

**MAYOR  
AND COMMISSIONERS**

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

**January 28, 2026**

The Town Meeting was called to order by Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis at 7:03 P.M. Present were Commissioners Hilary Crothers-Moore and Neil DeMatt. Also present were Police Chief Yates, Director of Finance Vonnie Stemen, Director of Planning and Zoning Betsy Vennell, Maintenance Supervisor Richard Gregg, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Absent from tonight's meeting, Mayor Kelly Benson, Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and Water Superintendent, Ron Carter.

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

**-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-**

Vice-Mayor Davis tabled the approval of the minutes of the January 14, 2026 as presented due to the absence of Commissioner Bernard-Dutton. These minutes will be presented and approved on Wednesday, February 11, 2026.

**-APPOINTMENTS-**

Vice-Mayor Davis reported, due to Mayor Benson's absence, he contacted her prior of the meeting to advise he reviewed the application for William Weisel and gives his approval based on what he was provided.

Board of Supervisor of Elections

A motion to approve the appointment of William Weisel to the Board of Supervisor of Elections was made by Commissioner DeMatt. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

**-GUESTS-**

None

**-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-**

None

## **-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-**

None

## **-REPORTS-**

### Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the January 14, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 1.15.2026 - Taught English Second Language (ESL) class. Along with a giveaway table, which was really nice. A bunch of us brought household items in and we were able to share with our students and they really enjoyed this
- 1.22.2026 - I attended the friendly visitor volunteer session, which is through the Department of Aging. They are looking for volunteers, this gives their caregivers a break for an hour or so. Later in the day, I taught English Second Language (ESL) class
- 1.23.2026 – I participated in Mad Money, High Road School, Singerly Road, Elkton. These students have either, behavioral problems, learning disabilities or physical disabilities. This is a great program through the Neighborhood Youth Panel. It teaches the students how to get a job, manage a salary, given a pretend spouse and managing their spouse's salary along with a child under the age of five. It teaches the children what it takes to live on their own and the appreciation of what their parents did for them while growing up

### Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported it has been hectic at work due to the snowstorm along with the ice, customers are calling for salt and heating oil. Commissioner Crothers-Moore also helped her community clean-up after the storm.

### Commissioner DeMatt

- 1.8.2026 – Attended the Cecil County YPN event at the Elkton Alliances with the Assistant Town Administrator, where we heard from the Cecil County Chief Deputy, Gerald Widdoes
- 1.21.2026 – Planning the North East Easter Eggstravaganza along with his mother/real estate partner, which will be held the Saturday prior of the Easter holiday. This will be held at the North East Elementary School. There will be pictures taken with the Easter Bunny at the “Little House on the Green”, during this time also.
- 1.21.2026 – Attended the 2026 Cecil County Board of Realtors Ice Splash Fundraiser at Patriot’s Glen Golf Club, Elkton which raises money for the Cecil County Ice Splash. This year it will be, Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at the Wellwood in Charlestown. This helps with children in need and youth organizations. It’s free to attend but if you would like to splash, it’s \$25.00 to \$50.00.

- 1.22.2026 – Attended the North East Chamber of Commerce Thirsty Thursdays met at Snatcher Restaurant with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday's Committee to discuss plans for this year's events
- 1.28.2026 - Attended the Cecil County Board of Realtors YPN meeting. Discussed assistance in housing and separate real estate scenarios

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she is happy to say that today is her first day back from surgery. Thank you everyone for their support and prayers through this process.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie thanked the Board for their vote at the last Board meeting, the appointment of the new Director of Finance, Deana Ittner. This will take effect this Friday, January 30, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie thanked the departing Director of Finance Vonnie Stemen on her much-deserved retirement.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the January 14, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- An ad went into the Cecil Whig, for the Finance Associate II position, it ran until Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will interview any applicants through the process. There was an emergency hire, she started today and will apply for the position
- In touch with the water plant during the Snowstorm. One employee has stayed at the plant since last Thursday
- Worked with the Director of Planning very little regarding a water agreement, Riverwoods. She and I both had similar comments, we are working with the Town's attorney
- Worked on the Comp Plan as far as formatting so when the town gets to the public hearing stage it will all different than what it does now
- Worked with the Chief Yates and the Director of Finance regarding our officers who graduated for the Police Academy. Officer Platt completed his field training, so as a result and the agreement we have with him, he is eligible for a pay increase. Which was processed immediately
- Worked on several items for the Town's Election, Monday, February 6, 2026
- Worked with DES along with Chief Yates regarding the updates that were sent during the snowstorm. This information was forwarded to the Department Heads along with the Vice-Mayor Davis

