



**Town Council**  
**Meeting Minutes - Draft**  
**May 13, 2026, 6:00 PM**  
**Library, Meeting Room B**

For interpretation or translation services, call 919-969-5105.

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லாተர்ကலியைத் தேர்வு செய்து, மின்னஞ்சல் மூலமாக அல்லது தொலைபேசி மூலமாக 919-969-5105-ஐ அழைக்கவும்.

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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:** 8 - Mayor Jessica Anderson, Mayor pro tem Camille Berry, Council Member Wesley McMahan, Council Member Melissa McCullough, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Louie Rivers, Council Member Amy Ryan, and Council Member Elizabeth Sharp
- Absent:** 1 - Council Member Theodore Nollert

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

Town Manager Theodore Voorhees, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Interim Town Attorney Jim Baker, Communications and Engagement Director Susan Brown, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Business Management Assistant Director Matthew Brinkley, Economic Development Director David Putnam, Library and Community Arts & Culture Director Atlas Logan, Chief of Staff Jeanne Brown, Budget & Management Analyst Sally Shader, Manager's Office Intern Desiree DeDolce, Police Captain Shane Osborne, Assistant Town Clerk Brenton Hodge, and Town Clerk Brittney Hunt.

**OPENING**

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**0.01 Mayor Jessica Anderson**

Mayor Anderson announced a special occasion, celebrating Town Manager Ted Voorhees' birthday with a cake provided by staff. She also reminded everyone that the public hearing on the budget would be held on May 20, 2026, encouraging community members to provide input either in person or via email.

**AGENDA ITEM(S)**

**1. FY 2026-27 Budget Work Session**

Town Manager Ted Voorhees presented the FY 2026-27 Recommended Budget. Mr. Voorhees described the intention of the Work Session as an opportunity for Council and staff to review, discuss, and refine the budget before its formal adoption on June 10, 2026. Mr. Voorhees began by stating that the recommended budget totals \$169.7 million, with approximately \$100 million allocated to the general fund and the remainder distributed among enterprise, debt, capital, and other funds. He emphasized that there is no proposed increase in the property tax rate.

Mr. Voorhees explained that the Town's goals are being operationalized through adopted plans and funded projects, and that staff are continuing to leverage innovative approaches to housing and environmental goals. He noted that the five-year funding outlook aims for fiscal sustainability, with targeted investments in facilities, streets, fleet, and fire capital. Mr. Voorhees presented branded strategic priorities and proposed reporting metrics to help track progress toward these goals, inviting Council members to provide feedback on the documents distributed at their seats.

Mr. Voorhees provided additional detail on revenue sources, explaining that property taxes are the primary source, followed by sales taxes and other revenues. He stated that the budget proposes appropriating \$500,000 from the fund balance, a decrease from the prior year, with the goal of using fund balance only for one-time needs rather than ongoing operations.

Mr. Voorhees highlighted investments in employees, including a 4% market pay increase, retirement contribution increases, medical insurance increases, three new positions (library experience assistant, fleet technician, economic development), pay study implementation for Fire, and skills-based pay adjustments for Inspectors. He also described continued investments in affordable housing, climate action, greenways, and outside agency funding, as well as efforts to advance efficiency and innovation, such as developing in-house capacity for greenway segments, maximizing external grants, and modernizing internal systems. Mr. Voorhees discussed changes in enterprise funds, noting that transit and parking funds see a 1% decrease, the housing fund increases by 4%, and the stormwater fund increases by 23%, accompanied by an \$8.798 per equivalent residential units (ERU) fee increase.

Council members engaged in discussion about the sustainability of department operating budgets, expressed concern that departments have had to absorb cost increases for years without sufficient resources and asked for clarification on how the Town plans to address these challenges. Council members also raised questions about inflation sensitivity of various priorities, suggesting that capital investments in construction and infrastructure may be more cost-effective if made sooner rather than later. Mr. Voorhees responded by explaining that the Town evaluates capital

needs through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and considers debt capacity when planning large-scale projects.

Library and Community Arts & Culture Director Atlas Logan discussed the Orange County contribution and the potential impacts of reduced county funding. She explained that county funds do not cover full-time staff, and loss of funding would require charging out-of-area fees, increasing service fees, reducing collection budgets, and potentially laying off part-time staff, which would affect weekend and evening hours. Ms. Logan emphasized that Chapel Hill Public Library serves a large portion of county residents and is recognized as a premier library in the state.

Council members expressed concern about the equity and sustainability of library funding, noting that Chapel Hill Public Library provides essential services to both town and county residents. Council also referenced the 2023 Library Task Force Final Report, which recommended a phased funding increase and highlighted the value of Chapel Hill Public Library to county residents. Council and staff reviewed contingency options for addressing potential funding gaps, such as charging library card fees to out-of-town county residents, increasing printing and meeting room fees, reducing collection budgets, and laying off part-time staff. Council members debated the merits and drawbacks of each option, expressing concern about the impact on vulnerable populations and the potential loss of services that make Chapel Hill Public Library special.

Council members emphasized the importance of advocacy, both with county officials and the broader community, discussed the historical context of library funding, the role of the library as a community equalizer, and the importance of maintaining access to robust programming and collections.

The budget discussion continued with Council members asking about the methodology used for revenue estimates, particularly for sales tax projections and requested more information about the impact of stormwater fee increases on homeowners.

Several Council members emphasized the need for greater transparency and communication with the public regarding budget decisions, service trade-offs, and the rationale behind funding allocations, suggesting that early and ongoing community engagement would help inform community members about the Town's financial picture and solicit feedback on priorities and potential service reductions. Council requested additional information on affordable and public housing, economic development strategy, and return on investment for new positions. Council asked for updates on debt funds, capital improvement projects, and unfunded capital needs.

**This Item was received and filed.**

### **CLOSED SESSION (AS NEEDED)**

**A motion was made by Mayor pro tem Berry, seconded by Council Member McCullough, that the Council entered into closed session as authorized by N.C. General Statute Section 143-138.11(a)(5). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

Council recessed into Closed Session at 9:25 p.m.

**A motion was made by Council Member McCullough, seconded by Council Member Miller-Foushee to adjourn the Closed Session and Council meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.