



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)
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
Various members of the staff and public

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Vice Mayor Veitenthal participated remotely. Mayor Cockrell confirmed Vice Mayor Veitenthal location is at home, in Front Royal due to illness.

PRESENTATION

Appalachian Trail Connector Update Justin Proctor, Chair of the Advisory Committee for Environmental Sustainability (ACES), provided an update on the Appalachian Trail Connector Trail project. He explained that the proposed connector would consist of approximately three miles of trail primarily intended for pedestrian use, extending from Chrysler Road to the Appalachian Trail crossing near U.S. Route 522. The project would provide a safer connection between the Town and the Appalachian Trail without requiring pedestrians to travel along or cross Route 522. Bicycles and horses would not be permitted.

Mr. Proctor reported that a formal feasibility study was completed by Ironwood Outdoors earlier in 2026. The study evaluated potential trail routes, terrain, creek crossings, and other site constraints and divided the proposed trail into five sections. Multiple routing options exist in certain areas, which may allow the project to reduce costs and minimize environmental disturbance.

Mr. Proctor advised that an Appalachian Trail Connector working group has been established to assist with advancing the project and includes representatives from the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, the Warren-Front Royal Appalachian Trail Community, and other community partners. The working group is evaluating potential fiscal agents, funding opportunities, construction partnerships, easement and right-of-way requirements, environmental considerations, and options for the proposed Happy Creek crossings.

The feasibility study estimated a maximum project cost of approximately \$3.8 million. Mr. Proctor stated that the working group is evaluating ways to reduce costs without compromising safety and estimated that the project could potentially be completed for approximately \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

In response to questions, Mr. Proctor discussed the need for creek crossings to be designed above the floodplain and noted that bridge crossings would be a significant project expense. He also explained that the trail would



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need to be sufficiently wide to accommodate emergency access, including ATVs, and that multiple access points from Route 522 could provide emergency response access.

Mr. Proctor discussed potential partnerships with conservation organizations and volunteer groups to assist with construction and reduce costs. He stated that maintenance could potentially be coordinated through the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, with additional opportunities for local civic and youth organizations to adopt and maintain sections of the trail.

Regarding accessibility, Mr. Proctor explained that the initial trail would not be fully ADA accessible throughout. Future phases could evaluate opportunities to improve accessibility on portions of the trail, including potentially paving select segments where appropriate.

Mr. Proctor concluded by noting that the project is continuing to move forward, with the working group currently focused on stakeholder coordination, funding, routing, construction, and maintenance considerations.

NEW BUSINESS

Purchase of Replacement Truck for the Public Works Concrete Crew - Michelle Campbell, Purchasing Manager, presented a request to authorize the purchase of a 2027 Ford F-350 Crew Cab 4x4 pickup truck equipped with a 9-foot service body and tow package for the Public Works Concrete Crew. The vehicle will replace Unit #748, a 2004 Chevrolet 3500 pickup truck with a utility body that has accumulated more than 92,149 miles.

Ms. Campbell reported that the vehicle would be purchased through the City of Chesapeake, Virginia's cooperative contract with Hall Automotive. Staff obtained a quote from Hall Automotive Fleet Team of Virginia Beach, Virginia, in the amount of \$87,874.00. Funding is available in the Highway Maintenance Department's FY27 operating budget, consisting of \$80,000 previously encumbered under Purchase Order #31424 and \$7,874 budgeted in the FY27 Motor Vehicles account.

In response to a question regarding the disposition of the existing 2004 Chevrolet 3500, Mr. Boyer advised that the vehicle is in poor condition and is expected to be disposed of rather than reassigned to another department.

Council agreed to place this on the Consent Agenda for August 24, 2026.

Purchase of Replacement Refuse Truck for Public Works- Solid Waste - Michelle Campbell, Purchasing Manager, presented a request to authorize the purchase of a 2027 Freightliner chassis equipped with a 25-foot rear loader for the Public Works Solid Waste Department. The vehicle will replace Unit #687, a 2008 International 2600 refuse truck with more than 117,917 miles.

Ms. Campbell reported that the vehicle would be purchased through a Sourcewell cooperative contract with Daimler Trucks North America. Staff obtained a quote from Excel Truck Group of Weyers Cave, Virginia, in the amount of \$266,967.00. Funding is available in the Solid Waste Management Department's FY27 Motor Vehicles operating budget, consisting of \$105,004 previously encumbered and \$161,963 budgeted in the FY27 Motor Vehicles account.



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Council discussed the age and mileage of the existing refuse truck and questioned whether engine hours are tracked, given the vehicle's frequent stop-and-go operation. Mr. Boyer explained that newer vehicles are equipped with technology that tracks operating hours, but comparable information may not be available for the older vehicle. Mr. Wilson also discussed the difficulty of obtaining parts for older vehicles.

