



Town Council
Meeting Minutes - Draft
May 06, 2026, 6:00 PM
RM 110 | Council Chamber

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WELCOME to a COUNCIL MEETING!

We're glad you're here. Want to know more about the meeting logistics, see <https://www.chapelhillnc.gov/Welcome-to-a-Council-meeting>

ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Mayor Jessica Anderson, Mayor pro tem Camille Berry, Council Member Wesley McMahon, Council Member Melissa McCullough, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Theodore Nollert, Council Member Louie Rivers, Council Member Amy Ryan, and Council Member Elizabeth Sharp

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Theodore Voorhees, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Interim Town Attorney James Baker, Communications and Engagement Director Susan Brown, Planning Director Britany Waddell, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Business Management Assistant Director Matthew Brinkley, Police Chief Celisa Lehew, Assistant Police Chief Paul Bell, Administrative Analyst Abbey Foucart, Fire Chief Jay Mebane, Engineer III Robert Gehris, Police Captain Todd Harris, Fire Marshal Tony Massey, Fire Marshal Heather Robinson, Assistant Town Clerk Brenton Hodge, and Town Clerk Brittney Hunt.

OPENING

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that items 6 and 7 would be taken in a different order -- the Public Hearing on a drainage easement (Item 7) would be heard before the Manager's Recommended Budget presentation (Item 6).

1. Proclamation: AAPI Month

This proclamation was deferred to a later meeting.

2. Proclamation: National Police Week

Council proclaimed May 10-16, 2026 as National Police Week and May 15, 2026 as Peace Officers Memorial Day in the Town of Chapel Hill. Council Member Nollert presented the proclamation to the Guardians of the Hill in

the audience expressing appreciation for officers and their families, and emphasized the department's commitment to community well-being.

2.1 Mayor Anderson Regarding Municipal Clerk's Week.

Mayor Anderson recognized May 3-9, 2026 as Professional Municipal Clerk's Week and acknowledged the Clerk's Office team highlighting the essential role they play in ensuring government transparency and continuity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

2.2 Mayor Jessica Anderson

Mayor Anderson announced Small Business Week and encouraged residents to support local businesses. She highlighted Bike Month activities including bike-themed movie night on May 8, 2026 Bike to Work Week May 11-17, 2026 and Roll Fest May 16, 2026. Lastly, Mayor Anderson reminded the public of upcoming budget meetings scheduled for May 13, 2026 and May 20, 2026.

2.3 Council Member Louie Rivers III

Council Member Rivers delivered prepared remarks addressing community concerns regarding the proposed Charter amendments related to Council size. Council Member Rivers emphasized the growing financial pressures facing the Town, noting rising costs and the strain these place on local government operations. He highlighted the importance of maintaining an agile and responsive governing body capable of adapting to fiscal challenges while continuing to advance core priorities, including infrastructure maintenance and climate resilience initiatives. He also noted the need to strengthen efficiency across municipal operations and to deepen partnerships with community stakeholders to ensure sustainable, effective governance moving forward.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Public Comment Period allows the public to address Council on items not on the printed agenda. To speak, please sign in at the Clerk's desk with your name and email. When called, step to the podium, adjust the microphone, and state your name for the record. Comments are limited to 3 minutes (or 2 minutes if more than 14 speakers). Large groups are asked to select a spokesperson. Council does not act or deliberate on items raised during this time.

CONSENT

All items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine, to be enacted by one motion without discussion. Council member(s) may request discussion of an item. If such motion passes, then the item is removed from consent and considered separately.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member Sharp, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

3. [Interim Town Attorney Employment Contract](#)

Resolution R-1 was adopted to approve the Interim Town Attorney employment contract.

4. [April 8, 15, and 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes](#)

The meeting minutes for April 8, 15, and 16, 2026 were approved.

5. [2013 Work Session Minutes](#)

The 2013 Work Session minutes for March 6, September 11, and October 23 were approved.

DISCUSSION

7. [Public Hearing: Drainage Easement Closure at 1301 Fordham Blvd](#)

Engineer III Robert Gehris presented the request to close a public drainage easement located at 1301 Fordham Boulevard, and discussed the statutory requirements and history of the easement. Mr. Gehris described the former drainage infrastructure that once crossed the site, noted that the pipe had been removed as part of redevelopment, and explained that the area is now fully occupied by the new building.

Council members asked clarifying questions regarding the historical drainage patterns in the Ephesus Church Road and Fordham Boulevard area, the approvals granted during the redevelopment process, and the current management of stormwater.

Council members raised concerns about past flooding along Fordham Boulevard during severe storms. Mr. Gehris expanded on how stormwater now moves through the area and how the North Carolina Department of Transportation's roadside systems interface with local drainage. Mr. Gehris also clarified that the easement had been planned for vacation as part of the 2021 development approvals and that neither NCDOT nor OWASA had any remaining need for the easement.

A motion was made by Council Member Ryan, seconded by Council Member Nollert, that the Council open the public hearing. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Council Member Miller-Foushee, seconded by Council Member McCullough, that the Council close the public hearing. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Council Member Ryan, seconded by Mayor pro tem Berry, that the Council adopt R-2, approving a request to close a portion of a public drainage easement at 1301 Fordham Blvd. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

6. [Presentation of the FY 2026-27 Manager's Recommended Budget](#)

Town Manager Theodore Voorhees presented the FY2026-2027 Manager's Recommended Budget video. In the budget video, Mr. Voorhees highlighted that no tax increase was being recommended. Mr. Voorhees covered anticipated revenues, including increases in property and sales tax collections, and outlined strategic investments aligned with the Council's priorities of complete community, environmental resiliency, housing, and organizational and fiscal sustainability. He described ongoing cost pressures across departments, such as rising prices for materials, equipment, and software, and emphasized the Town's efforts to manage costs while maintaining service quality.

Council members discussed the importance of public engagement in the budget process, especially given heightened community interest following the prior year's tax increase and ongoing conversations around county and school system budgets. Several council members expressed concerns about ensuring that residents have clear and accessible opportunities to learn about the Town's budget and to understand which governmental body is responsible for which services. They suggested exploring formats such as informal community conversations, sessions held alongside existing community events, or stand-alone meetings at the library. Council members also raised concerns regarding public confusion about county funding for the library and requested that accurate information be shared broadly. Mr. Voorhees noted that an engagement plan is already underway and that staff could incorporate Council's suggestions.

Council members also mentioned the prioritization of street maintenance, the importance of meeting residents where they are, and the potential role of council members in supporting engagement efforts. The budget discussion concluded with general appreciation for the presentation and the communications materials developed to support public understanding of the budget.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry that the Council entered into closed session as authorized by General Statute Section 143-318.11(a)(6). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Council recessed into Closed Session at 7:01 p.m.

A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council

Member Miller-Foushee to adjourn the Closed Session. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.