



CORPORATION OF HARPERS FERRY

Town Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Regular Meeting **Monday, 10 August 2026** **7:00 p.m.**
Town Hall • 1000 Washington Street, 2nd Floor, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Vaughn, followed by a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Member	Title	Status
Greg Vaughn	Mayor	Present
Kevin Carden	Recorder	Present
Chris Craig	Councilmember	Present
Greg “Storm” DiCostanzo	Councilmember	Present
Jesse Z. Melton	Councilmember	Present
Christian Pechuekonis	Councilmember	Present
David Simmons	Councilmember	Present

The agenda was approved as amended.

There was one public comment:

- Zach Morse spoke in favor of the proposed Dark Sky ordinance and against Senate Bill 659 (2026, “prohibiting certain restrictions on regulation of accessory dwelling units”).

1. Mayor’s announcements.

Mayor Vaughn thanked Virliisa Breeden for her years of service to the Town.

2. Recorder’s comments and updates.

None.

3. Community announcements.

a. Hill Top Hotel.

None.

b. National Park Service.

Superintendent Tonya Gossett said the Byron Bridge crossing has been closed until the new steps are installed and completed. The Appalachian Chamber Music Festival concert was quite successful, for which Superintendent Gossett thanked all who attended. An herbicide is being applied at Bolivar Heights and Nash Farm on the 17th of August, which will require the closure of these locations temporarily. A renovation project is being started at Anthony Hall from September 2026 to January 2027. The Park is working on designs for six new wayside exhibits in Lower Town, two of which will include tactile components for the visually impaired. This fall, the National Park Service will begin a pavement preservation project throughout the Park, its properties in the town, and some public streets and ways used by visitors.

c. Other.

Chris Craig extended thanks to the National Park Service for hosting the Appalachian Chamber Music Festival.

Christian Pechuekonis mentioned that the Town will hold a job fair on the 24th of September.

4. Approval of minutes.

a. Regular Council meetings: 13 April 2026, 8 June 2026, 13 July 2026.

- Chris Craig motioned for approval of the 13 April 2026 minutes; David Simmons seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- David Simmons motioned for approval of the 8 June 2026 minutes as amended; Chris Craig seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Chris Craig motioned for approval of the 13 July 2026 minutes as amended; Jesse Melton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Special Council meetings: 27 February 2026, 8 July 2026, 17 July 2026, 29 July 2026 .

- Chris Craig motioned for approval of the 27 February 2026 minutes as amended; Jesse Melton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Chris Craig motioned for approval of the 17 July 2026 minutes as presented; David Simmons seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Chris Craig motioned for approval of the 29 July 2026 minutes as presented; Jesse Melton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The minutes for 8 July 2026 were not available at this time.

5. Town reports.**a. Historic Landmarks Commission.****i. General report.**

George Owen reported that Landmarks held a special meeting in July, the minutes of which will be approved at the regular August meeting. A special meeting will be scheduled to review Appendix A. The president of the Commission will prepare a request to the State for additional funding for current initiatives. The Commission continues to work on a list of vacant and blighted properties. Discussion was held on an application for work at 167 High Street, but there was no action required for a vote by Landmarks. An application for 316 Fillmore Street was approved, pending the president's review with the Code Enforcement Officer. The Commission noted the presence of several snakes at the Hill Top Hotel property, including copperheads.

b. Planning Commission.**i. General report.**

Zach Morris reported that the Planning Commission reviewed the comprehensive plan process. They plan to create a template for the commissions to use when composing their annual reports.

ii. Discussion and action on the composition of the Planning Commission.

Zach Morse reported that the Planning Commission would like to request that the Town Council member on the Planning Commission also be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee. Mayor Vaughn noted that this cannot be done by ordinance, since that committee is a standing committee and not created by ordinance; however, it could be done by Council appointment.

c. Parks and Recreation Commission.**i. General report.**

Zach Morse reported that two of the three recent concerts that had been scheduled were held. The third was prevented by bad weather. During next week's meeting, the Commission will finalize the schedule for fall events.

d. Water Commission.**i. General report from the Public Works Administrator.**

Steve Paradis reported that the unaccounted-for water rate for the last month was in the high 20s, percentage-wise. Greenridge will be reviewing some lines tomorrow. About 750 bills were just sent out for the new radio-read meters. The

collector at High Acre is fully operational and tied into the system. The Gilbert Street project has not yet begun, but preparations are being made for it. Drawings for Phase III of the water project are being prepared; work is expected to begin in Spring 2027. The Water Works is still short-handed.

ii. Water Commission report.

None.

e. Treasurer's reports and approvals.

i. Review and approval of financial reports: June 2026.

Motion	Motion to approve the June 2026 financial reports.
Motion by	Chris Craig
Second	Jesse Melton
YES	7
NO	0
Result	MOTION APPROVED

ii. Approval of invoices and purchases.

Motion	Motion to approve the invoices and purchases as submitted.
Motion by	Chris Craig
Second	David Simmons
YES	7
NO	0
Result	MOTION APPROVED

f. Budget and Finance Committee.

i. Discussion and action regarding Distribution System Phase I.

Storm DiCostanzo said the Budget and Finance Committee is waiting on an easement resolution to move forward on this item.

ii. Discussion and action regarding FY 2024 Distribution System Phase II – Water Meters Resolution 3.

