

Town Council Meeting: 13 July 2026
Approved Minutes

Call to Order: Mayor Joe Whited opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Council members Patrick O'Connell, Brad Schneider, and Deb Harris were present. Town Clerk Barbara Batson was also present. John Fox Sullivan, Drew Beard, and Jean Goodine were absent.

Approval of Agenda: Ms. Harris **moved** to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. O'Connell **seconded** the motion. The motion to approve the agenda passed unanimously (4-0).

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Harris **moved** to approve the May 11, 2026 minutes as presented. Mr. O'Connell **seconded** the motion, which passed unanimously (4-0).

Mayor's Report: Mayor Whited stated that he did not think the Town could have had a better Fourth of July weekend, and he wanted to thank everyone who made it possible. He said Colonel John Bourgeois carried on the wonderful tradition for the Town, and because the holiday fell on a federal holiday this year, attendance was slightly higher. Mayor Whited noted that the new format took advantage of the seating in the art hall; while it was not as good a backdrop for photographs, it was a much more comfortable way to get through the concert. He thanked Drew Mitchell and Tyler Townsend for continuing to make Avon Hall open to the Town, as well as the committee that put the event together. He stated that the Town would continue with this format, with a slightly later start in the evening to assist with the dropoff.

Mayor Whited stated that the concert was followed on Saturday night by a wonderful additional Fourth of July celebration in the Town, and he thanked those who were able to get out to Trinity for the parish hall reception, followed by fireworks. He also thanked Mr. O'Connell for hosting the reception behind the tavern shops. He stated that also over the Fourth of July weekend, the Town gained a new manager for its Facebook account and a new Town Instagram account, and he thanked [Brian] for his work. Mayor Whited encouraged businesses to pass along their happenings for inclusion in the Town's social media.

Mayor Whited mentioned that in addition to the nation turning 250 years old this year, the Town turns 230—focused on the official birthdate in the fall and recognized by keeping the banners up around Town. He stated that additional events contemplated were a Town picnic dinner, a classical guitar concert, and a one-person show at Town Hall via RAAC. He noted that Ms. Batson and others on the 230th Committee were working on additional celebratory events.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Harris thanked Mr. O'Connell, [Alicia], and team for handling the banners, which she acknowledged was not a small feat. She said everything was running as usual with the budget; they were now at the end of the fiscal year and evaluating the adjustments made. Ms. Batson commented that they are on track and looking good.

Infrastructure Report: Mr. Schneider said everything was running smoothly with the water system, stating that there were some operational offsets with wastewater. He said the floats had come in so the second basin could be done, and he would coordinate with Rick's Welding on the three pieces of structural steel for dimensions, then schedule with Moyer Brothers.

Mayor Whited asked if the new setup seemed to be working well.

Mr. Schneider confirmed that it was and said some slight adjustments would be made on the floats to get things better balanced, but what they had in place now was dramatically better than the previous arrangement.

Mr. Schneider stated that his other item concerned the shed, and Ms. Batson had asked him to take the reins on that.

Mayor Whited noted that it would just be an additional structure at the plant so some of the repair work could be done inside, as well as keeping equipment from being stored outside, which impaired its lifetime.

Mr. Schneider confirmed this and said that the following week he could get the necessary approvals, then get a permit from the County.

Town Attorney's Report: There was none.

Planning and Zoning Director's Report: Ms. Batson said Mr. Gyurisin's written report was included in the Council packet.

Planning Commission Report: Mr. Jerome Edwards stated that the Planning Commission had held a meeting on June 22, and most of the meeting involved a discussion of the additional dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance for the Town, which the Commission had drafted.

Mayor Whited noted that based on actions taken last year, the Town was working to establish an ordinance around ADUs.

Mr. Edwards explained that the ADU ordinance coincided with the requirements of the state law going into effect. He stated that the Commissioners did not have significant issues but wanted to do a little research, so they tabled action but were moving ahead. He said the Commission also reviewed the upcoming reorganization that Mr. Gyurisin was pulling together for the ordinances overall, as well as a plan for reviewing those.

