Council Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2026

Present:

Mayor Joe Beasley

Vice Mayor Jonathan Hankins

Councilmember Danny Willis

Councilmember Zach Cline

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Glen Keen, Jr.

Councilmember Elisabeth Takach

Absent:

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

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 6:30pm.

Certification of Executive Session

RESOLUTION

Motion made by: Keen

Motion Seconded by: Hankins

Vote: All voted Aye

Resolution Number: ES260908

Meeting Date: September 8, 2026

Purpose: Legal Matters, Real Property, 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;

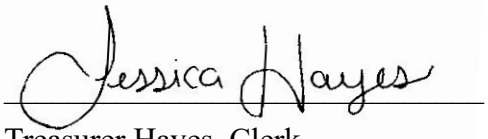
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Tazewell Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the executive session to which this certification resolution applies,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

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 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Beasley called the regular meeting to order at 7:38pm.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Pastor Nate Thomas led the meeting in the invocation prayer**.**

Local Business Recognitions

A. A Hope and Future Ministry

Corey Sparks informed the Council that they are establishing a residential recovery home for women. They explained that their thrift store A Hope and Future Ministry Gift & Thrift located 300 Main Street Suite 100 helps financially support this initiative. They also noted that the organization maintains a Facebook page for community outreach and provided business cards to Council members for additional information.

Special Recognitions

A. Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce Oktobrewfest Support Request

Pam Meade, Executive Director- Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce submitted a request to the Council for support of the 2026 Oktobrewfest as a sponsor, marking the event's 10th anniversary. Organizers anticipate a significantly larger festival this year, scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd, and noted that non-drinking attendees will be able to enter at no cost. The event will include several add-on activities, including a Friday night party hosted by Back of the Dragon and an after-party at Bee Noodled, encouraging a two-night experience that would benefit local hotels, Airbnb's, and restaurants. Organizers emphasized the festival's strong tourism impact and the importance of sponsorships in sustaining the event. A Bon Jovi tribute band is planned as the headliner. Councilmember Cline motioned to continue the Town's sponsorship at $500, with Councilmember Fox seconding the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, nay; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

B. Southwest Virginia Community College's 2027 Festival of the Arts Support Request

Manager Regon reported receiving a sponsorship request from the college for its upcoming event, which will follow the theme "In Motion." She noted that the Town contributed a $500 sponsorship last year. Councilmember Takach made a motion to continue the $500 sponsorship for this year's event. Councilmember Cline seconded the motion. On vote, Councilmember Willis, nay; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Mayor Hankins made a motion to approve minutes from the regular Council Meeting August 11th. Council Cline 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 Cline made a motion to approve financial statements and financial reports for August 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 Planning Commission will meet this upcoming Monday at 6:15pm.

B. Tazewell Today

Nate Thomas, President of Tazewell Today, provided a financial update and shared that he hopes to hold a more in-depth meeting in October. He announced that Tessa Ferrell has been appointed Interim Director, noting that the organization plans to revisit the position after Christmas. President Thomas praised her performance, stating she has done an outstanding job in the acting role. Councilmember Fox commented that he would like to see more music on Main Street. Interim Director Ferrell noted the recent fashion show was a success. Councilmember Cline asked Interim Director Ferrell what drew her to the organization, and she responded with her thoughts and vision, primarily focused on improving organization and structure. The Council welcomed and congratulated her on her new role.

C. Industrial/Development Economic Development Authority

IEDA Chairperson Spivey reported that the committee will meet next week and shared several positive updates. They have received a planning grant for the 1616 Riverside Drive property, which will allow them to work with engineers to obtain estimated costs for revitalizing the building. IEDA Chairperson Spivey noted that this progress would not have been possible without the efforts of Manager Regon, Executive Assistant Reeves, and Jordan Dillon with Cumberland Plateau. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Friday to discuss how the project will move forward within the community. The committee also voted to have Manager Regon interface with the engineering company Thrasher regarding the Ramey property. IEDA Chairperson Spivey explained that they met with Karen Webber, who confirmed the site may offer the possibility to apply for a Brownfield Grant with 50/50 support, which will be pursued once quotes are received from Thrasher.

Councilmember Cline asked for updates on the Wagner Tribute project timeline, and IEDA Chairperson Spivey stated that fundraising is still underway, with a target date of October 17th for completion. Attorney Pyott also mentioned a potential media opportunity with ESPN for this project.

Unfinished Business

A. Ratify Vote Regarding Reduction of Town Decal Fees

Mayor Beasley declared to ratify the vote for reduction of Town Decal fees. Councilmember Keen motioned to reduce Town Decal fees to $1 effective immediately. Councilmember Takach seconded the motion. On roll call vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

B. Automated License Plate Readers/Flock Cameras

Mayor Beasley stated that this matter had been tabled the previous month. The Council discussed establishing a policy requiring any proposal to install automated license plate readers, including Flock cameras, within the town limits to receive Council approval before installation.

