

Council Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2026

Present:

Absent:

Mayor Joe Beasley

Councilmember Danny Willis

Vice Mayor Jonathan Hankins

Councilmember Zach Cline

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Glen Keen, Jr.

Councilmember Elisabeth Takach

Staff members present were Town Manager, Leeanne Regon; Executive Assistant, Susan Reeves; Attorney, Brad Pyott; Clerk-Treasurer, Jessica Hayes; Police Chief Stanley Lampert, Fire Chief John Thomas; EMS Director, Syndee Saleem; Recreation Director, Addie Hurst.

PUBLIC HEARING

Budget 2026/2027

Mayor Beasley called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m., read the notice, and opened the floor for discussion.

Councilmember Cline addressed capital improvements related to street paving and proposed granting the Planning Commission authority to prioritize paving projects to improve efficiency. Councilmember Willis expressed concern about the budget and emphasized the need to limit the number of donation requests by establishing clear budgetary criteria. Manager Regon agreed that recurring annual donations could be managed more systematically and noted the final budget is approved in June. She reported a \$35,000 donation line item and suggested separating past donations from future requests to enable clearer allocation, such as the 4-H Camp donation and other recurring annual donations. This would be separate line items created for these donations and the funds would be reallocated from the original donation line item. Councilmember Willis suggested that they consider a donation amount of \$1,200 for 4-H Camp annually. The council discussed reallocating funds within the established budget and agreed to work within the suggested limits. Councilmember Cline recommended requiring all donation requests be submitted by the first quarter to facilitate planning. Mayor Beasley clarified that the donation line item would be separated for next year's budget session and leave it as is for this budget.

The public hearing was closed at 7:13 p.m.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Proposed FY 2027 Budget

On the 12th day of May 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall, Tazewell, Virginia, the Tazewell Town Council will hold a public hearing on the Budget (for information and planning) for the fiscal year 2026-2027 as well as the tax rates and fee schedules. The entire proposed budget may be inspected by the public from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Town Manager's office in Tazewell, Virginia.

Leeanne Regon
Town Manager

GENERAL FUND

Estimated Revenues:

Property Taxes	\$1,194,500.00
Other Local Taxes	\$1,601,000.00
Permits	\$17,900.00
Business License	\$321,500.00
Use of Money & Property	\$150,000.00
Fines	\$35,500.00
State Revenue	\$2,114,300.00
Refuse Collections Revenue	\$502,500.00
Recreation Department Revenue	\$87,100.00
Fire Department Revenue	\$11,000.00
Rescue Squad Revenue	\$1,515,000.00
Donations	\$11,800.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$72,550.00
TOTAL PROPOSED GENERAL FUND REVENUES	\$7,634,650.00

Proposed Expenditures:

Mayor/Town Council	\$29,750.00
Town Attorney	\$65,100.00
Administration	\$466,780.76
Police Department	\$1,885,761.33
Fire Department	\$172,900.00
Sanitation	\$313,181.93
Recreation Department	\$330,406.20
Rescue Squad	\$1,808,144.81
Treasurer's Department	\$123,873.90
Bookkeeping	\$33,945.07
Planning Commission	\$5,900.00
Community Development & Donations	\$203,008.11
American Legion Building	\$15,200.00
Zoning/Property Maintenance	\$125,503.54
Mowing Department	\$167,057.52
Mini-Park	\$2,550.00
Train Station	\$48,605.20
Capital Expense	\$197,156.81
Vehicle and Heavy Equipment Maintenance	\$160,246.33
Street Department	\$1,448,746.49
Miscellaneous	\$30,832.00
TOTAL PROPOSED GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	\$7,634,650.00

WATER FUND

Estimated Revenues:

Interest	\$1,000.00
Water Meter Sales	\$1,511,000.00
Town Revenue - PSA Meters	\$530,000.00
Water Tap Fees	\$8,000.00
Service Charges	\$3,000.00
Rt 460 Water Line Replacement Project	\$15,034.37
Water True Up Revenue	\$38,000.00
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$6,000.00
Penalty Meter Sales	\$6,000.00
TOTAL PROPOSED WATER FUND REVENUES	\$2,118,034.37

Proposed Expenditures:

