Council Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2026

Present:

Mayor Joe Beasley

Councilmember Danny Willis

Councilmember Zach Cline

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Glen Keen, Jr.

Councilmember Elisabeth Takach

Absent:

Vice Mayor Jonathan Hankins

Staff members present were Town Manager, Leeanne Regon; Executive Assistant, Susan Reeves; Attorney, Brad Pyott; Clerk-Treasurer, Jessica Hayes; Police Sargent Nick Denvers, Fire Chief John Thomas; Zoning and Building Official, Chris Hurley.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Cline made a motion to enter into the executive session. Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

The Town Council entered into Executive Session at 7:00pm.

Certification of Executive Session

RESOLUTION

Motion made by: Cline
Resolution Number: ES260811

Motion Seconded by: Fox
Meeting Date: August 11, 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, Cline, Fox, Keen, Takach

Nays: none

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

Jessica Hayes

Treasurer Hayes, Clerk

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

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

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL 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 Recognitions

A. Recognition of Glen Illig and Edward Hill, Town of Tazewell Public Works

Manager Regon began with stating that day-to-day operations often go unnoticed, but small acts of kindness can make a meaningful impact. Recently, an elderly woman stepped off a bus carrying several bags. Glen Illig and Edward Hill noticed her struggling and stopped to help her cross safely with her belongings.

Their willingness to pause, assist, and show compassion reflects the values we strive to uphold in our community. It's important to acknowledge and encourage these moments of kindness; they strengthen our town and remind us of the difference each of us can make.

B. Recognition of Irma Mitchell, Tazewell County Fair Coordinator

The Fair has officially concluded, and the Council presented Irma Mitchell with a certificate recognizing her outstanding commitment to this long-standing community event. She shared that the weather cooperated, attendance was strong, and both Saturday and Derby night were among the most successful they've ever had.

Irma noted that the carnival remains small and can be difficult to book, but the group plans to add at least one new attraction each year to continue growing. She expressed appreciation for the Town's leniency with parking, saying it contributed to a smooth and enjoyable event.

Irma also announced that this will be her final year, as she plans to retire in October. She emphasized how many people it takes to make the Fair possible, especially the volunteers who are essential to its success. She thanked the Town for its support, saying that without that help, it would be difficult to make the Fair as special as it is. She suggested that the annual donation to the Fair be included in the Town's budget moving forward.

The Fair is now 154 years old, and Irma has been involved for more than 20 years. She expressed deep gratitude for her time working with the Fair and for the community that has supported it.

Local Business Recognitions

A. Altizer, McGraw, and French, PLLC.

David Altizer noted that their firm has been providing professional business consulting since before 1904, making them one of the four oldest businesses on Main Street. In acknowledgment of their long-standing presence and continued service to the community, the Council presented them with an award recognizing their longstanding contribution to the Town.

Special Presentations & Requests

A. US Martial Arts Team and Tazewell Taekwondo Support Request

Kasey Addair, who runs the Town's martial arts programs, shared an update on her work and upcoming opportunities. The program originally began under the Recreation Department, and she took it over in 2010. She is a multi-degree black belt and was scouted in April to compete in an international tournament in Daytona, Florida.

She explained that sponsorship would help cover her competition fees while also promoting the Town of Tazewell on a world stage. She believes the visibility would extend far beyond the event itself. Since being scouted, interest in her program has grown, with more students signing up. Her competition team has already produced two state champions, demonstrating the positive impact on younger martial artists who are following in her footsteps.

In response to a question from Councilmember Cline, Kasey explained that reaching the national level has taken her 16 years. She compared the process to baseball, working your way up through increasingly difficult levels. She emphasized how challenging it is to advance, even at this stage. She clarified that there are two separate events: the International Martial Arts Festival and the U.S. Teams Audition. Her schedule includes Thursday, Friday, and Saturday events. Her region has 20 members on the team.

Manager Regon added that Kasey and her team performed at Main Street Moments and that the demonstration was very impressive.

