



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes - Draft Town Council Meeting

Monday, April 7, 2025

7:30 PM

Charles Robinson Jr. Town Hall, 127 Center
St. South

Invocation: Councilmember Ray Brill

Mayor Colbert called on Ray Brill, Council Member, Town of Vienna to provide the evening's invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

1. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Sandra Allen, Chuck Anderson, Roy Baldwin, Ray Brill Jr., Jessica Ramakis, Howard J. Springsteen and Linda Colbert

2. Acceptance of the Minutes:

- A. [25-5014](#) Acceptance of the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2025, March 24, 2025, the Work Session Minutes of March 3, 2025, March 15, 2025 and March 17, 2025.

The Regular Council Meeting minutes of February 24, 2025, March 24, 2025, the Work Session Minutes of March 3, 2025, March 15, 2025 and March 17, 2025 were accepted as presented.

A motion was made that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

3. Receipt of petitions and communications from the Public that are not on the Agenda. (Limited to 3 minutes per issue and no formal action can be taken this evening)

4. Reports/Presentations

- A. [25-4993](#) Proclamation for International Dark Sky Week

Mayor Colbert read into the record a proclamation declaring April 21, 2025 - April 28, 2025 as International Dark Sky Week in Vienna VA.

- B. [25-5032](#) Proclamation for Volunteer Recognition Day

Mayor Colbert read into the record a proclamation declaring Tuesday April 22, 2025 as Volunteer Recognition Day. She further noted the annual Volunteer Reception to be held April 22, 2025 at the Volunteer Fire Department beginning at 7:00 PM.

- A. Report and Inquiries of Council Members

Mayor Colbert opened the floor for comments from Council Members.

Council Member Allen thanked residents for sharing their comments with her this past week, especially Ms. Riddle [Nancy] a former TOV employee and Eric and Michael. She specifically sought prayers for all who are going through times of difficulty in their lives.

Council Member Springsteen reminded residents of Taste of Vienna, April 26, 2025 beginning at 11:00 AM at the Vienna Fire Department. He questioned whether the Church Street Vision precluded a crosswalk. He urged Council, if in agreement with year round composting, to consider beginning site work prior to budget passage in June. Finally, Council Member Springsteen commented on the solar powered flashing stop signs seen during a trip to New Jersey.

Council Member Brill remarked on Opening Day for Vienna Little League last Saturday, April 5, 2025 extending appreciation to the 264 volunteer coaches.

Council Member Baldwin commented on the diversity of the Vienna Little League participants and the ceremony that honored resident Donald Ellis, who helped to integrate the sport in 1962.

B. Report of the Town Manager

C. Report of the Mayor

Mayor Colbert remarked on Donald Ellis, the first Black coach of Vienna Little League and also William Carter, who, along with Donald Ellis, were the two Black managers to integrate the sport.

Vienna Youth Soccer held opening day celebrations on Saturday, April 5, 2025. The organization celebrated 50 years in January, 2025.

The Volunteer Town Clean Up Day was held April 5, 2025. Mayor Colbert thanked all who took part.

D. Proposals for Additional Items to the Agenda

E. Closed Session Report

It was moved that the members of the Vienna Town Council be polled to affirm that a Closed Session was held on March 3, 2025 prior to the Work Session and on April 7, 2025 at 6:30 PM in accordance with Virginia Code, Section 2.2-3711, a(1), for discussion or consideration of personnel matters, specifically the interviewing of individuals for consideration of appointment and/or reappointment to Town Boards and Commissions.

It was further moved that the Certification Resolution be adopted in accordance with State Statutes, and that the Town Clerk is authorized to execute the Certification Resolution.

And it was further moved that the Closed Session be continued to later this evening, Monday April 7, 2025 after the Regular meeting in accordance with Virginia Code, Section 2.2-3711, a(3) for discussion or consideration of property acquisition.

Motion, Council Member Ramakis; second, Council Member Springsteen. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved that George Creed be recommended to the Fairfax County Circuit Court for reappointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

It was moved that Joseph Leonard Ignatowski be reappointed to the Town Safety Commission for a two-year term. Said term to be retroactively effective from 2/1/2025 and expire 2/1/2027.

It was moved that Tracy McCarty be reappointed to the Town Business Liaison Committee for a two-year term. Said term to be effective 4/25/2025 and expire 4/25/2027.

