

Farmville Town Council Retreat

February 7, 2025

**Emergency Operations Center
Farmville Town Hall**

Notes

Mayor Brian Vincent called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. In addition to the Mayor, Council members Sallie Amos, Dan Dwyer, John Hardy, Donald Hunter, Tom Pairet, and Adam Yoelin were in attendance. Also present were Town Manager Scott Davis, Clerk of Council Mary McKay, Director of Finance Julie Moore, Executive Assistant Jackie Vaughn, and Berkley Group Executive Manager Kimball Payne, who served as facilitator for the retreat.

Notes for the retreat were captured on flip charts. A transcription of the notes, with clarifying annotations, is attached as an addendum to these notes.

After calling the meeting to order, Mayor Vincent turned the meeting over to the facilitator. Mr. Payne thanked the Council for the opportunity to once again serve as facilitator for Council's retreat. He then referred to the agenda and reviewed suggested goals for the retreat:

- Review progress on the work plan developed at the last retreat
- Preview the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget
- Review the Town's mission, vision, and values statements.
- Review major strategic goal areas
- Craft a work plan for the next 18 to 24 months
- Identify longer term issues
- Understand constraints to progress and identify means to overcome them

He then mentioned some themes that might run through the day, including Council roles and responsibilities, dynamics, and processes, Council/Manager roles and relationships, public engagement, and potential limitations that might have to be overcome to address Council's priorities.

Mr. Payne then offered some ground rules to guide the Council's discussion:

- Everyone participates; no one dominates
- Engage
- Be honest
- Listen to each other
- Respect different opinions
- No idea is too outlandish
- Seek to understand
- Ask questions
- Seek consensus (formal action at a future Council meeting)

- Silence means consent – speak up if you disagree
- Use the parking lot for issues that may evade consensus or require more background
- Have fun; don't take ourselves too seriously
- We will take breaks when it seems appropriate

Mr. Payne asked if the agenda, goals, and the ground rules were consistent with the Council's expectations and if there were any questions. There were no questions, and the agenda, goals, and ground rules were accepted by unanimous consent.

Mr. Payne thanked the Council members for making themselves available for pre-retreat interviews, which helped to determine the agenda. He shared with Council the "common themes" from those interviews, issues mentioned by more than one Council member. Some issues were mentioned by nearly all Council members. The common themes were:

- Staffing – recruitment and retention; succession planning
- Communications – with boards and commissions; to and from the Town Manager and Council; website
- Infrastructure – water & sewer; sidewalks; buildings
- Partner relations – County, Longwood University, downtown partnership, business community
- Housing – incentives, permitting, zoning, comprehensive plan, school system
- Perry Drive traffic
- Grocery store
- Recreation – rec center, outdoor recreation
- The fence ordinance
- Business roundtables

Mr. Payne noted that an acknowledgement of the common themes expressed by Council members could inform the later discussion regarding priorities and actions.

Team Building

The facilitator led the Council members through a team building exercise. He asked that they provide answers to the following questions:

1. *Tell your colleagues something about yourself that they probably don't know.*
2. *What strengths do you bring to the Town Council team?*
3. *What two things might people find challenging when working with you?*
4. *What legacy do you want to leave for the Town of Farmville when you conclude your service on Council?*

Responses to the last three questions were recorded without individual attribution.

The cumulative strengths identified by Council members were (flip charts #1 & #2):

- Opinionated (thinks he is always right)
- Holistic
- Future-first focus
- Cautious, considerate
- Considerate
- Takes community to heart
- Mediator - wants everyone to get along
- Listens
- Asks a lot of questions for transparency
- Smart
- Thinks long-term
- Likes to investigate
- Thinks about the entire town, not just his ward
- Knowledge, experience
- Not cheap – builds for the future
- Financial hawk ("tightwad")
- Focused on infrastructure
- Open-minded, with a deep desire to understand
- Listens to public sentiment but acts in the public interest
- Has a leadership mindset – is measured, calm in a storm
- Collaborative

It was noted during the discussion that some strengths could become challenges if taken too far. When asked what was missing that, if present, would make a stronger team, the responses were mutual respect and collaboration.

