

REGULAR MEETING OF THE FARMVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON APRIL 8, 2026

At the regular meeting of the Farmville Town Council held on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 6:00 PM in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, located at 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia, there were present Mayor Brian Vincent, presiding, and Council members Sallie Amos, A.D. “Chuckie” Reid, Daniel Dwyer, Thomas Pairet, Adam Yoelin, Donald Hunter, and John Hardy.

Staff present were Town Manager C. Scott Davis, Town Attorney Gary Elder, Deputy Town Manager/Finance Director Julie Moore, Community Development Director Ashley Atkins-Austin, Police Chief Andy Ellington, Fire Chief Daniel Clark, Human Resources Manager Amanda Zirkle, Public Works Director Stephen Edwards, Deputy Clerk and IT Support Jacqueline Vaughan, and Clerk of Council Mary McKay.

Mayor Vincent called the meeting to order, and all guests were welcomed.

The Clerk called the roll, noting all Council members were present.

An invocation was led by Mayor Vincent for anyone wishing to join in prayer. Vice-Mayor Reid led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Hunter made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Hardy, and with all stating “aye” in favor, the motion passed.

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest made.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION IN RECOGNITION OF APRIL AS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Mayor Vincent read the proclamation and made a presentation to Vicky Page who accepted on behalf of the Friends of the Barbara Rose Johns Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library. Ms. Page provided information on the Poem in Your Pocket Day celebration.

**PROCLAMATION
IN RECOGNITION OF APRIL AS
NATIONAL POETRY MONTH**

WHEREAS, the Academy of American Poets established the month of April as National Poetry Month in 1996; and

WHEREAS, National Poetry Month seeks to highlight the ongoing achievement of American poets by introducing Americans to the pleasures and benefits of reading poetry; by bringing poets and poetry to the public in immediate and innovative ways and by making poetry an important part of our children's education; and

WHEREAS, as National Poetry Month, under the leadership and direction of the Academy of American Poets, is now the largest literary celebration in the world; and

WHEREAS, poetry enriches the lives of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, poetry, as an essential part of the arts and humanities, affects every aspect of life in America today, including education, the economy, and community pride and development; and

WHEREAS, poetry has produced some of the nation's leading creative artists and has inspired other artists in fields such as music, theatre, film, dance, and the visual arts; and

WHEREAS, National Poem in Your Pocket Day will be celebrated on April 29th. Poems will be available at Farmville Downtown Businesses, CENTRA Hospital, and Moton Museum.

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS PROCLAIMED, by the Mayor and Town Council that the month of April be recognized as National Poetry Month in the Town of Farmville, Virginia, in honor of poets across America that share their talent with the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Seal of the Town of Farmville, Virginia to be affixed on this 8th day of April, in the year 2026.

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE NO. 242 – REPEALING CHAPTER 10 – EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL AND ENACTING CHAPTER 10 – EROSION AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM TO FULFILL THE TOWN REGULATING EROSION, SEDIMENT CONTROL, AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FROM THE VIRGINIA EROSION AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Mayor Vincent announced the opening of the public hearing. As there was no one who signed up or wished to provide comments, the public hearing was closed on Ordinance No. 242.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE NO. 243 – AMENDING SEC.(S) 25-101, 102, 106, 108, AND 110 OF ARTICLE V – TAX ON SALE OF PREPARED FOOD TO INCREASE THE TAX FROM 7% TO 8% AND MAKE CHANGES TO POSITIONS IN THE TOWN

Mayor Vincent announced the opening of the public hearing.

Tammy Nelson, owner of Grateful Fed Catering Company, addressed the Council urging for a pause in the tax increase stating it would strain the already tight margins of both businesses and customers. She suggested exploring alternative solutions such as the evaluation of the 3% remitter discount and emphasized the Farmville Food and Hospitality Coalition's willingness to collaborate with the Town.

Robin Simpson emailed comments asking the Council to reconsider the 1% meals tax increase as it could undermine support for a proposed 1% retail tax intended towards funding the Prince Edward County public school's construction project.