Architectural Review Board: Ms. Batson said the ARB met the following week and reviewed the agenda: 250 Main Street was just a renewal of the certificate of appropriateness (COA) that had already been done for the addition being built on the back; the work shed at the wastewater treatment plant; and signage for Hayfields.

Old Business: There was none.

New Business:

A. Appointment – Custodian of Public Funds: Mayor Whited stated that their bank required the Town to appoint at least two people as custodian of public funds, and the proposal is for him and the treasurer, Deb Harris, to serve as those custodians for commercial purposes.

Mr. O’Connell **moved** to appoint Mayor Whited and Ms. Harris as custodians of public funds.

Mr. Schneider **seconded** the motion.

Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following vote: Mayor Whited—yes; Mr. Schneider—yes; Ms. Harris—yes; Mr. O’Connell—yes.

B. Emergency Response Services Update – Kier Whitson/Darren Stevens: Mayor Whited stated that Mr. Whitson had contacted the Town a few weeks earlier and asked to provide an update on the County’s emergency response services.

Mr. Kier Whitson stated that he was currently vice chair of the Rappahannock County Board of Supervisors and also served concurrently as the chair of the County public safety coordinating body—the Public Safety Committee—composed of two members of the Board of Supervisors, the emergency services chief, the County administrator, the sheriff, and a chief from one of the fire companies. Mr. Whitson said he was joined that night by Darren Stevens, the County’s EMS coordinator, who had a long career in fire and EMS and was a fortunate addition.

Mr. Whitson said he would provide a high-level overview of the current status of fire and rescue services in Rappahannock County, and he was there to reassure Town leadership that the County was working hard to provide protection to the Town’s growing number of residents, specifically via the Rush River Commons housing area and its increasing number of visitors. Mr. Whitson said he knew Mr. O’Connell and Mr. Tompkins were working hard to expand amenities for the Inn at Little Washington, which already included a pool and would soon feature a spa; if additional hotel rooms were added, the County understood the need for a continued comprehensive EMS services. He stated that anecdotally, the County had noticed a slight uptick in calls in the Town, stemming in part from the Rush River Commons residential area and from incidents at the Inn and other businesses, and the County had requested the data from its dispatch system. He emphasized that the County wanted to assure that it was there to assist.

Mr. Whitson cited his own experience in Wisconsin as a cardiac arrest survivor and the importance of a quick response, noting that as soon as a person goes down, the clock starts ticking and assistance is needed within a 5-7 minute window. He stated that this was called the “chain of survival,” and he shared that experience with Mr. Schneider.

Mr. Schneider mentioned that one of the sheriff’s deputies was there literally within a minute on the clock from when the call was made, and he took over doing CPR—with Josh Waddell right behind the deputy a few moments later. He said that what he learned from the deputy

was the professionalism and dedication of the County's emergency response teams, as the deputy said Mr. Wadell refused to give up on him. Mr. Schneider also said that the Sperryville commander indicated to him that he was kind of lucky because it was snowing and everybody was hanging out at the stations. He added that the only update needed was that they had to transfer him to Fauquier because they had RSI certification and Rappahannock did not.

Mr. Darren Stevens stated that he had retired from Fauquier County after 37 years, before coming to Rappahannock. Mr. Stevens said Fauquier had an EMS supervisor program in which providers carried whole blood and one other cardiac medication, but realistically it was the use of a ventilator that mattered. He said he was happy to report that the County had applied for and received a grant from the Virginia Department of Health. He stated that later that month, actually the following week, training would begin, and he said the County had purchased a Hamilton T1 ventilator and signed an agreement to start carrying whole blood with Inova Blood Services. He stated that within about 30 to 45 days, the service would be available locally.

