

Minutes of the New Market
Town Council Meeting
Monday, June 16, 2025
6:30 pm

The New Market Town Council met in the Council Chambers of Arthur L. Hildreth, Jr. Municipal Building on Monday, June 16th, 2025, with the following members present: Mayor Peter Hughes, Peg Harkness, Bob King, Daryl Watkins, Janice Hannah, Scott Wymer, and Jon Henry.

Mayor Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and established a quorum with four members present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison. Mayor Hughes welcomed all visitors and guests.

Approval of the Agenda:-

Mr. Watkins moved to approve the agenda as presented, and Mr. King seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was carried out with a unanimous 6-0 voice vote.

Mrs. Harkness	Aye	Mr. Watkins	Aye
Mr. King	Aye	Mrs. Hannah	Aye
Mr. Henry	Aye	Mr. Wymer	Aye

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Wymer moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the minutes from May 19th, 2025, of the New Market Town Council, and the minutes from the May 29th, 2025, Special Called Meeting of the New Market Town Council, along with the financial statements for May 2025.

Mrs. Hannah seconded the motion, with no further discussion, the motion was carried out with a unanimous roll call vote of 6-0.

Mrs. Harkness	Aye	Mr. Watkins	Aye
Mr. King	Aye	Mrs. Hannah	Aye
Mr. Henry	Aye	Mr. Wymer	Aye

Public Hearing: none

Citizen Comments and Petitions:

Mr. James "Jimmy" Shifflett, owner of the Southern Kitchen Restaurant at 9576 S. Congress Street, addressed the council about the proposed increase to the meals and sales tax. He stated that he spoke with each council member individually and appreciated their time and willingness to speak with him, along with the Town Manager. He stated he had spoken with several merchants about the increase in meals and sales tax, and the

consensus he found was that no one was aware of it, and that it was too soon to pass along to our patrons of New Market. Mr. Shifflett stated that he felt that passing yet another tax to town citizens and consumers will only make it harder than it is already. He noted that water rates are increasing as well. This will only discourage people from going out and eat, as it is a luxury to do even now. Mr. Shifflett requested that the council look at this and take it into consideration. He recognized that time is important in passing the budget but would like them to consider it.

Mr. Garrison stated that Mr. Keven Walker, from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, emailed a comment to be read aloud, as he would not be able to attend the meeting. Mr. Garrison read all the contents of the email from Mr. Walker. A copy of the email will be filed with the minutes.

Chief Jeff Mongold, of New Market Fire and Rescue Department, presented his quarterly report. He congratulated Mr. Henry on his appointment with the council. He reported that there were 241 total calls. He also reported that call volume is going up. They continue their duty nights, and training, as well as combining training with Mt. Jackson Fire and Rescue. He attended the Chiefs and Captains meeting, and they have started the process of hiring a new fire chief. They started creating the hiring committee. New Market Fire and Rescue continue with their monthly bingo, which is going well. Their Fall Fling will be coming up in September. For the quarter, they had 285 duty hours, 102 training hours, and 100 fundraising hours. Chief Mongold went over the events they attended to include the Apple Blossom parade where the Tower Ladder won 1st place. He stated they finally got the portable radios that they have been needing for the past two years. The Public Education at Endless Caverns Campground, which raised \$1,399. They enjoyed their time at the Rebels Meet and Greet. Mr. King asked who paid for the portable radios. Chief Mongold reported that Shenandoah County paid for them. He stated that the county has been good to them, and he worked with Ms. Weaver, she runs the EOC, and they were able to find the money at the end of the budget cycle. Mrs. Harkness thanked Chief Mongold for the progress that has been seen since these reports have been given. He appreciated the gratitude, and they are working hard. He notes that the budget request has went unanswered but realized that some of that may have been his fault. He encouraged the council to meet with him if they have questions. He explained the cost of everything has doubled, but the money they bring is the same. A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

Committee Reports: none

Staff Reports:

1. Public Works Department Monthly Report – Mr. J. D. Fadley

Mr. Fadley gave a Power Point presentation. The public works department repaired a water leak at 316 West Old Cross Road. The collection system had a backup in the line at the Stirewalt Pump Station. It was a five-gallon bucket in the line, and unsure how it got in there. They rebuilt the mounting system and replaced the movie screen on the stage. The park was mulched. The public works crew continue with regular monthly maintenance. The water department installed cell modems between the water plant and SVA well to replace radio communications. They have started flushing hydrants and

99 working on the certification of consumer confidence report. They cleaned and checked
100 the pressure transducers on raw and finished water tanks at the plant. They are working
101 on lead and copper notifications and certifications for 2025. They also replaced a seal and
102 impeller for the big pool at the park. Mr. Garrison extended thanks to the public works
103 staff member, Mike Simmons, for making the new podium. A copy of the presentation is
104 on file with the minutes.

