TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 11, 2026
6:10 P.M.

PRESENT

Mayor:	Roy M. Gladding
Vice Mayor:	Anita J. Latane
Council Members:	Carolyn Barrett
	A. Fleet Dillard
	Kenneth A. Gillis
	Troy L. Balderson
Town Manager:	Steve Wright
Assistant Town Manager:	James Knighton
Town Clerk:	Patsy K. Scates
Town Treasurer:	Tina F. Brock
Chief of Police:	Thomas Carter

ABSENT

Council Member: Katherine B. "Kay" Carlton

VISITORS:

Jovita Kelly, Historic Downtown Tappahannock
Taylor Stover, Robinson, Farmer & Cox
Cassy Lord, Virginia Department of Transportation
Micheal Clarke, Essex County Little League
Beth Sharpe, Rivahfest

CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Gladding called the meeting to order.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS APPROVED

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Anita J. Latane, Council voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda items which was the April 13, 2026 Council Meeting Minutes.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

COMMITTEE REPORTS

WATER/SEWER

Mayor Gladding recognized Council Member Gillis and asked if he had anything to add to the Water and Sewer report.

Council Member Gillis did not have anything to add.

PUBLIC FACILITIES REPORT

Mayor Gladding recognized Council Member Balderson and asked if he had anything to add to the Public Facilities report.

Council Member Balderson stated that in the Public Facilities report in the council members packet there are quotes for work/repair on the Gaines Columns and the Saint Margarets shed for the Tappahannock Central Park location and he asked council to advise the committee on how they would like to proceed.

Council Member Dillard stated that there is not yet a confirmed cost for the commemoration plaque being produced by a company in Pennsylvania. The intention is to install a plaque honoring Mr. Gaines as the restoration efforts. He stated that is considered part of the project to preserve and reinstall the historic columns including any masonry or related contraction work at the site.

Council Member Balderson stated the committee is recommending that the project move forward.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN TAPPAHANNOCK

Mayor Gladding recognized Jovita Kelly from Historic Downtown Tappahannock.

Jovita Kelly, Historic Downtown Tappahannock stated that the Soul by the Rivah and Farmers Market were very successful. She stated the Farmers Market is coming up this weekend and the vendors and visitors stated that they prefer the vendors to be set up on the middle of the street instead of on the sides, so that new set up will continue.

TAPPAHANNOCK POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mayor Gladding recognized Chief Carter and asked if he had anything to add to the Tappahannock Police Department Report.

Chief Carter thanked the public for a successful Soul by the Rivah and Farmers Market event and advised that both events were without incident. He stated in recognition of National Police Week, the Tappahannock Police Department will be sponsoring a Law Officers Memorial Service on May 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. The service will be held at Tappahannock Memorial United Methodist Church, 345 Earl Street, in the sanctuary. He invited the council members and the public to attend.

FINANCE

Mayor Gladding recognized Vice Mayor Latane.

Vice Mayor Latane reported she met with Town Manager Wright and Town Treasurer Brock to review the financial report. She stated the town is currently at 86% in revenue collection and 75% in expenditure, indicating a positive financial position. She noted that both the water and sewer fund and the water and sewer capital fund are performing well. She mentioned that Central Park Phase Two still has a remaining balance, though additional invoices are expected to be paid from that amount.

ROBINSON, FARMER AND COX ASSOCIATES

Mayor Gladding recognized Taylor Stover with Robinson, Farmer and Cox Associates.

Taylor Stover of Robinson, Farmer & Cox, presented an overview of the FY2025 audit and financial statements. He explained that the audit was conducted under generally accepted auditing and government auditing standards, noting that the town was not required to undergo a single audit this year. He reviewed the structure of the financial report, explaining the difference between the government-wide statements, which use full accrual accounting and include long-term assets and liabilities, and the fund financial statements, which he said are more useful for tracking yearly operations and budgeting.

He highlighted that the town's tax collection rate was 90.57%, with delinquent collections bringing the total to 93%, only slightly below the previous year. The audit resulted in two unmodified opinions, the highest and cleanest opinion possible for both the financial statements and the town's internal controls and compliance.

