

Minutes of the New Market  
Town Council Meeting  
Monday, July 21st, 2025  
6:30 pm

The New Market Town Council met in the Council Chambers of Arthur L. Hildreth, Jr. Municipal Building on Monday, July 21, 2025, with the following members present: Mayor Peter Hughes, Peg Harkness, Bob King, Jon Henry, Daryl Watkins, Janice Hannah, and Scott Wymer.

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

**Approval of the Agenda:**

Mrs. Harkness 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 vote.

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

**Consent Agenda:**

Mr. Garrison stated there is a correction that needs to be made for the minutes of the Special Called Joint Public Hearing on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, as they do not reflect the correct code section, and it should state Section 70-152(j)(7). Mr. Hughes noted that a motion is needed to approve the minutes with noted changes as well as the June financials, and Mr. Watkins stated so moved. With a motion on the floor, Mr. Hughes inquired about a second and Mrs. Hannah seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was carried out with a unanimous 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:**

Mrs. Carol Hughes, of 277 Periwinkle Lane, addressed the council as a member of the Independence Day Celebration Committee. She wanted to commend and to thank the people that worked during the event. She thanked the public works department for their help. She stated that committee members meet a few times throughout the year, but the

50 public works department does all the heavy lifting. She thanked the police department for  
51 their presence and a special thank you to Ms. Frazier for her role in planning the event.

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53 Mrs. Karen Whetzel, of Shenandoah Drive, thanked the council for their hard work and  
54 time being a public servant. She also thanked the town staff. Mrs. Whetzel gave a brief  
55 note of last summer children's program and congratulated Mr. Jon Henry on making the  
56 15 Under 50 in the Northern Virginia Daily.

57  
58 Mr. Tom Gilmore, Chief Land Preservation Officer at the American Battlefield Trust in  
59 D.C., noted he was happy to see that Southern Kitchen was still in business. He wanted to  
60 address the council about a piece of property associated with the Battle of New Market.  
61 He explained that the American Battlefield Trust preserves properties around the United  
62 States, not only Civil War, but the Revolutionary War as well. They have saved 60,000  
63 acres to date. Mr. Gilmore referred to the property known as Shirley's Hill and explained  
64 that the American Battlefield Trust and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation  
65 were working together to secure a grant to save this property. He brought up the letter the  
66 town received from the Department of Historic Resources to confirm that the  
67 preservation of this property was in alignment with the town's comprehensive plan. He  
68 explained this is a normal part of process. He apologized for not being at the meeting last  
69 month when the letter was addressed during the monthly meeting. He was unaware that it  
70 was to be brought up and would have been able to answer any questions that council may  
71 have had. He wanted to ask that the council reconsider the request and their position on  
72 the preservation of Shirley's Hill property.

73  
74 Mayor Hughes responded to Mr. Gilmore by explaining his thoughts on the issues with  
75 the preservation of the property on Shirley's Hill. Mr. Hughes explained that the whole  
76 town of New Market in and of itself is apart of the battle and any part of all the properties  
77 could be considered historic for that reason. Mr. Hughes explained that the parcel in  
78 question is zoned commercial and that is something that the town does not have a lot of.  
79 He went on to say that without any further information he voted the way he felt was in  
80 the best interest of New Market.

81  
82 Mr. King thanked Mr. Gilmore for coming and explained that he agreed with Mr.  
83 Hughes, and that he too voted against it as it is zoned commercial. Mr. King also  
84 referenced the overlay map that the Department of Historic Resources provided with the  
85 letter. He reiterated the fact that the map showed practically all of New Market as part of  
86 the battlefield. Mr. King stated that we can't pick the town apart, and we need more  
87 businesses not more battlefields.

88  
89 Mr. Watkins also explained that he too felt we need more business and that is why he  
90 voted no.

91  
92 Mr. Wymer stated that his issue with the conservation easement of land is that the state of  
93 Virginia will own that property and that land can never be sold or built on and nothing  
94 can be done. This is taking town land and giving it to the state to control. Mr. Wymer  
95 said he doesn't believe that any town land should be given to the state. He stated that  
96 there were two parcels in town that already have conservation easements within town.  
97 One of which no longer has a house on it and the other one is waiting to be renovated. In

98 a hundred years, if someone wanted to build something they couldn't because of the  
99 easement. He said he doesn't feel that the state of Virginia should own town land.

100  
101 Mr. Gilmore addressed the map that Mr. King mentioned, and how it became to be. He  
102 explained that his organization is presented with thousands of acres, and they must decide  
103 which lands can be preserved and restored in a way that it can be incorporated with a trail  
104 system and creating a destination site. Their overall goal is to have a destination site that  
105 is a fully interpreted and restored battlefield. He spoke to the economic drivers that help  
106 the town such as visitors staying at hotels and eating in local restaurants.

