

**APPROVED MINUTES
TOWN OF URBANNA TOWN COUNCIL
WORK SESSION OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2025**

A work session of the Town Council of the Town of Urbanna, Virginia, was held on the 25th day of September, 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall located at 390 Virginia Street, Suite B in Urbanna, VA.

AGENDA ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

AGENDA ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION BY A COUNCIL MEMBER

Not necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 3. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Marjorie Austin	Present
Larry Chowning	Present
Alana Courtney	Present
Mayor Bill Goldsmith	Present
Merri Hanson	Present
Beth Justice	Present
Robbie Wilson	Present

Others Present:

Ted Costin, Town Administrator
Michele Hutton, Town Treasurer
Christine Branch, Town Clerk
Andrea Erard, Town Attorney
Members of the public

AGENDA ITEM 4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM 5. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

Councilmember Austin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Justice seconded. The Mayor called for any discussion. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion passed 7-0 w/0 absent.

AGENDA ITEM 6. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – DELEGATE KEITH HODGES

Delegate Hodges thanked the Town Council for the hard work they do every day. He provided insights and highlights from the latest General Assembly session, including:

- Changed standard deduction which saves taxpayers money
- Put \$900 million away due to the uncertainty in the federal government
- Record number of vetoes from the Governor
- Record number of pieces of legislation never even heard by a committee
- Put \$782 million in public schools
- Car tax elimination bill went away – need to make localities whole
- Introduced a bill to limit cell phone use for kids under 16

- Local authority preservation – local decisions needs to stay local; blanket approach doesn't work
- Virginia economy is very strong. Although there are some concerns with what's happening in Washington, Virginia is well-prepared.
- Jobs and Economic Development in the region remain a top priority. Our region has the lowest wages in the state.
- Number 1 priority – blue catfish, the #1 threat to the Chesapeake Bay
- Looking at starting a municipal dredge program
- Flooding resiliency – living shorelines bill
- Healthcare – only three healthcare professionals in the General Assembly; two pharmacists in the House (including himself) and one dentist in the Senate.
- Looking at the advanced manufacturing of generic drugs in Virginia
- Eliminated tolls on Coleman Bridge
- Got the funding to replace Norris Bridge; now working on bonding
- DMV Select review was put into the budget as a study, which is due December 1st
- Town of Urbanna Charter change approved

Councilmember Austin requested that Delegate Hodges fight every data center request that wants to come into the area. Delegate Hodges said there are new ones that are self-contained and don't use water.

Councilmember Chowning said the Town's water lines are a major concern. He said we don't get grants because of the Town's per capita income. The County can get help but we can't. Little towns need help dealing with water lines. Delegate Hodges said he has been working on it.

Councilmember Hanson asked how frequently income levels are assessed. Mr. Costin said some are annually, some are based on the census.

Mr. Costin said additional barriers to grants include that the Town is not considered distressed and we do not have a water quality issue.

Ms. Erard requested that Delegate Hodges work on requiring revenue sharing on data centers with smaller localities. She said counties should share the wealth because it affects everyone.

Delegate Hodges said the Middle Peninsula Alliance (MPA) would be reactivating soon and that is where those discussions need to take place. He said he didn't think the General Assembly could do anything; it has to be done within the localities. He said localities are getting very little out of solar facilities. The power goes to Northern Virginia and corporate buyers. His legislation says localities can negotiate with solar and data centers in order to allow them in.

Mr. Costin thanked Delegate Hodges for his assistance with a problem the Town was having with communication with a state agency. He said the issue was resolved within hours after Delegate Hodges got involved.

AGENDA ITEMS 7 & 8. PUBLIC COMMENT & COUNCIL RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

No one signed up to speak during Public Comment.