Water Administration	\$251,205.45
Water Purchases - PSA	\$1,030,000.00
Water Distribution	\$518,194.03
Miscellaneous Water Fund	\$303,309.45
Vehicle and Heavy Equipment Maintenance	\$15,325.44
TOTAL PROPOSED WATER FUND EXPENDITURES	\$2,118,034.37

SEWER FUND

Estimated Revenues:

Interest	\$2,500.00
Sewer Metered Sales	\$1,600,587.00
Sewer Unmetered Sales	\$12,000.00
Sewer Tap Fees	\$2,160.00
PSA Sewer Fees Baptist Valley	\$18,000.00
PSA Sewer Fees Adria	\$16,000.00
PSA Sewer Fees Witten Mill	\$14,500.00
Sewer True Up Revenue	\$5,000.00
Sewer Jet Usage Fee	\$1,000.00
Leachate Revenue	\$45,000.00
Sewage Disposal Fees	\$12,000.00
Sewer Late Payment Penalty	\$8,000.00
Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade (Engineering/Design-PSA)	\$7,332.00
TOTAL PROPOSED SEWER FUND REVENUES	\$1,744,079.00

Proposed Expenditures:

Wastewater Administration	\$235,605.45
Wastewater Plant	\$727,685.30
Wastewater Collection	\$515,465.52
Miscellaneous Sewer Fund	\$250,091.17
Vehicle and Heavy Equipment Maintenance	\$15,231.56
TOTAL PROPOSED SEWER FUND EXPENDITURES	\$1,744,079.00

I/EDA FUND

Estimated Revenues:	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$15,000.00
Transfer – General Fund to I/EDA – RE Tax Allotment (Barnes Property)	<u>\$900.34</u>
TOTAL PROPOSED I/EDA FUND REVENUES	\$15,900.34

Proposed Expenditures:	
Miscellaneous Expense	\$15,000.00
Real Estate Tax Allotment (Barnes Property)	<u>\$900.34</u>
TOTAL PROPOSED I/EDA FUND EXPENDITURES	\$15,900.34

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Keen made a motion to enter into the executive session. Vice Mayor Hankins seconded the motion.

On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

The Town Council entered into Executive Session at 7:15PM.

Certification of Executive Session

RESOLUTION

Motion made by: Keen

Resolution Number: ES260512

Motion Seconded by: Hankins

Meeting Date: May 12, 2026

Vote: All voted Aye

Purpose: Personnel Matters

CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Tazewell Town Council has convened an executive session on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, 2.1-344.1 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Council that such executive session was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law;

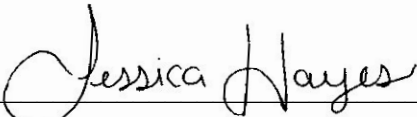
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Tazewell Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the executive session to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive session were heard, discussed or considered by the Tazewell Town Council.

VOTE

Ayes: Willis, Hankins, Cline, Fox, Keen, Takach

Nays: none

(For each nay vote, the substance of the departure from the requirements of the Act should be described.)


Treasurer Hayes, Clerk

Councilmember Fox made a motion to leave the executive session. Councilmember Takach seconded the motion On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Vice Mayor Beasley read the resolution for the Certification of Executive Session. On roll call vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Beasley called the regular meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Pastor Nate Thomas led the meeting in the invocation prayer.

Special Presentations

A. Billy Wagner Park Project

Attorney Pyott provided an update on the project timeline and current progress. The statue has been completed in clay and photographs of the sculpture were shown. Billy Wagner served as the model for the work, which is rendered with significant detail. Upcoming fundraising includes a golf tournament on Friday, several additional events, and brick sales with a deadline of June 19th. Expenditures to date include geotechnical drilling, sculpting, and architectural fees. Funds donated by the Town remain unused because they were earmarked specifically for park grounds renovations, lighting, and related site work. Alpha

Land Surveyors have been retained for surveying services. Construction is scheduled to begin on May 18th, and the dedication remains planned for October 2026. Plans call for relocating trees to the dog park and moving the flagpole. Councilmember Cline expressed appreciation for the team's efforts in advancing the project and inquired about contingency measures should fundraising goals are not met. The team intends to revisit corporate donors as a secondary resource and is organizing a large banquet in August or September to raise additional funds. Overall, Attorney Pyott is confident that the necessary funds will be secured, and the project will proceed as planned.

