



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft Town Council Meeting

Monday, May 4, 2026

7:30 PM

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

Invocation: Rev. Dean Miller, Christ Church Vienna

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

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. All Council Members were present.

Present: 7 - Council Member Chuck Anderson, Council Member Roy Baldwin, Council Member Doug Francis, Council Member Dann Nash, Council Member Jessica Ramakis, Council Member Howard J. Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert

2. Acceptance of the Minutes:

Council Member Baldwin proposed a clarification to more accurately reflect the action taken during the public hearing, specifically identifying the motion directing advertisement of intent to adopt the FY 2026–27 budget following consideration of the real estate tax rate. With that clarification noted, the minutes were approved as amended.

A. [26-5573](#) Acceptance of the Town Council Draft Minutes of April 6, 2026

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)

The Mayor opened the floor for public comment. No speakers came forward, and the public comment period was closed.

4. Reports/Presentations

A. Report and Inquiries of Council Members

Council Member Nash addressed the tone of recent public communications received by Council, stating that while feedback is welcomed and encouraged, some messages have included unnecessarily harsh or inflammatory language. He specifically referenced use of the term “slush fund,” noting that it carries implications of misconduct or corruption, and asked that residents continue to engage respectfully so that dialogue remains constructive and productive.

Council Member Ramakis recognized Public Service Recognition Week and expressed appreciation for Town staff, emphasizing their professionalism and dedication in maintaining Vienna as a high-quality community. She noted that the Town’s success is driven not only by residents but also by the work of staff across all departments and encouraged continued recognition of their contributions.

Council Member Baldwin highlighted upcoming community events, including a May 17 appearance by a historical re-enactor portraying Colonel Charles Broadwater, and encouraged residents to participate. He also referenced the Town calendar and noted the importance of community engagement and participation in local programs and events.

Council Member Springsteen provided an update on staffing within the Town's forestry program, noting that positions appear to now be fully staffed, including the urban forester and supporting personnel. He expressed appreciation for progress in this area and emphasized the importance of maintaining and managing the Town's tree canopy.

B. Report of the Town Manager

C. Report of the Mayor

The Mayor shared observations regarding strong engagement among youth and families in the community, highlighting recent visits from scouting groups to Town Hall and participation in civic learning activities. She also referenced recent community events, including the Vienna Elementary School Fun Run and student-led projects, noting the positive involvement of young residents.

A. [26-5569](#) 2026 Small Business and Economic Development week Proclamation

The Mayor issued a proclamation recognizing Small Business and Economic Development Week (May 3–9, 2026), highlighting the importance of small businesses to the Town's economy and quality of life. The proclamation encouraged residents to support local businesses and recognized the role of economic development professionals in fostering community prosperity.

D. Proposals for Additional Items to the Agenda

E. Closed Session Report

Council Member Ramakis made the following motion, seconded by Council Member Nash, "I move that the members of the Vienna Town Council be polled to affirm that a Closed Session was held on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in accordance with State Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for consideration of personnel matters, specifically, the discussion of appointment and /or re-appointment to Town Boards and Commissions. And "I further move that the Certification Resolution be adopted in accordance with State Statutes, and that the Town Clerk is authorized to execute the Certification Resolution. And I further move that the Closed Session be continued to Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:30 pm in accordance with State Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for consideration of personnel matters, specifically, the discussion of appointment and/or re-appointment of Town Boards and Commissions." The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Ramakis further moved, seconded by Council Member Baldwin, "I move to re-appoint Patrick Carney to the Pedestrian Advisory Committee for a two-year term. Said term to begin May 22, 2026 and expire May 22, 2028." This motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Hearings

Present: 7 - Council Member Chuck Anderson, Council Member Roy Baldwin, Council Member Doug Francis, Council Member Dann Nash, Council Member Jessica Ramakis, Council Member Howard J. Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert

A. [26-5555](#) Public Hearing on the Planning Commission's Draft 2026 Comprehensive Plan (10 mins)

Staff presented the Planning Commission's Draft 2026 Comprehensive Plan, stating that it reflects more than two years of work and includes input from boards and commissions, staff, residents, and the business community. Staff explained that the Comprehensive Plan serves as a long-term policy guide for how the Town grows and preserves community character and encouraged additional public input, including leaving the record open for written comments.

