

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

May 27, 2026

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

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

-ROLL CALL-

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

Mayor Benson tabled the approval of the below list of minutes as presented. These minutes will be presented and approved on Wednesday, June 10, 2026.

April 22, 2026 – Executive Session Meeting
May 13, 2026 – Regular Meeting
May 13, 2026 - Fiscal Year 2026- 2027 Budget Workshop
May 20, 2026 - Fiscal Year 2026 -2027 Meeting

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

William Streaker, President, North East Fire Department is speaking to the Board tonight on behalf on the North East Fire Department to request additional funding from the Town of North East. All paperwork has been filled out as requested by the Town's administration and submitted. President Streaker gave a history of the North East Fire Department and how they have been supporting the Town for over 100 years. The fire department has over 8 million in assets and a little over 3 million in liquid assets which is currently invested. June 1, 2026 the fire department is having a special stockholders meeting for approval of a 4.3 million dollar structure at the corner of Theodore Road and Route 274. President Streaker stated the current funding the Town has been funding to the fire department has been, \$30,000.00. In 2024 the fire company requested the Town to fund \$200,000.00 level, 2025 they requested a level of \$160,000.00 and 2026 \$175,000 level. For example, and this number comes from the National

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average for responses from last year. The North East Fire Department received 720 calls, each call costs, \$400.00 at the minimum, the amount the Town funds, \$30,000.00, this barely covers the cost of the response calls. President Streaker is here to speak at tonight's meeting to request more funding from the Town.

Jeff Isaacs, Deputy Chief, North East Fire Department expressed he has attended several Board meetings over the years, and has sat down with the Town Administrator and the President of the North East Fire Department to discuss other options to get additional funding for the fire department. The Deputy Chief is asking for additional funding for apparatuses to help service our community. They have one on order, it takes 3 years to receive which would be in 2028. The cost, \$1.4 million compared to the 2007 which they paid \$400,000.00. Deputy Chief Isaacs thanked the Board for their continuous support throughout the years.

Kevin Kline, Board of Directors, North East Fire Department and who oversees the fundraising for the fire company. Our fundraisers throughout the year for our community does not touch the dollar amounts needed the President and Deputy Chief have given. Mr. Kline explained, after speaking with several residents during community events, they had no idea a majority of our fire department are volunteers. They thought Station 4 & 44 were funded by the Town, County and State. His suggestion, if the residents realize they are volunteers, they will be willing to help, the public needs to be aware, which means this could be an opportunity for more funding from the community.

Mayor Benson asked the name of their insurance company they use for the fire company. Kevin Kline, answered, Insurance Service Office (ISO), they give fire ratings, which the North East Fire Company are rated at mid-range. The range is based off the age of your apparatus, trainings, funding, along with takes that are done within the firehouse. This all comes into play with all residents that live within town limits. The ranking is from 1 – 7, being the poorest. ISO comes out to inspect randomly, they expressed, they are due for an inspection. The class ratings apply to the insurance ratings. Mayor Benson suggested applying for grants, Kevin Kline stated he sits on the grant committee for the fire department. In the fire service, 95 percent of all grants that are a substantial cost, you have to apply after you purchase the item. You don't get to put a grant in stating you want this amount, you have to spend the money, then ask for a refund. The other 5 percent of grants, they are received on a regular basis for supplies etc., for the fire house.

After further discussion, Mayor Benson suggested, there needs to be structure regarding the annual budget and disbursements. This information would need to be received by the first of every year so this is not a request cycle, a standard process for the Town, but is meaningful for the North East Fire Department.

-PUBLIC HEARING-

Mayor Benson opened the Public Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund, Enterprise (Water) Fund and Storm Water Fund Budgets

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie gave an overview of the Ordinance 2026-06-01 into the record. There were no comments from the public nor the Board; therefore, Mayor Benson closed the Public Hearing.

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS-

Resolution C-2026-05-01-A – Annexation Resolution

A Resolution of the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East adopted pursuant to the authority of Article XI-E., Constitution of the State of Maryland, and MD Code, Local Government, § 4-401, et seq., for the enlargement of the corporate boundaries of the Town of North East by the annexation of certain land contiguous to and adjoining the existing corporate boundaries of North East.

Resolution C-2026-05-02-A - Annexation Plan

A Resolution of the Town of North East to adopted pursuant to the authority of the MD Code, Local Government, §4-401, et seq. the "Annexation", to adopt an Annexation Plan for the area proposed to be annexed by P.L.L. Corporation, more particularly identified in the Petition for Annexation filed by P.L.L. Corporation, by and through its officers, Lynn L. Howard and Thomas W. Amrein, on May 13, 2026, attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein.

