

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

July 22, 2026

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:03 P.M. Present were Vice Mayor- Kimberly Davis and Commissioners Hilary Crothers-Moore. 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, Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Neil DeMatt, 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.

-ROLL CALL-

-APPROVAL OF AGENDA-

Mayor Benson would like to amend tonight's agenda and postpone, Ordinance 2026-07-01: Code of Ordinance & Amendments:

- Cover Letter Code of Ordinance Updates
- Chapter 1 – Edits
- Chapter 2 – Edits
- Chapter 4 – Edits Public Conduct Code
- Chapter 5 – Edits Code Security and Provisions
- Chapter 6 – Edits
- Chapter 7 – Edits Code
- Table of Contents
- Renumbering.

A motion to amend tonight's agenda and postpone, Ordinance 2026-07-01, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-OATH OF OFFICE –

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office to Patrol Officer, Erin M. Mahaffey as the newest member of the North East Police Department.

Town Board Approved Minutes August 12, 2026

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2026 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-GUEST-

Payton Hardy, Intern to Assistant Town Administrator

The Assistant Town Administrator briefed the Board on the accomplishments, Payton Hardy, Intern gave this past Summer to the Town of North East:

- Graduate student from Catholic University, Washington D.C.
- Created Open Meetings Act Training PPT
- Created Public Information Act Training PPT
- Emergency Response Plan Edits
- Assisting in editing the Town of North East Code Ordinances - particularly researching neighboring jurisdictions fees
- Project managed the Old Town Lock-Up open house and helped recruit future usage tenants
- Helped assist with the creation of the Town of North East Newsletter
- Helped market facade grant applications
- Assisted on the Town of North East Wonder Map encouraging participation of businesses
- Participated in the WILMAPCO 272 Corridor Walk
- Participated in the Torch Run with Special Olympics
- ARPA and Grant-Funded Projects Photo Catalog
- Capital Funding Request Letter to Gov Moore's Administration Regarding the North East Preserve
- CPTED Final Project
- New internship application
- Draft template writing for various projects

The Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley thanked Payton for all her hard work she has given to the Town and wished her luck for a bright future.

Payton Hardy gave a presentation, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), which is a multi-disciplinary approach to urban and architectural design that deters criminal behavior, reduces fear, and fosters positive community interaction. CPTED operates through:

*Natural Surveillance *Social Cohesion *Access Control *Maintenance *Reinforcement

Recommendations that were given to the Town of North East:

- Construct sidewalks or share-use paths
- Install marked crosswalks in key locations

Town Board Approved Minutes August 12, 2026

- Improve/add street lighting
- Add/remove landscaping to improve visibility
- Incorporate bicycle accommodations where appropriate

Mayor Benson asked Payton how she selected the topic of Environmental Design (CPTED). She expressed she wanted to take what she learned from college and apply what she is learning from the town and include the community she has grown up in. Mayor Benson and the Board thanked Payton for her well-done presentation and wished her continued luck for her future. Mayor Benson presented a Proclamation honoring Payton Hardy, Intern for the Assistant Town Administrator, for her outstanding service to the Town of North East.

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS-

None

-GUESTS-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS-

Resolution No. 2026-05-09: Adopting Adaptive Reuse Development Application Fee

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-05-09 was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

Resolution No. 2026-07-01: Waiving for Businesses during FY 26-27 the following permit and application fee: Change of Use Permit, Sign Permit, Special Exception (with site plan) Application, Special Exception (without site plan) Application and Variance Application

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-07-01 was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Ordinance 2026-07-01: Code of Ordinance & Amendments: Cover Letter Code of Ordinance Updates, Chapter 1 – Edits, Chapter 2 – Edits, Chapter 4 – Edits Public Conduct Code, Chapter 5 – Edits Code Security and Provisions, Chapter 6 – Edits, Chapter 7 – Edits Code, Table of Contents and Renumbering

There was a motion to amend tonight's agenda and postpone, Ordinance 2026-07-01, during the approval of tonight's agenda.

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES -

None

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson wanted to complement the Town Administrator and the Assistant Town Administrator for making quick decisions in the last couple of weeks with deadlines. He also commended them for working through the challenges and making excellent changes for the future.