Patty Esswein (105 Wilmar Place NW), "I'm the Chairperson of the Town of Vienna's Conservation and Sustainability Commission, and I live at 105 Wilmar Place Northwest here in Vienna. I'm here tonight representing the CSC to share that in October 2025, the members of the CSC voted unanimously to pursue the rezoning of the Robinson and Beulah Road properties as parks. For the record, the Beulah Road property is currently zoned Residential 12.5, permitting single-family lots of 12,500 square feet, and the Robinson property is zoned Residential 10, permitting single-family lots of 10,000 square feet. The CSC recommends and requests that the Town rezone both properties as parkland as a first step in preserving this valuable green space. Further, in February 2026, the CSC voted unanimously to support a detailed proposal for developing the Robinson property as a park, and we look forward to discussing park proposals in greater detail with the Town Council. You may recall Mark Twain's famous quote, 'Buy land, they're not making it anymore.' Vienna already owns the Beulah Road and Robinson properties, and we have a wonderful opportunity to preserve those properties for future generations as parks, even as the Town faces pressures of urbanization and greater density in the future. Thank you."

No additional speakers appeared. Council Member Baldwin moved to close the public hearing and hold the record open for written input until 9:00 a.m. on May 11, 2026. The motion was seconded by Council Member Springsteen and passed unanimously.

Council discussed next steps, including additional meetings scheduled for May 18 and June 1 to review the document and provide direction, with potential adoption at a future meeting. Members encouraged residents to review the plan and submit comments during the open comment period.

"I move to close the public hearing for the Planning Commission's Draft 2026 Comprehensive Plan and hold the record open for written input until May 11, 2026, at 9 a.m."

AND/OR

Other action deemed necessary by the Town Council.

6. Regular Business

A. [26-5571](#) Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Tax Rate (5 mins)

Director of Finance Steven Barlow presented the continuation of Council's

discussion regarding the proposed FY 2026–27 real estate tax rate. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to determine the maximum rate to be advertised prior to adoption and recommended advertising the full proposed rate of \$0.195 per \$100 of assessed value, noting that Council could later reduce the rate but could not increase it once advertised. Mayor Colbert stated that several Council Members had expressed interest in lowering the rate and asked the Town Manager to provide recommendations on how that could be accomplished without reducing Town services.

Town Manager Mercury Payton recommended reducing the rate by one-quarter cent through increased use of prior-year surplus, explaining that the proposed budget currently included \$400,000 in use of prior-year surplus and that increasing that amount to \$600,000 would allow for a quarter-cent reduction while maintaining existing service levels. Finance Director Barlow explained that the Town currently maintains approximately \$6 million in unassigned fund balance, representing roughly 18% of annual expenditures, which remains above Government Finance Officers Association best-practice recommendations. Staff stated that the Town has historically budgeted use of prior-year surplus while still ending most fiscal years with positive balances and emphasized that the proposed approach would still represent the lowest planned use of prior-year surplus since 2011.

Council Members discussed additional options for lowering the rate further. Council Member Anderson expressed support for exploring a half-cent reduction and requested additional analysis of alternative budget options, including use of reserve funds, adjustments to compensation increases, delaying implementation of salary changes, increasing service charges, or shifting certain operating expenses into the Capital Improvement Program. Council Member Nash stated that he believed a half-cent reduction could potentially be achieved through reserve adjustments and supported continued discussion. Council Member Springsteen expressed support for reducing the rate through use of surplus funds rather than reducing reserve contributions, while Council Member Ramakis stated she supported advertising a rate of \$0.1925 per \$100 of assessed value and hoped further reductions could still be considered before final adoption.

Council Members also discussed broader fiscal considerations, including employee compensation, overtime costs, long-term debt obligations, reserve levels, and maintaining Town service levels. Staff explained that several budget adjustments had already been implemented during the fiscal year, including a temporary hiring freeze and reductions in planned use of prior-year surplus, which improved the Town's projected year-end financial position following earlier concerns regarding deficits and snowstorm-related overtime costs. Council Member Baldwin stated that while residents deserved the lowest rate possible, reductions should not come at the expense of service quality, and Council Member Nash expressed support for maintaining the proposed 3% employee compensation adjustment, noting the strong performance and collaboration of Town staff across departments.

Following discussion, Council Member Nash moved to advertise a proposed real estate tax rate of \$0.1925 per \$100 of assessed value, with the understanding that Council could continue discussing additional reductions prior to final adoption. The motion included direction for the Town Clerk to advertise notice of intent to adopt the tax rate at the May 18, 2026 Town Council meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

“I move to approve the fiscal year 2026-27 proposed real estate tax rate at \$0.1925 per \$100 of assessed value, and the bank net capital rate, residential utility tax rate, and

commercial utility tax rate as presented. I further move that the Town clerk be directed to advertise a Notice of Intent to Adopt at the May 18, 2026 Town Council meeting.”

Aye: 7 - Council Member Anderson, Council Member Baldwin, Council Member Francis, Council Member Nash, Council Member Ramakis, Council Member Springsteen and Mayor Colbert

7. Meeting Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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.

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