Taylor Stover also discussed new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements. GASB 101, implemented in FY2025, changed how compensated absences such as sick leave are recognized as liabilities, generally increasing reported liabilities. He stated looking ahead to FY2026, GASB 103 will require more detailed narrative explanations in the Management Discussion and Analysis section and explanations for significant budget variances, requiring the town to adopt a policy defining what qualifies as "significant."

Taylor Stover reported that the general fund balance decreased from about $2.8 million to just over $2 million, while the capital project's fund balance increased from roughly $900,000 to about $3.2 million. He noted that 34% of the general fund balance is unassigned and that the total balance represents 38% of annual general fund expenditures, well above the recommended minimum reserve level of 16.7%. He concluded by thanking town staff for their assistance during the audit and invited questions from council members.

Mayor Gladding asked for any comments or questions.

There were none.

FY25 AUDIT REPORT

On motion of Carolyn Barrett, seconded by Fleet Dillard, Council voted unanimously to approve the FY 25 Audit Report presented by Robinson, Farmer and Cox Associates.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

Mayor Gladding recognized Cassy Lord from Virginia Department of Transportation.

SMART SCALE PROJECT - VDOT

Cassy Lord, VDOT representative, presented a proposed "road diet" plan for Route 17 through the Town of Tappahannock, including a traffic simulation showing how the redesigned roadway would operate during projected peak-hour traffic conditions in 2033. The simulation focused on the PM peak hour and demonstrated that traffic would continue moving efficiently while improving safety and reducing congestion caused by left-turning vehicles.

Cassy Lord stated the proposal would reconfigure portions of Route 17 by introducing a two-way left-turn lane through much of town, allowing turning vehicles to move out of the main travel lane and preventing backups. She stated that at the Queen Street intersection, Queen Street would no longer allow through traffic; instead, it would become left-turn and right-turn only on one side, while the opposite side would operate as right-in/right-out only. These changes would provide additional green time for Route 17 traffic and improve overall traffic flow.

Cassy Lord explained that the project originally began as a study of issues at Queen Street, Cross Street, and Route 17, in coordination with the Town of Tappahannock and Essex County. The plan evolved into a relatively low-impact improvement project involving repaving, restriping, removal of one traffic signal, installation of ADA-accessible curb ramps, and upgraded pedestrian crosswalks.

Cassy Lord stated that proposed additional improvements include removing the Prince Street signal and converting Prince Street to right-in/right-out access to reduce conflicts with Route 17 traffic. She stated Duke Street access would be improved through the addition of the center turn lane. She reported the project would also relocate and upgrade several pedestrian crosswalks and install rectangular rapid flashing beacon signals to improve pedestrian visibility and safety. She noted that design efforts are being coordinated with the Town of Tappahannock and Essex County to avoid right-of-way impacts and minimize effects on nearby commercial properties.

There was some discussion regarding the proposed road diet changes and how it would impact the traffic on some of the side streets in Town such as Water Lane and Cross Street.

Council Member Balderson asked the Virginia Department of Transportation representative if a traffic study had been done of the side streets.

Cassy Lord stated the main traffic study focused on Rt. 17. She stated the assumption is that most people would stay on Rt. 17 because it would operate better and be safer to travel on because of a lot of accidents on Rt. 17 and mirror slaps because the road is narrow. She stated the easiest answer would be to widen it, but we cannot because it would impact the businesses along Rt. 17.

Cassy Lord explained that the project is currently focused solely on a Smart Scale application for Route 17. She noted that VDOT has limited resources available to assist localities with Smart Scale applications, so the agency must carefully narrow its focus. The town and county were one of only two out of fourteen localities that VDOT was able to support for a relatively new Smart Scale concept due to funding and staffing constraints.

After some discussion council members agreed it was worthwhile studying whether proposed changes along Route 17 could improve safety through the town.