Motion	Motion to approve FY 2024 Distribution System Phase II – Water Meters Resolution 3.
Motion by	Chris Craig
Second	David Simmons
YES	7
NO	0
Result	MOTION APPROVED

iii. Discussion and action regarding update regarding FY 2026 CDS Distribution System Phase III.

Storm DiCostanzo said this item will be presented for bids around September or October of this year.

iv. Discussion and action regarding maintenance of mains contracting.

Storm DiCostanzo said that \$6,050 have been spent of the \$10,000 approved for this item by the Town Council.

v. Discussion and action regarding Water Works vehicle.

Storm DiCostanzo said delivery of the new vehicle is expected by the end of this week.

vi. Discussion and action regarding Water Works personnel capacity.

This item was discussed in executive session.

vii. Discussion and action regarding Harpers Ferry Water Works water testing services.

Storm DiCostanzo said there is word that the State may be closing its water testing service in Kearneysville. This testing is a requirement. The Town is attempting to collaborate with other municipalities in the area to figure out how to manage this closure, if it does happen.

viii. Discussion and action regarding subscription terms.

Jesse Melton recused himself from the discussion and vote on this item.

Motion	Motion to add Visio components to Councilmember Melton's Town Microsoft account for the duration of the website reset project and reimburse Mr. Melton back to October 2025, when the project began.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	MOTION APPROVED

ix. Discussion and action regarding cash management strategy.

No action at this time.

x. Discussion and action regarding Harpers Ferry Annual Signature Event.

Motion	Motion to make Olde Tyme Christmas the Harpers Ferry Signature Event for 2026.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	7
NO	0
Result	MOTION APPROVED

xi. Discussion and action regarding payments for the summer concert series.

Storm DiCostanzo said the contract as written for this year's summer concerts did not have a cancellation clause. He said such a clause is a pretty standard item in most such contracts. The request is that if a concert is cancelled, half the amount that was contracted for the performer is paid. The Parks and Recreation Commission will be voting on this item at their next meeting.

xii. Discussion and action regarding Harpers Ferry Police Department body camera policies.

Mayor Vaughn said he met with the Chief and stated that the officers are not to turn off their body cameras, due to officer safety and Town liability.

xiii. Discussion and action regarding public safety and law enforcement policy.

Storm DiCostanzo said the Budget and Finance Committee adopted a resolution in April on this subject, pending review by legal counsel. The language was taken from a similar resolution by the City of Charles Town. Once it is cleared, it will be sent out for signatures by the police officers.

xiv. Discussion and action regarding Town website.

Storm DiCostanzo said a design kickoff meeting was held. Some Microsoft OneDrive modules may need to be added to the accounts. An additional \$10,000 has been allocated for this implementation. Some additional costs to the vender are projected, but it is not yet known how much this may be. The current estimate for the new site to go live is February or early March of next year.

g. Ordinance Review Committee.**i. Ordinance Review Committee report.**

None.

ii. Discussion and action on first reading for approval of Ordinance 2026-04 Signs, pertaining to historic and solicitation signage.

Main motion	Motion to approve first reading for approval of Ordinance 2026-04 Signs, pertaining to historic and solicitation signage.
Main motion by	Jesse Melton
Second – main motion	Christian Pechuekonis
Amended motion	Motion to add the word “natural” before “person” at 1316.02(k).
Amended motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second – amended	Jesse Melton
YES – amendment	7
NO – amendment	0
Result – amendment	AMENDMENT APPROVED
YES – main motion	7
NO – main motion	0
Result – main motion	MOTION APPROVED AS AMENDED

iii. Discussion and action on first reading for approval of Ordinance 2026-05 Dark Sky, pertaining to the protection of the night sky.

Jesse Melton recused himself from the discussion and vote on this item.

Motion	Motion to approve first reading for approval of Ordinance 2026-05 Dark Sky, pertaining to the protection of the night sky.
Motion by	Chris Craig
Second	Christian Pechuekonis
YES	6
NO	0
Result	MOTION APPROVED

h. Internal Office Operations Committee.

i. General report.

David Simmons reported that the Internal Office Operations Committee will meet this Thursday to talk about job descriptions, among other topics.

6. New business.

a. Discussion and action regarding the implications and response to West Virginia Senate Bill 659.

Christian Pechuekonis said that this bill will benefit most cities and towns in West Virginia, but because Harpers Ferry is completely within a historic district, it will not be very good for this town. The bill primarily concerns Auxiliary Dwelling Units

(ADUs). The bill is currently in effect as West Virginia Code § 8-42. Mr Pechuekonis said it would be a good idea to review the Town's housing ordinances to see how they fit with this new law. Mayor Vaughn suggested that he and a couple of Council members sit down with Senator Patricia Rucker to discuss this law and how it will affect Harpers Ferry. Mr Pechuekonis felt the first step would be to consult with the Town Attorney, then with Senator Rucker. After further deliberation, it was decided to first discuss this bill with the Town Attorney.

Motion	Motion to enter executive session, pursuant to WV Code § 6-9A-4(b)(2)(A).
Motion by	Chris Craig
Second	Christian Pechuekonis
Result	MOTION APPROVED. Executive session began at 8:49 p.m.

The executive session ended at 9:16 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Chris Craig, seconded by David Simmons. Meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

The above minutes are true and correct, as approved.

Mayor: _____

Date: _____

Recorder: _____

Date: _____