Councilmember Takach asked whether her growth would also bring more people into Tazewell. Kasey said yes, her success not only expands her dojo but also positively influences local youth. She currently has 35 active students, with enrollment fluctuating but averaging about five new students per month.

Kasey requested a $300 sponsorship. Councilmember Fox made the motion to donate $300 and Councilmember Cline seconded. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

B. The Waylon Foundation Support Request

Alexis White attended the meeting to introduce the Waylon Foundation, which she created after experiencing a miscarriage last year. Through that experience, she discovered how many others in the community had faced similar losses, and she felt called to build a support network for families navigating grief.

She requested support for their first benefit event, explaining that the organization already has upfront expenses that need to be covered. While she did not specify a formal amount, she noted that a contribution of $1,000 would be especially helpful in meeting immediate needs. The upcoming Poker Run will begin at the Wayfarer. Mayor Beasley asked whether flyers were available and if there was an estimated number of attendees. Alexis confirmed that flyers are actively circulating, though they do not yet have attendance numbers; however, community feedback has been very positive.

Councilmember Cline asked for clarification on how the Foundation currently connects with families. Alexis explained that, at present, most outreach happens through Facebook, but they hope to partner with funeral homes and hospitals in the future. She also plans to set up pop-ups and expand beyond the local community. Increasing face-to-face engagement, along with digital outreach, will help them grow. She shared that when she went through her own loss, she didn't know where to turn, and she wants to ensure others have a clear place to go for support. She noted that the Foundation is a 501(c)(3) and is open to ideas, involvement, and collaboration. Councilmember Cline asked whether the Foundation offers tiered sponsorships. Alexis confirmed that they do and presented the sponsorship list to Council. Councilmember Willis noted that Alexis's husband served many years with the Fire Department, and his father served as a Police Officer; highlighting the family's long history of service to the community.

Councilmember Keen motioned to provide two Gold Sponsorships totaling $300. Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

C. Haus of Taylor Sponsorship Request

Manager Regon reported that she received an email request after the July meeting from the local artisans located at the beginning of Main Street, Haus of Taylor. They will be opening a new exhibit on August 29, 2026, titled "What We Kept." The exhibit will feature historical art, personal stories, and items connected to Tazewell's history. They requested that the Town serve as a Story Wall Sponsor at a level of $500. The sponsorship request is specifically for the opening reception, which is the main event associated with the exhibit. Councilmember Cline noted that, as this is a business, it was important to clarify whether they planned to charge admission for the event. No motion was made.

Approval of Minutes

Councilmember Keen made a motion to approve minutes from the regular Council Meeting July 14th and the Special Called Meeting July 27th. Council Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Approval of Financial Statements & Financial Report

Councilmember Cline made a motion to approve financial statements and financial reports for July 2026. Councilmember Takach seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, 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 Planning Commission met on August 3, 2026. During the meeting, Attorney Pyott was directed to update terminology in our existing ordinance from Family Day Home to Home-Based Child Care to reflect current standards. Discussion also focused on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which will affect all zoning districts. Building and Zoning Official Hurley explained that they are working to get ahead of these changes by drafting ordinances.

Councilmember Cline asked whether anyone had presented to the Planning Commission about potential Airbnb developments near the Horseman's Club. Manager Regon responded that the new property owner had discussed that site and adjoining parcels, but the main focus of the conversation was another property on the Town side related to water and sewer availability.

B. Tazewell Today

Nate Thomas, President of Tazewell Today, reported that Main Street Moments was a major success. Family Night on Friday drew close to 1,000 people to Main Street, and Saturday's events, including performances and a Cruise-In with about 55 vehicles, were equally well received. Vendors expressed satisfaction and enthusiasm about returning for the Christmas event and next year's Main Street Moments. He also noted a recent Freedom Ride for the Burton Family, held in partnership with Back of the Dragon. The Board has resumed committee meetings, with a priority to establish a new active board of directors, restructure bylaws, and meet upcoming deadlines for the SMART, ACT, and DIG grants within 60 days. Councilmember Fox raised questions about the Farmers Market sale, but President Thomas suggested Aaron Kidd as a contact for those inquiries as Tazewell Today is not over Farmers Market. Mayor Beasley praised the putt-putt attraction and Family Night, while Councilmember Keen highlighted the popularity of the pickleball court. Councilmember Fox requested bringing back 50s–70s music, which Nate said he would consider. Irma added that her group held a reunion on Main Street with 35 attendees.