Cassy Lord emphasized that side streets and additional roadway modifications are still important and could be addressed later through separate planning studies in coordination with the town. However, because of the limited scope and time constraints tied to the current Smart Scale application, the effort had to remain focused on a single aspect of the transportation network for now.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton explained that project priorities are determined by VDOT data rather than by what the town independently believes needs improvement. In rural areas and small localities, Smart Scale projects generally must demonstrate significant safety benefits to qualify. He stated that although Water Lane is considered a local concern, it does not meet the state's threshold for a documented safety improvement need, making it ineligible for Smart Scale funding.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton noted that Smart Scale is one of the few funding opportunities available that does not require a local match, making it especially valuable for towns. He referenced a previous Smart Scale application for sidewalks or crosswalk improvements near Walmart, which scored poorly and was not pursued again. He stated instead, VDOT data identified multiple intersections along Church Lane, Wright Street, Queen Street, and Route 17 as having safety concerns, leading officials to focus on roadway safety improvements in those areas.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton explained the proposed solution discussed was a "road diet," which would reduce and reconfigure traffic lanes along Route 17. He explained that the existing four lanes are narrow and do not meet VDOT's preferred twelve-foot lane width standards. He added that many localities use similar projects (who can) to widen sidewalks or add bike lanes, but Tappahannock has very limited space available. He acknowledged that the proposal is not a perfect solution and he emphasized that the current roadway configuration is also problematic.

Council Member Dillard expressed concern that focusing solely on Smart Scale criteria while ignoring Water Lane is unproductive, arguing that the roadway issue should still be addressed even if it does not qualify under the program. He also questioned the traffic assumptions behind the proposed changes, noting that while slowing traffic may improve safety, drivers traveling northbound from the Walmart area toward Fredericksburg may simply seek alternate faster routes if congestion increases.

Cassy Lord explained that the goal is not to force drivers below the 25 mph speed limit, but to encourage them to travel closer to the posted limit rather than the current estimated speeds of 30–35 mph. She emphasized that slower, steadier traffic would improve safety for pedestrians, families, and people using downtown sidewalks.

Cassy Lord also stated that the redesign is intended to make Route 17 operate more efficiently reducing backups and improving traffic flow. She reported the proposed changes, including a dedicated right-turn lane onto Queen Street and removal of the Prince Street traffic signal, are expected to allow traffic to move more continuously through town. She explained that VDOT hopes these improvements will discourage drivers from using neighborhood cut-through routes such as Wright Street and Water Lane to access the Downing Bridge.

There was some discussion regarding the speed limits and the possible congestion and impact on traffic on the side streets.

Mayor Gladding asked Cassy Lord, VDOT, what were the next steps.

Cassy Lord explained that the next step will involve working with the Town on potential improvements related to Wright Street and Water Lane. She noted that the planning department can assist with certain studies and evaluations, including intersections such as Wright Street and Route 17, as well as Water Lane and Queen Street. She clarified that full traffic calming studies cannot be funded by the planning group and would instead need to be funded directly by the town.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton explained that if the town wants to pursue a Smart Scale application, the full application period opens in June and closes in August. He noted that the town would need to hold a public input session and public hearing, likely in June or July, before moving forward.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton emphasized that Smart Scale projects are long-term efforts, with an estimated timeline of about eight years before any construction or visible improvements would occur. He also explained that if the town decides not to apply during this funding cycle and instead focuses on other improvements to Water Lane and Wright Street, those projects could potentially happen sooner. He explained that waiting would mean the next opportunity to apply for Smart Scale funding would not come until 2028, delaying the project by at least another two years. He clarified that he was not trying to pressure council to make an immediate decision but wanted members to understand the timing and funding cycle considerations involved.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton advised the council members that he would send the VDOT presentation to them so they can review it and discuss it again in June and plan on how council would like to proceed.

JUNE PARKER REZONING REQUEST

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Troy L. Balderson, Council voted unanimously to approve the application from June Parker Oil Co. Inc. requesting to rezone a portion of the lot known as tax parcel 32B (37) A and all of the lot known as 32B (37) B1. The proposed request would rezone the eastern portion of 32B (37) A. The extent of the request to rezone would extend 109' along the northern property line along the alley, the south from the end of the alley to the north western property corner of lot B1 totaling approximately 0.3 acres, located at the 700 and 800 block of Essex St. in the Town of Tappahannock. The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from R-3 Town Residential to CG-2 General Commercial to fix an error on the official zoning map adopted in 2023 as recommended by the Tappahannock Planning
Commission.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS VACANCY

Mayor Gladding stated council should look for town community members interested in volunteering to serve on the Town's Board of Zoning Appeals.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton informed the council members that the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) recently lost another member through resignation, leaving the board with only two members and without a quorum. He explained that the town has two possible options: reducing the board from five members to three members, which would require only two members for a quorum and one additional appointment to function, or partnering with Essex County to create a joint BZA.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that he preferred maintaining a separate town BZA so members could focus specifically on the town's zoning ordinance without conflicts or the need to also interpret Essex County regulations.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton also noted that there is currently a pending BZA case that should be heard within ninety days under the code. While failure to meet that timeline would not automatically approve the application, he emphasized the importance of hearing cases as quickly as possible.