Melissa Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board, Resolutions C-2026-05-01-A & C-2026-05-02-A is for introduction only. There will be further discussion at a future town board meeting.

-GUESTS-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS-

Vice-Mayor Davis made a motion to adopt Resolutions 2026-05-03, 2026-05-04, 2026-05-05, 2026-05-06, 2026-05-07 and 2026-05-08, Commissioner Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and was approved by all.

- Resolution 2026-05-03 - Circuit Rider Funding for Fiscal Year 2027
- Resolution 2026-05-04 – To Declare Juneteenth as a Permanent Holiday to be Observed Annually
- Resolution 2026-05-05 - Adopts the Amount the Town will contribute toward premiums for Medical Insurance
- Resolution 2026-05-06 - Adopts the Amount the Town will contribute toward premiums for Dental and Vision Insurance
- Resolution 2026-05-07 - Adopts the Amount which the Town will contribute toward a Life Insurance Policy for each full-time employee
- Resolution 2026-05-08 - To Amend the Administrative Fee Schedule

Resolution 2026-05-09 - To Amend the Planning and Zoning Schedule of Fees, Charges and Expenses

Mayor Benson requested Resolution 2026-05-09 be tabled until further discussion regarding the amendment to the Planning and Zoning Schedule of Fees, Charges and Expenses.

-INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES-

Ordinance 2026-06-01 -- To Amend the Definition of Assisted Living Facility and Group Home; To add a definition for Adaptive Refuse Development

Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East for the Purpose of Amending the Town of North East Zoning Ordinance. Article 3. To Amend the Definition of Assisted Living Facility and Group Home; to Add a Definition for Adaptive Refuse Development.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie advised the Board this is for introduction only, there will be further discussion at a future town board meeting.

-ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES-

Ordinance 2026-05-02 - 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.

A motion to approve Ordinance 2026-05-02 was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the May 13, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 5.20.2026 – The Town hosted WILMAPCO and Wallace Montgomery who did a 2-Way Study on Mauldin Avenue. There was a report, basically there is an ongoing group that continuous on looking at the data and feasibility
- 5.20.2026 – Met with the Department of Natural Resources for a Bikeways Grant with the exception of looking at a potential mixed use pedestrian path thru Elk Neck State Park up to Ridgely Forest this would connect into town
- 5.28.2026 - Met regarding Human Resources topics, attended a Department Head meeting spoke briefly regarding the Bikeways Grant. The study is complete and the town staff is looking into projects that the town could try and get designed funding. The focus is Route 7 and a specific project here in town. Also, met with the contractor from the Chesapeake Club, North East to go over the water service which the town was presented with and possibly having them annexed in to the Town of North East

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the May 13, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 5.14 – 5.21.2026 – Volunteer through the Department of Community Services, Friendly Visitor Program. Spent time with her person, she is a resident from North East
- 5.17.2026, – Participated with her Vintage Group over 55 who get together with the youth for games, snack and to share their wisdom and they share their youth with them
- 5.18.2026 - Helped another resident in cleaning out her home, this is also volunteer
- 5.19.2026 – Presented a family on how they can order a Memorial Bench at the North East Community Park
- 5.20.2026 – Attended the Town Hall Board meeting to Introduce a new Ordinance for Budget 2027

Vice-Mayor Davis stated she has been away for the past 4 days, her son graduated from college and his present was to visit Cleveland, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Today she sent over to the Assistant Town Administrator information regarding Cecil Cares. This is a 2-day event which helps the town and the entire County.

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

None

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the May 13, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Several meetings with the Director of Finance regarding the fiscal year 2027 budget, this has been a good process for her new roll
- Attended the Budget Workshop
- North East Civic League is celebrating their 75th Anniversary. On May 15, 2026 they toured the new North East Library, Mauldin Avenue, Former Library, 106 West Cecil Avenue and the Old Town Hall Lockup, 102 West Cecil Avenue. The contractor of the project, Michael Urine was asked for specifically for the tour
- Met with the Upper Bay Museum regarding several needs, aging issues, the building is owned by the town along with the Boat Builders. Her along with the Assistant Town Administrator has talked about a bond bill for the buildings
- Just a reminder, Saturday, June 6th, 2026 the IKE Foundation Bass Tournament will be held at the North East Community Park. The children's activities will start at 9:00 a.m.
- Attended a LGIT webinar, with the Town Clerk regarding ADA compliant with social media
- Met with the Town Clerk on several items and working on several Resolutions