Mr. Whitson emphasized that as the Town grew and the Inn expanded, County EMS resources would continue to be ready in times of need. He said Mr. Schneider had written a strong letter to the editor asking County government to prioritize EMS funding, and he would address that before describing current assets, with Mr. Stevens then covering operational details.

Mr. Whitson reported that County EMS funding was nearing 15% of total County revenue, including about \$1.5 million in taxpayer funds to volunteer fire and rescue companies through the fire levy process—which was collected through tax bills, aggregated in the County's general ledger, and returned to fire companies for operating expenses. He said they were grateful for all volunteers, including Company 1 members who spent their free time running calls, and taxpayers supported their efforts by covering operating expenses. He said the County was also nearing \$1 million a year for paid paramedics, such as Josh Waddell, to complement volunteers.

Mr. Whitson said in addition to about \$2.5 million in direct taxpayer dollars for fire and rescue, he had gained unanimous support in 2025 in his capacity as Public Safety Committee chair for five non-monetary offerings to each volunteer fire and rescue company:

- The County offered each company centralized drug management, with those protocols in Virginia having become onerous, including tracking drugs, expiration dates, and refrigeration.
- Because volunteers also worked, the County offered paid providers and paramedics to fill staffing gaps at volunteer fire and rescue companies.
- Knowing who was on duty and when mattered, so the County offered centralized scheduling.
- The County offered a rapid response vehicle for volunteers to take home, avoiding extra time going to the station before a call.

- The County offered to purchase for every volunteer fire and rescue company a life-saving LifePak 35.

Mr. Whitson stated that the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved taxpayer-funded LifePak 35s for companies that wanted them, with each device being a combination defibrillator and heart monitor for ambulances. He said LifePak 35s were critical life-saving devices, totaling more than \$400,000 for companies that wanted them, a major capital-equipment infusion.

Mr. Whitson reviewed key County EMS assets:

- Company 1, supported annually through the Town's budget and through volunteers such as Ann Speaker, one of the County's most talented paramedics, who responded to Mr. Schneider's call and provided transport. About \$1.5 million went to operating expenses across volunteer fire and rescue companies, with Company 1 receiving about \$10,000 per month in taxpayer support and one of two companies, along with Company 3 in Amissville, that did not accept any of the County's five non-monetary initiatives.
- ALS 1400, the Rappahannock County Fire and Rescue Department, a County department staffed 24/7 by highly trained advanced life-support paramedics with gold-and-blue vehicles seen around Town. The big SUV looked almost like an operating room inside and carried advanced life support technology and drugs. The ALS 1400 bunkhouse, which housed paramedics, as behind the Rappahannock County Sheriff's Department. Deputies carried AEDs and defibrillators in all vehicles.
- Company 4, the Flint Hill Volunteer Fire Company. The County had moved its paid EMS program from Chester Gap, and as of July 1, the other end of Fodderstack had a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week EMS-staffed station benefiting Town residents and visitors. After protracted litigation following removal of its leadership, volunteers and newly trained EMTs had resurrected the company, with the County offering paid staffing there.
- A community paramedicine program, with funding through Board of Supervisors' approval the previous Monday and PATH Foundation support in Fauquier County. The County had frequent users of the 911 system and EMS services whose calls sometimes did not require that level of response. This program would use two paramedics working about one shift a week, up to 16 hours, with the goal of helping frequent users better manage medications, making homes safer to prevent falls, and reducing non-emergency call pressure on volunteers and vehicle wear from repeated ambulance runs. Mr. Stevens had led that effort, which would be a strong supplemental service for the Town's aging residents.

Mr. Whitson also mentioned the County AED initiative to place public-facing defibrillators wherever possible; the Town was included—and the Board of Supervisors had approved—using opioid abatement settlement money to help fund it. He said the County also had private donations and was trying to move existing indoor AEDs to outdoor, temperature-controlled

cabinets for free public access. He noted that the *Rappahannock News* would have photos that week from Settles Gas Station in Flint Hill, where the County installed its first public-facing AED; another would go on the Quickie Mart, thanks to Paul and Cookie Baldwin; one was at the Sperryville Marketplace, and one would be donated to Rappahannock County Park, thanks to the efforts of his daughter and the Miss Teen Virginia organization. He added that the County would support the Town by funding, managing, and mapping units through its dispatch system.