With respect to the challenges that might arise when Council members worked together, the following were identified (flip chart #3):

- Asks a lot of questions and pushes back
- Is unusually sensitive to those facing challenges
- Has a hard time communicating to citizens that they alone don't have, or can't provide, the answer
- Passionate, empathetic
- Will flip their position in a second after hearing a good argument or story
- Pushes back; loves to be proven wrong
- Lets personal feelings color their decisions
- Not listening to the whole story before deciding
- Being approachable
- Is overly confident
- Is easily frustrated

Mr. Payne asked how the potential challenges might be overcome or compensated for to help the Council work better together as a team. The following ideas were offered (flip chart #3):

- Talk, good communications, listening
- Mutual respect
- Self-awareness
- Be a cohesive group
- Support each other

The facilitator noted that every team brought together a combination of strengths and challenges and that the goal was to utilize the strengths and be aware of the challenges in order to work together effectively.

The last question was for the Council members to talk about the legacy that they wanted to leave after their term of service was ended. The combined individual thoughts helped describe this Council's vision of a better Farmville. The responses were (flip charts #4 & #5):

- * Trees & sidewalks that are ADA compliant and functional
- * Everyone will enjoy working for the town
- * Actions that leave benefits for future generations
- * "Better"
- * Recreation for everybody (including visitors)
- * Helped the town grow and be better
- * Grocery store
- * Housing - starter homes
- * Clean/ attractive town
- * Gateways that are welcoming and attractive
- * A progressive that has experienced positive change
- * Model of solid, stable leadership
- * Strong quality of life in the community

Review of Progress In Addressing Action Items Identified in the 2023 Work Plan

With the Town Manager's assistance, Mr. Payne reviewed with Council progress addressing the action items from the 2023 work plan developed at that year's retreat. Mr. Payne said that his goal for this review and for the development of a new work plan was to identify "SMART" goals or objectives, those that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely, or time designated. He said that he would recommend removing goals or objectives that don't meet those criteria as they have a tendency to become merely considerations or aspirations without the definition provided by the SMART criteria.

Mr. Davis provided the following annotated report that was used for the discussion.

2023 Chronological Work Plan

Ongoing and/or Complete

In-Progress, Under Review, and/or Paused

Not Addressed

Project Cut

- * Indicates action items for the new work plan. (Flip charts #5 & #6)

Ongoing or Immediate

- Take advantage of opportunities to improve accessibility and further comply with ADA requirements. *This is an ongoing activity that will be removed from the work plan.*
- Support the efforts of the “Branch Out in Farmville” program to increase the tree canopy and further beautify the Town. *An ongoing activity.*
- Promote partnerships, with the County and with the YMCA. *An ongoing aspiration.*

Within Three Months (by June 1)

- The Mayor will initiate a joint meeting of the Town Council and the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors to take place in Spring 2023. *The meeting was held. *Another meeting is planned for the Fall of 2025.*
- Council will convene quarterly business roundtables with the first to be held by June 1, 2023. *The first meeting was held in late 2024. *Schedule quarterly meetings.*
- Draft Rules of Procedure for Council’s consideration. *Done.*

Within Six Months (by September 1)

- Develop an asset management plan – the first component addressing buildings will be complete in June 2023. *Data for utilities has been incorporated into the Town’s GIS. *A maintenance and replacement plan will be developed, and projects will be included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).*
- Consider adding language to the Zoning Ordinance that would allow for Planned Unit Development (PUD) with appropriate conditions. Draft language to Council in July 2023. *No action was taken. Will be considered when the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances are reviewed.*
- Revisit the study of a new Public Works building – August 2023. *Completed. *The current facility will be renovated over the next five years through projects included in the CIP. The upgrade has started.*

Within the Calendar Year

- Airport – Contact the aeronautical programs at Liberty and Averett Universities to determine if there is any interest in owning, managing, or in some other way partnering with the Town on airport operations. *Completed; no interest expressed. *The Town is*

*issuing an RFP to identify a Fixed Base Operator – October 1, 2025. *Current leases are being revised to reflect best practices and the market – May 1, 2025.*

- Continue efforts to establish a joint emergency communications center; develop a proposal for consideration. *Completed; the joint EOC will be operational July 1, 2025.*
- The Mayor will initiate an annual meeting with the leadership of Longwood University. *Informal meetings have been held. *The Mayor will invite the President and senior staff of the University to a meeting with Council in the Spring, aiming for April.*
- Expansion of the fire department building to accommodate paid staff – architectural study in Fiscal Year 2024. *The preliminary study is complete and major renovations are planned, an \$11-13 million project. *Occupancy of the renovated building in Spring 2028. *Present a financing plan to Council – Fall 2025.*
- Complete the study of water and sewer infrastructure needs. Consider designating ARPA funds for improvements. *Completed. Future projects will be included in the CIP.*
- Address the activities gap for teens – report from the Parks & Recreation Director by January 2024. *No report was presented due to the press of other business. Council is aware of the programs offered by Parks & Rec that address teen activities. No additional action required.*
- Review the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with a focus on crisis communications and leadership succession. **A joint EOP will be developed with Prince Edward County over the next 18-24 months.*