C. Industrial/Development Economic Development Authority

Manager Regon said they met last Monday. There were few items closing out. Discussed Comprehensive Plan and that it is now in the hand it needs to be and is in the final stages of preparation. They discussed the plans for upcoming and ongoing projects.

Unfinished Business

A. Capital Improvements Plan – Auditor Opinion:

The auditors' recommended approach is to use capital improvement project budget line items within each existing fund, which avoids bookkeeping hurdles such as interfund transfers while still supporting long-term planning. They suggested utilizing:

- Multi-year forecasts to project operating and capital needs alongside revenue.
- Reserve accounts within each fund to set aside targeted amounts annually for future capital projects.

This method keeps financial reporting straightforward while ensuring funds are prepared for long-term needs.

We already operate within similar parameters as suggested by the auditors. For current projects such as the Rt. 460 Project for example, funds are budgeted annually and then moved into reserve accounts set aside for future expenses. The same approach could be applied to capital improvement planned projects by creating budget line items within each fund. The town already maintains reserve funds in the General Fund and Water Fund, and similar reserves could be established across all funds. This would allow capital improvement funds to be budgeted annually and prepared for multi-year planning, ensuring compliance while avoiding the complications of interfund transfers.

Councilmember Cline discussed challenges in reviewing the charter and comparing practices with other municipalities, noting that the lack of prior implementation has caused confusion. He explained that items built into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are earmarked for three years unless abandoned, citing the 2025 sidewalk improvement project that was redirected elsewhere. He emphasized the need for a set fund to avoid deferrals and to prepare for predictable future expenses, such as public works vehicles. While reviewing the comprehensive plan, he cautioned against neglecting essential needs.

Councilmember Keen asked for clarification on the differences between the CIP and the comprehensive plan. Councilmember Cline explained that the CIP would be incorporated into the annual budget, allowing for predictability in planning. He referenced an example budget he had shared, which included benchmarks for bond debt as a standard operating practice. Councilmember Keen noted that the University of North Carolina offers guidance on this process and asked if outside assistance would be needed, similar to the comprehensive plan. Manager Regon suggested beginning discussions during budget work sessions in January.

Councilmember Cline added that he had reviewed a straightforward three-page CIP from South Hill, which outlined current year, funding sources, and future year allocations. He said it need not be as detailed as the comprehensive plan; noting that while the Town already has a similar setup, a five-year planning framework would be beneficial. He stressed the importance of planning for additional funds, explaining that while the Town managed unexpected expenses this year, better planning would reduce the need to scramble for resources.

Mayor Beasley suggested that during budget work sessions, the capital improvement budget should be determined first, with the rest of the budget built around it. Manager Regon agreed to develop a framework for planning and implementation in next year's budget process. Attorney Pyott asked about the example Councilmember Cline provided, referencing VA Code 15.2-29, and clarified that his understanding was that implementation is optional ("may" vs. "shall"). Councilmember Cline concluded that without adopting the CIP, budgeting risks becoming inconsistent and unpredictable.

B. Economic Administrative Assistant

Manager Regon reiterated that the position had been included in last year's budget, though the hiring process was delayed after interviews when the direction changed. She explained that the role is structured as a full-time, 40-hour per week position, with a salary range of $44,000–$50,000 (currently budgeted at $44,000).