Mr. Stevens said he had been a resident of Amissville since 1996 and came to Washington three years earlier after his retirement from Fauquier County Fire and Rescue. He said when he started in Fauquier, there were three lone paramedics running chase cars; when he retired, he had about 170 career staff and a volunteer field of over 250. Mr. Stevens said he enjoyed the Town, and the Washington Volunteer Fire Department was a vital part of the County's response platform. He said the department played a role in nearly one-third of all calls answered last year—about 1,200—including 340 within the County. He said Chief Bradley was his first go-to for special events in or around the area, and together they had always managed to get the job done. Mr. Stevens stated that he served as liaison to the County's medical director, and in the last 12 months, four to six EMTs and two paramedics had been released to the Washington Fire Department, which was incredible growth.

Mr. Stevens said ALS 1400 was designed 3.5 years earlier to supplement the volunteer system and ensure ALS paramedical services were available 24/7. He said ALS 1400 was a safety net, and he onboarded every employee by telling them to show up on scene and ask what they could do to help. Mr. Stevens said there were great providers across the system, and ALS 1400 was there to support their mission, running about 1,400 calls the previous year. He noted that the unit was on Porter Street behind the Sheriff's Office in what he believed was a former stable building. He said responders in different colored T-shirts worked together for a seamless response, and Mr. Schneider was a rarity, noting that last year the County had four sudden cardiac arrest victims and two were still alive.

Mr. Stevens said that of those two, one was in Town and one was just a mile outside Town, and both had rapid response from Fire and Rescue, ALS 1400, and the Sheriff's Office, which carried AEDs. He said the County was happy to work with the Town on AEDs, and he could send pictures of the boxes, which were yellow and measured about 18" x 18." He said they were clearly marked "AED," and the County was identifying and placing them within the County—with many already in place at faith-based organizations and the County cataloguing them so people could find them in an emergency. Mr. Stevens said AEDs were remarkable but had to be deployed within four to six minutes to be effective, and the goal was to place them in population clusters and near trained users.

Mr. Stevens said an additional goal was to roll out hands-on CPR training as a 15- to 20-minute program. He said the County could get people started, and the training did not carry

certification but made people comfortable doing CPR; it involved no respiration and was an effective tool. He said a person still had oxygen in the body, but it needed external compression to move until a defibrillator arrived, followed by advanced life support and drugs. Mr. Stevens said AEDs gained footing in America through the airline industry, and the first AEDs in public use were placed on airplanes—with an incredible save ratio because a person was never more than 100 feet from an AED and trained users were present. He said AEDs moved into airports, then shopping malls, and now public spaces often have AED cabinets near fire extinguishers. He said the County hoped that over the next six months people would see the devices and know where they were in the community.

Mr. Stevens said the Community Paramedicine Program was another exciting initiative. He expressed gratitude to [Pat] for partnering on it, along with Rapid Home and the Benevolent Fund, and the program was not primary medical care but allowed paramedics to perform daily patient care. He stated that two young women had recently completed certification and worked with others across the state who had instituted similar programs. He said the program ran via Just Love Them Always (JALADA) and was designed to connect people with services, with the community paramedicine program operating as a central hub with social services, Rapid Home, the Benevolent Fund, volunteer fire and rescue centers, and the sheriff's office.

