

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF NORTH EAST
106 S. MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND 21901

May 14, 2025

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:01 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly A. Davis, Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Hilary Crothers-Moore and Neil DeMatt Also present were Police Chief Stephen Yates, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean.

A moment of silence was observed to give thanks to all the men and women that protect and serve us.

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2025 budget workshop, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis and seconded by Commissioner DeMatt and approved by all. Commissioner Bernard-Dutton abstained due to her absence from the budget workshop meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2025 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis and seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-GUESTS-

None

PROCLAMATION:

Proclamation – National Police Week

Mayor Benson presented a Proclamation to Chief Yates, for National Police Week, May 11, 2025 thru May 17, 2025.

Proclamation – National Safe Boating Week

Mayor Benson presented a Proclamation to the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, for National Safe Boating Week May 17th thru May 23, 2025.

-OATH OF OFFICE-

Town Board Approved Minutes May 28, 2025

None

-APPOINTMENTS & OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-PUBLIC HEARING-

Mayor Benson opened the Public Hearing at 7:09 p.m. for the Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund, Enterprise (Water) Fund and Storm Water Fund Budgets

Mrs. Stemen gave an overview of the Ordinance 2025-05-01 into the record.

There were no comments from the public nor the Board; therefore, Mayor Benson closed the Public Hearing at 7:13 p.m.

-INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES-

Ordinance 2025-05-01 Adopts the General Fund, Capital Projects Fund and the Enterprise Fund (Water Fund) and Establishes Water Rates, Connection Fees, Major Facilities Fees, Ready-To-Serve Fees, Bulk Fees, EDU'S, etc.

Mrs. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Town Administrator introduced to the Board, Ordinance 2025-05-01, for the Purpose of Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, Real and Public Utility/Railroad Operating Tax Rates for the Taxable Year Beginning July 1, 2025, and a Homestead Credit Percentage to be Applied for the purposes of the Homestead Tax Credit Under State Law; Stating Certain Projected Expenditure and Expenses Allocations; Specifying Circumstances Under which Approval of the Mayor and Commissioners is Required for Modifications to Revenues and Expenditures; Establishing Employee Salary Increases, and Generally Related to a Comprehensive Fiscal Plan for the Town of North East for the Period July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board this is for introduction only, there will be further discussion at the next town board meeting on May 28, 2025.

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Resolution 2025-05-01 North East Police Administration Training & Operational Assistant Job Description & Resolution 2025-05-02 North East Police Administration Training & Operational Assistant Job Progression Scale

Commissioner Crothers-Moore made a motion to adopt Resolutions 2025-05-01 & 2025-05-02, Vice-Mayor Davis seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

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-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

On April 29, 2025 attended the MD-272 Corridor Study Open House at the North East Fire Hall, Mauldin Avenue. Mayor Benson stated in general he thought that the audience asked very good questions and had the opportunity to express themselves. Mayor Benson also thought the presentation could have had a more comprehensive view, a letter was sent to Wallace Montgomery Team, which can be viewed on the town's website and social media to address his concerns.

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the April 23, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 4.30.25 Met with the Town Administrator and the Water Plant Superintendent to discuss the issues with the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) violations and working on solutions to solve the issues that are happening in terms of the water
- 5.2.25 Attended the St. Mary Anne's Garden Market Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- 5.7.25 Various meetings with the Town Administration regarding multiple discussions from the public meeting, Wayfinding Signage throughout town as well as adding parking areas
- 5.12.25 Met with town staff regarding past and future communication throughout the town
- 5.14.25 Follow-up call with the Town Administrator and the Water Plant Superintendent regarding options that will be implemented

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the April 23, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 4.25.25 Attended as a Member of the Cecil County Youth Panel and participated in Mad Money, a financial workshop which was held at the High Roads School of Cecil County, 3035 Singerly Road, Elkton
- 4.29.25 Attended the MD-272 Corridor Study Open House at the North East Fire Hall, Mauldin Avenue. Vice-Mayor Davis advised she also took the survey
- 5.2.25 Attended the St. Mary Anne's Garden Market
- 5.3.25 Attended along with Chief Yates the North East Fire Company Annual Banquet, Mauldin Avenue and handed out 11 Proclamations to the EMS & Volunteers
- 5.6.25 Attended a Maryland Municipal League webinar for navigating their app. to prepare for the 2025 Summer Conference
- 5.8.25 Met with Amy Ocasio, Founder of, "Live for Thomas", 22 North Main Street, North East and toured the facility
- 5.9.25 Attended the North East Elementary School Talent Show along with Commissioners Hilary Crothers-Moore, Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Neal DeMatt and Chief Yates

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton reported she along with Vice-Mayor Davis and Commissioners Hilary Crothers-Moore, Neal DeMatt and Chief Yates attended the North East Elementary School Talent Show.

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she attended the following meetings since the April 23, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Attended the MD-272 Corridor Study Open House at the North East Fire Hall, Mauldin Avenue
- Attended the St. Mary Anne's Garden Market, May 2, 2025
- Attended along with Vice-Mayor Davis and Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Neal DeMatt and Chief Yates the North East Elementary School Talent Show

Commissioner DeMatt

Commissioner DeMatt reported he attended the following meetings since the April 23, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 5.3.25 Attended the St. Mary Anne's Garden Market
- 5.7.25 Attended the North East Chamber of Commerce meeting. On May 22nd Mayor Benson, Town Administrator and Commissioners are welcome to attend their Mixer Event at Woody's Restaurant. On May 22nd at 10:00 a.m. there will be a Membership meeting at Snatchers Creekside, 510 South Main Street, North East. Commissioner DeMatt will be giving an AI Course regarding the pros and cons of artificial intelligence.
- Attended along with Vice-Mayor Davis and Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Hilary Crothers-Moore and Chief Yates the North East Elementary School Talent Show

