

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

**TOWN OF NORTH EAST
106 S. MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND 21901**

July 23, 2025

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:00 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis, Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton and Hilary Crothers-Moore. Also present were Chief Stephan Yates, Maintenance Supervisor Richard Gregg, Water Superintendent Ron Carter, Director of Finance Vonnie Stemen, Director of Planning and Zoning Betsy Vennell, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Absent from tonight's meeting, Commissioner Neal DeMatt and Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley.

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 July 9, 2025 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, and seconded by Mayor Benson and approved by all. Commissioner Bernard-Dutton abstained due to her absence from the meeting.

-GUESTS-

None

-PROCLAMATIONS-

None

-APPOINTMENTS & OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES-

None

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-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS-

None

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the July 9, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Took a camping trip with family to the Delmarva Peninsula the week of July 13th
- 7.23.25 - Attended a meeting with town staff regarding the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and updating
- 7.23.25 - Attended a meeting regarding a future Hotel in the Town of North East and a meeting with the North East Little League regarding their Eastern Regional 9-10-11 Softball Invitational Tournament, Saturday, August 2nd – Tuesday, August 5th. Mayor Benson will also be throwing out the first pitch

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the July 9, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 7.11.25 - Attended Craig Hudler, North East Water Plant, Mother-in-Law's viewing at the Crouch Funeral Home
- 7.11.25 - Attended 2nd Friday along with her son who just turned 21 years old
- 7.12.25 - Attended a Celebration of Life Service along with the Town Administrator, for Patrol Officer Hunter M. Heinecke from the North East Police Department who passed away, Friday, July 4th
- 7.17.25 - Attended the Maryland Municipal League Cecil-Harford Chapter Dinner along with Commissioner DeMatt which was hosted by the City of Aberdeen. During the meeting Vice-Mayor Davis who is on the Scholarship Committee, handed-out two well deserved scholarships to applicants from Cecil and Harford County. The Cecil-Harford Chapter also welcomed the new President, Michelle Linkey, Mayor of Perryville
- 7.23.25- Attended a meeting for the English, "Second Language" classes for Cecil County. Vice-Mayor Davis is now the Co-Director of the program along with teaching

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton reported she attended the following meetings since the July 9, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 7.3.25 Attended Cecil County Salute to Cecil County Veterans dinner, VFW Post 6027, Turkey Point Road and the fireworks. Commissioner Bernard-Dutton thanked Maintenance Supervisor, Richard Gregg, who found her keys

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she attended 2nd Friday

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Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she is getting her Swimming Certification through the Scouting America to help individuals swim safely

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie she attended the following meetings since the July 9, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Attended a Celebration of Life Service along with the Vice-Mayor Davis, for Patrol Officer Hunter M. Heinecke from the North East Police Department who passed away, Friday, July 4th
- Meeting with the Town Attorney, David A. Beste Esquire
- Met with a potential developer along with the Director of Planning regarding a development of property on Lums Road, on the Westside. Hopefully we will be able to release information in the near future
- Held several interviews along with the Director of Finance for Finance Associated II candidates. She is happy to report, this position has been filled as of Saturday, July 26th. Deana Ittner will be starting fulltime in August, starting part-time Monday, July 28th to received training
- Narcan training was held by Chief Yates at the new North East Police Administration Building
- Participated in 2 interviews with Chief Yates, one candidate is certified and the other will be going into the Police Academy
- Meeting with the Steve Riley, Town's Engineer, Contractor and Water Superintendent, Ron Carter regarding the Leslie Treatment Plant bid. The Maryland Department of Environment will have to approved the bid, due to state funds are involved
- Met with Robert Crouch regarding grant opportunities through the town and the State of Maryland
- Met with the Director of Planning regarding Lot 7B at the North East Commerce Center regarding proposed use
- Saturday, July 19th, there was filming at the North East Community Park with Cecil County Tourism, the History of Slavery and the Cecil County Underground Railroad
- Meeting with Steve Riley, Town's Engineer, regarding the 20 year Water System Master Plan. There will be proposals presented by the Town's Engineer at a future board meeting
- Met with property owners on Race Street regarding possible future development
- Had a great meeting with the contractor regarding the interior of the Old Town Lock-Up and all is moving forward in a positive motion
- Attended a meeting with Mayor Benson and town staff regarding the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and updating

