Minutes

Special Session - Town Council - FY2026 Levy & Budget Approval

Town of Chesapeake - Meetings

Date	3/27/2025
Time	6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Present	Melissa Hill, Ron Petty, Dona Lacy, Arianna McLaughlin, David Lloyd, Wes Dillard, Craig Smith, Katie Miller
Absent	Robin Taylor
Note Taker	Melissa Hill

Agenda

1 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM. The Mayor outlined the purpose of the meeting as a public hearing for the FY2026 budget and levy proposal and to address any concerns the Council might have regarding the budget. The Mayor expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead the town and asked for guidance and protection for the town's first responders. The meeting began with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

2 - Roll Call

Roll call was conducted, and the following council members were present: David Lloyd (Council at Large), Ron Petty (Ward 1), Donna Lacy (Ward 1), Wesley Diller (Ward 2), Arianna McLaughlin (Ward 2), Katie Miller (Ward 3), and Craig Smith (Ward 3). It was confirmed that a quorum was present, allowing the meeting to proceed.

3 - Overview of Proposed FY2026 Budget & Levy

The Mayor presented an overview of the proposed FY2026 budget and levy. The budget includes a total of $110,000 from property taxes, contributing to an overall budget of $800,000, with grants bringing the total to $121,000,000. The Mayor explained that the budget is primarily used for employee salaries and resources. The workbook detailing the budget was presented, highlighting the Certificate of Valuation based on county assessments and property taxes. The Mayor explained how property taxes are distributed among the town, state, and other entities.

The discussion covered the general fund review, including non-spendable fund balances, restricted funds, and assigned funds. The Mayor detailed various revenue sources such as property taxes, excise taxes, and municipal service fees. The Mayor also addressed the issue of uncollected taxes and the decision to use third-party contractors for tax collection.

The Mayor provided a detailed breakdown of expenditures, including state grants, salaries for the Mayor and City Council, and the City Clerk's office. The Mayor emphasized the importance of proper financial management and the need for forensic accounting to address past financial discrepancies. The budget also included allocations for public works, police and fire departments, and community services.

4 - Public Comments

The floor was opened for public comments on the FY2026 budget and levy proposal. Several residents voiced their concerns and questions. One resident questioned the lack of active tax collection over the past 12 years and the communication regarding the police force levy. The Mayor responded by explaining the challenges faced in tax collection and the efforts to improve transparency and financial management.

Another resident, raised concerns about the advertisement of the levy and the availability of budget documents. The Mayor assured that the documents were made available as required and emphasized the transparency of the process.

Deanna Schmidt clarified that any levy imposition would require a general or special election and cannot be decided solely by the Council or Mayor. The Mayor acknowledged this and reiterated commitment to following legal procedures.

A resident questioned the feasibility of the proposed police budget, suggesting the use of part-time officers to manage costs. The Mayor explained the limitations of the current budget and the efforts to balance fiscal responsibility with the need for effective law enforcement.

5 - Council Discussion & Response to Public Comments

Council members discussed the public comments and provided their responses. Council Member Dona Lacy expressed support for the police department and the need for proper training and certification. The Mayor addressed concerns about the turnover of police officers, emphasizing the challenges of maintaining a stable police force and the efforts to improve working conditions and support for officers.

Council members acknowledged the importance of addressing public concerns and the need for ongoing communication and transparency. They discussed the steps being taken to improve financial management, tax collection, and community services.

6 - Council Vote on FY2026 Levy & Budget Approval

The Council proceeded to vote on the FY2026 levy and budget approval. The motion to approve the budget and levy was put forward, and the Council members voted in favor. The Mayor emphasized the importance of adhering to the approved budget and commitment to financial transparency and accountability.

- Motion: David Lloyd, Craig Smith 2nd Motion – Motion Carried

Appointment - Approved – William Bennett – Sanitary Board Members

- Motion – Ron Petty, 2nd Wesley Dillard – No Questions – Motion Carried

7 - Adjournment

The meeting was formally adjourned following the approval of the FY2026 budget and levy. The Mayor thanked the Council members and residents for their participation and reiterated the commitment to serving the community effectively and transparently.