105 106 **2. Planning Department Monthly Report – Ms. Summer Barden**

107 Ms. Barden reported that there were two sign permits at the beginning of Village
108 at Smith Creek, one is a temporary sign, and the other one is a welcome sign for the
109 subdivision. There was a zoning permit for a new house at 9997 South Congress Street. A
110 copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

111 112 **3. Public Safety Monthly Report – Chief Chris Rinker**

113 Chief Rinker gave a Power Point presentation. He reported that there were 415
114 total calls for service for the month of May with a total of 1723 for the year. There were
115 178 extra patrols, and nine (9) foot patrols. He reported on some notable events such as
116 staff completing the annual firearms qualifications and firearms training. The police
117 department provided a police presence during Jammin' Foods Fest and participated in the
118 New Market Rebel's Meet the Rebel's event. Chief Rinker and Sgt. Smoot attended
119 leadership training at the regional police academy. For the month of May, crashes were
120 up some, but other numbers look about average. Mr. Henry asked if everything has been
121 cleared up with the wide load that came through. Chief Rinker gave a brief overview of
122 the incident with the wide load that was routed through town. Through good
123 communication with the driver, he was able to get through the intersection. However, he
124 hit the power line at Exxon. Dominion Power came quickly to repair the damage. Chief
125 Rinker noted that there are double stop signs now at the four-way stop on John Sevier and
126 East Old Cross to help deter drivers from missing the stop. A copy of the presentation is
127 on file with the minutes.

128 129 **4. Events & Marketing Monthly Report – Ms. Savannah Frazier**

130 Ms. Savannah Frazier presented a power point presentation. Attended a dinner
131 with Shenandoah County as they hosted VTC for a fam tour. This dinner was well
132 attended and nice to see familiar faces and meet new individuals. She stated she attended
133 a virtual VA exploring Main Street Interchange meeting and the RevUp team met for a
134 recap and start brainstorming for 2026. She attended the Meet the Rebels event and had a
135 ribbon cutting with Nate Rockey at Edward Jones. Both events were well attended.
136 Unfortunately, due to the rain both the movie night and the first Cross Roads Music Fest
137 were cancelled. She is looking to rescheduled Cross Roads Music Fest. She gave an
138 update on the upcoming events. A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

139 140 141 142 **Action Items:**

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144 1. Discussion and consideration of Ordinance #135- Adoption of State Law
145 Mayor Hughes asked for an overview of this ordinance. Mr. Jason Ham, the Town
146 Attorney, explained that he did not have a summary available, however, if we do not
147 approve this ordinance our Town Code will not be compliant with state laws.

Mr. King made a motion to adopt Ordinance #135 as presented. Mrs. Harkness seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion was passed with the following 6-0 roll call vote.

Mrs. Harkness	Aye	Mr. Watkins	Aye
Mr. King	Aye	Mrs. Hannah	Aye
Mr. Henry	Aye	Mr. Wymer	Aye

2. Discussion and consideration of Ordinance #136- Imposing an increase in both In-Town and Out-of-Town Water and Sewer User Rates and Connection Fees.

Mr. Garrison stated that these increases are the same as proposed at the budget work sessions, as well as the public hearing. Mrs. Harkness made a motion to adopt Ordinance #136 as presented. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion. Mr. Henry stated he was glad to see the proposed increase in tap fees. With no further discussion the motion was passed with the following 6-0 roll call vote.

Mrs. Harkness	Aye	Mr. Watkins	Aye
Mr. King	Aye	Mrs. Hannah	Aye
Mr. Henry	Aye	Mr. Wymer	Aye

3. Discussion and consideration of Ordinance #137-Adoption of Annual Budget, Rates/Fees and Taxes for FY25-26.

Mr. Garrison stated if this ordinance is adopted it would appropriate the Annual Budget Rates/Fees and Taxes for FY25-26, and if council has any questions, he would be happy to answer. He stated that this budget is the same as presented at the public hearing. Mrs. Hannah asked if the council can amend the budget after it is approved. Mr. Garrison explained that yes, the budget can be amended moving forward. He explained that if the inquiry is due to the taxes and fees, then that can get complicated especially with real estate and personal property standpoint. He read over the increases that are proposed. Mr. Wymer asked when the last time we raised the rates. Mr. Garrison explained that the transient occupancy tax was two years ago, meals tax was 2019, trash was roughly two years ago, and cigarette tax has not been changed in several years. Mr. Henry inquired if the state has started to allow taxing for vaping products. Mr. Garrison stated that he has not seen anything stating that they have. He explained that this has been a topic of conversation for many localities. Mrs. Harkness stated that a lot of time is put into creating the budget, and no one wants to increase the taxes or put a burden on the citizens, and we try to balance the budget the best we can. We don't do it lightly, and we take our responsibility seriously.

Mrs. Harkness made a motion to adopted Ordinance #137. Mr. King seconded the motion. Mr. Henry asked what needs to be done to follow up on the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation's offer to tax their admission. Mr. Garrison responded that the state code does allow taxing admissions for several categories. It states it should not charge more than 10% of the admission amount. An ordinance would have to be drafted for that fee. The knowledge of daily attendance and admission fees of our local museums would help staff to provide the potential revenue to council. Mr. King pointed out that

real estate taxes are not being raised. Mr. Henry asked about an overlay for a culinary district. Mr. Garrison stated that he has not investigated this yet, but staff would be willing to look more into that topic. With no further discussion the motion was passed with the following 5 Ayes, 1 Abstain, 0 Nays roll call vote.