It was moved that Catherine Hardman be reappointed to the Pedestrian Advisory Committee for a two-year term. Said term to be effective 5/2/2025 and expire 5/2/2027.

Motion, Council Member Ramakis; second, Council Member Springsteen. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Jessica Ramakis, seconded by Howard J. Springsteen, that this was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

5. Public Hearings

A. [25-4996](#)

Public Hearing for Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operating Budget

Mayor Colbert opened the first Public Hearing at 7:27 PM. All Council Members were present.

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Steven Barlow, Director, Finance, provided a summary of the Item.

The Town Manager's proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget reflects economic conditions expected over the next 12 to 24 months, and the top-ranked initiatives as identified by Council. The general fund budget includes no change in the real estate tax rate of \$0.195 per \$100 of assessed value and increases in salaries and other costs to meet current operational needs.

The proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget totals \$55,472,690 for the fiscal year beginning July 1st, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.

Town Manager Payton thanked Finance Director Barlow and the Budget Committee for their leadership on this Item. A Work Session will be held in June to discuss the budget process. Council is invited to provide input prior to that meeting.

Council Member Baldwin shared questions from residents regarding the water and sewer service charge. Why does it remain at \$40 when the Town received \$10 M in ARPA funds for water and sewer infrastructure? Director Barlow indicated that ARPA funds were used for large-scale capital improvements while the service charge covers day-to-day operations and overhead. Town Manager Payton added that the ARPA funds helped make it possible to keep the planned \$5 increase in service

charges to \$2 for fiscal year 2025-26.

Council Member Ramakis suggested that it would be helpful before the public speaks to clarify the budget process. Council and the public have seen the proposed budget. Tonight is the Public Hearing and Council can consider what is shared by the public, as well as other issues, prior to adoption. How will the process move forward and include input from the public? Director Barlow noted that Staff and Council will listen to the public comments and make any agreed upon adjustments, as long as those changes lower the budget figures. Town Attorney Briglia stated that, according to State Code, proposed budget figures can increase, but by no greater than 1%. If the adjustment increase is greater than 1%, then the proposed budget must be advertised.

Council Member Allen stated that she hoped the budget process was addressing the budget crisis that might happen and the impact in future years. Property valuations are just another form of taxing; with the recent increases would the Town be able to lower the tax rate in the future? Director Barlow responded that the Town carries 18% in reserves of next years proposed budget. Those funds are in place should revenues go down. The Town also has the revenue stabilization fund of \$1M on top of the 18%, earning interest. Those funds are not touched and not included in the budget or day-to-day operations. They exist for times of economic downturn, that's how the Town prepares for the next 12-14 months. As far as tariffs, Staff is working closely with Public Works regarding the vehicle replacement program to replace only the most essential vehicles. The Town is still seeing growth but do expect that to come down in the next 12-24 months.

Council Member Allen indicated that she is attempting to determine if the Town can provide assistance to lower income residents. Should predictions come true even the more stable position will be impacted and she wants to assure that the lower/middle classes will have some type of remedy. Council Member Allen noted that there is no evidence of this in the proposed budget; there are no budget cuts based on the current economic conditions. To be conservative, she questioned if the finance director would advise Council to lower the rate. Director Barlow stated that he would not make such a recommendation because to do so would require cutting staff or lowering services; both of which would be a Council decision. Council Member Allen questioned why this could not be done given the available 2023-24 reserves. Director Barlow stated that it is important to have those funds available for a potential economic downturn. As of now the assessments have risen and that provides the tax funding the Town will receive over the next year.

Town Manager Payton reminded Council that the tax rate has been lowered several times since 2011 and that once lowered it has never been raised. If the Council chooses to lower the tax rate now, in order to present a balanced budget, expenses must be lowered at an equal rate.

With no additional comments from Council, Mayor Colbert opened the floor for comments from the Public.

Matt DiFiore, 207 Owaissa Ct. SE

I'd like to commend Council for working through the proposed budget as well as Staff for articulating their vision for their respective departments. That said, there are a couple of minor issues you may want to address.

There were no hyperlinks in the budget book. I did not attend the meetings but did listen to most of the sessions. It would have helped to have these available.