Town Administrator read into the record, on behalf of the Grant Writer/Project Manager, Amy Yackeanech, I am entering into the record the December 2025 Monthly Report:

- North East Preserve Site Pre-Construction Site Visit - (Greenspace Grant)
- Attended Pre-Bid meeting for Rolling Mill Finished Water Pumping Station Project
- Prepared Semi-Annual Report for CDBG Grant
- Prepared Quarterly Report for Bikeways Grant – MDOT
- Sent MDOT Draft Feasibility Study for 30/60-day review & Comments
- Prepared Quarterly Report for DHCD Grant (Facade Grant)

- Attended meeting with Water Plant and Town Engineer to select projects needing future funding
- Applied for MDE - MWIFA - Water Project Grant
- Started initial research of the BUILD grant (US Dept of Transportation - Possible Bridge Grant)
- Assisted in processing W-2's with Finance Associate
- Met with Chief Yates to go over future funding needs for Police Department
- Attended Winter Lights meeting
- Attended CDS Webinar for Congressional Spending Grant
- Worked on needed edits for Com Plan – Transportation Chapter

**Grants in Progress:**

- CDBG – Riverwoods II Project - \$800,000
- EPA – SCADA WTP Project - \$636,668
- EPA – Pond WTP Project - \$500,000
- DNR – Greenspace Equity – Preserve Cleaning Project - \$68,165
- MDOT – Bikeways Grant – Feasibility Study - \$50,000
- MD DHCD – Business Façade Grant FY25 - \$50,000
- MDE – WTP PAC Project - \$684,628
- MDE – Finished Water Pumping Station Project - \$2,122.000

**Grants Awaiting Award Information:**

- NOAA – North East Preserve Grant - \$4,919,557
- Congressional Spending – Finished Water Pumping Station Project - \$1,950,000
- DNR – Grants Gateway – North East Preserve Stony Run Restoration - \$4,591,952
- DNR – Grants Gateway – NE Town Park Shoreline Restoration Project - \$559,410.41
- Community Parks & Playground Grant – Turner Park Project - \$550,000
- MWIFA – MDE Annual Water Project Grant – Ridgely Forest Tank - \$2,130,000

**Assistant Town Administrator**

Mr. Handley wanted to acknowledge the audience who is in attendance regarding the snowstorm and the removal. The efforts have been challenging due to equipment failures; however, substantial progress was made today. He explained, per the agenda, business on the floor, the public can express their thoughts on how the snow removal process worked for them/community.

Mr. Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the January 14, 202 Town Board Meeting:

- Leslie Retention Pond is refilling following sediment removal. Hopefully the plant will be back on line in a week or so
- Congress has passed a funding bill that includes support for the Town of North East's Rolling Mill Pumping Station. With funding now secured from both MDE and EPA, Amy and I have been diligently updating bid guidelines and requirements, and we

extended bid deadlines to ensure contractors have time to adjust to the federal EPA language now included in the project.

- The Town's Code of Ordinances continues to be reviewed and updated through Department Head oversight
- On-call contractor bids have been submitted, and the deadline has passed, giving the Town several contractors to utilize for general contracting, paving, and electrical work
- Updated information was provided to the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services
- Planning discussions were held with Cecil County Parks and Recreation
- Sidewalk rehab project, trying to get a one giant bid for all the roads and sidewalks throughout the town
- North East Preserve clean-up, on 60 acres of land, filled with tires and concrete slabs. The town received a grant from the State of Maryland to clean-up but due to the snow and ice, it's been moving slow

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

- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 12.31.25
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 12.1.25 to 12.31.25
- Check Register as of 12.12.25 to 1.23.26

Mrs. Stemen reported she has been working on the single audit primarily, for the ARPA Fund, she feels the work has been completed, CLA Auditors will be moving forward with this. Mrs. Stemen also reported, this week she launched the budget process for fiscal year 2027.