Mr. Stevens explained that the program had several specific purposes:

- Help address the health care deficit, as there was only one physician's office and no pharmacy or urgent care center in the County. When an ambulance arrived, responders could only take a person to the hospital or have them sign a refusal and stay home. The program provides a liaison function to residents' primary care providers, with the community paramedic performing a detailed assessment and reporting findings to the PCP, who in turn makes an assessment as to case urgency. Paramedics can connect people to services such as Rapid Home, which transportation, or to the Benevolent Society for a handyman to help install handrails in bathrooms or hallways.
- Support an aging and vulnerable population, with the Town having a median age of 50.6 years, 11 years higher than the state average. Nearly 28% of County residents were over 65, and large pockets of the community had fixed incomes or limited financial abilities; significant mobility issues and geography could be a challenge.
- Reduce EMS use and frequent calls through patient education and advocacy by helping people get needed help and understand their medicine.
- Address the disaster preparedness gap, allowing the County to identify residents who might be fragile in a local emergency such as a power loss or extended storm. They could establish where those residents were and how to reach them.

Mr. Stevens concluded his presentation and offered to answer questions.

Ms. Harris stated that the Town was planning Christmas in Washington and would welcome a County table or booth about its programs.

Mr. Stevens said the County welcomed that and looked forward to being present at community events, including Halloween night.

Ms. Harris said she would reach out to him.

Mr. Whitson said CPR and AED training could follow once AEDs were deployed in Town, including the food pantry as a possible location, and it might be worthwhile to hold a session for Town residents. He noted that training could be done within one or two hours, covering AED use and hands-only CPR.

Ms. Harris said she wanted to confirm whether Mr. Whitson had talked to RAAC about a TV and said they had one.

Mr. Stevens said outdoor AED placements cost about \$2,800, or about \$1,000 if the AED was already available and only needed a temperature-control box. He said the food pantry had a new unit from last year that would need to be moved outside. He said the social services hub, restaurant, and courthouse project would benefit from one nearby. He said the County was also working with RAAC about moving its unit outside, out of direct sunlight.

Mr. Whitson said he had attended a cardiac arrest technical summit the previous December in Phoenix, Arizona, where Sumter County, Florida officials discussed widespread unlocked AEDs in The Villages. He said one had been stolen despite neighborhood and boat-ramp placements, but he had encouraged Mr. Stevens and Stephanie Clark to try unlocked cabinets and hoped they would not be taken so that anyone could use them when needed.

Mr. Stevens said the cabinets connected on Wi-Fi and cellular, checked in every morning at 2 a.m. to report readiness, status, location, and geofence, and the County was alerted if they moved a certain distance from placement.

Mayor Whited said the Town could try that and noted that Trinity was preparing a kickoff to their renovation, and that location is something central to Town that could be added and would provide fairly good coverage.

Mr. Whitson said a new unit at Trinity probably could come outside.

Mayor Whited said he was proud of the Town's annual budget contributions to Company 1; between direct appropriation, other mechanisms, and the Town's percentage of the tax levy, the Town funded about 50% of the government contribution to Company 1 each year.

Mayor Whited said the Town took that responsibility seriously and intended to increase support year over year if fiscal projections held, as public safety was the Town's greatest commitment. Mayor Whited thanked the teams across the County and said Ms. Batson had identified fire-

company grants totaling more than \$40,000, including another \$30,000 just that day—part of the Town’s good success rate in identifying grants. Mayor Whited said the broader Washington area accounted for about 2% to 3% of County calls annually, and the Town wanted to support residents and the broader community.

Public Comments: Mr. Wes Kerr stated that the ARB would address their signage application the following week and would begin renovations as soon as possible—perhaps even late fall. He asked how someone would access a locked AED.

Mr. Whitson explained that it related to the larger question of cell phone coverage in the County. He said an open businesses would have the code, and for closed businesses or outdoor units, a person would call 911 and have dispatch provide the code. He said this was too much in a time of panic, in his view, so he supported starting with the unlocked units and assessing.

Adjournment: At 7:52 p.m., Mr. Schneider **moved** to adjourn the Town Council meeting. Mr. O’Connell **seconded** the motion. The motion passed by the following vote: Mayor Whited—yes; Mr. Schneider—yes; Mr. O’Connell—yes; Ms. Harris—yes.