



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft Town Council Work Session

Monday, May 11, 2026

7:00 PM

Vienna Police Department Community Room,
215 Center St. South

1. Regular Business

*The Town Council Work Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
All Council Members were present.*

A. [26-5565](#)

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Guidance (15 Minute Staff Presentation)

Finance Director Steven Barlow presented CIP guidance for planning year 2027, noting the purpose of the discussion was to review planning assumptions and project priorities and provide staff direction ahead of the June 8th CIP Work Session, where a proposed CIP for fiscal years 2028 and 2030 will be presented. Formal adoption is scheduled for July 6th. Town Manager Mercury Payton opened by recognizing Director Barlow's work and the Town's Triple-A bond rating and clean audit record.

Director Barlow reviewed the Town's existing debt schedule, clarifying that vehicle debt for general fund vehicles would be moved from the Debt Service Fund to the General Fund for transparency, reducing apparent Meals Tax-supported debt by approximately \$1.2 million. The 2020 bond issuance, structured with lower early principal payments due to COVID-19 uncertainty, carries accelerated debt service beginning in FY2026. The 2012 and 2014 obligations totaling approximately \$800,000 will roll off in FY2028. The Town projects a Debt Service Fund reserve of approximately \$6.5 million at fiscal year-end June 30. Director Barlow reported that Meals Tax gross receipts for January through March 2026 showed flat year-over-year growth of approximately 0.24%, with January up 8% but February and March each down 2–3%. Town Manager Payton noted the data suggests no meaningful decline in dining activity. Council Member Anderson asked about the current Capital Improvement Fund balance; Director Barlow explained that bond proceeds are held in Fund 300 and used to pay for approved projects, separate from the Debt Service Fund which holds Meals Tax revenues for debt payments.

Council discussion covered several areas. Council Member Springsteen raised concern about the proposed deferral of all vehicle purchases for the next fiscal year, noting lead times of one to two years for heavy equipment and police vehicles and the operational risk of a full-year deferral. On water and sewer, the current CIP reflects replacement of one mile of line per year, increasing to two miles beginning with the 2028 bond issuance. Council Member Springsteen advocated for three miles per year given the age of the system. Director Brad Baer indicated he has proposed ramping to approximately three miles per year across the 2028, 2030, and 2032 bond cycles subject to affordability, and will provide detailed data at the June 8th Work Session.

Mayor Colbert proposed that the CIP include resources for the Robinson property — a three-quarter-acre parcel acquired approximately five years ago — for a park honoring former Town Officials Maud and Charlie Robinson, referencing two

conceptual designs from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Council discussion reflected a range of views, including consideration of workforce housing and the historic Moorefield House relocation as alternative uses. Planning and Zoning Director David Levy confirmed the property is currently zoned single-family residential and that the Comprehensive Plan update beginning the following week would be the appropriate forum for land use decisions.

The Town Council discussed the Meals Tax rate at length. Mayor Colbert expressed a desire to consider returning the rate to 3%, citing the original rationale for the increase to 4% as funding for an Aquatics and Fitness Facility. Director Barlow confirmed existing debt obligations can be serviced under either rate and offered to prepare both 3% and 4% CIP models for the June 8th Work Session. Some Council Members expressed support for maintaining the 4% rate, noting that approximately 96% of Meals Tax payers are non-residents and that the Town is not uncompetitive with neighboring jurisdictions. Council Member Ramakis indicated she is open to seeing a 3% scenario modeled. Council Member Baldwin proposed removing the Aquatics and Fitness Facility line and adjusting the \$4 million property acquisition for tourism line from the 2028 bond year, in light of approximately \$3 million in federal funding already appropriated to CIP with an additional \$2 million pending. Mayor Colbert announced that 444 Maple Avenue has submitted its building permit application with the Town and Fairfax County. Council Member Anderson requested that June 8th materials be organized by department to allow top-down evaluation of capital needs; Town Manager Payton agreed and will distribute draft materials by email in advance.