Executive Assistant Reeves explained that, for similar ordinances in the past, the matter was first referred to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission would work to develop a definition of a Flock camera and draft an ordinance requiring any party seeking to install such devices to appear before the Council for approval.

Councilmember Willis questioned the need for action at this time, noting that there were currently no requests to install such cameras. Councilmember Cline responded that the Town should be proactive and address the issue before any requests are submitted. He noted that several years ago the Council discussed how these cameras could be purchased and used without input from either the Council or the public. Because the technology could affect Town residents, he believed the Town should prepare in advance and require Council approval before any installation.

Councilmember Willis asked whether the Council could simply pass a resolution prohibiting the use of such cameras. Attorney Pyott advised that a resolution could have a similar effect in this situation. Councilmember Cline stated that he believed an ordinance would provide a more permanent solution.

Attorney Pyott asked where such provisions would be incorporated into the Town Code. Councilmember Cline reiterated that, as these systems are being adopted in other areas, the Town should act now to ensure any proposal would come before the Council and allow citizens an opportunity to participate in the discussion before the technology is permitted within the Town.

Mayor Beasley expressed concern that a future Council might be unaware of a resolution because resolutions are not codified in the Town Code. As a result, the issue could potentially be overlooked in the future.

Councilmember Keen asked whether, if a resolution were adopted, any proposal to install Flock cameras would still have to come before the Council and whether the resolution prohibiting that technology would remain in effect. Councilmember Cline further explained the rationale behind the proposal.

Councilmember Takach asked whether the matter could be addressed as part of the Town's budget or procurement process.

Councilmember Cline made a motion to adopt a resolution prohibiting the implementation of automated license plate readers within the Town of Tazewell. As part of the motion, he also requested that Attorney Pyott report back at the next Council meeting regarding the process and options for incorporating the prohibition into a Town ordinance. Councilmember Keen seconded the motion. On roll call vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

New Business

A. Items for Auction

Manager Regon reminded the Council that each spring and fall the Town has the opportunity to auction surplus and unusable equipment. For the upcoming fall auction, the Town has two John Deere tractors that staff recommends placing in the auction. Councilmember Keen made a motion to authorize the proposed items, including the two John Deere tractors, to be included in the auction. Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On roll call vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

B. Town Owned Property on Walnut Street

Councilmember Cline raised questions regarding the future use of Town-owned property. He noted that the Town owns what he considers prime real estate near Kelly Kidd in the industrial zone and clarified that the property is located across the street from Clinch Valley Printing. He stated that the area consists of three parcels and asked whether there are any existing plans for the property. He also suggested exploring whether the property could be transferred to the IEDA for development opportunities or used as a potential location for Public Works operations.

Building and Zoning Official Hurley noted that portions of existing buildings appear to be located on two of the parcels. He stated that a title examination would be needed to determine ownership and property rights. Attorney Pyott commented that a title examination alone may not provide all the necessary information and that a survey may also be required. He recommended first contacting the neighboring business to determine whether they are aware that they may be utilizing Town-owned property and to gauge their response before pursuing additional steps.

Manager Regon stated that she was not aware of any previous plans for the property and would like additional time to investigate the matter before making any recommendations to the Council.

The Council informally directed Manager Regon to further research the property and report back with her findings. Councilmember Fox made a motion to allow Manager Regon to search further into the property including the methods of title examination and or survey if necessary. It was not seconded. Councilmember Cline clarified that this was intended as verbal direction only and did not authorize the expenditure of funds at this time.

C. Nominations for Historic Review Board Vacancies

Councilmember Cline nominated Kathy Buchanan and Benjamin Mitchell to serve on the Historic Review Board. He nominated Benjamin Mitchell to fill the term expiring this year and Kathy Buchanan to fill the term expiring next year. Councilmember Fox seconded the motion. On roll call vote, Councilmember Willis, aye; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Town Manager Project Updates

Councilmember Fox asked whether the reservoir area at Lincolnshire Park could be evaluated. Manager Regon responded that the Town's dam inspection is scheduled for either this month or next month and stated that the reservoir area would be reviewed as part of that process.

EMS Renovations

Manager Regon reminded that the Town has been awarded a Congressional Directed Spending grant, with Rural Development serving as the overseeing agency for the project. Following discussion at the previous meeting, she signed and submitted all required documentation to Rural Development. Staff participated in a Zoom conference call to review project requirements and discuss next steps. As part of the process, the Town received approximately 90 pages of documentation outlining the items that must be completed and submitted. Manager Regon stated that staff have worked through several requested items and that Attorney Pyott provided additional information needed for the application process. The Town has submitted the required materials and continues to make progress toward meeting all project requirements.