ESSEX COUNTY EDA

Mayor Gladding stated council should look for town community members interested in volunteering to serve on the Essex County Economic Development Authority.

Town Manager Wright stated that Essex County is requesting that the Town appoint someone to the Essex County EDA, so he wanted to formally make the council members aware.

PROCLAMATION SCOTT CANNADY

On motion of Anita J. Latane, seconded by Troy L. Balderson, Council voted unanimously to approve the following proclamation recognizing Scott Cannady for his service on the Tappahannock Board of Zoning Appeals and the Tappahannock Planning Commission.

TOWN OF TAPPAHANNOCK, VIRGINIA
PROCLAMATION

RECOGNIZING AND THANKING SCOTT CANNADY FOR HIS SERVICE

WHEREAS, public service is a vital component of a strong and thriving community, and the Town of Tappahannock is fortunate to have residents who dedicate their time and expertise to its boards and commissions; and

WHEREAS, Scott Cannady was appointed to the Tappahannock Planning Commission in 2020 and faithfully served until 2023, contributing to the thoughtful planning and development of the Town; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure on the Planning Commission, Scott Cannady demonstrated a commitment to responsible growth, community engagement, and the long-term vision of Tappahannock; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, Scott Cannady was appointed to the Tappahannock Board of Zoning Appeals, where he continued his service until his resignation in 2026; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals, Scott Cannady applied careful judgment, fairness, and integrity in the consideration of zoning matters affecting residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, throughout his years of service, Scott Cannady has shown dedication, professionalism, and a genuine concern for the well-being of the Town of Tappahannock and its citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Town Council of the Town of Tappahannock hereby expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to Scott Cannady for his years of dedicated service to the Tappahannock Planning Commission and the Tappahannock Board of Zoning Appeals.

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that the Town Council extends its best wishes to Scott Cannady in all his future endeavors and recognizes his valuable contributions to the community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, a copy of this proclamation is hereby entered into the permanent records of the Town of Tappahannock. ***11th day of May 2026***

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

Scott Cannady stated he was moving therefore he must resign but he was thankful for the opportunity to serve. He wished the Town of Tappahannock all the best.

PROCLAMATION – SAFE BOATING WEEK

On motion of Carolyn Barrett, seconded by Anita J. Latane, Council voted unanimously to approve the following proclamation recognizing Safe Boating Week.

Safe Boating Week Proclamation

For over 100 million Americans, boating continues to be a popular recreational activity. From coast to coast, and everywhere in between, people are taking to the water and enjoying time together boating, sailing, paddling and fishing. During National Safe Boating Week, the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Safe Boating Council, along with federal, state, and local safe boating partners encourage all boaters to explore and enjoy America's beautiful waters responsibly.

Safe boating begins with preparation. The Coast Guard estimates that human error accounts for most boating accidents and that life jackets could prevent nearly 75 percent of boating fatalities. Through basic boating safety procedures - carrying lifesaving emergency distress and communications equipment, wearing life jackets, attending safe boating courses, participating in free boat safety checks, and staying sober when navigating - we can help ensure boaters on America's coastal, inland, and offshore waters stay safe throughout the season.

National Safe Boating Week is observed to bring attention to important life-saving tips for recreational boaters so that they can have a safer, more fun experience out on the water throughout the year.

- Whereas, on average, 650 people die each year in boating-related accidents in the U.S.; 75 percent of these are fatalities caused by drowning; and
- Whereas most of these accidents are caused by human error or poor judgment and not by the boat, equipment or environmental factors; and
- Whereas a significant number of boaters who lose their lives by drowning each year would be alive today had they worn their life jackets.

Therefore, the Tappahannock Town Council hereby supports the goals of the Safe Boating Campaign and proclaim May 16-22, 2026, as National Safe Boating Week and the start of the year-round effort to promote safe boating.

In Witness Thereof, we urge all those who boat to practice safe boating habits and wear a life jacket at all times while boating.

