

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

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

April 22, 2026

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 6:05 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis, Commissioners Hilary Crothers-Moore; Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and Commissioner Neil DeMatt. Also present were Director of Finance Deana Ittner, Police Chief Stephen Yates, Water Plant Superintendent Ron Carter, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie and Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell. Absent from tonight's meeting, Town Clerk, Stephanie Racine-Dean 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-

April 8, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner DeMatt and approved by all.

-GUESTS-

None

APPOINTMENTS & OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-PUBLIC HEARING-

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported the following:

- May 22, 2026 Meeting with the Director of Planning and Zoning with regard to zoning changes.
- May 15, 2026: 131 South Main Street with Department Heads: project update
- Various meetings about budget and personnel
- 4-22-2026: Budget meetings and personnel meetings

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice Mayor Davis reported the following:

- April 9, 2026: Worked with the Friendly Visitor Volunteer Program
- April 9, 2026: Miniature resource fair for ESC English Second Language Program
- April 14, 2025: Open House North East Public Library: North East 2040 Draft Comprehensive Plan
- April 15, 2026: North East Chamber of Commerce meeting
- April 15, 2026: Friendly Visitor Volunteer Program
- April 15, 2026: Attended and spoke at the Maryland Municipal League (MML) Chapter Dinner
- April 18, 2026: Bay venture Outfitters 8th Annual Stream Cleanup Event

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton reported that she is still taking care of her dad.

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore attended the following:

- Working at the YMCA, teaching swimming lessons
- April 10, 2026: Attended the Park Storywalk ribbon cutting
- April 14, 2026: Planning Commission Open House 2024 Draft Comprehensive Plan meeting at the North East Library
- April 16, 2026: Maryland Municipal League Dinner

Commissioner DeMatt

Commissioner DeMatt attended the following meetings:

- April 9, 2026: Coffee with a cop

- April 10, 2026: Park Storytrail ribbon cutting
- April 11, 2026: North East Little League Event
- April 15, 2026: North East Chamber of Commerce

Town Administrator

Ms. Cook-MacKenzie attended the following meetings:

- Department Head meetings
- Several meetings with Steve Riley and Ron Carter
- Attended a Worker's Comp hearing with Chief Yates
- Attended a meeting with Ms. Ittner with Benicon of cost savings program which will be offered to employees at no cost to the Town.
- President of the North East Isles Homeowners Association President. Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported that a meeting will be conducted with Town Staff and the Homeowner's Association in June to assist the new homeowners understand about the North East Isles Buffer Management and Critical Area Regulations.
- Had a meeting concerning the street and sidewalk project
- Attended a meeting with Artesian
- Wonders Map
- Met with the Director of Planning and the Town Administrator in Port Deposit, Vicki Rinkerman, concerning combining two part time Code Compliance positions into one full time position for both towns.,
- Meeting with Maryland Department of the Environment regarding an emergency repair project.
- Completed her treatments for cancer between March 30-April 10, 2026
- Several meetings with Director of Finance regarding Budget for FY26/27

Director of Finance

Ms. Ittner entered into the record the list of payments issued since the last meeting, the Check Register, General Fund Balance Sheet and Statement of Revenue and Expenditures.

Ms. Ittner stated she is continuing to work with Department Heads along with several meetings with the Town Administrator regarding the Fiscal Year Budget 2026-2027.

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mrs. Vennell entered her March monthly report into the record. Mrs. Vennell reported she attended the April 14, 2026 Open House for the North East 2040 Draft Comprehensive Plan, conducted at the North East Library, and reported that the open house was very well attended with approximately 33 attendees and a lot of feedback from visitors.

Chief of Police

Chief Yates read his report into the record. Chief Yates also reported about the various events the Police Department will be involved with over the next few months.

Water Plant Superintendent

Mr. Ron Carter entered his March monthly report into the record. Mr. Carter also reported that the most recent water testing results show that they will be out of violation. Mr. Carter reported that he is pleased to be working with a team put together by ENTECH, which will be utilized to track down problem areas. It is expected that the plan of action will involve a lot of testing.

Mr. Carter reported that the SCATDA program is nearly complete at the Leslie Water Treatment Plant, and the SCATA program will be starting soon at the Rolling Mill Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Carter reported that there will be hydrant flushing this week.

Mayor Benson commended Mr. Carter on all the hard and diligent work on the projects and his work on the problem solving.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

-NEW BUSINESS-

Town Administrator

1. Public works agreement extension request: North East Gateway, (Lot 2) 125 Gateway Drive & (Lot 3) 100 Gateway Drive

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton made a motion to approve the Public Works Agreement extension for two years. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, and approved by all.

- 2: Water Service Agreement extension request; David Ayers, Two ERU on Razor Strap Road.

This agenda item was tabled, as clarification on the request was needed.

Mayor

Mayor Benson referenced that they have elected to withdraw from the Bond Program that the Town had previously been interested in participating with. Mayor Benson informed the Board it was decided unanimously that this was not the optimum time to borrow money. Ms. Cook-Mackenzie reported that there will be another opportunity in the Fall 2026.

Mayor Benson told the Town Board that he has been corresponding with a Charter School group who has been interested in utilizing the North East Middle School building, once it is vacated. Mayor Benson reported that along with internal dialogue with the Charter School group. Mayor Benson reported that on two occasions, he and Town Staff have met with the

Charter School group, where they shared proposals of their visions of the Charter School. Mayor Benson reported:

1. Background: There has been a precedent that when there is a surplus school, the Board of Education gives the school to the municipality. The municipality then can decide what to do with the property. The county doesn't want to implement something for the re-use of a school building when it is located in the middle of the town.
2. Mayor Benson continued by reporting that there have been discussions with an organization about a charter school for this site, and reported that the organization is adamant this is a good site for a charter school. Mayor Benson stated that until he has some more information that tells us that this is a good decision for the re-use of the North East Middle School, he is unable to move forward. Mayor Benson has spoken with a couple representatives from the Cecil County Board of Education, and they let him know that the Board of Education didn't plan to give up the school, to necessarily put in another school.
3. Mayor Benson reported that the organization who is behind the charter school, has requested a recommendation from the Town for the proposed charter school. Mayor Benson expressed concern that he is not an expert on education, and believes that he does not have the knowledge and expertise in this matter to say whether he can give this recommendation.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that she sent a letter to the manager for the Lowe's store, who came to the Town Board meeting last month, and offered the Town Lowe's support with anything the Town needed assistance with.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that Requisition R6-02054 concerns the Street and sidewalks and sign project from 2014:

1. Requisition R6-02054-CDA Infrastructure Financing Bonds \$122,162.48 – 2014 Series A Town of North East Repayment Agreement:

Principle	\$ 101,500.00
Interest	\$ 20,446.95
Trustee Fee	\$ 215.53
 Total:	 \$ 122,162.48

A motion to approve Requisition R6-02054 was made by Vice-Mayor Kim Davis, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

VOTE TO ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION:

The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East will hold a Closed Session, this evening, April 22, 2026, after the Town Board Meeting. The time for the regular meeting was moved to 6:00 p.m. The Closed Session Meeting is pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, 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 go into the executive session was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis at 6:20 p.m. A ten-minute recess was called.

-ADJOURNMENT-

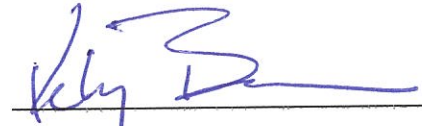
With no further business to discuss, Commissioner DeMatt made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning



Kelly Benson, Mayor