

Special Called Council Meeting Minutes

July 27, 2026

Present:

Mayor Joe Beasley

Councilmember Danny Willis

Vice Mayor Jonathan Hankins

Councilmember Zach Cline

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Glen Keen, Jr.

Councilmember Elisabeth Takach

Absent:

Staff members present were Town Manager, LEEANNE REGON; Attorney, Michael Thomas; Clerk-Treasurer, Jessica Hayes

SPECIAL CALLED TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Beasley called the regular meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Mayor Hankins led the meeting in the invocation prayer.

A. 2027 Rt. 16 Rally & Music Festival Event and Support Requests

Street Closure Discussion

Donna Roberts and Chris Meyers stated they are willing to adjust Friday's Street-closure time and are flexible on the sponsorship amount. They emphasized that they can "figure it out on their own" if needed but would greatly appreciate support from the Town.

Councilmember Willis asked what closure schedule they preferred. They responded that they would prefer to close it earlier on Friday to better prepare for the event but are requesting the same closure footprint as last year:

- **Friday:** Closure beginning at 5pm from West Street down to Hurst Scott Funeral Home.
- **Saturday:** Closure of Main Street beginning at 9am.

Mrs. Robert noted they have not yet had the opportunity to contact all Main Street businesses to see if they are interested in being included in this event, but plan to do so soon. They hope that all the businesses will participate.

Mayor Beasley opened the floor for a motion. Councilmember Keen moved to approve the street closure as amended for Friday to close from West Street to Hurst Scott Funeral Home at 5 PM and as originally requested for Saturday, full street closure beginning at 9am. Councilmember Cline seconded the motion.

Councilmember Cline asked whether, given the expanded closure area requested, did the organizers plan to recruit volunteers to complete the VDOT street-closure training course. Manager Regon stated that in order

to get started with this, volunteers would be required, and once enough people commit, a class could be scheduled to certify them. This would reduce the burden on the Public Works team. As long as the Town has at least one certified staff member, volunteers can be trained in-house.

Councilmember Cline also raised concerns from business owners about a full street shutdown and asked when a clear plan could be finalized. The organizers said they expect to have a solid list of participating businesses within 60 days. They are reaching out to businesses throughout town and plan to contact additional restaurants to support VIP tents.

The motion on the floor was to approve the event application as previously presented with the exception of:

- **Friday:** Closing West Street to the Hurst Scott Funeral Home at 5pm.
- **Saturday:** Closing Main Street beginning at 9am

The organizers expressed hope that they hope more Main Street businesses would participate and possibly extend their operating hours to better emphasize tourism. They hope to continue to grow this event and really make out Town a destination.

On Roll Call Vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, abstained.

Sponsorship Request

The organizers originally requested \$15,000, explaining that the amount was intended to help double event attendance. They stated they were flexible and would accept \$5,000 or \$10,000, and would appreciate any support.

Councilmember Keen made a motion to allocate \$5,000. Vice Mayor Hankins seconded the motion.

Council Discussion

Councilmember Fox said that during last year's event, it was difficult to get through one of the restaurants. Mrs. Robers asked when this occurred. Councilmember Fox said the front was roped off. She clarified that the area had to be roped off due to ABC licensing requirements and those areas had to be designated per licensing but access to the restaurant was still available.

Councilmember Fox also asked whether the organizers would provide their own volunteers for the event. They confirmed they would as they previously discussed having them VDOT certified to assist with street closures. He expressed concern about street closures and complaints from residents.

Mrs. Roberts responded that the event brings much-needed tourism and helps improve the Town.

Councilmember Cline reiterated that the attendance counter used in past years is the most accurate method and shows year-over-year improvement. He said the event's positive impact on revenue growth is clear and questioned why Councilmember Fox is frustrated with street closures when the events help prevent future property tax increases.

Councilmember Cline referenced last month's marketing report, noting over \$5,000 spent on billboards, radio ads, Facebook ads, posters, and outreach to motorcycle clubs. The organizers also pursued corporate sponsors and ran regional TV spots to advertise for the event.

Vice Mayor Hankins agrees that this event is good for our Town. The organizers highlighted that the Town's new music venue adds a unique asset that supports growth in our Town, drawing more here.

Councilmember Fox expressed concern that other businesses may lose opportunities. Mrs. Roberts reiterated that it is their goal to include more businesses and make this a success for all. She explained that last year they had only seven weeks to plan the event and had to work within OTR's footprint. Given more time they now have the opportunity to really grow the event and offer more inclusion.

Mayor Beasley thanked the organizers for their feedback and responsiveness. Mrs. Roberts confirmed that a paper copy of the event report was provided to the council at the last meeting.

Councilmember Willis said he loves the event but wanted to clarify that when he is acting on council he considers public feedback when voting. He appreciated the organizers' willingness to adjust street closures to address their concerns.

Councilmember Takach read a statement recusing herself from discussion and voting due to a personal interest in this matter.

On Roll Call Vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, abstained.

B. DHCD Industrial/Revitalization Fund Grant Resolution for Iron Thrones Project

Manager Regon reminded that in the last meeting Iron Thrones appeared before council and requested for a resolution of support to go with the application for the IRF through DHCD to relocate their business and completely restore a blighted building in Town. The location would be the previous Rainbow Upholstery building. Councilmember Willis made a motion to approve the resolution of support. Councilmember Takach seconded the motion. Mayor Beasley read the resolution of support. Roll call vote: keen nay. All others Aye. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Councilmember Keen motioned to adjourn. 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 6:38pm.