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the July 8, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Settled on the design of the Town of North East Visitor's Guide
- Met with town staff regarding smart advertising and using the budget funds from Cecil County Tourism to hopefully get more foot traffic here in Town
- Wrapped-up the open period for the Town's Façade Grant Program, with applications received. The Planning Commission will be making selections on how the awards will be awarded
- Met with the Town attorney regarding annexation and touched on several topics as well
- Had a great meeting regarding North East Preserve, the town has the opportunity through the Assistant Town Administrator, connections where the Town may have potential money from private sectors to help fund the project
- Multiple discussions on a future businesses here in town and how to help them open in a timely manner

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the July 8, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 7.10.26 – Met with Friendly Visitor person for a few hours as part of the Cecil County Community Services Friendly Visitor Program and also attended Second Fridays to continue to celebrate our country's 250th Anniversary
- 7.15.26 - Worked on taking inventory and organizing supplies in preparation for this school year for English as a Second Language (ESL)
- 7.16.26 – Met with Friendly Visitor person for a few hours. In the evening attended our Cecil/Harford County chapter for Maryland Municipal League (MML) Dinner meeting at The Carriage House in Port Deposit. This was our meeting to award two \$1,000 scholarships to deserving students. One from Cecil and one from Harford County. Current Scholarship Chair, Adam, Hiob, passed the reigns of Scholarship

Chair to me for this coming year. He has needed to step down from this role since he will be very active in his District 10 duties. A local historian gave an enlightening history lesson on Port Deposit

- 7.17.26 - Attended the 55 Plus AmeriCorps Senior Volunteer Leadership Program (VLP) reunion at the Senior Center
- 7.18.26 - Attended the Open House for the Historic Elk Landing. This sight is on the Patriotic Pathway. Christine Hurschman led our walk-through time. She volunteers for the Elk Landing Foundation and was the historian who welcomed folks at the Old Lock Up Open house here in town
- 7.22.2026 - Attended the Town Staff picnic at the North East Park

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she attended the following meetings since the July 8, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 2 Y.M.C.A. Scholarships were given to children that passed their swimming certification
- Attended 2nd Fridays on July 10th
- Attended the Maryland Municipal League Dinner, Thursday, July 23rd

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the July 8, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Continuing to work with the Director of Finance on fiscal year 2026-2027 requirements along with the audit
- Worked with the Director of Planning on several projects along with working to get vacancies filled
- Working with Mayor Benson regarding Ordinances of Code & Zoning
- Working with the Department Heads regarding their needs
- Attended the Town Staff picnic at the North East Park

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the July 8, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Attended the WILMAPCO Council meeting on Thursday, July 9th
- Façade Grant applications have been received and forwarded to the Planning Commission for review
- Please to report that the Code of Ordinances update is complete. Melissa and I will distribute the materials to the Mayor and Commissioners for review as soon as they finalized
- Met with the Office of Rural Economic Strategy to discuss the Town's funding request for the North East Preserve in Governor Moore's FY2028 Capital Budget

- The Town of North East Wonder Map has been completed and sent to print. Once received, I will distribute copies to as many locations as possible both within and outside the community
- Assisted with preparations for today's Employee Appreciation Cookout
- Assisted the Mayor with various ongoing initiatives
- Continued assisting Payton with internship projects and assignments

Director of Finance

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

- Check Register as of 6.24.26 to 7.19.27
- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 6.30.26
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 6.1.26 to 6.30.26

Mayor Benson asked if there are any highlights she would like to share with the Board regarding the finances. The Director of Finance stated, the auditors advised, fiscal year 2026 files can remain open for 120 days, this is to give the opportunity for all items to be posted accurately.

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mayor Benson wanted to complement the Director of Planning and Zoning for all her help with projects pertaining to the Planning Office. Mayor Benson stated there are a lot of projects moving forward along with the her keeping up with the department's daily tasks. Good things are in the future.