B. Tazewell Today

Erin Keene, Vice President (and incoming President next year), along with fellow board members addressed the council regarding reductions to their funding in the upcoming budget. They requested a clear explanation of the council's expectations for the organization following the cuts. Their concern centers on the fact that the most recent memorandum of understanding (MOU) referenced in earlier years does not reflect the current budget reductions or recent operational changes.

Representatives asked why funding is being decreased despite rising costs and whether reductions will continue annually. They also noted that the original MOU referenced a formal letter and a signed copy; however, no signed copy has been found in town records. Because there is no signed document on file, the validity and terms of the prior agreement are unclear.

Councilmember Willis observed that the previous MOU originated under a former council and town manager. Manager Regon stated that a revised MOU was provided in 2024 but, after board discussion, it was not finalized or signed. Councilmember Cline recalled 2023 discussions indicating the board's intention that Tazewell Today should become more financially self-reliant and not depend solely on town funding. Erica Galloway emphasized concern about the absence of an updated MOU or written plan defining the organization's future funding, stressing the need for clear, documented expectations so the nonprofit can plan accordingly.

Next steps should include locating any signed agreements, clarifying the town's funding policy, and developing a documented plan or revised MOU that specifies responsibilities, timelines, and funding expectations. Regon added that there were originally 6 events included in that proposed MOU; the Easter Egg Hunt, Independence Day Celebration, Main Street Moments, Veteran's Day Parade, Christmas Parade and Trunk or Treat. Again, she clarified that this is the one that was proposed but not signed. Councilmember Willis acknowledged that their budget year begins 6 months before the Town's and that it is clear that their current fund-raising attempts are not successfully meeting the budget needs and can see how it would be difficult to then receive the news in the middle of their active budget year what the Town's allocated amount will be.

Mayor Beasley asked if we can host a joint meeting later in the year so that they can plan accordingly for the upcoming year. This would give them time to look back at the previous meetings. He said that we could come to an understanding and get a signed MOU or clearly documented expectations so that they can better plan for their upcoming year.

C. Gospel Explosion Outreach Recovery Ministries- Rommell Hargrave

Rommell Hargrave presented pamphlets to the council regarding Gospel Explosion Outreach Recovery Ministries, a community outreach event scheduled for June 20th from 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM at Lincolnshire Park. Employed by the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office, Mr. Hargrave frequently encounters individuals affected by addiction through his work with inmates and has developed a passion for supporting their recovery. He emphasized that the ministry's purpose extends beyond handing someone a Bible: it focuses on helping people understand faith and connecting them with ongoing spiritual and community support.

The event will include testimonials, music, and preaching, and is designed to reach people who do not attend church. Organizers hope the gathering will provide spiritual encouragement, fellowship, and practical assistance. This is the third such outreach, and Mr. Hargrave expressed hope that it will become an annual event.

Food will be provided free of charge. Planned items include smoked chicken, barbecue chicken, fish, pasta salad, baked beans, cakes, pies, potluck contributions, ice, napkins, and trash bags; a smoker will be used on-site. Most expenses are currently being covered personally by the organizers, and Mr. Hargrave requested the council's support with food and drink donations or other assistance to help expand the event's reach.

Councilmember Beasley asked Mr. Hargrave to complete and submit the formal donation request form so the council can review and consider support. The council thanked him for his efforts and the work of the ministry. An administrative follow-up item was noted: Manager Regon will request an email vote from council once the donation request form is received. Councilmember Keen motioned to waive the rental fee on the shelter. Councilmember Takach seconded the motion to waive the shelter fee. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Local Business Recognition

A. Sweet Willow Tree: Petals & Pages- Katelyn Huntley, Owner

Katelyn Huntley has revitalized the Old Dominion Florist building to create Sweet Willow Tree: Petals & Pages, a unique shop that blends the charm of a florist with the comfort of a neighborhood bookstore. The shop offers fresh floral arrangements, thoughtful gifts, and a selection of houseplants alongside books for readers of all ages. Whether customers come for a bouquet, a new book, or a quiet corner to relax, Sweet Willow Tree seeks to provide a friendly, inviting environment where people can connect, learn, and celebrate local life.

