



Marina  
757-787-1930



P.O. Box 242  
Wachapreague, VA 23480



Town Office  
757-787-7117

**Charles Elliott, Mayor**

**Town Council Present:**

Sandie Puchalski, Vice Mayor  
Robert Hipple  
Glenn Schagelin  
Craig L. Baker  
Aileen Joeckel  
Bob Bilicki

Clerk: Susan Springer

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
July 10, 2025  
VIMS SEASIDE HALL**

**Town Council Meeting**

Meeting began at 7:00 pm

**I. Mayor Charles Elliott called the meeting to order.**

**II. Councilman Glenn Schagelin led the prayer.**

**III. Charles Elliott led the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**IV. Public Comment**

Mayor Elliott opened the floor for public comment, requesting everyone state their name for the record and keep their comment to a three minute limit.

New resident Deborah McCormick expressed concern about the visibility of street signs, and the lack of pavement where her driveway meets the street, noting excessive water ponding. Councilman Robert Hipple offered to look into both and contact VDOT if necessary.

Resident Steve Joseph spoke, giving thanks to former Mayor Janci and Councilman Bob Bilicki for the success in bringing sewer to the Town and completing Phase I. He summarized Phase II so far, noting the Council approved Award of Bid to Grizzly in February, under the caveat that bond concerns would be satisfactorily addressed. He noted a contract had not yet been given and explained at an Owner's meeting the owners also voted unanimously to award to Grizzly, further noting the Mayor was in attendance at that meeting and did not speak. Mr. Joseph reviewed the events of July 13<sup>th</sup>, when the Mayor emailed a notice to Grizzly that the Award of Bid was rescinded. He noted this was done without notice to Project Manager and Councilman Bob Bilicki and while Councilman Bilicki was out of town. **End of 3 minutes.** Email correspondence between property owners supporting this is attached at the end of these minutes.

Resident Bob Means spoke and expressed concern that the decision to pull the award was done behind closed doors rather than at a public meeting, he further questioned if the Mayor had the authority to pull the award without a public meeting and questioned where the Attorney was who recommended this action. He questioned how the whole project could be killed in this manner.

He also expressed concern for the rumor that someone in Exmore was not pleased with the job Grizzly did there. He stated the Mayor should have that person present to identify themselves, where they live and their reasons for circulating this. **End of 3 minutes.**

Resident Linda Jones stated she attended the meeting to listen and expressed her hope that everyone who wanted sewer was able to get it. She also stated 3 years ago when talk of sewer first started the residential home in the commercial district where told it would be cost free. She expressed concern over the changing number of properties included in Phase 2, noting it went from 22-23 down to 17. She further expressed concern that the Accomack County Health Dept. be involved all aspects of Phase 2. Councilman Bob Bilicki reported that he has been in contact with the County Health Dept and was able to receive the Health Dept. site plan of record for each property in Phase 2, which he share with the Contractor of record. **End of 3 minutes.** Copy of the Jones' concerns attached to the end of these meeting minutes.

Ed Roach chose to have Mayor Elliot read his statement. In his letter Ed Roach stated he did not want to assign blame to anyone, however he recalled at the very beginning of Phase 1 he was approached by the previous administration on his interest in sewer, at which time he was told it would be at no cost. **End of 3 minutes.**

Business owner Chris Wardius reported that the cleaning was completed on the Wachapreague sign at the NE corner of Route 13 and 180 as well as the new panel on the bottom for the Wachapreague Inn, adding that next up was the new lighting. Mr. Wardius was applauded and thanked for his work.

Resident Darlene Carrico spoke that shortly after buying her house 8 years ago she was approached about sewer hook up and told it would be free, to which she responded she was interested if it was in fact free. She also questioned how 6 commercial residents could have been skipped over in Phase 1 and stated her belief that those in the commercial district should be taken care of first.

Resident Alena Elliot spoke on Phase I when all commercial and working waterfront properties were promised sewer at no cost and how now, without a council vote, money is being re-allocated from the commercial and waterfront properties left out in Phase I to cover noncommercial residents in Phase 2. She further stated in review the individual estimates from the Contractor of record she noticed gaps and questioned why an owner's meeting was scheduled during daytime owners when those who work could not attend. She expressed further concern over the design for the Carrico and Jones properties which show the sewer line being installed to close to the well requiring an engineered redesign to include extensions, she also expressed concern over property owners not being able to contact the Contractor of record to discuss concerns directly with them, and felt they were told to just sign the contract and return it with full payment. She further expressed concern that most contracts are returned with half payment, with payment completed at the end of the project and also expressed concern over the \$2.5% interest fee if not paid in full within 30 of completion, and the lack of clarity on pricing. **End of 3 minutes.** Town Clerk Springer has requested a copy of her notes for attachment to these meeting minutes.