Mr. Boyer, advised that the Town operates six refuse trucks and recently received another new refuse truck. Mr. Boyer further explained that the department has been retaining an additional truck due to fleet reliability concerns and the need for a spare vehicle, noting that the Town recently experienced a situation in which two trucks were out of service and recycling operations had to be suspended to provide adequate refuse collection coverage.

Council agreed to place this on the Consent Agenda for August 24, 2026.

Purchase of Replacement Camera System for Public Works Sewer Camera Truck- Michelle Campbell, Purchasing Manager, presented a request to authorize the purchase of equipment, software, and installation services to retrofit the Public Works Sewer Maintenance Department's sewer camera truck with a new camera inspection system. The existing camera system has reached the end of its useful life and is no longer capable of meeting the Department's operational needs.

Ms. Campbell reported that the purchase would be made through a Sourcewell cooperative contract with Infrastructure Solutions Group (ISG) of Mechanicsville, Virginia, in the amount of \$139,936.35. Funding is available within the Sewer Maintenance Department's FY27 Machinery and Equipment operating budget.

Council clarified that the purchase is for replacement of the camera equipment and associated system, rather than replacement of the sewer camera truck itself. Council had no further questions and agreed to place the item on the Consent Agenda for the August 24, 2026 meeting.

Council Appointments- Tow Board- Mr. Petty presented proposed appointments to the Joint Towing Advisory Board for the new four-year term beginning in 2026. He explained that the Board was established following the Town's adoption of Chapter 158-54 through 158-69 in 2017 regarding Law Enforcement Requested Towing. Under the Board's By-Laws, the Town Council and Warren County Board of Supervisors jointly appoint three representatives from the towing and recovery business, three law enforcement representatives, and one citizen member to four-year terms.

The proposed appointments are:

- Captain David Fogle, Front Royal Police Department
- Lieutenant Michael E. Glavis, Warren County Sheriff's Office
- Sergeant Steven Marks, Virginia State Police
- Gloria Knott, Keens Towing
- Louis C. Tharpe, Tharpe's Towing
- Alan Crawford, Midway Towing

Mr. Petty advised that the Town and County had previously discussed the appointments during joint liaison meetings and had sought applicants for the positions. No new applicants were received; however, all existing



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members indicated their willingness to be reappointed. The Town and County will continue seeking a citizen representative to fill the remaining vacancy. He noted that the citizen representative may reside in either the Town or Warren County and that preference is for the appointment to be a citizen rather than a Town or County employee.

Council discussed potential future revisions to the Board's By-Laws and the ordinance, including matters related to towing fee caps. Mr. Petty advised that these matters would be brought forward for consideration after the Board has been reappointed and is able to review and make recommendations.

Council agreed to place this on the Consent Agenda for August 24, 2026.

OLD BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Outdoor Dining Areas – Lauren Kopishke, Planning and Zoning Director, presented a proposed ordinance amendment to define “outdoor dining area” in Town Code §175-3, permit outdoor dining as an accessory use in the C-1, Community Business District, and C-2, Downtown Business District, and establish performance standards under §175-118. She explained that the amendment was prompted by the Town’s current zoning provisions, which generally require commercial uses to occur within an enclosed building, leaving no clear mechanism to permit outdoor dining. The amendment would recognize outdoor dining as an accessory use to a restaurant or other qualifying food establishment, establish objective standards for compliance, and bring existing outdoor dining areas into compliance while providing a clear process for future businesses.

Council discussed the proposed requirement that outdoor dining remain incidental and subordinate to the principal use, including the proposed 50% limitation on outdoor seating. Council also discussed requirements for securing outdoor furniture, umbrellas, and structures; maintaining clear building exits, emergency access, and fire equipment; and the distinction between private property and public rights-of-way. Staff clarified that the amendment would apply to qualifying outdoor dining on private property and would not authorize use of sidewalks or other public rights-of-way without the appropriate Town approval.

Council expressed concerns regarding the 50% limitation and whether outdoor dining should instead be incorporated into the definition of a restaurant rather than established as an accessory use. Ms. Kopishke explained the zoning distinction between a principal and accessory use and noted that removing the 50% limitation would not prevent the ordinance from functioning, as outdoor dining would still be required to remain incidental and subordinate to the principal use. She further clarified that existing outdoor dining businesses would not be required to discontinue their current operations and that the intent was to establish a mechanism for compliance rather than penalize existing businesses.

Following discussion, Council indicated support for moving the ordinance forward to a public hearing, with consideration given to removing the 50% limitation. The matter was scheduled to return for further review and consideration of final language prior to advertisement for a public hearing.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:22PM

Approved by Council: **08/24/2026**