B. Bee-N Thrifty Consignment- Cheryl Smith, Owner

Established in 2012, Bee-N Thrifty Consignment has experienced steady growth under the ownership of Cheryl Smith. The shop was honored as Virginia's top thrift store for two consecutive years, reflecting its strong community reputation and customer support. Recently the business completed an expansion that doubled its retail space, allowing the store to add furniture to its inventory. Located at 581 Freedom Ave., Bee-N Thrifty Consignment has been serving customers for 14 years.

Approval of Minutes

Councilmember Takach made a motion to approve minutes from the April 14th Council Meeting. Vice Mayor Hankins seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Approval of Financial Statements & Financial Report

Councilmember Fox made a motion to approve financial statements and financial reports for April 2026. Councilmember Keen seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Committee/Conference Updates

A. Planning Commission Committee

Building and Zoning Official Hurley reported that the board did not meet last Monday and is scheduled to meet in June. Councilmember Willis inquired about the status of a proposed Taco Bell; Building and Zoning Official Hurley stated construction is set to begin next month with opening anticipated this fall. Councilmember Willis also requested an update on the theatre; Building and Zoning Official Hurley noted that seating installation is currently underway. Finally, Councilmember Willis asked Building and

Zoning Official Hurley to contact the owner of the Hayes Drug property to request lawn maintenance.

B. Tazewell Today

Nate Thomas, President of Tazewell Today, reported that April 24 marked the first Fourth Friday event. The evening was organized as a low-cost community gathering featuring free games and activities, live music, and a concluding movie screening of Lassie presented in partnership with the American Legion. Eleven volunteers supported the event, and organizers described the night as well-intentioned and successful. They plan to continue offering similar low-cost, low-traffic events in the future. Several board members attended the Virginia Main Street Training event in Pulaski. This was a training focusing on supporting small businesses. The next Fourth Friday will feature the Best of Times Band. The Independence Day celebration is scheduled to be held at the middle school; due to an active water line project, the Ramey Lot will not be used.

C. Industrial/Development Economic Development Authority

The I/EDA Chair, Cara Spivey, expressed appreciation to all who attended the Farmer's Market ribbon cutting and noted early positive impacts. The board will continue focusing efforts on North Tazewell, including planning work for the proposed Fab Lab and support for rural trades initiatives. Manager Regon and Executive Assistant Reeves reported a productive meeting with Southwest Community College related to that project. Executive Assistant Reeves has been coordinating with the CBDG representative regarding the block grant and façade improvement projects along the street. Several initiatives are underway. Councilmember Cline inquired about the expected timeline for implementation. David Hills from Hills Studio is scheduled to deliver a final presentation. The application deadline is July 16th. Councilmember Cline also asked about the award notification date; Manager Regon anticipates the grant award period will occur in 2027. The June meeting will include an update on the cinema project. Regarding the Ramey Lot, the I/EDA board confirmed it will not permit use of the lot while it remains in its current condition. There is an active water line project in that area and it is under construction. They are scheduled to meet with Mr. Jones from Virginia Tech who is tomorrow to see drawing of the plans for that possible project. The goal or vision for that would be a park, multi-use fields, and multi-generational. Councilmember Willis asked us to advertise the ability to rent the Clinch River Pavilion. Striping on the parking lot will be soon for the Clinch River Pavilion.

D. Comprehensive Plan Review Sub-Committee

Councilmember Cline shared that they did not meet this month. They will meet again following the IEDA meeting on the first Monday in June.

Unfinished Business

A. Town Council Representative for the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission

The commission meets quarterly. Councilmember Keen moved that Mayor Beasley be appointed to serve as the town's representative. Councilmember Cline seconded the motion. Mayor Beasley expressed his willingness and pride in accepting the role but noted that his responsibilities are already considerable and he would prefer to resign from the Historic Review Board if appointed. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye. The next commission meeting is scheduled for Monday at 6:00 PM.

Councilmember Willis moved to appoint Councilmember Fox to the position on the Historic Review Board. Councilmember Keen seconded that motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

New Business

A. National Music Week Proclamation for May 3rd – 10th

Mayor Beasley informed that there is a proclamation that the week of May 3rd- the 10th will be National Music Week. Last Friday Bonnie White from the Tazewell Music Club reached out to him to request this proclamation. The Tazewell Music Club has been a long-time active organization. He was unable to read the proclamation because he didn't have it at that present moment.