## **V. Approval of Minutes**

Town Council Meeting – June 12, 2025

Councilman Bob Bilicki motioned to approve, Vice Mayor Puchalski 2<sup>nd</sup>, all voted in favor.

## **VI. Review of Financial Report**

Town of Wachapreague Financials – June 2025 incomplete (due to fiscal year end)

Vice Mayor Puchalski motioned to move the vote to next Council meeting, Councilman Schagelin 2<sup>nd</sup>, all voted in favor

Port of Wachapreague – June 2025 incomplete (due to fiscal year year)

Councilman Joeckel motioned to move the vote to the next Council meeting, Councilman Bilicki 2<sup>nd</sup>,

all voted in favor.

## **VII. Unfinished Business**

Councilman Bob Bilicki noted the amount of residents present to participate in the discussion of HRSD Sewer Phase 2 and suggested a motion to amend the Agenda to place HRSD Sewer Phase 2 before Maintenance. Councilman Bilicki motioned to place HRSD Sewer Phase 2 before Maintenance.

Vice Mayor Puchalski 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.

All in favor.

**D. HRSD** – By Majority vote on April 9, 2026, Mayor Elliott's comments are struck from the meeting minutes due to lack of paper or digital back of his presentation, as agreed upon by Mayor Elliott.

**A. Maintenance** – Councilman Schagelin reported all equipment was working well and there was nothing to report.

**B. Powell Park** – Vice Mayor Puchalski the Tennis Court repair is two thirds complete and will be finish in another month.

**C. Seaside Park** – Councilman Baker reported that now that the Carnival season is over he will be meeting with Sean Fate and sever other Fire Dept. members to review the extending of the parking lot across from the Fire Dept.

**E. Derelict Properties** – Question was asked about 7 South St and if they had been fined, Mayor Elliott responded they would receive 3 letters before being fined. Town Clerk Springer reminded the Mayor the 1<sup>st</sup> letter sent was returned by the Post Office undeliverable. That address was taken from Tax records. Town Clerk Springer suggested perhaps the post the notice on the property.

**F. Marina** – Vice Mayor Puchalski reported the Marina is doing well, a few minor electrical issues that US Electric will be coming on site to repair. She reported on one boat slip that only placed a \$50 deposit and did not submit insurance information.

**G. Tourism** – Councilman Joekel reported on the Artisan show planned this Saturday for the Presbyterian Church. She reported she is working on the Micro business grant and should have it submitted late July. She explained a tourism grant was in the works for events although the parameters are not available yet but remains hopeful perhaps it could be used for a Christmas event. On the Christmas event Councilman Joekel suggested some extra garland for the Town lights, Fire Chief Sean Fate offered the building at the end of Custis St to disassemble the lights and add new garland, and suggested upgrading the wreaths as well. Seat pointed out that the Town owned the decorations, the Fire Dept. just stored them in their building during off season.

**H. Floodplain Administration/CRS Coordinator/RAFT** – Councilman Bilicki reported on the award of a \$50,000 grant from Gov. Younkin from the CFPF fund, for a Flood Resiliency Plan, noting that due to the size of the Town, may be exempt from VA Public Procurement requirements. Once complete it would be presented to the Town Council prior to seeking public funding for implementation. Councilman Bilicki reported on the award of a \$10,000 grant from the VA Energy Resilience fund, for communications in the event of a 12 hour or more loss of a electricity, something he is working with Fire Dept. Chief Sean Fate on. Lastly he distributed and key points regarding the Mayor's actions without Town Council authorization and requested it be incorporated into Minutes.

**I. Town Beautification** – Councilman Joekel had nothing new to report.

**J. Safety/Security** – Councilman Schagelin reported no new issues have arisen.

**K. Historic District** – A preliminary draft of the nomination form was completed by the DHR contractors and submitted to the DHR for review and revision. We originally planned for an August Public Hearing and submission to the State Board for a vote at the September 2025 meeting. Since then I have received notice that there is not sufficient time to do the aforementioned and submit in September. The primary revisions related to bolstering the justification for the district's period of significance and building out of Section 8, the nominations Narrative of State of Significance, to address the chosen Criteria and Areas of Significance. These additions will be important in ensuring the nomination is likely to be approved by DHR's Board (and eventually, our National Park Service reviewer), and suggested a new target of November for a public hearing and submission to State Board for a vote at the December 2025 meeting. My response was to take whatever time is needed to provide the best possibility for an affirming vote.