Longer Term or Indefinite

- Renovation of the skatepark – FY 2024 CIP *Complete.*
- Complete Phases II and III of the wayfinding signage project with the Farmville Downtown Partnership – FY 2025 and subsequent, depending on grant funding. *Will move forward once funding is identified.*
- Develop a bicycle pump track – FY 2025 CIP *Complete.*
- Complete Phase II (FY 2025 CIP) and Phase III (FY 2027 CIP) of the Riverwalk Trail, depending on the receipt of TAP grant funding. *Defer indefinitely due to lack of funding.*
- Plan for restroom facilities at the splash park – in an out year of the CIP, with inclusion as other projects are completed and funding becomes available. **Installation Spring/Summer 2025.*
- Implement recommendations from the ABM Asset Management Plan for Town buildings. *Ongoing through the CIP.*
- Conduct a mobility study to address the potential, possible location of, and cost of an expanded system of trails and bikeways. *Because of projects currently underway and resource limitations, 2028 was identified as the most likely time for action. *Remains a goal.*

During the review of the 2023 Work Plan, it was noted that it was time to review the Town's Comprehensive Plan. A discussion arose regarding how extensive that review might be and whether it could lead to a major revision of the plan. Dr. Davis pointed out that a major revision could take up to two years and was beyond the capability of Town staff. Nevertheless, if Council wanted to address concerns such as promoting additional housing, addressing sidewalks

and tree canopy, and potential revisions to the zoning and subdivision ordinances to achieve broader land use and development goals, a revision of the comprehensive plan was the place to start. How the Planning Commission would be involved, its role vis-à-vis the Council, was also an item of discussion. ***To determine how much work needs to be done to revise the Comprehensive Plan, staff was directed to consult with Town stakeholders and provide a plan for review and potential revision, including a tentative schedule, for Council’s consideration by May 1, 2025.**

The retreat was recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m. and reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Preview

Director of Finance Julie Moore provided handouts to Council and provided an overview of the anticipated revenues for Fiscal Year 2026 in the various funds. Of particular note was the projected increase in County real estate assessments. Without a decrease in the Town’s real estate tax rate, the assessed values would bring in approximately \$243,000 in additional revenue to the General Fund. Ms. Moore also noted that interest income would be less in the new fiscal year due to ARPA funds being spent and GF bonds being paid down. Ms. Moore indicated that other revenues were projected to show little change.

Ms. Moore also reviewed with Council the Town’s outstanding debt and debt service in anticipation of a new bond of up to \$16 million to finance the fire station renovations and a new ladder truck. She noted that with the Town paying off earlier debt there was capacity for the new debt.

Review of the Town Vision, Mission, and Values/Operating Principles

Mr. Payne asked if the vision, mission, and values statements developed in 2023 still reflected Council’s thinking. Council agreed that the statements remained relevant.

Vision: *“A vibrant place to live, work and recreate.”*

Mission: *“To provide efficient, effective, and equitable service, and encourage diverse growth in our charming community.”*

Values/Operating Principles

- ❖ *Honesty & Integrity*
- ❖ *Accountability*
- ❖ *Customer Focus – Positive, Friendly, and Courteous Town Workers*
- ❖ *Open, Honest, Transparent, Responsive, and Timely Communications*
- ❖ *Embracing Diversity – Open-minded, Unprejudiced, Inclusive, Respectful, and Seeking Common Ground*

- ❖ *Financial Responsibility, Sustainability, and Resiliency*
- ❖ *Asset Management and Maintenance*
- ❖ *Support and Development of Town Staff*

Review of the Strategic Goal Areas

Mr. Payne then asked Council to review the major strategic goal areas for possible revision. Council agreed that the goal areas were still appropriate.

