

**Minutes of the New Market
Town Council Work Session
Monday, April 15th, 2025
4:00 p.m.**

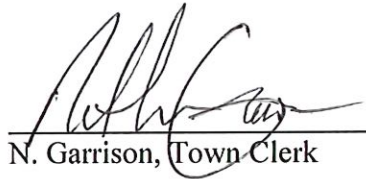
The New Market Town Council met in the Council Chambers of the Arthur L. Hildreth, Jr., Municipal Building on Monday, April 15th, 2025, with the following members present: Mayor Peter Hughes, Peggy Harkness, Larry Bompiani, Janice Hannah and Bob King. Council member Daryl Watkins, and Scott Wymer were absent.


Mayor Hughes opened the meeting at 4:02 p.m. and acknowledged the agenda topic was the discussion of the FY25-26 draft budget. He asked Mr. Garrison to give a run down of the budget process and steps. After Mr. Garrison explained the process, Mr. Hughes asked Mr. Garrison to start discussions using the budget summary that included the general fund revenue and expenses, general fund capital expenditure, and the water/sewer revenue and expenses. Mr. Garrison explained that this year's budget was tight due to several aspects and no longer utilizing ARPA funds as a revenue source. Staff had to look at increasing revenue and present a few tax increases. There is a proposed increase to meal tax and transient occupancy tax by 1%. Another consideration is cigarette tax to increase it to .40 per pack. The state regulates the maximum which is .40 per pack. The surrounding areas are at the state max already. Mr. Garrison noted that the proposed FY25-26 budget reflects the use of unassigned capital reserves to balance the budget. For other revenues there is a proposed increase of \$1.00 for trash collection, which increases the amount to \$21.00 per household, and an increase of \$1.00 to the extra trash can fee, which will increase it to \$4.00 per trash can each month. This increase is due to the collection service fees. Mr. Garrison also stated that there will be a proposed pool rate increase brought to the council at the next town council meeting. Under the general fund expenses there is an increase to fringe benefits due to insurance coverage. The ShenGo bus transportation project increased by \$749 from prior years. Mr. Garrison stated that some of the categories such as audit fees are projected to increase. Mr. King inquired about the decrease in streetlights, and how we oversee that. Mr. Garrison explained that we are responsible for electricity for streetlights. During the cultural and economic development budget, the fire department's current annual donation along with their current request for assistance with the ladder tower maintenance with a stokes basket holder was deliberated. Mr. Garrison talked about the budget projects such as the Rt. 11 Sidewalk project, along with the Community Center improvements, and pool and park improvements. Mr. King asked if this proposed budget impacts on the new roof for the community center, and Mr. Garrison stated that it doesn't keep us from getting this completed this year. One of the items requested for Events and Marketing is a refrigerated trailer. Ms. Frazier and Mr. Garrison explained the reasons for this request, and that it is increasing in cost to rent one for the events. Mr. King inquired about the cost of the mural downtown, and Ms. Frazier and Mr. Garrison explained that it is an estimated amount and is probably more than needed, but this being the first mural staff were unsure. He noted that staff will be diligent with the funding for the mural and try to come in at a lower cost. The council brought up the cost of the printed newsletter and inquired if this service is needed. The council and staff discussed several different options to decrease the cost of the printed newsletters and other ways to communicate with the citizens. Mr. Garrison took a moment to give a list of the items that staff will work on per council's comments during the meeting such as increasing postage, fire department

funds, and printed newsletter options. As the discussion moved into the Enterprise Funds, Mr. Garrison stated that the budget proposes a 23% increase in the base water rate. Additionally, a 5% increase in usage of over 1,000 gallons is proposed for water sewer rates. He explained that the increase is due to preparing for the water tank project loan. There is a proposal to increase the tap fees. The tap fees are proposed to increase \$3,000 for In-Town connections. He noted that we are still very low in connection fee cost compared to other localities. There were some increases in water/sewer salaries, fringe benefits and for supplies such as chemicals, utilities and other supplies.

Prior to wrapping up, Mrs. Green proposed changing from a 10% penalty fee to a flat \$10 fee for not paying the vehicle license fee. Mr. Garrison asked the council if they had any other changes or questions. Mr. Garrison stated he had the list of minor changes that have been requested by the council, and asked if he could proceed with scheduling a public hearing after the changes are made. Council members did not object. Council members thanked Mr. Garrison for the budget summary, as it made it easier to follow.

At 5:40 p.m., Mr. Hughes adjourned the work session meeting.



N. Garrison, Town Clerk

Mayor Peter Hughes