Councilmember Keen motioned to move forward with seeking a full time Economic Administrative Assistant and Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. Councilmember Takach asked whether the job description had changed; Manager Regon clarified that she used the original description but added several items to assist with administrative duties. On vote, Councilmember Willis, nay; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

C. Ratify Vote Regarding Iron Thrones Industrial Revitalization Fund Grant Application

Manager **Regon** reported that following the last meeting, an email vote was conducted to approve Iron Thrones submitting an application for the IRF Grant. The vote results were: Councilmember Willis motioned to approve the application and Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, abstained; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, nay; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Councilmember Cline added that this was the second application received at the last minute, leaving little time for review. He emphasized the need for better notice so the public and council can review applications at least a month in advance. Council Takach asked for confirmation about the program, and Manager Regon explained it was through DHCD, noting that the application window is narrow and not tied to a strict deadline. She suggested encouraging earlier participation, possibly through the economic development position. Mayor Beasley asked if applications should be advertised and recommended setting a hard deadline in April to ensure submissions are timely. Attorney Pyott suggested adding information to the Town’s website so applicants understand the parameters in advance.

In a separate update, Manager Regon confirmed that there is a meeting scheduled Friday regarding the Theatre project. She explained that deadlines were impacted by the passing of the previous designer, and several new quotes have come in higher than originally planned. Further discussions are scheduled to address the next steps.

D. Ratify Vote Regarding PFAS Litigation

Mayor Beasley opened discussion on ratifying the prior vote regarding PFAS litigation. Councilmember Cline motioned to apply for the settlement, and Councilmember Keen seconded the motion. The recorded votes were: Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, abstained; Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye.

Following receipt of communications outlining settlement parameters, it was clarified that distribution applies only to system owners and does not fall under the same criteria previously understood. With this new information, the original motion was deemed null and did not require ratification.

Mayor Beasley wanted to add for clarity that although the motion is now null the ratification is to show how they originally voted based on previous understanding.

On roll call vote: Councilmember Cline, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, abstained; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, abstained; Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye.

Attorney Pyott informed that there is no need for a new motion because there is nothing now to act on.

Councilmember Cline made a motion to abandon the action regarding the PFAS Litigation. Councilmember Willis seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

E. Automated License Plate Readers/Flock Cameras Update

Sgt. Denver reported that there is a one-year contract proposal of $13,500 for three cameras. He noted that the Town missed the deadline for the HEAT Grant this year, which would have provided $10,000 in funding, but they can reapply in 2027. He clarified that the cameras must be installed on private property. Councilmember Willis motioned to table the matter, and Councilmember Fox seconded the motion.

Councilmember Cline pointed out a miscommunication between the last meeting and this one. While acknowledging the merits of having cameras, he emphasized that the issue is highly controversial across municipalities. His recommendation from the prior meeting was to draft language requiring council approval before implementation, ensuring public participation. He clarified that his intent is not to implement cameras but to establish language that guarantees council and citizen input before any future action. The motion to table carried. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

New Business

A. Budget Amendments

Treasurer Hayes explained that, as required by the auditors, budget amendments are presented periodically throughout the year. The current set of proposed amendments are end-of-year adjustments for FY26, outlined by department in the agenda packet with brief explanations. These include reallocations as well as adjustments to incorporate grant revenues or other revenues not previously budgeted. She noted that some additional revenue could be directed into the general fund contingency.

A question was raised regarding the Tazewell Today Donation line item, which appeared to contain an error and did not reflect the accurate expense total for FY26. Treasurer Hayes agreed to investigate and correct the issue before applying the amendment, and she will send her findings to Council for approval of that specific line item.

Councilmember Cline motioned to approve the proposed budget amendments with the exception of the amendment under review on Pg. 109 of the agenda packet (001-032-4220). The motion carried. Councilmember Keen seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

B. EMS Renovations Budget

Manager Regon provided an update regarding the EMS renovation project, originally estimated at $866,000 by Thompson and Litton's preliminary architectural report. Funding sources include a $354,000 congressional transportation grant and a previously earmarked $300,000 contribution, leaving a potential shortfall of about $212,000. Manager Regon stressed the need for council approval before signing off with Rural Development, since actual construction bids could come in higher or lower than estimates. Concerns were raised about committing funds without assurance that the shortfall would be covered.