Three minute comments on a \$55 M budget doesn't get very far. I send occasional

emails to Council so there is at least a written record of the issues I've brought forward.

Not being able to talk in Work Sessions is another issue. Sometimes it is good to have outsiders whispering in your ear so you can ask better questions.

Does the Town keep inventory records of what we have and/or what we have sold?

The budget reflected many shifts in spending but often times it was difficult for a resident to follow the money trail (i.e. Parks and Recreation's salary changes due to positions moved into separate departments).

Does the Town make use of Fairfax County capabilities beyond property assessments? The County has GIS staff. While the Town has some capability, I wonder if it is used to its full potential. Since most of the Town tax revenue goes to Fairfax County hopefully we are getting County services that can augment or supplement what needs to be done as a Council.

With no additional speakers, Mayor Colbert called for a motion to close the public hearing at 8:24 PM.

Motion, Council Member Ramakis; second, Council Member Springsteen. Motion carried unanimously.

The following represents comments from Council.

- Cannot leave Public Hearing open for further written comment due to deadlines;
 - Any additional budget changes can be made between this meeting and Council vote on May 19, 2025; Adoption can be pushed to June, 2025;
 - Council has latitude to lower tax rate to desired level;
 - Adding year round composting (\$25,000) would require matching dollar cuts from other budget items;
 - Code does not address home composting; Practice is discouraged due to potential for attracting pests;
 - Should find ways to be more conservative with budget; Reduce or eliminate salary increases; Salary reduction would negatively impact morale;
- Mayor Colbert called for an immediate recess at 8:35 PM. Council discussion reconvened at 8:37 PM.
- Town works to build and retain good employees; Compensation level has allowed for strong retention.

With no additional discussion, Mayor Colbert called for a motion on the Item.

It was moved that the Town Clerk be directed to advertise a Notice of Intent to Adopt the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget at the May 19, 2025, Town Council meeting, following Town Council's consideration of the real estate tax rate.

Motion, Council Member Springsteen; second, Council Member Brill. Motion carried in a 6-1 vote.

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to come down in the next 12-24 months.

Council Member Allen indicated that she is attempting to determine if the Town can provide assistance to lower income residents. Should predictions come true even the more stable position will be impacted and she wants to assure that the lower/middle classes will have some type of remedy. Council Member Allen noted that there is no evidence of this in the proposed budget; there are no budget cuts based on the current economic conditions. To be conservative, she questioned if the finance director would advise Council to lower the rate. Director Barlow stated that he would not make such a recommendation because to do so would require cutting staff or lowering services; both of which would be a Council decision. Council Member Allen questioned why this could not be done given the available 2023-24 reserves. Director Barlow stated that it is important to have those funds available for a potential economic downturn. As of now the assessments have risen and that provides the tax funding the Town will receive over the next year.

A motion was made by Ramakis, seconded by Baldwin, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

Nay: 1 - Allen

B. [25-4995](#)

Public Hearing for Fiscal Year 2025-26 Water and Sewer Rates

Mayor Colbert called the second closed session to order at 8:42 PM. All Council were present.

Steven Barlow, Director, Finance, presented the Item for consideration.

The Town of Vienna is proposing an increase to the volumetric water and sewer rates of 7.25%, and a 5% increase to the quarterly service charge from \$40 to \$42. The main factors that are driving the proposed rate increases are:

- * Wholesale water purchase agreement (9% increase)
- * Sewer treatment agreement (Estimated 10% increase)
- * Infrastructure, maintenance, and capital improvements
- * Operational cost increases (Inflationary)

Water availability fees will also rise in line with Fairfax County Water Authority's rates.

Residents in Northern Virginia facing challenges with utility payments have access to a variety of assistance programs provided by nonprofits, religious organizations and community services. Two resources available to Vienna residents include the Community for Helping Others (CHO) and the Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS).

Mayor Colbert expressed appreciation for efforts to assure safe water in the Town of Vienna.

Council Member Anderson suggested that it might be appropriate to change the name of "service charge" to one that would be more explanatory. This is not truly a service charge, it is a fixed capital maintenance fee, plus staff salaries, billing posting, etc.

Director Barlow indicated that the title could be easily changed in the budget but it would first require changes to the Town Code.