B. Fire Truck Discussion

During budget work sessions, Manager Regon reminded the group that the Fire Chief has identified the need for a new fire truck. Tj Johnson- Chief Engineer and Manager Regon worked together to review the current vehicles: Unit 685 is a 2002 pumper truck. This unit has responded to 208 calls in the last 3 years. Chief Engineer Johnson and Manager Regon have acquired three quotes for a new Fire Truck. The first is from Atlantic Emergency Solutions \$1,361,007, the second is 4 Guys Fire Truck is \$1,300,000, and the final quote is from Sutphen \$997,787.37. Manager Regon noted that the quoted prices will increase after June 1st and reminds that once ordered it will be a delay of nearly 3 years before the truck is complete and received. That is when payments would begin. The team searched for alternatives. A possible FEMA grant was identified, but no current funding source was found. Another option is obtaining a lower-interest loan through Rural Development. Chief Engineer Johnson located a company offering a lease-to-own arrangement: a lease for a term (for example, 10 years) followed by the option to purchase. However, the lease option would

be more expensive over time and would not result in ownership until the buyout, and even then, the total cost could exceed a direct purchase.

Councilmember Willis asked what is wrong with the current truck. The current truck has mechanical problems, including failing to build air pressure, and estimated repair costs exceed the cost of buying a new apparatus. He did note that the calls are less on this truck because they treat it as a second on call truck because of its issues so it is used less now for those reasons. The truck is roughly 24 years old, while the National Fire Protection Association commonly recognizes a 15-year service-life benchmark for fire apparatus. The quoted replacement price includes fully equipped apparatus and is presented as a 30-year investment. Of the three companies that provided proposals, Sutphen has been particularly helpful and cooperative during this process.

Councilmember Fox moved to approve the purchase of a new fire truck using the best quote presented which is Sutphen and Councilmember Keen seconded the motion. Councilmember Hankins asked about the loan time frame; financing terms will depend on the options the district secures. Councilmember Cline referenced the prior discussion at the last meeting and raised a broader question about asset allocation: with two fire stations located so close to each other, how many vehicles are truly required to meet the area's service needs? Manager Regon did ask the county about some sort of asset sharing program but they didn't respond with an answer. She does see that it could cause conflict if the two departments shared an emergency vehicle. Maintenance would also be consideration if it was a shared asset. Fire Chief clarified that the County rarely would need to use a pumper truck as it relies on hydrant system. Typically, when the department is called out to assist in county calls, they request a tanker.

Councilmember Cline asked about the plan for replacing the other units in the future, specifically a five-year plan and a seven-year timeline that includes acquiring replacement vehicles. Manager Regon indicated they will continue pursuing grants to support the funding of this truck. They should expect a window of approximately 18 months to two years to obtain the new Truck and funding. The pumper truck is planned to remain stationed in town. Councilmember Willis requested clarification regarding the company that provided the quote and asked whether the existing pumper has resale value. It was confirmed that the old pumper could potentially be sold for about \$50,000, but it cannot be disposed of until a replacement is secured. They also clarified that they are happy to go with the quote with Sutphen. On vote, Councilmember Willis, nay; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