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108 Mr. Wymer noted that he doesn't see how a trail will be put on the parsonage property  
109 where a house was torn down and the land is just going to just sit there.

110  
111 Mr. Hughes commented that the town has done a great deal to help preserve the historic  
112 context of the town and understand the importance of it, and we believe it helps increase  
113 tourism. We also believe history is a huge part of our town. He stated that the council has  
114 acted several times in favor of easements that have been requested. He wanted to make  
115 sure that Mr. Gilmore understood that the council is not against historical preservation.

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117 Mrs. Harkness stated that she did vote in favor of the preservation; however, she knows  
118 that Civil War tourism is not on the upswing. She stated she does have concerns overall,  
119 and we need to understand where it is going. She went on to explain that the town has a  
120 lot of land that is already preserved, and that is an overall concern for the council.

121  
122 Mr. Henry stated that he voted for it also as he felt it was a win-win for the town as that  
123 land is useless and doesn't see a business paying the cost to level the land to make it  
124 ADA complaint. He stated he looks forward to the trail and hopes it connects with the  
125 downtown park. He referred to the lot that the town purchased a few years ago. He stated  
126 the Battlefield Foundation beat us at putting cannons on their field, while the town has  
127 done nothing but mow the property that was purchased. He stated that he is sad that they  
128 are being so hard on the Battlefield over this, as it is the pot calling the kettle black. He  
129 noted that the town has not renovated our downtown park area and has not put in a  
130 sidewalk in over a decade. He encouraged Mr. Gilmore to get a comment from VMI the  
131 next time they put in a request, as they have one of the biggest protected properties in  
132 town.

133  
134 Mr. Hughes gave one last suggestion that in the future to give a scope in the request of  
135 what a fair portion of New Market can and should be dedicated to both historic purpose  
136 and used by the town for commerce reasons.

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138 Mr. Gilmore stated he appreciated the comments and understands the concerns, and  
139 explained again they felt that Shirley's Hill would be a great asset due to its location.

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141 Mr. Hughes and council thanked Mr. Gilmore for coming and giving more information  
142 but for also listening to the council's concerns.

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144 **Committee Reports: none**

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**Staff Reports:**

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

Mr. Fadley gave a Power Point presentation. He reported that the public works department repaired a water leak at 9448 Congress Street, 154 Confederate Street, and at 9497 Congress Street. They worked on a sewer back up at 385 West Old Cross Road. The public works crew have been busy rebuilding the wooden exercise equipment in the park, and regrading and repairing the walking trail. They have trimmed trees out of the roadways. They continue to complete their regular monthly maintenance routines. The water department had some electrical issues at Well #1. They replaced the pump disconnect and installed the new service disconnect. They completed full service on the main air compressor at the Memcor plant. The quarterly calibrations of instrumentation were completed, as well as an upgrade to the well control system to cellular modem control. They worked on a bad frequency drive at the North Fork Pump station. The drive is obsolete, and they are figuring out the repair options. Certified lead and copper and CCR reports are done and turned into VDH. He reported that he and Mr. Griggs attended training on VDH's new 2-hour notice requirement. He gave the pool attendance information.

Mr. Hughes thanked Mr. Fadley for their work and noted that they have been very busy. A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

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

Ms. Barden presented a power point presentation. She had 15 permits this past month to include zoning permits for a carport, deck and ramp, fences, a shed, 9 house permits and a sign permit. A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

**3. Public Safety Monthly Report – Sgt. George Smoot**

Sgt. Smoot gave a Power Point presentation. Sgt. Smoot reported there were 409 total calls for service, for a total of 2130 for the year. There were 176 extra patrols, and 6 foot patrols. He gave an overview of the types of calls that were answered over the past month and stated that June was a pretty busy month. He introduced the new officer, Jesse DeMay. He explained that Officer DeMay has over 10 years of experience and several certifications. He talked about the wide load incident on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, that hit utility lines. He did note that the truck was out of its permitted route. This was not related to a similar incident in June. Sgt. Smoot explained that Chief Rinker is in contact with the DMV about the oversized load permits. He thanked the public works department for their help during that incident.

Mr. Hughes asked about the increase in numbers versus 2024. Sgt. Smoot explained that some of the increase was due to one big incident.