Vice Mayor-Davis, thanked The Director of Finance, Mrs. Stemen for her dedication and years of service to the Town. You have been a blessing, we will miss you, enjoy your retirement.

#### Director of Planning and Zoning

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

- Reviewed Zoning Amendment which we are in the process of codifying, RM-C Multi-Family Residential District Regulations
- North East Retail came into Town Hall for a Concept Plan and received concept approval, pending conditions come back to the Planning Commission
- Board of Appeals did not meet in December
- Working on Riverwoods Phase 2, they are requesting approval from the town, the construction authorization, which the town did release on Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Planning Commission meeting next week, we have a full agenda with the Board of Appeals meeting the following week

#### Maintenance Supervisor

Mr. Richard Gregg entered into the record the December 2025 Monthly Report for the North East Maintenance Department:

- Christmas Parade went well, only a few hiccups, wreaths have been changed out along with the street banners
- North East Community Park for Winter Lights-Cecil Lights (WLCN)

Vice Mayor-Davis along with Commissioner Crothers-Moore thanked the Maintenance Department for all their hard work and efforts during the snowstorm.

Chief of Police

Police Chief Yates entered into the record the December 2025 North East Police Department Monthly Report:

Chief Yates thanked Vonnie for all her hard work over the years, it's been a pleasure working with you. Chief Yates also thanked the Maintenance Supervisor for all his hard work during the snowstorm, he kept the Police Department open for our officers.

Water Plant Superintendent

Assistant Town Administrator, on behalf of the Water Plant Superintendent, Mr. Ron Carter, I am entering into the record the December 2025 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Plants. In addition, Mr. Handley reported the following.

Mr. Handley gave an update regarding, Total Organic Carbon (TOC) and Haloacetic Acids (HAA5). Since the new TOC analyzer has been installed, the water quality has drastically changed for the better. The Requirement from the EPA is below 60 ppb.

- Flying J - 18.2 ug/L ppb
- Red Toad Road - 16.5 ug/L
- Irishtown Road - 19.5 ug/L

**-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-**

None

**-NEW BUSINESS-**

None

**-MISCELLANEOUS-**

Vice Mayor Davis gave a reminder, the Town's Election will be held, Monday, February 9, 2026 starting at 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the North East Town Hall.

**-APPROPRIATIONS-**

Requisition R6-01371 – Cecil County Government – Fiscal Year 2026 Communication Billing \$46,777.56

A motion to approve Requisition R6-01371 to Cecil County Government for the Fiscal Year 2026 Communication Billing in the amount of \$46,777.56 was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

**-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-**

Residents of Ridgely Forest Community – Snow Removal

1. Courtney Washburn Marcheski, 9 Hibiscus Court, Elkton, Maryland
2. Sean Hanlon, 11 Sequoia Place, Elkton, Maryland
3. Marybeth Appio, 18 Bayberry Drive Elkton, Maryland

The residence of the Ridgely Forest Community wanted to express their concerns regarding the snow plowing, removal and the clean-up after the snowstorm. They were extremely frustrated with blocked drive-ways, single lane in and out of the community and mounds of snow piles. They felt overlooked or underserved compared to other areas of the town.

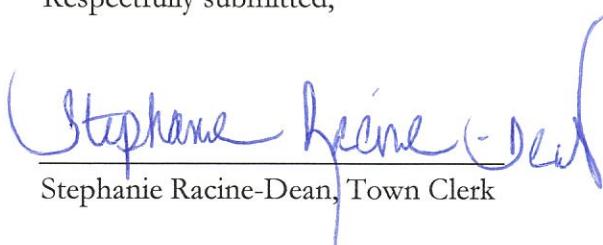
After discussion, Vice-Mayor Davis stated the fiscal year budget for 2026-2027 will be in review and possibly there can be equipment purchased to help avoid these situations in the future.

Grant Handley, Assistant Town Administrator asked if they received their new light pole at the entrance of their community. It was struck during COVID by the Maryland State Highway. AUI installed the pole last week with the light being installed in the near future.

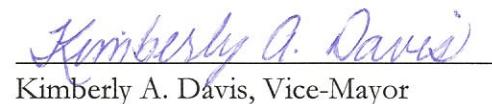
**-ADJOURNMENT-**

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

ATTEST:

  
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Kimberly A. Davis, Vice-Mayor