Luther Cifers, Briarwood Dr., addressed the Council to also speak in opposition of the meals tax being raised from 7% to 8%, stating the meals tax is already the main source of revenue for the town and one of the highest in the state. He referenced several major strategic goal areas in the Town's Strategic Plan and questioned how raising the meals tax fits in. He emphasized wanting the opportunity to be part of the process and feels that business owners substantially contribute to the Town's tax base.

Anastasiia Cifers, Briarwood Dr., addressed the Council as a small business owner in Farmville also speaking on behalf of the Farmville Food and Hospitality Coalition who signed the petition against the tax increase. Ms. Cifers added that the increase will create more deficit for the next year and hurt the small businesses and families who are already struggling. She asked for a pause on the tax increase, to collaboratively look at the budget for some options, to have discussion on restructuring the \$16 million debt, and continue with the working group with business leaders to attract investments to the town.

Jody Hobgood addressed the Council as a lifelong resident of Prince Edward County and expressed thanks for the small businesses in the community which she and her family frequent. She praised the growth in the community but expressed concern on the impact that a tax increase would have on the food businesses already facing rising costs in addition to the impact on small restaurant owners, families, and seniors. She urged the Council to not increase the tax and support the Town's small businesses.

April Leithleiter, April's Acres, spoke on the financial risk for towns which could potentially lead to bankruptcy and higher taxes being placed on residents. She mentioned the increasing trend of declining college enrollment which could result in less revenue for the town. Recommendations were made to implement an immediate hiring freeze, establish a policy to renegotiate or rebid all contracts every 2-3 years, and strictly control the town's spending, adding the need for a savings account and a surplus.

Jake Romaine addressed the Council to speak in opposition of the proposed meals tax increase from 7% to 8%, stating that the meals tax would hurt local restaurants by making the town one of the highest taxed areas in Virginia and subsequently drive customers to dine elsewhere. Two solutions were offered by Mr. Romaine: Seek financial contributions from Longwood University towards the cost of the new fire truck and improve staffing efficiency which would save money to fund employee raises without raising taxes.

Jim Bezdán, Price Drive, Farmville, addressed the Council and voiced respect for the difficulty in the budgeting process but questioned the fairness of imposing increased taxes, comparing Farmville to Virginia Beach. He sought to understand last year's increase in the real estate tax rate and 12 months later discussing proposed meals and lodging tax increases and emphasized the need first for a line-by-line review of expenses. Mr. Bezdán asked about the specific spending that has been eliminated before proposing a tax increase and noted that residents see a pattern of proposing a new tax instead of budget cuts when there is a shortfall in the budget.

Patrick Carwile, High Street, spoke in opposition to raising the Town's food tax and asked what can be done to return to the 6% rate which is standard for Virginia's counties. He pointed out that the Town already has received an increase in tax revenue as food prices in Farmville have increased. Mr. Carwile also emphasized higher taxes could discourage businesses and visitors from coming here and asked what the Town is doing to encourage investors and visitors to come to Farmville. He asked that the Town's spending be reviewed as there might be some hard cuts that need to be made until our tax rate is where it needs to be.

Trinity Crahan, a Longwood University student, was present to voice her concerns on the rising living costs and stated that the increased taxes could drive businesses away from the area. She emphasized one of her biggest issues being here as a college student is that the area has few amenities and opportunities, making it less attractive for students which could mean less revenue from the college.

Cherokee Samson, Farmville resident, addressed the Council and reported she only just learned about the issue and believes citizens should have been more involved. She argued that raising the food tax from 7% to 8% would significantly impact families. She stated the problem is budget management and criticized Council members for avoiding spending cuts and accountability. She sees the tax as an unfair shortcut that places the burden onto residents instead of fixing a budgeting problem.