Mrs. Harkness asked if the powerline incident caused anyone to be out of service, and if the powerlines can be raised. Sgt. Smoot stated that the power line company stated the height of the lines is acceptable, and Chief Rinker is talking with the DMV about permit approvals. Mr. Garrison stated that the second incident was due to a driver being outside of his permitted route. A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

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

Ms. Savannah Frazier presented a power point presentation. She reported that the June movie night had a good turnout. They had their Block Party on Congress Street. It was hot but fun and well attended. Cross Roads Music Fest was cancelled due to the rain. The Independence Day Celebration was a huge success, and she thanked the Independence Day Celebration committee, law enforcement, volunteers, public works director, and vendors. She gave an overview of the upcoming events.

Mr. Hughes congratulated Ms. Frazier on the huge success of the Independence Day Celebration. A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.

**Action Items:**

The first action item was the discussion and consideration of Ordinance 138-Remote Participation Policy

Mr. Garrison explained that this ordinance is done annually to allow remote participation during meetings, and it outlines the rules and requirements for such attendance.

Mrs. Harkness moved to approve Ordinance 138-Remote Participation Policy, and Mr. Watkins seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion 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

The second action item was the discussion and consideration of Ordinance 139-Amending Code Sec. 2-31.

Mr. Garrison presented Ordinance 139 and explained that this amended the town's code to state that the council will state the time and place of council meeting by resolution to be aligned with the Virginia state code.

Mr. King made a motion to approve Ordinance 139 and Mr. Wymer seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion 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

The third action item was the discussion and consideration of Resolution 257-Regarding Meeting Times

Mr. Garrison explained that this resolution outlines the regular meeting times of the Town Council, which is the third Monday of each month. He noted that the only change addresses holidays that fall on a Monday meeting. In the past if a holiday lands on a meeting day, the meeting was moved to the next day, Tuesday. This resolution changes the day to Wednesday.

Mr. Watkins moved to approve Resolution 257, and Mr. Wymer seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion 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

The last action item was the discussion and consideration of a text amendment to Article XIV. Supplementary District Regulations Section 70-152(j)(7) to allow for attached canopy banners.

Ms. Barden presented a power point to show the text amendment, along with pictures of the requested banners and their placement. She stated that this information was presented at the joint public hearing and that the Planning Commission recommended the Town Council move forward with the text amendment.

Mrs. Hannah moved to approve the text amendment to Article XIV. Supplementary District Regulations, Section 70-152(j)(7), and Mr. King seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion 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

#### Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Hughes wanted to say again that the Independence Day Celebration was great.

#### Council Comments:

Mrs. Harkness thanked the public works department for their work, as she knows all of rain is creating more work.

Mr. King wanted to make note of the new one-page newsletter that is being inserted into the water bills monthly. He wanted citizens to know that the town is saving \$9,000 per year by doing it this way.

Mr. Henry inquired about the property purchased on Congress Street, and what is the plan for that lot. Mr. Garrison explained that yes the town purchased it last July and the intent is to create a downtown park space for events, and an envisioning of a pavilion. At this time the park plan has not been completed. Mr. Garrison said it has not been worked on yet, due to the other projects going on at this time.

Mrs. Hannah wanted to encourage everyone to remain open-minded and to keep our eyes on what is important and to listen to the town's people that are trying to move New Market forward both in beautification and economically. We need to set our own thoughts and feelings aside and listen to what is being requested of us.

**Staff Comments:**

Ms. Barden announced that she received the easement from Holtzman for the sidewalk project. She will be working on getting the signatures needed, and the project will move on to the next steps.

Mr. Garrison gave thanks to staff for all the work being done. He announced there will be a special election and the deadline to be on the ballot is August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Closed Session:**

Mrs. Harkness moved to go into a closed session as authorized by section 2.2-3711(A)(29) of the state code to discuss the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. The subject matter of the meeting is the Water System Improvement Project. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hannah. With no further discussion, the motion was carried out with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

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

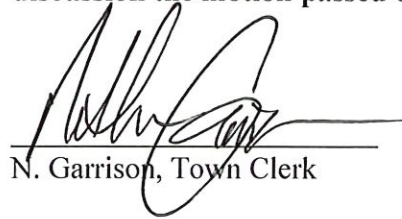
Closed session commenced at 7:23 p.m.

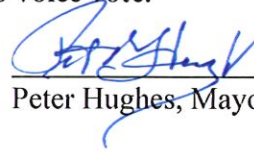
Mr. Watkins made a motion to return from Closed Session at 8:33 p.m. and read aloud the following Certification Resolution: With respect to the just-concluded Closed Session and to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under The Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Town Council. Mr. Henry seconded the motion which passed on 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

**Adjournment:**

341 With no further business to discuss, at 8:33 p.m. Mr. Henry made a motion  
342 to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wymer seconded the motion, with no further  
343 discussion the motion passed on a unanimous 6-0 voice vote.  
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N. Garrison, Town Clerk

  
Peter Hughes, Mayor