Mrs. Harkness	Aye	Mr. Watkins	Aye
Mr. King	Aye	Mrs. Hannah	Aye
Mr. Henry	Abstain	Mr. Wymer	Aye

4. Discussion and consideration of the Department of Historic Resources request to place a historic preservation and open-space easement on Tax Map Parcel 103-A-72E.

Ms. Barden noted that all council members had the letter of request, as well as images to show the area of request. Ms. Barden read the letter from the Department of Historic Resources requesting a letter from the Council stating that a conservation easement on Tax Map Parcel 103-A-72E is in alignment with the Town's comprehensive plan. Ms. Barden used the images that outlined the parcel in question, to explain the current owners' use, and the adjoining properties. Ms. Barden stated that the parcel is in the B2 district, and although it is vacant there have been commercial inquiries in the past. Mr. King asked for the pros and cons of the conservation easement. Ms. Barden stated that it is not currently within the battlefield protected land, per our comprehensive plan. However, the property next to it that is owned by VMI is protected. The con is in the B2 district. Mr. Garrison expanded on to state that the land is already owned by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation. He discussed the current properties that have conservation easements. He did state that effectively it is conserved due to the owner of the property, however, if you feel it does fall into the comprehensive plan. Mr. King asked if the conservation easement is in place, would it ever be able to be brought back into the B2 district. Mr. Garrison explained it would be in perpetuity. Mrs. Harkness stated if they own it then it is a moot point. Mr. Wymer noted that if the conservation easement were placed, and the Battlefields foundation were to sell the property, the easement is still maintained. However, if the easement is not placed and they were to sell the property, the land would still be in the B2 district.

Mrs. Harkness made a motion to send a letter be sent to the Department of Historic Resources stating that it complies with our comprehensive plans and Mr. Henry seconded the motion. Mr. King stated he felt that he didn't have an option. Mr. Henry asked if the American Battlefield Trust have any other easements with the Town or will this be the first. Mr. Garrison stated he is not sure. Mr. Wymer stated it would still be an easement regardless of who owns it. Mr. Henry stated that he Googled them, the American Battlefield Trust, that they own 60,000 acres that they manage, while the Shenandoah Battlefield Foundation owns 7,000 acres. He wondered if they were a bigger entity interested in tourism here in town. Mrs. Hannah felt that it makes sense as it would add to the walking trail they are proposing, in which she is interested in knowing a time frame. Mr. Wymer inquired about the walking trail and a timeframe, as it has been years since they approached council about this, and there has been no movement. Mr. Henry stated he believes that they are trying to time it with the walking trail to Dollar General. Mr. Wymer stated that it could years, or never, for them to start the project. Mr. Henry brought up the fact that the Town has also talked about a walking trail to the Dollar

246 General and that has not been accomplished yet, so it would not behoove them to ask.
247 Mrs. Hannah stated that it has to do with the history and promises of the projects that
248 were supposed to be done and nothing coming to fruition. Mr. Henry stated that it is a
249 tough pill for citizens when projects such as the walking trail to Dollar General have not
250 been completed. Mr. Watkins asked if it is in our best interest for the easement and if it
251 will negatively impact us. Discussion about the negatives if the Town does not approve
252 this. Mr. Hughes asked for the vote.

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254	Mrs. Harkness	Aye	Mr. Watkins	No
255	Mr. King	No	Mrs. Hannah	Aye
256	Mr. Henry	Aye	Mr. Wymer	No

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258 With a 3-3 tie, the mayor is the tie breaking vote. Mayor Hughes voted No. The
259 motion did not pass.

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261 **Mayor's Comments:**

262 Mayor Hughes stated he appreciates the conversation about the taxes. He stated the need
263 for the revenue is genuine, and they do the best they can during the budget process and
264 balancing it out.

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266 **Council Comments:**

267 Mr. Watkins thanked the public works department for cleaning up the park after the rain.

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269 Mrs. Hannah wanted to commend Mr. Shifflett on the way he approached the council
270 members about the meals tax increase. She commended Chief Mongold on the progress
271 that has been shown at the New Market Fire and Rescue Department.

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273 Mr. Henry commended the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation for offering to be
274 taxed on their admission prices. VMI cancelling the reenactment and Rat Parade has
275 made a negative impact on revenues.

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277 Mr. King would be interested in learning more on how to be able to implement the
278 admission taxes.

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280 **Staff Comments:**

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284 **Closed Session:**

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288 **Adjournment:**


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290 With no further business to discuss, at 7:36 p.m. Mr. King made a motion to
291 adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Harkness seconded the motion, and with no further
292 discussion the motion passed on a unanimous 6-0 voice vote.


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N. Garrison, Town Clerk



Peter Hughes, Mayor