With no one else signed up or wishing to provide comments, Mayor Vincent moved onto the next Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 244.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE NO. 244- AMENDING SEC.(S) 24-131, 133, 137, 138, 139, 140, AND 141 OF ARTICLE VI – TAX ON TRANSIENT LODGING TO INCREASE THE TAX FROM 7% TO 8% AND MAKE CHANGES TO POSITIONS IN THE TOWN

With no one signed up or wishing to provide comments, the public hearing was closed on Ordinance No. 244.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Jake Romaine signed up to offer comments but stated he had nothing further to add. With no one else signed up to speak, the public comment period was closed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Amos made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Reid, and with all stating “aye” in favor, the motion passed. The Consent Agenda included the draft minutes of the February 23, 2026, Special Meeting, March 4, 2026, Work Session, and the March 11, 2026, Regular Council Meeting.

FINANCE REPORT – NO REPORT

Finance Director Moore explained that due to the deadline for sending out the meeting packet and the date the information was received, the report could not be provided this month. A report will be provided for a two-month period at the next regular meeting.

REQUEST ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 242 - REPEALING CHAPTER 10 – EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL AND ENACTING CHAPTER 10 – EROSION AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM TO FULFILL THE TOWN REGULATING EROSION, SEDIMENT CONTROL, AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FROM THE VIRGINIA EROSION AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Dwyer made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 242, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote of Council members Amos, Reid, Dwyer, Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, and Hardy voting “yes”, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND: The proposed ordinance would allow the Town to manage its own stormwater permitting process. A public hearing was held on April 8, 2026, with no input received.

Mr. Pairet asked whether a backup plan is in place to certify additional staff in case of a shortfall. The Town Manager reported that there is a training process and said that more staff will be trained but that training has not yet begun.

REQUEST ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 243 - AMENDING SEC.(S) 25-101, 102, 106, 108, AND 110 OF ARTICLE V – TAX ON SALE OF PREPARED FOOD TO INCREASE THE TAX FROM 7% TO 8% AND MAKE CHANGES TO POSITIONS IN THE TOWN

Mr. Dwyer suggested that the vote be postponed until after budget discussions later this month, seconded by Mr. Reid, with all voting “aye” in favor, the motion passed. Mayor Vincent clarified the motion to table the vote.

BACKGROUND: At the March 11, 2026, Regular meeting, the Council voted in favor of the proposed budget being prepared using a Meals Tax Increase from 7% to 8%, with a Public Hearing being held in April as part of that motion. A Public Hearing was held on April 8, 2026, with input received from residents and business owners.

Mrs. Amos asked for suggestions in response to public concern about the proposed tax increases.

Mr. Hunter added that other alternatives could be explored.

Mayor Vincent noted an upcoming budget meeting on April 22nd and spoke on his availability to receive comments at any time regarding issues. Everyone was thanked for their attendance and participation. He added that the Town’s finances are audited annually by an external agency with three consecutive awards being received for auditing and reporting, and that no hiring is planned in the proposed budget.

REQUEST ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 244 - AMENDING SEC.(S) 24-131, 133, 137, 138, 139, 140, AND 141 OF ARTICLE VI – TAX ON TRANSIENT LODGING TO INCREASE THE TAX FROM 7% TO 8% AND MAKE CHANGES TO POSITIONS IN THE TOWN

Mrs. Amos made a motion to move the vote on the lodging tax as well [until after budget discussions later this month], seconded by Mr. Reid, with all voting “aye” in favor, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND: At the March 11, 2026, Regular meeting, the Council voted in favor of the proposed budget being prepared using a Lodging Tax Increase from 7% to 8%, with a Public Hearing being held in April as part of that motion. A Public Hearing was held on April 8, 2026, with no community input being received.

REQUEST ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Hunter made a motion to accept the Planning Commission 2025 Annual Report as presented, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and with a recorded vote of Council members Reid, Dwyer, Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, and Amos voting “yes”, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND: Section 15.2-2221 of the Code of Virginia states: *Duties of commission. 5. Make recommendations and an annual report to the governing body concerning the operation of the commission and the status of planning within its jurisdiction.* Community Development Director Ashley Atkins-Austin was available for any questions.

REQUEST ACCEPTANCE OF THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Mrs. Amos made a motion to accept the Board of Zoning Appeals 2025 Annual Report as presented, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with a recorded vote of Council members Dwyer, Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, Amos, and Reid voting “yes”, the motion passed.