**L. Streets and Drainage** – Councilman Hipple reported VDOT has repaired 3 areas in the last 4 weeks. He reported the 5 or so lots with drainage issues at Church and Custis have been improved and now drain in 24 hours, where before it took 5 days. He noted there has not been much improvement in the area of Powellton and Paul and he and Randy Powell are of the opinion a CCTV is needed to observe the condition and possible obstruction of the culverts. VDOT has offered to use pressure hose to clear the culverts, however many are old terra cotta and may not be in shape to withstand the pressure, so Tving them first would show whether that was a possibility or not. The Bayview ditch is still in the works to be contracted out and funded by the County and gaining temporary access to the abutting properties is currently under way. Councilman Hipple was thanks for his time and dedication to this project. Council Hipple also reported he has contacted VDOT about painting the no parking zone at the corner of Main and Brooklyn (General Store) with yellow curb paint. He is waiting to hear back.

**M. Planning and Zoning Commission** – Planning Commission President Jim Bell reported on the Quarterly Meeting held July 1, 2025 and the Work Session held immediately after the regular meeting. He reported the updated comprehensive plan is in final stages of review, targeting Mid August for a public hearing, and submission to Town Council for approval at the September Town Council Meeting.

**Technology Committee** - Committee Chair Jim Bell reported on the recent progress made: acquired ownership of Squarespace accounts from Full Circle Designs at no cost to the Town. Contracted with Municipal Impact, LLC for a Web Development and Hosting account for Wachapreague.org. A work plan was developed and new the new site is under development, requests have been made to local photographers requested photos asap, targeting September 1<sup>st</sup> for cut-over. Although not immediately being implemented there will be online payment for taxes, as well an alert system that can signed up for. Anyone interested in giving feedback, suggestions, etc please contact Jim Bell or Town Hall. Wachapreague info (tourist site) will remain with Squarespace at this time but will be redesigned and updated.

**VIII. New Business** – Mayor Elliot brought up the recently submitted petition requesting the Town Council to consider winterizing the public restrooms at the Town Marina for year use. Vice Mayor Puchalski stated she considers Town Hall a better location for year around public bathrooms, citing the lack of traffic at the Marina in the winter. In addition she believes most people who use the Marina in winter are happy with the port a pot that is available in winter. She cited Town Hall as close to the Seaside Park and available for events there. She also noted that as a seasonable bathroom the Marina restrooms are exempt from Health Dept. requirement for testing water. Town Clerk Springer expressed concern that Town Hall water would also would likely not pass a Health Dept. test. Comment was made there was a second page at the Post Office, that never made it to Town Hall. Comment was also made that the Saxis Island restroom facilities would be a good reference. Planning Commission Chair Jim Bell noted that Saxis closes their facilities down in the winter, citing low volume. Instead having two port a pots outside. No action taken.

Discussion was given to the dredging issue. Vice Mayor Puchalski noted that she asked local Captains and none had any complaints about the dredged area. Councilman Joeckel noted that VIMS professor Chris Hein contacted John Joeckel and stated that as well as they know the area, they were left grounded at that channel. Vice Mayor Puchalski noted that she believed the problem was with the markers and that could be fixed with pipe placement as it has in the past. Councilman Joeckel asked Mayor Elliot if he had circulated to

the Council the letter John Joeckel had sent him. Mayor Elliott responded he had. Councilman Joeckel did not think it was circulated to the Council, and it was not in the Meeting packet. Town Clerk Springer stated Town Hall email never received a copy. Councilman Joeckel explained it contained an Army Corp letter stating it was not dredged properly. It was noted the Army Corp of Engineers should provide a certified drawing upon final completion and typically John Joeckel receives a copy as well, so that should be forthcoming.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Councilman Glen Schagelin motioned to adjourn. Vice Mayor Puchalski 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All in favor.

### **Attachments:**

- 1. Notes of concern from Alena Elliott**
- 2. Notes of concerns from Linda and Grover Jones**
- 3. Talking points and copies of emails from Steve Joseph**
- 4. Ed Roach notes read by Mayor Elliott**
- 5. Mayor's Action without Town Council Authorization from Councilman Bilicki**
- 6. Copy of Petition for Town Council consideration of winterizing the Marina bathrooms**
- 7. Correspondence from John Joeckel on the dredging of Bradford Bay & Finney Creek**