Commissioner DeMatt reported the North East Chamber has an attentive date for the Unicorn Quest, this will be held on Saturday, August 23rd starting at 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie entered into the record her reports since the April 23, 2025, Town Board meeting:

- Met with the Director of Planning and the Town of Port Deposit regarding their meeting with Cecil County and their building permit process
- Several meetings following the MD-272 Corridor Study Open House at the North East Fire Hall, Mauldin Avenue. Following the meeting there will be an additional 2 meetings on June 2nd, with Mauldin Avenue and Main Street residents. Invitations will be going out to them directly

- Met with the Mayor Benson and the Water Plant Superintendent to discuss the issues with the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) violations and working on solutions to solve the issues that are happening in terms of the water
- Met with Director of Finance regarding water meters
- Attended the pre-bid meeting for the Leslie Water Treatment Plant Sediment Removal Project
- Met with Chief Yates along with Elite Electric Design Group, INC. regarding the camera project
- Attended the St. Mary Anne's Garden Market Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- Met with Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) and the Maintenance Supervisor regarding an upcoming case
- Met with Wayfinding Signage throughout town as well as adding parking areas
- New hire at the Water Plant has started, Monday May 12th

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley entered into the record his reports since the April 23, 2025, Town Board meeting:

- Emceed the North East Elementary School Talent Show on May 9th – a fantastic event and a great opportunity to support local students and showcase community spirit
- Phase II Legacy Bricks are installed at the Park's Veteran Memorial
- Attended the pre-bid meeting for the Leslie Water Treatment Plant Sediment Removal Project
- Powder Activated Carbon installation at the Water Treatment Plant is expected to be completed by mid-June. This, along with reduced flow rates and additional proactive monitoring, will help address water quality concerns and prevent future violations Mayor Benson and I also worked on making the violation notice easier for residents to understand while explaining our response efforts in more detail
- Trying to grow the Town's social media presence, working to increase visibility for important updates like the Mayor's recent letter on the MD Route 272 Corridor Study
- Reached out to Cecil County Public Schools to request use of North East Middle School as overflow parking for large Town events such as fireworks or the Christmas Parade. They have granted permission, provided that we register dates in advance
- Currently working on improved wayfinding signage for key parking and event areas in Town and, working with State Highway Administration on adding "Downtown" North East signs along 40 and MD 272, with Mayor Benson and Town Administrator
- Continuing the Maryland Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4) Program

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

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Amendment to the Approved 2025 Second Friday's Event – Request for Partial Street Closure
Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board an Amendment to the Approved 2025 Second Friday's Event, to request Partial Street Closure.

Mrs. Jenifer Goldbach, Chair of Second Friday's Event, 38 North East Isles Drive, North East wanted to follow-up with comments regarding the event and parking. Mrs. Goldbach is requesting additional parking be located at Turner Park, located off West Street. After discussion it was determined by the Board for the town's administration to work with Mrs. Goldbach to secure parking and signage for their event.

A motion to approve the Administrative approval of a Pilot Program for Parking, Wayfinding and Vendor spots for the June 15, 2025 Second Friday's Event was made by Commissioner DeMatt seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported the Wallace Montgomery Team who is working on the town's Bikeways Grant advised the traffic signals coming into town are not synced accurately. They are preparing a letter to be sent to the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT) and signed by the town along with the County Executive, Adam Streight requesting for the lights to be reprogrammed correctly.

Water Allocation Request - Frederick Ward Associates Inc. re: 322 East Cecil Avenue, North East 1 Equivalent Residential Unit

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board a Water Allocation Request for Frederick Ward Associates Inc., 322 East Cecil Avenue for 1 equivalent residential unit.

A motion to approve the Water Allocation Request for 250 gallons per day, with the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Office was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mayor Benson asked the Town Administrator if she has an update regarding the North East Charter Amendment. She advised yes, this will be discussed after tonight's regular meeting.

Chief Yates advised the Board the Occupancy Permit for the new North East Police Administration Building has been received. Chief Yates invited the Mayor and Commissioners to attend the dedication ceremony on Wednesday, July 2nd at 1:00 p.m., 104 West Cecil Avenue, North East.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

None

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Mr. Russell Polo, 4 North Main Street North East, advised the Board he was not impressed with the April 29, 2025 meeting regarding the MD-272 Corridor Study Open House at the North East Fire Hall, Mauldin Avenue. He is very happy to see the input regarding the parking and signage. He would like to see the dialogue not just for event parking, just parking in general with more signage. Mayor Benson advised the town is working on all angles to try and get additional parking and Maryland State Highway has been contacted regarding parking on Mauldin Avenue with signage. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie stated the first request to Maryland State Highway was the year 2022 and the town is still waiting for an answer. Mayor Benson reinsured Mr. Polo, the town staff along with himself are working on getting a resolution.

-ADJOURNMENT-

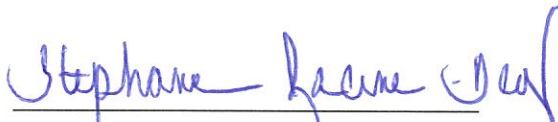
The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m. to go directly into the Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:


The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East will hold a Closed Session on May 14, 2024, immediately following the adjournment of their regularly scheduled Town Board Meeting, which begins at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will take place at the North East Town Hall Meeting Room, 106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901. The Closed Session is being held in accordance with the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article, § 3-305(b)(1), to “discuss the appointment, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.”

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk



Kelly A. Benson, Mayor