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported the BASSMASTER at the North East Community Park, has begun, Tuesday, July 22nd – Friday, July 25th. She thanked the Assistant Town Administrator along with the Maintenance Supervisor and Town Clerk for their help during this event.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported the town will be advertising for the position at the Water Plant, Operator Trainee

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie entered into the record on behalf of the Assistant Town Administrator, July 23, 2025 Report.

Vice-Mayor Davis asked about the yellow house that has been demolished, 104 Water Street and the next step regarding the bamboo. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie stated this is part of the contract to be removed and the town is very close to a settlement date for ownership.

Director of Finance

Mrs. Vonnice Stemen entered in the record the list of payments issued since the last Board Meeting. In addition Mrs. Stemen reported the following:

- Check Register as of 6.19.25 to 7.16.25
- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 6.30.25
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 6.1.25 to 6.30.25

Mrs. Stemen reported the town is gradually receiving the Opioid abatement funds. Last year the town was able to pass the funds to YES Organization, Youth Empowerment Source. Mrs. Stemen asked a year later for their organization to report on the 2 goals that were set:

- They increased and expanded participation in prevention by Cecil County Youth. Setting a goal of thirty five high school club meetings which turned out they had sixty one, which included high school and middle school.
- Increase Prevention training opportunities for youth leaders in Cecil County, they do this through a National Youth Prevention training. Thirty two were from across the County, with eight from North East area.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie stated to the Board, she would like to contact Ms. Beth Creek, Executive Director at Youth Empowerment to invite her along with the students, so they can be recognized publically for the accomplishments they are doing in our community.

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mrs. Betsy Vennell entered into the record the June 2025 Planning and Zoning Monthly report. In addition, Mrs. Vennell reported the following:

- Major Facility Fees \$20,500.00
- Connection Fees \$14,125.00
- Permit Fees \$575.00
- Escrow Fees \$12,000.00

Mayor Benson requested information on her report regarding Code of Ordinance review. Ms. Vennell stated the Town Administrator has been meeting with the Department Heads to review the Code of Ordinance by chapter.

Mrs. Vennell reported the Circuit Rider is working on Saturday doing Code Enforcement and office work. Mrs. Vennell stated her department is still short of a part-time Code Enforcement employee which is around 24 hours a week.

Maintenance Supervisor

Mr. Richard Gregg entered into the record the June 2025 Maintenance Monthly report. In addition, Mr. Gregg reported the following:

Chief of Police

Police Chief Yates entered into the record the June 2025 Maintenance Monthly report. In addition, Police Chief Yates reported the following:

Police Chief Yates reported to the Board, he is the Law Enforcement Representative on the Board for the Yes Organization, Youth Empowerment Source. Ms. Beth Creek, Executive Director at Youth Empowerment does a wonderful job with the youth throughout the county.

Police Chief Yates reminded the Board, National Night Out will be, Tuesday, August 5th from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office will in attendance along with the Maryland State Police and other organizations. Other events, Triathlon, Unicorn Quest and back to school party at the North East Elementary School. August is a busy month for the North East Police Department.

Water Plant Superintendent

Mr. Ron Carter entered into the record the June 2025 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Plants. In addition Mr. Carter reported the following:

Mr. Carter reported the Powered Activated Carbon start-up schedule for Thursday, July 17th was a failure due to the abductor system, the engineer is working on this problem to get up and running. This will be at both water treatment plants.