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

- Public Hearing for the Ordinance 2026-06-01 Amendment, still hoping to get codified
- Texas Road House received their pulmonary approval, there in the stretch to finalize the site plan, and return back to the town
- Board of Appeals did not meet, there were no applications received. One application was submitted but, not complete
- The Department took in \$18,545.00 with escrow and connection fees. The escrow fees go to the town's consultants which are used on behalf of the developer. The fees they don't use go back to the project owner
- Unicorn Quest and the Crab Crawl, the committee has approved both repeat event applications. The Unicorn Quest will be held, Saturday, August 29th with the Crab Crawl, Saturday, September 12th
- There will be additional Zoning Ordinance Amendment along with a Subdivision Amendment, that will be worked on by the Planning Commission very soon
- Comp Plans are due by the end of July 2026

- The Planning Commission will be reviewing the Commercial Façade Grants. They did request in the future for a Residential Façade Grant

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she along with the Director of Planning and Chief Yates, had a meeting with Maryland State Highway regarding the North East Retail Center. It went very well; we learned a lot as far as the process. The concerns the Town has, there were a few items eliminated, from the traffic impact study. Maryland State Highway made it very clear to the town staff, they are no way near the end of the process.

Chief of Police

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

- 29 adult arrests for the month of June 2026
- Officer issued 126 traffic stops citations and 93 warnings
- Discussions with other Chiefs in Cecil County regarding continuous riding of dirt bikes on the streets throughout the corporate limits. Chief Yates stated his department is working with the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to create a templet for search warrants. The process will be, find where the juveniles live, fill out the templet and go into the residence to seize the dirt bikes/4 wheelers or illegal vehicle and store the item
- Spoke with the town's attorney, David Beste along with Tim Kearns, Maryland Highway Safety, to apply for grants regarding speed enforcement and reckless driving. This will help in the communities and Mauldin Avenue
- National Night Out will be held, Tuesday, August 4th at the North East Community Park

Water Superintendent

Assistant Town Administrator entered into the record, on behalf of Ron Carter, Water Superintendent the June 2026 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Treatment Plants.

Assistant Town Administrator also reported for the Water Superintendent, the town passed the TTHM and HAA5 from the Maryland Department of Environment for the second quarter. This is very impressive, usually the month of July, historically, the town fails on these categories due to the heat, storm conditions and sediments. SCADA is 80 percent complete along with the Leslie Water Treatment Plant, waiting for the materials to complete the fencing. Mayor Benson asked for the Assistant Town Administrator to give the Water Superintendent, Ron Carter a pat on his back for all his hard work.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

Water Allocation Request: North East Developers, LLC., Chesapeake Club – 498 Equivalent Residential Units (ERU)

A motion to postpone Water Allocation Request, to North East Developers, LLC. was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-NEW BUSINESS-

None

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Budget Amendment 2027-001

Revenue

Fund Balances Resources \$449,700.00

Expenditures

Fixed Assets – Machinery \$449,700.00 Water Service Professionals
Emergency Filter Rehabilitation

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2027-001 was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Hilary Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

Requisition R7-00054 – Water Service Professionals \$350,200.00 Emergency Filter Rehabilitation

A motion to approve Resolution R7-00054 to Water Service Professionals for the Emergency Filter Rehabilitation in the amount of \$350,200.00 was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

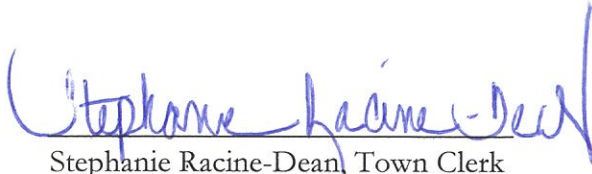
-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Vice Mayor reported, Dawn Rodenbaugh, Program Administrator, Cecil County Neighborhood Youth Panel, Inc. is retiring the end of July and relocating to St. Mary's County, Maryland. This is a great loss to our community, she served Cecil County for 26 years. Vice-Mayor Davis also reported, the Cecil County 55 Plus Healthy Lifestyle Expo will be held, Thursday, August 6, 2026 from 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Elkton High School with the cost of \$12.00.

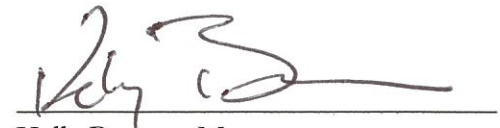
-ADJOURNMENT-

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 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

ATTEST:


Kelly Benson, Mayor