BACKGROUND: Section 15.2-2308 of the Code of Virginia states: *The board shall keep a full public record of its proceedings and shall submit a report of its activities to the governing body or bodies at least once each year.*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager provided an update on Town projects:

- High Street pump station inspection - The pump station itself has been inspected with recommendations to be made. As for the inspection of and finding infiltration from the line that is believed may have some effect on that pump station, the consultant would like to wait until around May 1 when both universities are out when there is less usage of the pump station from that line.
- Colony Construction won the paving bid for this year with notification to be placed on social media and other formats. Paving will begin on Monday, April 13th. Work will begin on residential streets such as Cabbell's Court, Alley Court, Fourth Avenue, Jesse's Way, Fifth, Sixth, 7th Avenues, Russell's Way, Lee Drive, Barrow Street, Sanford Street,

and Spotswood Drive before reaching Milnwood Road and then the adjacent roads of Ford and Greenhouse. With Milnwood being a more traveled thoroughfare, that work will be held until the end with traffic being diverted during the milling and paving work.

- Venable Street stormwater inspection will begin on Monday, April 13th, with TRC staff and Farmville Fire and Public Works departments on site. An inspection will be reviewed, and then on Tuesday and Thursday of the following week, weather permitting, a visual inspection of the stormwater system will be completed. Inspection will be completed on the Fourth Street roadway bridge on April 16th.
- Two bids were received for the fixed based operator but did not meet all requirements. Staff will be placing out to bid again.

COMMENTS BY MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mr. Hardy thanked everyone who attended and expressed appreciation to the Longwood University student who participated and provided input.

Mr. Hunter reported being pleased with the strong attendance and engagement at the meeting and invited suggestions on how to more effectively increase awareness.

Mr. Yoelin thanked everyone who attended and mentioned the ongoing efforts to share information. He encouraged community members to attend, participate, and bring ideas, emphasizing that Council members also live in the community and share the same concerns. He extended an invitation to reach out to him, and his contact information is listed on the Town's website.

Mr. Pairet stated he was encouraged by the participation and emphasized that the Council is trying hard to find solutions. He asked community members to provide some ideas to work with and thanked all for their efforts.

Mr. Dwyer expressed his appreciation for the participation and asked if the elimination of the 3% remitter discount is favored by other restaurant owners. He added also that his contact information is available on the Town's website.

Mr. Reid thanked everyone for their participation and asked that Council be contacted should anyone have an issue.

Mrs. Amos thanked everyone for their attendance and for the input received. She expressed appreciation for the solutions offered.

Mayor Vincent remarked that local governments, especially in rural areas, are challenged with rising personnel and infrastructure costs which are outpacing revenue. He believes solutions are possible and emphasized that Council members are not opposed to hearing suggestions. The Mayor advised that the Farmville Town Council is not a body that seeks to impose its will but rather listen to community members. He thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement and asked for all to reach out to the Council members.

CLOSED SESSION 2.2-3711 A.1. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF A PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE TREE BOARD

On motion by Mr. Dwyer, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with Council members Pairet, Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, Amos, Reid, and Dwyer voting “yes”, Council went into closed session under the provisions of Paragraph A.1 of Section 2.2-3711, Discussion or consideration of a prospective candidate for appointment to the Tree Board.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Farmville Town Council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Farmville Town Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Farmville Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Farmville Town Council.

VOTE: Seven ayes, No noes

MOTION: Dwyer SECOND: Hunter

AYES: Yoelin, Hunter, Hardy, Amos, Reid, Dwyer, and Pairet

NOES: None

ABSENT DURING VOTE: None

ABSENT DURING MEETING: None

Clerk of Council

TREE BOARD APPOINTMENT

Mr. Hardy made a motion to appoint Tommie Herbert Elder to the Tree Board, seconded by Mr. Hunter, and with all stating “aye” in favor, the motion passed.

There being no other business and on a motion by Mr. Reid, seconded by Mr. Pairet, with all stating “aye” in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Brian R. Vincent, Mayor

Mary H. McKay, Clerk of Council