B. [26-5556](#)

Preparation of the 2026 Town-wide Survey (10 Minute Staff Presentation)

Director of Public Information Karen Thayer presented an overview of the 2026 National Community Survey, which measures resident attitudes about local government services and quality of life and benchmarks results against comparable communities nationally. The most recent survey, conducted in fall 2023, drew 928 responses from a probability-based sample of 3,000 households — a 31% response rate. The next survey is planned for fall 2026, with results expected in late December 2026 or early January 2027. A working draft of custom questions is needed by approximately Memorial Day for the survey consultant to finalize materials in time.

Director Thayer presented the three custom questions from the 2023 survey for Council consideration. Council discussion addressed several themes. Council Member Springsteen suggested adding a water and sewer infrastructure question. Council Member Anderson suggested prefacing the priority question with language referencing limited town funds to frame responses within fiscal constraints. Council Member Baldwin proposed a response option indicating willingness to support a tax increase as a way of connecting priorities to costs, and also suggested a question about desired future uses for the Annex property. Council Member Ramakis suggested narrowing the priority question to focus on incremental investments rather than baseline service obligations. Director Thayer noted she would consult with the survey consultant on framing and will work with Economic Development Director Nicole Toulouse on potentially broadening the Maple Avenue corridor question to encompass other commercial areas. Council Members were asked to email topic area preferences so a working draft can be consolidated.

C. [26-5577](#)

Improving Wireless Coverage in Vienna (15 Minute Staff Presentation)

Planning and Zoning Director David Levy and Economic Development Director Nicole Toulouse presented research on wireless coverage gaps in Vienna and

regulatory options available to the Town, informed by staff comparison of Vienna's regulations to neighboring jurisdictions and discussions with AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, and Milestone Towers. Industry representatives present included Patrick Reardon of T-Mobile, Garrett McGuire of AT&T, and Matt Forkus of Milestone Towers.

Director Levy summarized Vienna's current framework: all new wireless installations require Conditional Use Permits, maximum antenna heights range from approximately 44 to 54 feet depending on zone — the lowest among jurisdictions surveyed — and the Town's CUP requirement for sub-50-foot facilities is likely inconsistent with state law requiring administrative approval at that height. He also referenced HB 277, recently signed into law, whose sponsor cited a Vienna application in floor remarks as illustrative of delays the legislation was intended to remedy. Town Attorney Steve Briglia provided historical context on the 1996 Telecommunications Act and noted that the Town's Comprehensive Plan has designated preferred cell locations since 2010, yet the 12 Dominion high-voltage transmission towers — the tallest structures in Town — have received zero applications. He suggested the process for co-location on existing commercial structures could be streamlined through codified design standards.

The three industry representatives described barriers to deployment. The T-Mobile representative acknowledged coverage needs in the northwestern part of Town and near the Navy Federal campus. The AT&T representative described an active Maple Avenue application requiring multiple revision cycles following BAR work sessions, characterizing the iterative process as a significant barrier. The Milestone Towers representative stated that the BAR has historically been a non-starter for new tower applications and that Milestone is instead pursuing a 150-foot monopole at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Fairfax County to address coverage gaps near the corporate park and Navy Federal campus.

Council discussion reflected broad support for action. Council Member Francis urged the Council to amend the Town Code for administrative approval of installations under 50 feet with codified design standards, citing FCC shot-clock requirements and coverage gaps at the Northside Property Yard. Council Member Anderson expressed willingness to consider taller installations given that coverage is now a public health and safety matter, and suggested exploring Town-owned land as potential tower sites. Council Member Baldwin expressed support for streamlining the process but asked the Council to carefully weigh the BAR's record before modifying its role, noting that his review of BAR minutes showed no formal cell tower application appeared on any agenda in 2025 or 2026 and that the October 2025 interaction was a work session, not a formal application. Director Levy and Town Attorney Briglia agreed to prepare a draft zoning code amendment language for Council consideration, subject to Planning Commission referral and public hearing.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Before adjourning, Mayor Colbert announced that Charles Broadwater Day will be held the following Sunday at 2:00 p.m. at the corner of Tapawingo and Frederick, featuring bands, musket demonstrations, colonial reenactors, and refreshments in recognition of the Nation's 250th anniversary.

With no further business, the Work Session was adjourned at 10:28 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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