

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

6:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Vice Mayor:

Council Members:

Anita J. Latane

Katherine “Kay” B. Carlton

Carolyn Barrett

A. Fleet Dillard, III

Kenneth A. Gillis

Troy L. Balderson

Steve Wright

Town Manager:

Assistant Town Manager:

Town Clerk:

Town Treasurer:

Chief of Police:

James Knighton

Patsy K. Scates

Tina F. Brock

Thomas Carter

ABSENT

Mayor:

Roy M. Gladding

VISITOR:

Straton Beamer

Jovita Kelly

CALLED TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Latane called the meeting to order.

MINUTES APPROVED

On motion of Troy Balderson, seconded by Kay Carlton, Council voted unanimously to approve the August 10, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

COMMITTEE REPORTS

WATER/SEWER

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Council Member Gillis and asked if he had anything to add to the water and sewer report.

Council Member Gillis stated he did not have anything to add. He commended the Public Works department for doing a good job.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Council Member Balderson.

Council Member Balderson stated that the notes from the meeting with the Commonwealth Attorney Sitton is in the council packet along with the committee’s recommendation. He advised that the Essex County Commonwealth Attorney was invited to the meeting tonight to answer questions regarding the funding request.

After some discussion it was decided to move this agenda item to the end of the meeting to give the Commonwealth Attorney Sitton the opportunity to attend.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN TAPPAHANNOCK

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Jovita Kelly and asked if she had anything to add to the report.

Jovita Kelly thanked Council Member Balderson for attending the small business summit. She advised the Soul by the Rivah event was cancelled due to the weather. She updated the council members of the upcoming events.

**TOWN MANAGER
REPORT**

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Town Manager Wright and asked if he had anything to add to the report.

Town Manager Wright provided several regional and local updates. He stated the Planning District Commission (PDC) is revising its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which must be completed by the end of December. He reported the proposed initiatives for the next five years include a workforce collaborative, a rural coastal resiliency center, a regional housing trust through Bay Aging, and a leadership development program for Middle Peninsula localities.

Town Manager Wright discussed a proposed housing affordability and availability study led by the Weldon Cooper Center covering ten counties in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. He advised the study is expected to seek approximately \$300,000 from the Virginia Housing Trust Fund and will examine changes in housing availability and affordability, including trends in Essex County dating back to 1977.

Town Manager Wright advised the Town has also been selected to receive free technical assistance from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to develop a green infrastructure plan addressing stormwater, flooding, erosion, and improvements to public spaces. He reported that Tappahannock is one of only 16 localities in the region receiving assistance this year, with a kickoff meeting scheduled for September 23, 2026.

Town Manager Wright noted that Mayor Gladding will be stepping down at the end of the year and asked Council to consider how they would like to recognize his lengthy and impactful service, with staff available to assist in planning the recognition.

**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
REPORT**

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Assistant Town Manager Knighton and asked him if he had anything to add to the report.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton did not have anything to add to the report.

**TAPPAHANNOCK
POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Chief Carter and asked if he had anything to add to the report.

Chief Carter stated he did not have anything to add to the report.

FINANCE

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Town Treasurer Brock.

Town Treasurer Brock reported the financial report reflects the Town's position two months into the new fiscal year. She reported the General Fund revenues include receipt of PPTRA funds, which will be applied toward personal property tax relief when tax bills are issued, likely in October. She noted that in expense category, it included an unplanned employee leave payout in the Police Department. She stated that approximately \$42,000 was spent under a hate-crime prevention grant, which will be reimbursed and most nonprofit appropriations have also been paid.

Town Treasurer Brock stated that two police vehicles funded through the recent loan have been purchased. She advised that the Water and Sewer Fund is generally in line with the prior year, although revenues and expenses currently appear uneven due to the billing cycle and with the next water and sewer bill due September 30th, the fund is expected to show improvement in the next report.