Route 460 Water Line Replacement

Manager Regon provided an update on the Route 460 Water Line Replacement Project. She reported that crews are scheduled to begin work at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday night in the area of the Hardee's traffic signal. The work will involve tying in new water lines and will require temporary water service interruptions in several areas, including the hospital. She stated that this particular outage is not expected to last long.

Affected areas will include portions of Freedom Avenue, Fincastle, Harman Street, Dial Rock Road, Joshua Street, and surrounding areas extending to the four-lane section of Route 460.

Manager Regon further reported that crews will return the following Thursday night to continue work at the Hardee's intersection and at the Ben Bolt traffic signal. The outage associated with that phase of the project is expected to take longer to complete.

She explained that the work is being performed during nighttime hours to minimize disruptions to local businesses and reduce the impact on residents' water usage. These tie-ins represent two significant milestones in the project.

Manager Regon stated that public notice of the planned outages has been posted on the Town's social media platforms and that staff will continue to share the information to ensure residents are aware of the upcoming work and potential service interruptions.

Ramey Lot

Manager Regon reported that she has spoken with Thrasher and expects to receive additional information this week. Councilmember Cline asked whether the Town would be receiving a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). Manager Regon indicated that a PER is being prepared, with water mitigation serving as a primary focus.

Mountain Biking Project

Manager Regon reported that she has been in contact with the property owners and continues to work with them, as well as Attorney Pyott, to make further progress on this project.

Sewer Line – Lowe Property

Manager Regon reported that Thrasher provided alternatives for the project, including one option estimated at approximately $50,000. Because the Town already owns some of the necessary equipment, the actual project cost may be much lower. She stated that grinder pumps are required and that this approach was determined to be the preferred option agreed upon with the homeowners.

Water Drainage – O'Quinn Property

Manager Regon reported that Thrasher is currently evaluating the drainage issues at the O'Quinn property and will provide recommendations for addressing the matter.

Steeles Lane Recycling Center

Manager Regon reported that letters have been sent outlining the approved uses and rules for the recycling center. While some problematic days continue to occur, she noted that conditions have improved. She recommended continuing with the current approach of having an employee there when we can spare someone and revisit the issue if problems persist. She also noted that the facility was originally implemented for county-wide use.

Manager Regon further reported that a section of roadway on Steeles Lane in front of the EMS building recently collapsed while Town employees were traveling through the area. The issue was determined to be caused by a water supply line serving the Water Plant. Repairs have since been completed.

Miscellaneous- None

Mayor Beasley opened the floor for action regarding the Tazewell Cinemas IRF loan discussion. Councilmember Cline reported that the project received a loan through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). He stated that Sharon Thomas had requested an extension due to unforeseen circumstances. Councilmember Cline made a motion to approve a six-month extension through March 1, 2027, subject to final approval by DHCD. Councilmember Hankins seconded the motion. Councilmember Willis asked how long the project had been ongoing. In response, it was noted that the project dates back to 2017; however, the IRF loan component was not initiated until 2024.

The motion to approve the extension through March 1, 2027, and forward the request to DHCD for final approval was approved. On roll call vote, Councilmember Willis, nay; Vice Mayor Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Keen, aye; Councilmember Takach, aye.

Miscellaneous Public Comment- None

Council Comments

Councilmember Cline requested an update on the Comprehensive Plan draft. It was reported that the draft had been submitted to VDOT for review of the transportation component. Councilmember Cline also requested that the subcommittee be provided with the current draft for review.

Councilmember requested an update on the Town's Recreation and Sports Committee. He noted that discussions with representatives of Tazewell Little League had highlighted several facility needs, including lighting, electrical improvements, and field maintenance. He asked about the status of the committee and its current activities.
Mayor Beasley explained that responsibility for the committee had transitioned to the Recreation Director and that attendance has been challenging due to the schedules of individuals involved with various sports programs throughout the year. Despite those challenges, the committee has identified several priorities, including:

- Exploring the creation of a volleyball league within the Town.

- Establishing a soccer association that would allow local recreation teams to compete against teams from neighboring communities.
- Developing a strategy to work with Tazewell County Schools to gain access to gymnasium facilities for youth sports, tournaments, and recreational programming, including volleyball, basketball, wrestling, and pickleball.

IEDA Chairperson Spivey suggested that the committee adopt a more structured meeting format, including regular agendas and goal tracking, to encourage participation and improve effectiveness. She noted that similar approaches used by other boards and committees, such as the IEDA, have proven successful in maintaining engagement and focus.

Councilmember Cline further stated that recreation-related needs, including improvements at Lincolnshire Park and Little League facilities, should be reviewed through the Recreation and Sports Committee so that priorities can be centralized and recommendations presented to Council through the budget and capital improvement planning process.

Staff agreed that the committee can serve as an effective forum for identifying recreation needs and developing recommendations for future improvements.

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm