

**MAYOR
AND COMMISSIONERS**

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

February 25, 2026

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

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

-OATH OF OFFICE-

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Hilary A. Crothers-Moore, her term expires, March 9, 2028.

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Kimberly Anne Davis, her term expires, March 9, 2028.

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2026 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Ordinance 2026-02-01 – Mayor and Commissioner of the Town of North East Infrastructure Bonds, 2026 Series A - \$5,200,000.00. Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) – Local Government Infrastructure Finance Loan Program:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board, Ordinance 2026-02-01, Town of North East Infrastructure Bonds, 2026 Series A.

Town Board Approved Minutes March 11, 2026

- Streets, Sidewalks, and Curb Improvements
- Preserve Roundabout
- North East Isles Bridge Repairs

Melissa Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board, this is for introduction only. There will be further discussion at the next town board meeting on March 11, 2026. The Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley introduced the guests as listed below.

-GUESTS-

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development - Charles Day Jr., Community Development Administration & Darrel Connelly, Senior Financial Analyst
Charles Day Jr., Community Development Administration & Darrel Connelly, Senior Financial Analyst from the Maryland of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) gave a presentation on the Local Finance Infrastructure Program and how to qualify for the loan program for the above Ordinance 2026-02-01.

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the February 11, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 2.17.2026 – Invited to an Economic Round Table at Great Wolf Lodge, Perryville with Senator Angela Alsobrooks
- 2.18.2026 - Met with the organization who powers the “Skipjack Martha Lewis”, regarding, to continue the lease agreement to the dock, North East Community Park. Met later in the morning with town staff regarding miscellanies items at town hall

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the February 11, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 2.12.2026 & 2.19.2026 - Taught English Second Language (ESL) classes and the past 5 days I took care of my mother, which I just returned home today

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton reported she attended the Sip & Stroll, Saturday, February 21st at Chesapeake City, what a very nice event. She also stated she spoke with a vendor who is interested in our 2nd Fridays Event here in North East

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she worked her weekly job and taught classes at the Y.M.C.A., Elkton.

Commissioner DeMatt

- 2.12.2026 - Attended Thirsty Thursdays, Snatchers Creekside here in Town
- 2.16.2026 – Met with the President, North East Chamber of Commerce in regards to the Easter Eggstravaganza. This will be held, Saturday, March 28th, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the North East Elementary School & the Santa House, “On the Green” a petting zoo and pictures with the East Bunny. Rain date, Sunday, March 29th.
- 2.25.2026 – Had the opportunity to go with the North East Rotary Club to Bay View Elementary to read to the students, which was a lot of fun

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the February 11, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Staff meetings
- Working with the Director of Finance, regarding the budget along with the process of the water billing
- Maintenance Department regarding applications for the Maintenance Supervisor position, there has been 8 applicants with interviews being set up in the next few days

Mayor Benson asked her thoughts on the water billing. She stated there are 2 things, she went back and looked at the last 8 quarters to see how much the town pays to have the bills printed along with the second notices. She needs one piece of information from the Utility Billing Clerk, how second notices are printed, she thinks anywhere from 600-800. The questions are how many are occupied by the owner or by the tenant, she is thinking about a hybrid type process on how to eliminate the shutting off of water.

Town Administrator, on behalf of the Grant Writer/Project Manager, Amy Yackeanech, I am entering into the record the January 2026 Monthly Report:

- Reviewed MDOT Draft Feasibility Study comments
- Attended meeting with MDE regarding MWIFA funding award for Leslie WTP Equipment Rehab Project
- Completed application for MDE - MWIFA - Water Project Grant
- Continued research and started the grant application process for the BUILD grant (US Dept of Transportation - Possible Bridge Grant)
- Worked on needed edits for Comp Plan - Transportation Chapter
- Attended meeting with Cecil County Parks and Recreation regarding upcoming park needs and plans
- Met with Dan Speakman - McCrone Engineering regarding Turner Park Project
- Met with Charlie Day to start the DCHC Loan process for streets and sidewalks
- Processed reimbursement requests for PAC Project and Business Facade Grant

- Helped Finance process 1099's
- Updated Chapter 3 edits for the Town's Comp Plan

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
- MD DHCD – Business Façade Grant FY26 - \$50,000
- MDE – WTP PAC Project - \$684,628
- MDE – Finished Water Pumping Station Project - \$2,122,000
- EPA – Finished Water Pumping Station Project (Congressional) - \$1,900,000
- MDE – Leslie WTP Equipment Rehab Project (Loan & Grant) - \$1,379,000

Grants Awaiting Award Information:

- NOAA – North East Preserve Grant - \$4,919,557
- 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

On behalf of the Water Superintendent, Ron Carter, the Town Administrator entered into the record the January 2026 Monthly Report. Also, entered into the record, Water Quality concerns. This report explains the yellow/brown discoloration of water and the quality, this is due to the recent Winter weather and heavy rain events which created significant operational challenges at the Rolling Mill Water Treatment Plant. Or manganese removal process became less effective because of the chlorine dioxide, which is used to assist with manganese removal was being consumed by elevated chloride levels introduced from road salt. The Town Administrator advised the Board, if they have any additional questions regarding the report, please do not hesitate to contact her or the Water Superintendent, Ron Carter.

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the February 11, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Attended the State of the County Address on February 12th
- Melissa and myself conducted interviews for the Summer Internship Program
- Mayor Benson and I met with stakeholders from the Skipjack Martha Lewis
- Over the weekend assisted in snow removal planning
- Community Garden meeting earlier today to judge stakeholder interest
- Working on finalizing new Wayfinding signage for the Town

- Code of Ordinances continued to be reviewed and edited
- Grant Writer has worked hard on a few grant deadlines
- Bid opening for the Finished Water Pumping Station at Rolling Mill will be next week

Director of Finance, Ms. Deana Ittner entered in the record the list of payments issued since the last Board Meeting:

- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 12.31.26
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 1.1.26 to 1.31.26
- Check Register as of 1.24.26 to 2.23.26

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mrs. Betsy Vennell entered into the record the January 2026 Planning and Zoning Monthly report. In addition, Mrs. Vennell reported the following:

- Permits are down due to the time of year \$345.00
- Major Facility \$11,300.00
- Connection Fees \$8,475.00
- Escrow Fees \$8,550.00
- Bedrock Ph 4 Escrow \$9,167.00

Mrs. Vennell reported the Circuit Riders, Marlene Muro's last day working for the Town of North East will be, Saturday, February 28th, she works fulltime at the Town of Perryville. The town will be advertising for this position.

Mrs. MacKenzie advised the Board she is looking into getting tablets for the Water Treatment Plant employees with a GIS Software added. This technology will be used for water easements, water as built drawings, locate water lines and other tasks when out in the field.

Mrs. Vennell reported Elk and North East Rivers Watershed Association are sponsoring the 12th Cabin Fever on Saturday, March 21, 2026 from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at Moore's Chapel 392 Blake Road, Elkton.

Chief of Police

Police Chief Yates entered into the record the January 2026 North East Police Department Monthly Report: Chief Yates also reported:

- Poly-Com System has been installed, the officers have been using it for reviewing on view arrests & warrants, everything is done at the North East Police Station
- Upgraded the Police Cad System, the town pays the County to be a part of their cad/dispatch. It was being stationed at the Counties IT now it goes directly to the Cloud which is connected to AWS Service

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

Maryland Department of Transportation Annual Tour 2026 - Priority Letter

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board the Maryland Department of Transportation Annual Tour 2026 Priority Letter. The Town of North East respectfully submitted priorities for consideration and inclusion in the final 2025 Consolidated Transportation Program. The Town of North East Planning Office is asking the Board if they would like to make any edits to the letter for the 2026 Annual Tour. The Cecil County Department of Land Use and Development Services, has requested the Town's letter by Friday, March 6, 2026.

After discussion, Mayor Benson advised the Board if they have any questions, please contact the Town Administrator via email and cc him, by Friday, February 27th.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Budget Amendment 2026-009

General Fund

Revenue – Contingency (See Note 1) **\$8,740.00**

Expenditure - Snow Removal Contract Services - Richard Mort - \$3,780.00

Susquehanna Contractors - \$4,960.00

Note 1: the remaining amount in the general fund contingency fund will be \$88,894.00

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2026-009 was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

None

-VOTE TO ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION-

The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East will hold a Closed Session on February 25, 2026, 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."

A motion to enter into a Closed Session at 8:08 P.M. was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-ADJOURNMENT-

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

Kelly Benson, Mayor