AGENDA ITEM 9. WORK SESSION MATTERS

9a. Wastewater Treatment Options

Mr. Costin said members of council sought additional information and an opportunity to hear from Mr. Pete Mansfield regarding his concerns over wastewater treatment costs through HRSD. The agenda packet contains communications between Mr. Mansfield and HRSD along with materials providing historical insight into the issue of wastewater treatment options as well as decisions made. These documents include portions of minutes from 1995-1998, communications, and news reports. Mr. Costin also confirmed with the Virginia Department of Health that the entirety of Urbanna Creek is condemned to shellfish harvesting and has been "for some time".

Mr. Costin recommends that in no scenario should the town return to managing wastewater treatment in any form.

Mr. Mansfield addressed Council regarding his concerns over the cost to the Town of HRSD's chosen wastewater treatment methods. He recommends a less expensive drip dispersion wastewater disposal system that would eliminate the dumping of wastewater into Urbanna Creek. He said there is a large residential development just outside Urbanna that has been successfully using a drip dispersion system for many years with no apparent problems. Mr. Mansfield said the Town of Whitestone has a more advanced drip dispersal system which he has seen. Cedar Point also uses a drip dispersal system. He said there are no state or federal oversight regulations for dispersal into the ground like there are for dispersal into bodies of water. Delegate Hodges said he believed there were regulations. Mr. Mansfield said he believed the regulations concerned treated wastewater which would then be pumped into creeks, rivers, etc.

Councilmember Austin asked what happens when a septic service pumps out a septic tank. Mr. Williams said it is taken to a discharge site, possibly an HRSD site. Delegate Hodges said the discharge sites are far away. He is working on trying to get discharge sites in the Middle Peninsula.

Mayor Goldsmith said we would need to convince HRSD to change what they're doing. Otherwise, we would need to buy the system back from them and run it ourselves, which he would never be in favor of.

Mr. Mansfield said the Urbanna treatment plant had never been in spec and HRSD now says it is. He said that is a tremendous accomplishment.

Councilmember Austin made a motion for the Town Administrator to communicate with Hampton Roads Sanitation District asking that they be open to wastewater treatment alternatives that are perhaps less costly and more efficient to keep wastewater out of Urbanna Creek. Councilmember Hanson seconded. The Mayor called for any discussion. Six were in favor and one opposed. Voting was as follows:

Marjorie Austin	In Favor
Larry Chowning	Opposed
Alana Courtney	In Favor
Mayor Bill Goldsmith	In Favor
Merri Hanson	In Favor
Beth Justice	In Favor
Robbie Wilson	In Favor

The motion passed 6-1 w/0 absent.

9b. Drinking Water Funding Workshop

Mr. Costin said much of what he learned at the workshop he and Councilmember Wilson attended today has already been discussed. He said they learned that there were a lot of changes coming out of DC. Funding pots are fewer and smaller. The funds go to places with a public health threat and to distressed communities. He suggested the grant making agencies change the criteria of what they consider distressed. He was told to make an application anyway which would give the agencies the ability to go back to the General Assembly and request more funding.

Mr. Wilson said it was disheartening to learn that everyone was judged by the same criteria. He said there is no way the Town can afford to make the necessary upgrades ourselves. He said it must be a hybrid of multiple grants and loans. He said the Town does not have the staff to perform this work ourselves and suggested looking for a grant to find a third party to do the work.

Mr. Costin said another dilemma is where to start. He said he met with AH Environmental today. This is the company which did the water line mapping. They said the lines were never physically inspected with cameras. The mapping was done using notes and drawings from the past. AH Environmental is going to come back with three proposals – one for camera inspection of the lines; one to address the looping issue; and one to address any lead pipe issues both in the system and to the residences. He said there were programs that would replace lead pipes for homeowners, however these programs do not cover replacing lead pipes in the water system.

Councilmember Chowning said the Town's low water rates are also one of the criteria which preclude us from getting grants.

Councilmember Wilson said having a well-run system seems to hurt us in terms of qualifying for help. Mr. Costin said he expressed in the workshop that it seems like we are being punished for running a good system.