Given under my signature and the seal of at the Town of Tappahannock this 11th day of May 2026.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

DAVENPORT REQUEST RFP

On motion of Troy L. Balderson, seconded by Carolyn Barrett, Council voted to approve having the Town's financial advisors, Davenport, put out an RFP for proposals for financing potential FY 2027 projects and equipment purchases.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

SET A DATE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

On motion of Troy L. Balderson, seconded by Anita J. Latane, Council voted to approve to to hold a public hearing on June 8, 2026, to review and consider options for financing potential FY 2027 projects and equipment purchases.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

ESSEX COUNTY LITTLE LEAGUE

Mayor Glading recognized Michael Clark from the Essex County Little League.

Michael Clark addressed the council on behalf of Essex County Little League to discuss the organization's operations, financial challenges, and facility limitations. He apologized for missing a previous hearing due to a scheduling mistake and said the league had since submitted a budget outline for council review.

Michael Clark explained that Essex County Little League is the county's largest youth organization, serving more than 300 athletes each spring and sometimes offering a fall season. He emphasized that the league does not own its facilities, nor do the town or county, and instead relies on the long-standing generosity of the O'Malley family to use the property. However, because the league lacks ownership or a long-term lease, it is ineligible for many grants that other leagues can access. He noted that despite having some of the highest participation numbers among comparable counties, Essex County Little League keeps registration fees relatively low to avoid burdening families. He stated registration costs are about $100 for older players and $50 for younger children, with scholarships available for families unable to pay. He stated that this year a corporate sponsor covered every registration fee for all participants.

In response to questions about expenses, Michael Clark clarified that the listed fuel cost was a typo. He explained that utility costs cover electricity, sewer, water, and trash services, while field maintenance expenses are substantial due to the age of the facilities. He stated repairs to fencing, infield mix, topsoil, and equipment rentals such as skid steers can quickly add thousands of dollars in costs.

Michael Clark added that expenses fluctuate significantly from year to year depending on sponsorship success and improvement projects. He cited a previous year when strong sponsorship fundraising allowed the league to replace pavilion and concession stand roofs and install a mini-split unit in the concession stand.

RIVERFEST REQUESTING FUNDS

Mayor Gladding recognized Beth Shape, Rivahfest Committee member.

Beth Sharpe reviewed the layout and an overview of the Rivahfest event. She stated she is present tonight to request funding for public safety. She stated she is requesting $4,500.00 from the Town and the same amount from Essex County but the committee will take any amount the Town is able to donate.

MOTION TO ALLOCATE $4,500.00 TO THE RIVAHFEST EVENT

On motion of Troy L. Balderson, seconded by Carolyn Barrett, the Council voted unanimously to approve allocating $4,500.00 to the Rivahfest event.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT/BOUNDARY LINE VACATION FEE

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that he has received his first subdivision request and right now there is nothing in the system that covers the fee for that request, so he is asking the Council to set a fee for a boundary line adjustment and boundary line vacation. He stated staff are recommending a fee of $125.00.

MOTION TO SET BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT AND BOUNDARY LINE VACATION FEE

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Anita J. Latane, Council voted unanimously to approve to set a fee of $125.00 for a boundary line adjustment and boundary line vacation.

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

MOTION TO SET THE GAINES COLUMNS AT THE TAPP CENTRAL PARK

On motion of Troy L. Balderson, seconded by Anita J. Latane, Council voted unanimously to move forward with setting the Gaines columns at the Tappahannock Central Park as set forth in the public facilities report. *(See insert from the report below)*

Gaines columns (2)

- Set both columns @ the corners of the ramp to the storage door of the bathroom structure and Virginia St. sidewalk
  - $2900 w/ town staff assistance
- Brick point after columns set
  - $500 w/ staff prep work
- Caps on both columns with metal work matching the park roofs
- Bio/ and relief portrait
  - Language has been drafted that highlights the Ernest Gaines family ownership of the parcel; his wife, his father, and grandfather. His Military service, education, service to the town, his business, and community leadership

Votes were cast as follows:

Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye	Anita J. Latane:	Aye
Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye		

COUNCIL COMMENTS/UPDATES

Mayor Gladding asked for any comments or updates from the council members.

There were none.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Roy M. Gladding, Mayor

Patsy K. Scates, Town Clerk