C. Town Manager Project Updates

- Theatre- The construction contract was signed for an 18-month schedule, with an anticipated completion date of August 12, 2026. Monthly progress submissions are being sent to DHCD to document milestones and compliance.
- Rt 460 Water Line Replacement Project- Crews are actively working on the water line replacement. Bridge hangers are expected to arrive tomorrow; once installed and connected, the team will proceed with hydrant installations and work on the pump station.
- Clinch River Pavilion & Farmers Market- The Clinch River Pavilion and Farmers Market have been well received and are considered a significant success based on recent usage and participation.
- Mountain Biking Project- The town remains in a holding pattern while awaiting notification from IMBA regarding whether they have been awarded the design portion of the mountain biking project.
- Ramey Lot - Conceptual drawings for the Ramey Lot are expected tomorrow. These initial plans will guide further discussion and any required refinements.
- Youth Soccer League- Overall, the youth soccer league is progressing successfully. However, a safety concern has been raised: softball activities have occurred on or near the soccer fields during soccer games. To reduce the risk of injury, Councilmember Cline requested signage to prohibit softball play during scheduled soccer games and to clearly communicate field-use rules.
- Sewer Line on Lowe's Property- Met with Thompson and Litton regarding the sewer line on Lowe's property. We received three distinct proposals, none of which matched our original plan. Proposal 1 calls for five individual grinder pumps with an estimated cost of \$339,500. Proposal 2 proposes two grinder pumps \$458,640. Proposal 3 recommends installing a sanitary lift station \$494,620. The team met last week with engineers, the property owners, and staff to review these options. We also prepared our own estimate: install an individual grinder pumps and re-route the sewer line, including repairs to existing odds and connections. This option is under \$50,000. The engineers modified one detail of our proposal and recommended using two pumps for redundancy in case one fails. We are currently awaiting the property owners' decision. The proposed installation would fit within the right-of-way easement and would be placed in the rear portion of

their yard. Overall, the option is feasible and meets the site constraints, pending final owner approval.

Misc

Manager Regon acknowledged Police Week and praised our department personnel. She noted that next week will be EMS Week and expressed gratitude to her staff for their dedication and service. She also introduced Addison Hurst as the new Recreation Director. Recreation Director Hurst informed the council that she completed a four- year Bachelor Science degree in Sport and Recreation Management at James Madison University and double minored in general business and coaching education. She is excited to be here and grateful for the opportunity.

Councilmember Fox took a moment to share his condolences to the family of Gary Childress. Mr. Childress passed away yesterday.

Councilmember Fox wanted to see if we could do more to enforce prohibited alcohol on premises around the lake. Manager Regon did clarify that there are signs stating that alcohol is prohibited. This will be monitored.

No public comment

Council Comments

Councilmember Fox would like the Town to supply a bench to businesses that have served the town for more than 20 years. It was specified that if a business was awarded a Town that it would be with the understanding that if the business closes, ownership of the bench would revert to the town. He expressed the view that long-standing businesses should have the option to be provided a bench and indicated a preference for placing one at Italian Village. He proposed that any business operating in town for over 20 years be eligible to participate in this program, using the town's logo "Tazewell" on the bench similar to what we have outside this building.

Mayor Beasley recommended determining how many businesses would qualify and estimating the cost of benches. Councilmember Takach added that there is a recycle program that the business could participate in. One of the awards received when participating in the program is a bench made of recycled plastic. The Garden Club participates and has already received several benches that can be seen around town. Manager Regon agreed to compile those figures and report back to the council. Councilmember Fox clarified that his proposal specifically targets restaurants for eligibility. Councilmember Willis then asked if that includes fast food restaurants or just privately owned because that significantly lowers the number of businesses that would qualify. Councilmember Cline

tried to clarify that he was relaying what he was asked by citizens. The fellow councilmembers were requesting for clarification on if we did this, who else would be eligible. Councilmember Takach tried to explain they just don't want it to be only directed to one specific business or restaurant. Manager Regon concluded that they would do research to determine the number of restaurants vs the cost of benches to give the council more information to better decide on this matter.

Councilmember Takach noted an intersection issue at Hill Street and Steeles Lane. She asked if there is a study that can be done for a yield sign or sometime of visual aid as it is a blind intersection.

Councilmember Cline thanked Councilmember Fox for his enthusiasm for the proposal earlier but reminded him that profanity should not be used during public meetings.

Councilmember Fox apologized for what he said earlier during the bench discussion and offered an apology to the council and attendees.

Mayor Beasley explained that Councilmember Fox's initial remarks about the benches were not aimed at a particular establishment but applied to any business that has been operating in Town for 20 years. As the conversation progressed, however, the focus shifted toward restaurants and then narrowed further to a single business. Mayor Beasley sought clarification about the exact nature of the request so the Town Manager would have clear direction. That request for clarification is what seemed to upset Councilmember Fox. Mayor Beasley emphasized that his intent was not to upset anyone but to ensure the Town Manager understood how to proceed.

Councilmember Willis reported that a resident had mentioned missing trash cans along the back side of the lake and asked that staff investigate and address their replacement.

Adjournment

Councilmember Keen motioned to adjourn. Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Meeting adjourned at 9:47pm