Mr. Carter reported the SCADA System start date, to be installed, will be Wednesday, August 6th. It will take the contractor 1 week at the Leslie Plant and then he will go directly to the Rolling Mills Plant to complete the installation.

Mr. Carter reported, during the heavy thunderstorms on Wednesday, July 16th, the Chesapeake House lost water for about 20 minutes. There is battery backup, but when there is a bad storm, and if it takes a hit, the line flat-lines. Mr. Carter stated, when the SCADA system is installed, it will be located in the area where it flat-lines. If this occurs, for an x-amount of time, the water plant will be notified so this doesn't happen again.

Mr. Carter reported the Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM's) and Rejuvenating Hydrator (HA5's) has failed due to the hot weather and storms. The good news, streaming current monitor (SCM) is in and sent Phil from HACH Company an email regarding a few questions, to make sure all pieces of equipment are received and to get a start-up date from his office for installation. Mr. Carter stated Allied Control Services, INC. will be installing.

Mayor Benson asked when the test took place, Mr. Carter stated, July 7th. And the results came in, Wednesday 16th. Mayor Benson asked the Town Administrator if she would set up a meeting for the three of them to meet.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

Deed of Conveyance – Bedrock Phase 3 Water Improvements

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board, Deed of Conveyance - Bedrock Phase 3, Water Improvements.

A motion to approve the Deed of Conveyance, with the recommendation of the Planning Office was made by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Melissa Cook-MacKenzie reminded the Board there needs to be 2 separate Workshops set-up for the Stormwater Management Fee and the Artesian Rate.

After discussion, the first Workshop will be prior of the next two board meetings, August 13th and August 27th at 6:00 p.m.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Budget Amendment 2025-010

- Lowe's and Amazon purchases of office furnishings and fixtures for NEPD Admin Building using prior year funds set aside for NEPD Admin \$1,319
- Sign Project - Cecil County Government - Road Signs \$955
- ARPA Payments - Johnston Construction - Rolling Mill & Leslie Water Treatment Plants

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2025-010 was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, Commissioner Bernard-Dutton seconded by Commissioner and approved by all.

Requisition R6-00066 - Local Government Insurance Trust - \$97,849 Annual Commercial Insurance Premiums

- Property \$39,715
- General Liability \$3,673
- Police Legal Liability \$20,139
- Public Official Liability \$3,046

- Employment Practices Liability \$2,582
- Auto \$28,896
- Excess Liability above \$1M Primary Liability \$3,944
- Equipment Breakdown \$519
- Equipment Breakdown and Cyber Credit (\$1,856)
- Primary Rate Stabilization Credit (\$2,809)

Requisition R6-00085 - North East Fire Company \$30,000 Annual Donation Budget

Requisition R6-00092 - The Benecon Group LLC \$578,500 August 2025 through June 2026
Cigna Employee Health Insurance Blanket Budgeted

Requisition R6-00139 Republic Services \$562,800 Annual Budgeted Trash and Recycle Service
(year 3 of a 7 year contract)

A motion to approve Requisitions R6-00066 amount \$97,849, R6-00085 amount \$30,000 and Requisition R6-00139 amount \$562,800 was made by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Erica Berge, 22 Adams Road, Port Deposit, Maryland is running for the House of Delegates, District 35-B. She has been attending the Municipalities board meetings throughout the county to introduce herself and if elected she will support her neighboring towns in Cecil County.

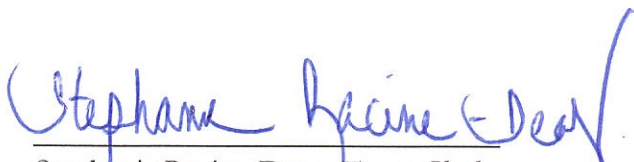
Chris Vanderslice, 203 Walnut Street, North East wanted to thank Bryce Hyse and Tom Bersler from the North East Maintenance Department in rescuing his father from getting mauled from a dog at the North East Community Park.


-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk


Kelly Benson, Mayor