AGENDA ITEM 10. ACTION ITEMS

10a. Resolution 2025-018 – Appointment to the Planning Commission

Mr. Costin said Ms. Caskie has resigned from the Planning Commission due to moving out of the Town. Her term was set to expire on December 31, 2025. Mayor Goldsmith sought an appointee, and Mr. William Powers expressed a willingness to serve.

Councilmember Austin made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-018 appointing Mr. William Powers to the Town of Urbanna Planning Commission for the unexpired portion of a four-year term expiring December 31, 2025. Councilmember Hanson seconded. The Mayor called for any discussion. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion passed 7-0 w/0 absent.

RESOLUTION 2025-018 CITIZEN APPOINTMENT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

WHEREAS there is currently one vacant seat on the Town of Urbanna Planning Commission with an expiration date of December 31, 2025 due to the resignation of Susan Caskie; and

WHEREAS there is currently one citizen who has expressed interest in serving on the Planning Commission – William Powers; and

WHEREAS the Town Council now desires to make an appointment to this vacant position;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of The Town of Urbanna, Virginia that William Powers is appointed to the Town of Urbanna Planning Commission for the unexpired portion of a four-year term expiring December 31, 2025.

DONE this 25th day of September, 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 11. COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS & REQUESTS

Councilmember Austin said the last 2nd Saturday had over 350 people in attendance. She said both food trucks sold out and people had a great time. She thanked people for coming.

Mayor Goldsmith said the MPPDC grant for the marina bridge engineering has been submitted and we should hear something in December.

AGENDA ITEM 12. CLOSED MEETING

Councilmember Hanson made a motion that the Town of Urbanna Town Council convene in Closed Meeting in accordance with Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) of the Code of Virginia to discuss or consider the acquisition of real property for the public purpose of the location of Town Hall, because discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Council. Councilmember Austin seconded. The Mayor called for any discussion. The Mayor called the roll.

Marjorie AustinAye
Larry ChowningAye
Alana Courtney.....Aye
Bill Goldsmith (Mayor)Aye
Merri HansonAye
Beth JusticeAye
Robbie WilsonAye

The motion passed 7-0 w/0 absent.

Councilmember Hanson made a motion to reconvene in open session and certify that only the matter identified in the motion to go into closed meeting was heard, discussed, or considered in accordance with Section 2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia, 1950. Councilmember Austin seconded. The Mayor called the roll.

Marjorie AustinCertify
Larry ChowningCertify
Alana CourneyCertify
Bill Goldsmith (Mayor)Certify
Merri HansonCertify
Beth JusticeCertify
Robbie WilsonCertify

The motion passed 7-0 w/0 absent.

The motion was read by Ms. Erard. Councilmember Austin made a motion to authorize the Mayor to finalize a purchase agreement for a new town hall and authorize him to execute the agreement. Councilmember Justice seconded. The Mayor called for any discussion. The Mayor called the roll.

Marjorie AustinAye
Larry ChowningAye
Alana Courtney.....Aye
Bill Goldsmith (Mayor)Aye
Merri HansonAye
Beth JusticeAye
Robbie WilsonAye

The motion passed 7-0 w/0 absent.

The Mayor read the following statement into the record:

As you know, the Council has been seeking to buy a building to serve as a new town hall. We had hoped to buy this building but unfortunately, that is not to be. In the best interest of the town, we have identified another option that we think will save the town money and meet the needs of the citizens and staff. Council would like to move forward with this option and perform due diligence. Closing will occur before the end of the year and hopefully the town operations' move will occur early next year. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 13. ADJOURN OR RECESS

Councilmember Austin made a motion to adjourn. All were in favor with none opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22pm.

**Respectfully submitted,
Christine H. Branch, Town Clerk**

Approved by Council: October 9, 2025

ATTEST:

Christine H. Branch, Town Clerk