Major Strategic Goal Areas

Economic Development & Tourism – *Support business development and expansion that enhances the tax base, provides gainful employment, and enhances quality of life. Tourism is an important component of economic development.*

Public Safety – *Protect life and property, plan for emergency management, mitigate risks, and respond to individual and community-wide crises.*

Community Development & Land Use – *Through comprehensive planning and appropriate land use decisions preserve the charm, beauty, and history of Farmville while accommodating growth, encouraging diverse and affordable housing, and promoting an efficient and safe transportation system.*

Environmental Stewardship – *As guardians of natural resources, act to promote sustainability and resiliency.*

Infrastructure – *Improve and maintain the Town’s important capital assets that are critical to service delivery, safety, and quality of life.*

Government Performance – *Continually work to improve organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in service delivery through the adoption and revision of appropriate policies, procedures, and practices; adapt and implement best practices.*

Recreation & Cultural Activities – *Take actions to further develop and promote Farmville as the regional hub for recreation and cultural activities.*

Partner Relationships – *Maintain open communications with major partners and seek collaborative approaches for community improvement.*

Identify Objectives, Priorities, and Timelines Under Each Strategic Goal Area; Assign Responsibilities

The remainder of the retreat was spent developing a new action plan for the next two years. Mr. Payne asked Council to consider appropriate activities under each strategic goal area and asked

that an effort be made to apply the SMART criteria. The following actions were identified (flip charts # 7- #10):

Recreation and Cultural Activities

- * Complete current and planned CIP projects.
- * Track Explore Act opportunities.
- * Foster an awareness of the efforts to develop the Mary E. Branch Community Center

Public Safety

- * Develop a joint Emergency Operations Plan with Prince Edward County – 18-24 months.
- * Renovate the fire station and procure a new ladder truck – complete in 2028.
- * Upgrade the Town’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) space to accommodate joint operations with the County – 18-24 months.

Community Development and Land Use

- * Complete a review of the Comprehensive Plan – 1st Quarter 2027.
- * Update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan – timing to be determined (TBD)
- * Close the loophole in the Subdivision Ordinance regarding sidewalk requirements for new residential development – 6 months, September 1, 2025.
- * Address promoting new housing development, especially starter homes, in the process of Comprehensive Plan review and ordinance updating.

Economic Development & Tourism

- * Explore designating the entire Town as an Urban Development Area (UDA) to improve Smart Scale scoring – report to Council in 60 days, May 1, 2025.

Infrastructure

- * Investigate the potential for extending Meriwood Farm Road to South Main Street. The Town Manager is to contact the owner of the property between Peery Drive and South Main Street to determine if the property is for sale and, if so, the asking price. If the response is positive, contact VDOT to conduct a traffic study on the proposed extension. Complete in six months, by September 1, 2025.
- * Implement the Asset Management Plan through the CIP and annual budget.
- * Conduct informal inquiries with engineering firms on the cost of developing a sidewalk plan; put a placeholder amount in the Fiscal Year 2026 CIP.

Government Performance

- * Hire a Public Works Director ASAP.
- * Implement a Fellowship Program for professional development and succession planning.
- * Find out from Civic Plus when the next update of the Town's website is scheduled and discuss potential enhancements.

Partner Relationships

- * Schedule a meeting between Council and senior leadership at Longwood University in April 2025.
- * Schedule a meeting with the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors in the Fall of 2025.

As the retreat was wrapping up, Mr. Payne asked if there was anything that the Town could stop doing, something that provided little utility, to free up some time for more important activities. An immediate suggestion was to stop sending out the check register to Council. It was pointed out that the information on the register was dated, since the expenditures had already been made, and that paying the Town's bills was a responsibility of the Town Manager. Council agreed to suspend the practice of receiving the check register.

With that the retreat concluded.

Mr. Payne thanked the Council members for their active engagement and expressed his appreciation that the Berkley Group and he could be of service to the Town of Farmville.

Mayor Vincent thanked everyone for their participation and declared the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Addendum: Transcription of Flip Chart Notes

Farmville Town Council 2025 Retreat

Transcription of Flip Chart Notes (with annotations for clarity)

Flip Chart #1

FARMVILLE

2/7/25

STRENGTHS

- OPINIONATED (ALWAYS RIGHT)
- HOLISTIC
- FUTURE FIRST FOCUS
- CAUTIOUS, CONSIDERATE
- CONSIDERATE
- TAKES COMMUNITY TO HEART
- MEDIATOR - WANTS EVERYONE TO GET ALONG
- LISTEN[s]
- ASK[s] A LOT OF QUESTIONS FOR TRANSPARENCY
- SMART
- THINKS LONG-TERM

MISSING: MUTUAL RESPECT, COLLABORATION (WRITTEN IN RED)

Flip Chart #2

STRENGTHS CONT.