Alternatives such as new construction (estimated at $4.6 million preliminary architectural report) or purchasing another building were considered but deemed unrealistic or unsuitable. Some members highlighted the department's long wait for facility upgrades and the poor living conditions staff currently face, arguing that this project should finally move forward.

After debate, Councilmember Cline made a motion to increase its earmark from $300,000 to $512,000, ensuring sufficient backup funding alongside the federal grant. Councilmember Takach seconded the motion. This decision allows the project to proceed, with the understanding that final costs will depend on bid outcomes. On vote, Councilmember Willis, nay; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Councilmember Takach added the need for stop sign at Steeles lane and Hill Street.

Town Manager Project Updates

Rt. 460 Water Line Replacement

The project has resumed in the Fincastle section, while work on the Market Street section is still pending. Councilmember Fox asked whether fiber optics could be laid alongside the water line, and Manager Regon noted that discussions have already taken place with a company interested in serving the Town. Building and Zoning Official Hurley added that the new medical facility is already equipped with fiber optics.

Ramey Lot

Preliminary conceptual drawings cost $5,275, and Manager Regon was directed to contact Thrasher to prepare engineering drawings. Councilmember Cline expressed concern about funding, while Manager Regon clarified that costs are uncertain with the new engineer. Councilmember Takach emphasized that public concerns about water mitigation must be addressed before moving forward. Manager Regon mentioned that a potential environmental grant could help support the project.

Mountain Biking Project

Grant opportunities are available but require permanent easements, which the Town does not currently have. Manager Regon requested help securing easements, noting that the IMBA grant will reopen soon. Councilmember Cline suggested seeking county assistance, and the Tourism Director confirmed that the project aligns with regional priorities under the Cumberland Plateau Planning District. Attorney Pyott clarified that existing access is limited to an unimproved logging road from the 1920s. Council directed Manager Regon to pursue permanent easements, with Councilmember Cline stressing the importance of county resources to resolve the issue.

Sewer Line – Lowe Property

Manager Regon reported that the Town met with Thrasher and signed a task order for both projects. Recommendations are pending.

Water Drainage – O'Quinn Property

The drainage issue was noted, with further updates expected as the project develops.

Steeles Lane Recycling Center

Manager Regon discussed ongoing issues at the Steeles Lane Recycling Center, noting that when staff were available to man the site, they were able to turn away cars from West Virginia and prevent rental facilities from dumping large loads when cleaning out apartments. Several suggestions were raised to reduce abuse: sending letters to rental properties, replacing the two open roller dumpsters with closed-top containers, reducing operating days and hours to align with Public Works (7 a.m.–3 p.m.), and updating signage to limit the number of bags since there is currently no restriction. Concerns were also raised about paving the parking lot, as the weight of trucks and dumpsters would make it costly, estimated at $38,000 for asphalt or $65,000 for concrete.

Mayor Beasley warned that if closed dumpsters are used, larger items left outside would still need removal. Councilmember Takach emphasized that the center should remain a convenience for taxpayers, not an outlet for abuse, and suggested a trial period of manned hours with public notice. Councilmember Fox recommended locking dumpsters once full until emptied, while Mayor Beasley noted that access to the cardboard bin must remain available. Additional ideas included sending notices with water bills, updating newsletters, and considering trespassing charges for offenders caught on camera. Building and Zoning Official Hurley suggested hiring a part-time employee to operate the center from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. Finally, Councilmember Willis asked about staffing levels in Public Works and asked if they are fully staffed at this moment. Manager Regon responded that there are current vacancies in electrical and street positions.

Miscellaneous- None

Miscellaneous Public Comment- None

Council Comments

Councilmember Fox expressed interest in seeing tiny houses developed in the community, particularly as housing options for senior citizens. Building and Zoning Official replied that an ordinance is expected to be drafted to address this initiative, with the understanding that such housing must be built in compliance with local regulations.

North Tazewell Maintenance

Councilmember Keen noted that North Tazewell had recently been mowed which is an improvement because it has not been maintained as expected. Manager Regon confirmed that the Town has changed contractors, now working with Williams Tree Service, which also maintains the lake.

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:20pm