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the May 13, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Payton Hardy, the Town's intern, has done a great job so far and has hit the ground running with various projects, including research, presentation creation, constituent correspondence, and report generation
- March 20th, 2026 WILMAPCO conducted a walking tour of Mauldin Avenue and presented the feasibility study for the Mauldin Avenue Two-Way Study to regional planners and Town representatives
- March 21st, attended the WILMAPCO Council meeting in Newark and had a productive discussion regarding the sidewalk gap study analysis
- Worked with the Mayor on the release of the Town of North East Tourism Map applications
- Worked with Amy on the release of the Town's Commercial Façade Grant applications
- Wayfinding signs are currently awaiting Miss Utility mark-outs/checks prior to installation
- Have been formulating a methodology to achieve compliance to Maryland SB 871 cybersecurity regulations and reporting requirements for the water plant
- The Preserve cleanout project is nearing completion; we are currently waiting for the mud to dry before installation of the first trail segment
- Community Garden continues to be successful

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 4.30.26
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 4.1.26 to 4.30.26
- Check Register as of 4.22.26 to 5.24.26

Mayor Benson thanked the Director of Finance and the Town Administrator for their teamwork during the budget 2027 process.

Director of Planning and Zoning

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

- Permits are down due to the time of year \$485.00
- Major Facility \$11,300.00
- Connection Fees \$5,650.00

Mrs. Vennell reported she is getting ready for the Comprehensive Plan to be sent to the State of Maryland. A nine-page Ordinance was sent to the Town's Attorney along with the State, who looked at the document, and advised there was no problem with the paperwork.

Mrs. Vennell reported the Planning Commission accepted the 2025 Annual Planning Report, she will have this document to the Board for their review. The North East Fire Company Carnival has been approved for the month of July by the Special Events Committee.

Chief of Police

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

- For the Mayor & Commissioners, there will be a CPR training, Tuesday, June 2nd & Tuesday, June 9th, at 10:00 a.m. at the North East Police Department Administration Building, training room
- Tuesday, June 9th is the Torch Run starting at MSP, Route 40, North East and run down South Main Street to the North East Community Park for a picnic after the run
- National Night Out will be the first Tuesday in August 2026

Water Plant Superintendent

Mr. Ron Carter entered into the record the April 2026 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Plants. In addition, Mr. Carter reported the following:

Mr. Carter reported the SCADA Project is finished at the Leslie Plant, there was a few minor hiccups. The Rolling Mill, doing a final sludge test, Thursday, May 28th, next week, the filters will be put online. The Pond Project at the Rolling Mill is almost completed, they are waiting for the fence to be placed back around the pond perimeter.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

Water Service Agreement Extension Request: Freedom Development LLC. Montgomery Oaks Section 2, Phases 1, 2 & 3

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board a Water Service Agreement Extension for Montgomery Oaks Section 2, Phases 1, 2 & 3.

A motion to approve the Water Service Agreement Extension Request for a three-year extension, from November 18, 2024 expiring November 18, 2027 with the recommendation of the Planning Office was made Vice Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Budget Amendment 2026-011

Water Fund Revenue

Fund Balance Resources **\$73,561.00**

Expenditures

Supplies – Lines \$15,000.00
Supplies - Labs \$2,700.00
Supplies - Electricity \$30,000.00
OT Service – Lab \$5,861.00
Property Service – R&M Services \$20,000.00

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2026-011 was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

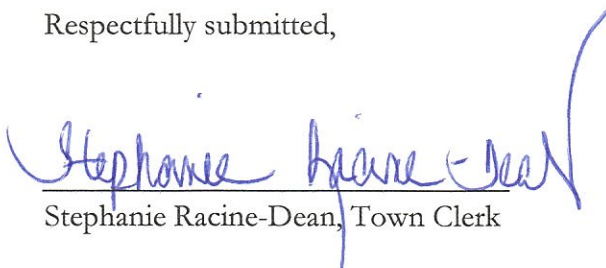
Russell Polo, 4 North Main Street, North East wanted to speak regarding the perception of the water that is supplied to the residence by the Town. This is a requiring item, when he is asked by others where he lives, he gets remarks, you don't drink the water do you? Mr. Polo is suggesting, maybe the town needs to put out public relations (PR) bliss to get the word out, the town is working towards safe water and it's safe to drink. The Town Administrator states there will be a report going out in the month of June.

Jeff Isaacs, Deputy Chief, North East Fire Department asked for a copy of the fiscal year 2027 Budget. The Town Administrator, stated she would give him a copy directly after the board meeting.

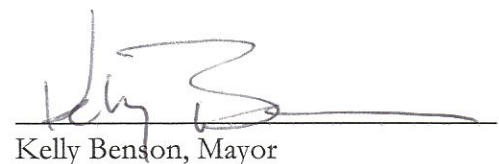
-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

ATTEST:


Kelly Benson, Mayor