- LIKES TO INVESTIGATE
- THINKS ABOUT THE ENTIRE TOWN, NOT JUST HIS WARD
- KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE
- NOT CHEAP – BUILD[s] FOR THE FUTURE
- FINANCIAL HAWK ("TIGHTWAD")
- FOCUSED ON INFRASTRUCTURE
- OPEN-MINDED
 - DEEP DESIRE TO UNDERSTAND
- LISTENS TO PUBLIC SENTIMENT BUT ACTS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
- LEADERSHIP MINDSET
 - MEASURED
 - CALM IN A STORM
- COLLABORATIVE

Flip Chart #3

CHALLENGES

- ASK[s] A LOT OF QUESTIONS, PUSH[es] BACK
- UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE TO THOSE FACING CHALLENGES
- HARD TIME COMMUNICATING [to citizens] THAT HE ALONE DOESN'T HAVE [or can't provide] THE ANSWER
- PASSIONATE, EMPATHETIC
- WILL FLIP IN A SECOND [after hearing a good argument or story]
- PUSH[es] BACK - LOVES TO BE PROVED WRONG
- PERSONAL FEELINGS [color decisions]
- [Not] LISTENING TO THE WHOLE STORY BEFORE DECIDING
- BEING APPROACHABLE
- OVERLY CONFIDENT
- EASILY FRUSTRATED

TO OVERCOME

- TALK, COMMUNICATIONS, LISTENING
- MUTUAL RESPECT
- SELF-AWARENESS
- COHESION
- SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Flip Chart #4

LEGACY

- * TREES & SIDEWALKS (ADA COMPLIANT)
- * EVERYONE TO [will] ENJOY WORKING FOR THE TOWN
- * [Leaves] BENEFITS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
- * "BETTER"
- * RECREATION FOR EVERYBODY (INCLUDING VISITORS)
- * HELPED THE TOWN GROW & BE BETTER
- * GROCERY STORE
- * HOUSING - STARTER HOMES
- * CLEAN/ ATTRACTIVE TOWN
- * GATEWAYS
- * PROGRESSIVE - POSITIVE CHANGE
- * MODEL OF LEADERSHIP
 - SOLID, STABLE

Flip Chart #5

LEGACY CONT.

- STRONG QUALITY OF LIFE

WORKPLAN PROGRESS

SIDEWALKS

TREES

*MEETING WITH BOS - FALL 2025

ASSET MANAGEMENT - REPLACEMENT & MAINTENANCE PLAN
FY '27 CIP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

STAFF TO PROVIDE REVIEW PLAN/SCHEDULE FOR COUNCIL
REVIEW - MAY 1

TO DETERMINE HOW MUCH WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE TO
REVISE THE EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Flip Chart #6

- RFP FOR FBO - OCTOBER 1
- REVISE AIRPORT LEASES - MAY 1
- MEETING WITH LONGWOOD LEADERSHIP - SPRING, APRIL '25
- FIRE DEPT. BUILDING OCCUPANCY - SPRING '28
FINANCING PLAN - FALL '25

Flip Chart #7

ACTION PLAN

RECREATION

- * ~~MEETING WITH P&R DIRECTOR TO DISCUSS TEEN ACTIVITIES (CROSSED OUT)~~
- CIP PROJECTS
- TRACK EXPLORE ACT OPPORTUNITIES
- MARY E. BRANCH COMMUNITY CENTER (AWARENESS)

PUBLIC SAFETY

- JOINT EOP [18-24 MONTHS]
- FIRE STATION & LADDER TRUCK
- UPGRADE EOC [18-24 MONTHS]

Flip Chart #8

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE

- COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW - 1ST QTR 2027
- ZONING & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE [revisions] - TBD
- ADDRESS HOUSING IN THE PROCESS
- CLOSE [the] LOOPHOLE REGARDING SIDEWALK REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
6 MONTHS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- EXPLORE UDA [Urban Development Area] DESIGNATION FOR [the whole] TOWN
REPORT TO COUNCIL IN 60 DAYS

Flip Chart #9

INFRASTRUCTURE

- MERRIWOOD FARMS RD. TO S. MAIN ST.
IS IT FOR SALE? PRICE?
SCOTT THEN VDOT STUDY
6 MONTHS
- IMPLEMENT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN
- SIDEWALK PLAN
INFORMAL INQUIRIES REGARDING COST
PLACEHOLDER FOR FY26 CIP

Flip Chart #10

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

- HIRE P.W. [Public Work] DIRECTOR - ASAP!
- FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
- WEBSITE - FIND OUT WHEN [the next review and upgrade is scheduled] FROM CIVIC PLUS

PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

- LONGWOOD
- BOS

STOP SENDING OUT THE CHECK REGISTER