Town Treasurer Brock stated a new e-commerce Police Department Fund has been established in a separate checking account as required by law to account for funds associated with electronic tickets.

Town Treasurer Brock advised approximately \$456,000 remains available in the Central Park Project. She stated a drawdown of about \$145,000 is planned, which would leave approximately \$312,000 for future expenditures. She stated that either Town Manger Wright or Assistant Town Manager Knighton will discuss this item later in the meeting with the council members.

Town Treasurer Brock stated regarding capital purchases, reimbursement has been secured for Cralle Avenue, the dump truck and two police vehicles have been purchased, and approximately \$564,000 in additional purchases remain under the recent loan.

ORDINANCE

Vice Mayor Latane stated council should consider the adoption of an ordinance authorizing the issuance of a general obligation bond.

Council Member Barrett asked for clarification regarding the bond. She asked if the options were to

- 1. Do Nothing,
- 2. Adopt ordinance number #1
- 3. Adopt ordinance #2.

TABLE
ADOPTION OF
THE ORDINANCE
AUTHORIZING
THE ISSUANCE
OF A GENERAL
OBLIGATION
BOND

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Carolyn Barrett, Council voted unanimously to table the adoption of an ordinance authorizing the issuance of a general obligation bond.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

PUBLIC SAFETY

After some discussion, it was decided that they would move this agenda item to the end of the meeting to give the Commonwealth Attorney a chance to attend.

TAPPAHANNOCK
CENTRAL PARK
FUNDING

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated Phase Two of Tappahannock Central Park is essentially complete, with the final invoice paid to Conamara and only minor punch-list items remaining. He reported that after accounting for the interest payment, the project is expected to have approximately \$311,000–\$312,000 in remaining borrowed funds, which must be spent under the borrowing requirements.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton presented several potential projects for the remaining funds. He stated the largest proposal is a complete renovation of the tennis and pickleball courts, including removing the existing surface, installing a new surface, and repainting the courts. He reported this project is estimated at approximately \$260,000 and is expected to last at least 20 years. He reported other proposed uses include restoring the White House on the park property, estimated at around \$10,000, as well as additional landscaping in the bioretention beds and southern areas of the park and installation of new grass, with those improvements estimated at approximately \$5,000–\$10,000 each.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that the council members will be asked to consider these projects as options for using the remaining Central Park funds.

There was some discussion about moving forward with additional improvements at Tappahannock Central Park, particularly landscaping and grass installation.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton noted that landscaping contractors recommend completing planting by early October, making it important to begin the work soon. He stated under the Town’s purchasing policy, the projects would not require a formal RFP; instead, staff could solicit three quotes for each project.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton reported approximately \$260,000 is planned for the tennis and pickleball court improvements, with an additional \$10,000 for grass and \$10,000 for landscaping, bringing the total to about \$280,000. This would leave approximately \$30,000 in remaining Central Park funds. He reported the landscaping work would include planting shrubs and native plants in the bioretention beds, mulching, and adding topsoil as needed for grass installation.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton requested Council’s input and approval to proceed with obtaining quotes and moving forward with the projects.

Council Member Dillard expressed support for replacing the existing contractor rye grass at Central Park, noting that the temporary grass is uncomfortable to walk on and that replanting had always been part of the park’s long-term plan. He supported moving forward with removing the current grass and installing a more appropriate permanent lawn. However, he expressed concern about spending approximately \$260,000 to completely redo the tennis courts, noting that the courts had received work in recent years. He stated that he was not prepared to support the \$260,000 tennis court project at this time.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton explained that an earlier quote for the tennis and pickleball courts was obtained during the CIP process. He stated approximately \$5,000 had already been spent repairing cracks, but those repairs are expected to last only two to three years before the cracks reappear. He also presented an option of completing a more permanent court improvement now to avoid having to find funding later. He noted that enough eligible projects must be identified to spend the remaining funds. He reported although Phase Three of Central Park had previously been discussed, there are currently no plans, designs, or supporting documents available to determine what that work would involve.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated the money has to be spent by Spring of 2027. He stated that staff will be more than happy to get quotes for any other projects and determine what the costs of those projects would be.

Council Member Carlton suggested asking the master gardeners about helping with plants and shrubs project at the Tappahannock Central Park.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated he has spoken to them, and they are interested in helping with the maintenance of the plans and shrubs.

Council Member Balderson suggested deferring the matter to the appropriate committee, such as the Public Facilities Committee, to develop specific project ideas. He suggested the committee could then present those options to Council with more detailed information and estimated costs, allowing Council to narrow down and prioritize potential projects.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton recommended that the planting and landscaping work move forward as soon as possible to take advantage of the appropriate planting season for grass and native plants, rather than waiting until the next Council meeting.

TAPPAHANNOCK CENTRAL PARK
LANDSCAPING PROJECT
APPROVED TO MOVE FORWARD

On motion of Troy Bladerson, seconded by Carolyn Barrett, Council voted unanimously to allow the Town staff to move forward with the landscaping at the Tappahannock Central Park.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

VHIB HOSKINS
BATHHOUSE
DESIGN

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Assistant Town Manager Knighton.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton advised that the Hoskins Creek project continues to make progress, with construction of the access road currently underway. He advised that staff recently met with the architects to discuss the next phase, which includes the bathhouse/restroom facility and docks. He advised

the proposed building design draws inspiration from historic wharf structures found throughout Virginia and along the Chesapeake Bay. He described the proposed 15-by-45-to-50-foot facility has planned to include men’s and women’s restrooms, a dockmaster suite with a small ship store, storage and utility areas, a janitor’s closet, and private shower/restroom facilities for transient boaters.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton advised that the transient facilities are required as part of the VDH grant, and it would be accessible by key code to overnight guests. He stated the design remains conceptual, with elevations still to be developed, and staff anticipates presenting additional information to Council around October.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton asked for any comments or questions.

RAISE GRANT

Assistant Town Manager Knighton reported the RAISE Grant RFP was developed by legal counsel at Sands Anderson and provided to Essex County for review and Essex County’s primary comment was that it was not specifically named in the document. He reported staff are working to determine where references to Essex County should be incorporated and is considering a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to clearly establish the Town and County’s roles and responsibilities. He advised Essex County will remain involved throughout the project, including consultant selection, proposal review, and project updates. He stated the Town Council a’s approval is being requested to issue the RFP so the project can move forward.

COUNCIL
APPROVES TO
ISSUE A REQUEST
FOR RFP
PROPOSALS FOR
CONSULTANTS
FOR THE RAISE
GRANT

On motion of Carolyn Barrett, seconded by Kenneth A. Gillis, Council voted unanimously to approve a request for proposals for consultations for the Raise Grant.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

COMMUNITY
FLOOD
PREPAREDNESS
FUND (CFPF)

Town Manager Wright advised the Town received approximately \$5.5 million in state grant funding for the Tappahannock River Park project. He stated that staff requested Council’s approval to issue an RFP for a consulting firm to provide professional services in three primary areas: project design, project management and construction oversight, and development of an Invitation for Bids (IFB) to assist with selecting the contractor for the construction phase. He stated the total project is just over six million so it’s about five point four five in grant funding.

There was some discussion about the Tappahannock River Park project is still in its early stages, building on 30% design plans previously prepared by VHB through an earlier RAISE grant and working waterfront initiative. The project is intended to improve and protect the shoreline, raise the road, and remove existing rubble and debris.

There was also some discussion whether the approximately \$5.5 million project includes shoreline protection features such as riprap placed in the river to create a crescent-shaped barrier and break walls.

MOTION TO APPROVE
ISSUING A RFP FOR
CONSULTANTS FOR CFPF

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Kay Carlton, Council voted unanimously to approve a request for proposals for consultants for the Community Flood Preparedness Fund.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

ANIMAL SHELTER

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Straton Beamer.

Straton Beamer asked the council members to keep the animal shelter in the Town of Tappahannock.

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Town Manager Wright.

Town Manager Wright stated the letter from the Board of Supervisors Chairperson Rob Akers is in the council members' packet along with some other documents regarding the animal shelter. He stated Essex County has two requests. He stated the first request is to determine if there's any interest in entering into discussion with the county regarding the potential conveyance, long-term use, or other disposition of the current property for construction of a replacement animal shelter at that location. He stated the second request is whether the town will approve a requested 12-month extension of the requested vacate date, which is currently July 8th of 2027, through July 8th of 2028 for an additional year.

Council Member Barrett stated that according to the original agreement it was an agreement for twenty years (2028). She asked why an extension request is needed.

Town Manager Wright reference a letter that previous Town Manager Eric Politt send to Essex County Administrator on July 9, 2024, giving notice to vacate the animal shelter located on 540 Airport Road in three years which is by July 8, 2027.

Council Member Balderson explained that the property discussion originated with the Economic Development Committee and a grant opportunity requiring the Town to assemble approximately 100 acres of commercial property for engineering work toward a pad-ready economic development site. He advised to meet the acreage requirement, adjacent property owned by the O'Malleys was included, and the Town was advised to indicate its intent to relocate the animal shelter so that property could also be incorporated into the overall economic development plan. He stated a letter was sent to Essex County documenting that intent.

Council Member Gillis stated he was in favor of having the animal shelter in the Town but expressed his frustration about not having a county official attend the meeting to discuss this item with the council members.

MOTION TO
EXTEND NOTICE
TO VACATE AT
THE ANIMAL
SHELTER

On motion of Troy L. Balderson, seconded by Fleet Dillard, Council voted unanimously to approve the request from Essex County to extend the request date to vacate the animal shelter located on 540 Airport Road by an additional twelve (12) months from September 14, 2026 to September 14, 2027 and have the appropriate town committee (Public Facilities Committee - *Balderson, Dillard, & Barrett) to reach out to Essex County for discussion.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

Town Manager Wright was directed to write a formal written response to Essex County Board of Supervisor on behalf of the Town Council.

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

Vice Mayor Latane recognized Town Manager Wright.

Town Manager Wright highlighted three recently passed pieces of legislation that will have implications for Town operations. Senate Bill 699 requires that any item on which a public body takes final action must be included on the agenda before the meeting begins; items added after the meeting starts cannot receive final action.

Town Manager Wright stated that House Bill 5/Senate Bill 199 establishes paid sick leave requirements, providing employees with one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked. He advised that beginning July 1, 2027, this will affect the Town's part-time employees, who currently receive annual

leave but not sick leave. He stated finally, House Bill 1097 requires law enforcement officers and EMS providers, as part of certification and recertification, to receive training on communicating with drivers diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and understanding the manifestations of autism.

COMMONWEALTH
ATTORNEY DISCUSSION

Council Member Balderson asked to go back to the discussion of the commonwealth attorney. He stated the Public Safety Committee is asking permission to engage with the Commonwealth Attorney.

Council Member Dillard asked Council Member Barrett since she was a member of the public safety committee if she felt it would be beneficial to continue discussions with the Commonwealth Attorney.

Council Member Barrett stated she felt that if the Commonwealth Attorney is requesting funding in the amount of \$41,000.00 then she feels he needs to appear before the Town Council at a council meeting.

Council Member Balderson discussed a funding request related to body camera footage review. He stated the request appears to seek reimbursement from the Town for a portion of a County-funded Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney position, with documentation showing approximately \$41,000 allocated for the position. He stated the request is reportedly based on the volume of Tappahannock Police Department cases requiring involvement from the Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office.

Council Member Balderson questioned how the requested amount was calculated, noting that state code requires such funding requests to be based on a measurable method. He compared staffing levels referenced in the code with the Town’s approximately 12 police officers and the County’s approximately 20 officers and expressed concern that the figures did not appear to support the amount being requested. He suggested further discussion with the Commonwealth’s Attorney to clarify the basis and calculation for the funding request.

Council Member Gillis stated that based on the taxes paid by the Town residents, he believes town residents contribute an amount comparable to what other residents pay.

Council Member Dillard asked the Chief of Police if he had a position on this issue.

Chief Carter stated he did not have a position on the issue.

The council members’ discussion focused on the Commonwealth Attorney’s request for the Town to contribute funding toward costs associated with reviewing and processing police body-worn camera footage.

Council Member Dillard questioned whether the applicable state code authorizes such funding from a town, noting that the statute defines a “locality” as a county or city.

Council Member Balderson confirmed that interpretation, which was also supported by the Town Attorney. He stated the Commonwealth Attorney Sitton’s request was seeking Town funding because the Town Police Department generates body-camera footage that creates additional workload for the Commonwealth Attorney’s Office.

The discussion also noted that the Town had previously provided a small annual payment to the Commonwealth Attorney’s Office that was removed from the budget by the previous administration

TABLE MEETING WITH
THE
COMMONWEALTH
ATTORNEY FOR FURTHER
DISCUSSION

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Troy Balderson, Council voted to table this issue from the public safety committee until more information is provided.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

SET A PUBLIC
HEARING DATE

Mayor Gladding recognized Assistant Town Manager Knighton.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton advised he has looked at different localities that have special event permits and it is felt this ordinance is necessary.

Council Member Dillard asked for clarification on the highlighted areas of the document.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that The Town is considering a new event ordinance that would regulate events held on town-owned, public, or private property once they meet a specified threshold. He stated the ordinance would establish requirements for event permits and address whether participating merchants and vendors must obtain local business licenses or whether they should be exempt from those fees to encourage participation. He stated that staff is also refining the definition of events held on private property, while several additional provisions requested by the Chief of Police have been incorporated into the draft.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton clarified that the proposed ordinance is entirely new and would give the Town its own authority and procedures for issuing and regulating event permits. He advised the need for the ordinance became apparent during Riverfest, when overlapping Town and County procedures created confusion over which agency such as the Town Police Department or Sheriff's Office was responsible. He advised under the proposed process, the Town would handle event permitting while continuing to send applications to Essex County for review and comment.

MOTION TO SET A
PUBLIC HEARING
DATE

On motion of Kay Carlton, seconded by Carolyn Barrett, Council voted unanimously to set a public hearing for the October 13, 2026, Town Council Meeting to discuss proposed special events permits.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

PROCLAMATION
CONSTITUTION
WEEK

Council Member Balderson read the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the United States of America, the guardian of our liberties, embodies the principles of limited government in a Republic dedicated to rule by law; and

WHEREAS, September 17, 2026, marks the two hundred and thirty-nine anniversary of the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary, and to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate it; and

WHEREAS; Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designation September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week,

NOW, THEREFORE I, Anita J. Latane, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Vice Mayor of the Town of Tappahannock do hereby proclaim the week of September 17 through 23 as

CONSTITUTION WEEK

And ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals of the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town of Tappahannock to be affixed this 14th day of September of the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-six

On motion of Fleet Dillard, seconded by Carolyn Barrett, Council accepted the proclamation as presented.

Votes were cast as follows:

Kay Carlton:	Aye	Kenneth A. Gillis:	Aye
Carolyn Barrett:	Aye	Troy L. Balderson:	Aye
Fleet Dillard:	Aye		

ADJOURN

Vice Mayor Latane asked for any further business.

There being none, the meeting was adjourned.


Anita J. Latane, Vice Mayor


Patsy K. Scates, Town Clerk