Council Member Allen questioned what water treatment was provided by the Town. Brad Baer, Director, Public Works replied that treatment is conducted by the wholesaler (Fairfax Water) and regular testing is conducted by the Town. Any failed test would require the Town to take the necessary corrective action.

Council Member Allen stated that the economy is uncertain and questioned what financial assistance was available for lower income residents. Director Barlow stated that there are currently no programs offered through the Town of Vienna to reduce or offset water and sewer bills other than an interest free payment plan. Any such relief programs would be created through Town Council action. Town Manager Payton reminded Council that a financial assistance program must be offset elsewhere in the budget which could increase rates for all residents.

With no additional remarks from Council, Mayor Colbert opened the floor for comment from the public.

Jack Torok, 207 Park St., Unit D

I live in a four-unit condominium. I would like to read aloud the email I sent to Council. I believe the service charge for our building is excessive. The fee for our four unit building is roughly \$300/quarter. I understand the fee is based on meter size and ours is based on that of a commercial property. I feel this is unfair as the typical Town resident pays \$40. Our four resident building should pay the sum of what four Town residents would pay, or roughly \$160/quarter. We are not a commercial property; our water usage is not excessive – it certainly equates to four Town residences. Our larger meter and related services, which accommodates the four units and the four fire extinguisher and sprinkler systems, should not be a basis for excessive charges. We should be billed fairly for our water use. I checked the Fairfax County figures and last year quarterly service charges were \$15.60. For a multi-family unit it was \$42.90 per quarter. That is roughly double what a single-family unit pays. In Vienna we pay nearly seven times more than a single family resident. I don't believe service charges are for capital improvements, rather the charge is to cover administrative costs, meters, etc. All I am asking is that we pay our fair share.

Jason Goff, 436 Park St., NE

I have questions regarding the water sump pump meter program for proper sewage measurement. Currently the Town of Vienna requires a water sewer submeter measuring 5/8" X 5/8" with a touchpad to capture accurate quarterly sewer measurements. Why isn't there a public option to buy a sewer submeter that meets the specifications of the Town? The last FY25 product quote and fee was \$1830, to be collected by the Town. I am curious as to the price breakdown for the submeter part and usage of the remainder of the fee. I understand I buy the submeter but must hire additional labor for installation. I understand that potential sewer savings depends upon usage. Does the Town of Vienna or Staff have an estimate of what can be expected in savings per 1,000 gallon should a resident choose to make the larger upfront sewer submeter investment? Thank you.

Matt DiFiore, 207 Owaissa Ct., SE

I believe I saw something about transfers from the water and sewer fund to the general fund. Why did this happen?

Director Barlow stated that this indirect transfer, supported by the 2023 independent consultant, accounts for Staff time, invoices, payroll, Town Manager and Town Attorney time, etc. This figure is static at 1%. Town Manager Payton added that it represents an industry standard. Town Attorney Briglia further noted that failure to

complete this transfer would suggest that the General Fund is subsidizing the water rate, which should stand on its own.

With no additional comment from Council, Mayor Colbert called for a motion to close the public hearing at 9:05 PM.

*Motion, Council Member Springsteen; second, Council Member Baldwin.
Motion carried unanimously.*

It was moved to approve water and sewer rates and fees for FY2025-26 as presented. I further move that the Town Clerk be directed to advertise a Notice of Intent to Adopt water and sewer rates and fees for FY2025-26 at the May 19, 2025, meeting.

Motion, Council Member Springsteen; second, Council Member Baldwin. Motion carried in a 6-1 vote.

**A motion was made by Springsteen, seconded by Baldwin, that the Action Item be approved.
The motion carried by the following vote:**

Aye: 6 - Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

Nay: 1 - Allen

6. Consent Agenda

A motion was made to accept the Consent Agenda, Items A and B, as presented.

Motion, Council Member Springsteen; second, Council Member Baldwin. Motion carried unanimously.

A. [25-4997](#)

Approval Request to Award Water System Valuation and Condition Assessment
..Body

DATE(S) OF PRIOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THIS ISSUE:

N/A

EXPLANATION AND SUMMARY:

The Department of Finance and the Department of Public Works (DPW) is seeking Town Council approval to award a professional services and valuation contract to Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc., in the amount of \$141,000 for the water system valuation and condition assessment.

