered at a community food distribution event hosted by Love in Action, attended a Virginia Municipal League Infrastructure Committee meeting, and participated in the Hike Kids Foundation Dueling Disco fundraiser. Vice Mayor Veitenthal encouraged public engagement in local government and noted the importance of community involvement through volunteerism and local elections.

Report of the Mayor- Mayor Cockrell reported on her retirement from Warren County Public Schools following 36 years as an educator and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to continue serving the community as Mayor. She attended the Cottonwood Ranch one-year anniversary celebration, the retired teachers' luncheon, the joint Town Council and Warren County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Hike Kids Foundation Dueling Disco fundraiser, former Clerk of Council Tina Presley's retirement celebration, and the Town employee appreciation luncheon. Mayor Cockrell also participated in volunteer efforts with the Boxes of Basics organization to provide back-to-school clothing for local children, welcomed participants and families during the Front Royal Little League State Tournament, and recognized Town staff and volunteers for their contributions to the tournament's success. She concluded by highlighting her continued involvement in the Hike Kids Foundation's Clothing the Kids initiative.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Town Manager Residency Requirement Waiver- Council approved the requested waiver of the Town Manager residency requirement pursuant to Section 4-53(D) of the Town Code as presented.

Retrofit Raw Water Switchgear Controllers- Council authorized the purchase of equipment and installation services from Benshaw Applied Motor Controls for the retrofit of the existing raw water switch gear control panels at the Water Treatment Plant, in the amount of \$264,798.

Re-appointment to the Planning Commission- Council reappointed Teresa Fedoryka to the Planning Commission for a four-year term beginning August 31, 2025, and ending August 31, 2029.

Special Exception Application -10160 Winchester Road- Council approved the Administrative Variance application submitted by Chris Ramsey to allow the subdivision of the 1.276-acre parcel identified as Tax Map Number 20A241-7, as presented.



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

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

No– None

Absent– None

Abstain– None

ROLL CALL

NEW BUSINESS

Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Appeal- Denial of Certificate of Appropriateness Application #2600313 (501 E. Main Street- Council is requested to consider an appeal pursuant to Town Code §175-94 regarding the Board of Architectural Review's (BAR) denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of 18 wood windows with vinyl windows at 501 E. Main Street. Staff explained that the property is a contributing structure within the Historic District and that the vinyl windows were installed without prior BAR approval. The BAR previously denied the Certificate of Appropriateness and directed replacement of the windows with wood windows in accordance with the Historic District Design Guidelines. The applicant requested that Council overturn the BAR decision or allow the existing vinyl windows to remain, with an alternative request to replace only the front-facing windows.

Mr. Hyo K. Bang stated to Council that there may have been a misunderstanding regarding the prior request and explained that he intended to propose replacing the front-facing windows with wood windows. He requested consideration of an alternative approach that would allow some of the existing windows to remain while replacing additional windows with wood.

Planning Director Kopishke provided background regarding the appeal of the Board of Architectural Review's denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness for 501 East Main Street. She explained that the property, owned by 505 East Main Street LLC, is a pre-Civil War contributing structure located within the Historic District and is considered one of the older structures on East Main Street. Ms. Kopishke reviewed the historical survey of the property, noting that the structure had undergone previous alterations but retained its historic designation due to its age and architectural significance.

Ms. Kopishke explained that the applicant installed vinyl replacement windows without first obtaining the required Certificate of Appropriateness or zoning permits. Staff issued a stop work order after discovering the work, at which time the applicant began working through the approval process. She stated that 15 of the 18 windows have been replaced with vinyl, while the remaining openings were left unfinished after work stopped.

Ms. Kopishke noted that the applicant's current appeal request was to replace the nine front-facing windows with wood windows while allowing the vinyl windows on the side and rear elevations to remain. She clarified that the applicant had not previously presented that specific request to the Board of Architectural Review and that the appeal before Council included this revised proposal.

Ms. Kopishke clarified the Certificate of Appropriateness process and explained that the Board of Architectural Review's consideration focused on the change in window material, as the original windows were wood and the installed replacements were vinyl. She noted that the Historic District Design Guidelines encourage the repair and rehabilitation of original features when possible and recommend replacement materials that are identical or compatible with the original design.



Council discussed whether other properties within the Historic District have vinyl windows and staff explained that some existing vinyl windows are the result of prior decisions or installations that occurred before the current Board of Architectural Review. Ms. Kopishke further explained that property owners are notified of Historic District requirements through the permitting process and that, in 2024, additional outreach was conducted to property owners regarding Historic District guidelines.

The applicant, Mr. Bang stated that he believed vinyl windows were acceptable based on his observations of other properties and explained that he was unaware of the Historic District requirements when purchasing the property. Ms. Kopishke noted that the property was in the Historic District and that the work began prior to obtaining the required permits and Certificate of Appropriateness. Council discussed the importance of property owners and contractors understanding permitting requirements before beginning work.

Council acknowledged the applicant's efforts to maintain the property and continued the discussion regarding the appeal process and agreed to place this on the August 24th Council Agenda.

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

No– None

Absent–None

Abstain– None

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 purposes: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 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; 2) pursuant to section 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, the Town Attorney.

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

No– None

Absent – None

Abstain– None

ROLL CALL:

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

Councilman Wood 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.



Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes of 7/27/26 - Page | 7

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.

Vote: Yes– Councilmembers Rappaport, DeDomenico-Payne, Ingram, Wood, Sealock, Vice Mayor Veitenthal
No– None
Absent– None
Abstain– None **ROLL CALL:**

ACTION AFTER CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

Councilman Ingram moved, seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve the RESOLUTION TERMINATING THE 2018 AMENDMENT TO THE 1999 VOLUNTARY SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT, as presented, and direct the Clerk of Council to forward an attested copy of the Resolution to the Clerk of the Warren County Board of Supervisors.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Rappaport, DeDomenico-Payne, Ingram, Sealock, Vice Mayor Veitenthal
No– Wood
Absent– None
Abstain– None **ROLL CALL:**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:13pm

Approved by Town Council
08/24/26