This contract was competed through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP 25-10) process, conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA) of the Code of Virginia. The RFP process was carried out in a transparent, fair, and competitive manner, ensuring full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards set forth under the VPPA.

The purpose of this project is to provide a condition assessment, recommendations for capital improvements, and establish a valuation of the Town's water system. The

condition assessment of the water system infrastructure is being completed to provide Finance and DPW with information to inform the operations, maintenance, and capital investments for the system. The valuation is being completed to provide the Town Council with credible and independent findings to ascertain what the Town's water system value is. The valuation will include the existing water system facilities, infrastructure, real estate, support vehicles, equipment, buildings, billing infrastructure, personnel training, and certifications.

The water system valuation and condition assessment project is funded by water and sewer fees, and will be charged out of the Water and Sewer Fund.

Approval is recommended to be made in the amount of \$141,000 to Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc.

Next Steps: If approved, award the contract and begin the water system valuation and condition assessment.

Expected Completion Time Frame: Estimated completion for the valuation and condition assessment is 4 to 5 weeks.

Strategic Plan Initiative: *Fiscally Responsible, Environmentally Sustainable*

Departmental Recommendation: Recommend approval.

Finance Recommendation: Recommend approval.

Purchasing Recommendation: Recommend approval.

Town Attorney Recommendation: The Town has solicited Requests for Proposals and complied with the Virginia Public Procurement Act for the proposed Water System Valuation. The Town Council may award the proposed contract in its discretion.

Town Manager's Recommendation: I recommend the Town Council approve the water system valuation and condition assessment contract, as presented.

Cost and Financing: \$141,000

Project Account: N/A

GL Account: 500-501-0000-50111-43101

Prior Funding Approval: N/A

Decision Needed by This date: April 7, 2025

PROPOSED/SUGGESTED MOTION

A motion was made by Springsteen, seconded by Anderson, that the Action Item be approved on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

- B. [25-4960](#)** Intent to Adopt Amendments to Section. 18-407. - Swimming Pools and Outdoor Hot Tubs

A motion was made that the Action Item be approved on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

7. Regular Business

- A. [25-4998](#)** Request for approval of a lot line adjustment, followed by two lot consolidations, resulting in the conversion of six small lots at 130 Wilmar Place NW into two equally sized buildable lots.

Mayor Colbert called on Andrea West, Zoning Administrator, to present the Item for Council consideration.

With no discussion on the Item, Mayor Colbert called for a motion.

It was moved to approve to the Town Council for the proposed:

- 1. Adjustment of the lot line between lots 63 and 64;*
- 2. Consolidation of lots, 61, 62, and the adjusted lot 63 to create a single parcel of 9,450 square feet; and,*
- 3. Consolidation of the adjusted lot 64, lot 65, and lot known as "part of 66" to create a second parcel of 9,450 square feet; on the parcels known as 130 Wilmar Place NW, map numbers 0384 03 0061 and 0384 03 0063, in the RS-10 Residential - Single-Unit, 10,000 sq. ft. zone.*

Motion, Council Member Ramakis; second, Council Member Springsteen. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Ramakis, seconded by Springsteen, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

- B. [25-5031](#)** Second Closed Session

*Mayor Colbert called for a recess into Closed Session at 9:26 PM.
Council reconvened at 9:28 PM.*

It was moved that a second closed session was held on April 7, 2025 after close of the Regular Council Meeting in accordance with Virginia Code, Section 2.2-3711, a(3), for discussion or consideration of property acquisition.

It was further moved that the Certification Resolution be adopted in accordance with State Statutes, and that the Town Clerk is authorized to execute the Certification Resolution.

And it was further moved that the Closed Session be continued to Monday April 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM in accordance with Virginia Code, Section 2.2-3711, a(1) for discussion or consideration of personnel matters, specifically the interviewing of individuals for consideration of appointment and/or reappointment to Town Boards and Commissions.

Motion, Council Member Ramakis; second, Council Member Baldwin. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Ramakis, seconded by Anderson, that the Action Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

8. Meeting Adjournment

With no further business, Mayor Colbert called for a motion to adjourn at 9:30 PM. Motion, Council Member Springsteen.

A motion was made by Howard J. Springsteen that this was adjourned.. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Allen, Anderson, Baldwin, Brill, Ramakis, Springsteen and Colbert

THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6304, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.