Corporation of Harpers Ferry
Town Council
DRAFT MINUTES

Regular Meeting
October 12, 2026 - 7 p.m.

Town Hall 1000 Washington Street, 2nd Floor
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

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

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

Mr. DiCostanzo and Mr. Craig were appointed as Recording Officers for the meeting

II. Approval of agenda.

- The agenda was approved as amended, to take up item 7.a following item 4.b (Motion Mr. Craig, second by Mr. Simmons, approved 6-0)

III. Public comments on agenda items only.

Public comment was limited to three minutes per speaker and fifteen minutes total. The following persons signed up and spoke:

- Ed Wheeless, on behalf of the Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Historic Town Foundation, regarding agenda item 5.d.vi.
- Melissa Hope, of Kabletown, regarding the proposed transmission line projects.
- Grant Davies, of Mount Hammond, regarding the proposed transmission line projects.
- Zach Morse, regarding the proposed transmission line projects and upcoming Parks and Recreation events.

1. Mayor's announcements.

Mayor Vaughn acknowledged volunteers who have worked at the Franklin Street park: Marie and Dan DesJardins, Deborah Lansbury, and Pat Morse, along with Larry Waters.

2. Recorder comments and updates.

No report. The Recorder was absent.

3. Community Announcements.

3.a Hilltop Hotel.

No update.

3.b National Park Service.

No update.

3.c Other.

- Mr. Craig reported that the Byron Bridge closure has been extended through the fall.
- Mr. Craig noted the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- Mr. Simmons thanked Officer Corbin for his assistance when Mr. Simmons' mother-in-law fell, and Mr. Craig noted his assistance with a cell phone rescue.

4. Approval of Minutes.

4.a Regular meetings: September 14, 2026.

No action was taken.

4.b Special meetings: July 8, 2026 and September 24, 2026.

- The minutes of the July 8, 2026 special meeting were approved as presented (Motion Mr. Craig, second by Mr. Simmons, approved 6-0)
- The minutes of the September 24, 2026 special meeting were approved as presented (Motion Mr. Craig, second by Mr. Melton, approved 6-0)

Item 7.a was taken up at this point in the meeting under the agenda as amended, and is recorded in agenda order below.

5. Town Reports.

5.a Planning Commission.

5.a.i General report.

A special meeting was held regarding Boundary Street jointly with Bolivar. The Mayor of Bolivar and a member of the Bolivar Planning Commission attended.

5.a.ii Discussion and Action on Addressing Stormwater Runoff Along Boundary Street.

Planning Commission Chair Zach Morse reported on stormwater runoff along Boundary Street, including conditions at the property at the corner of Boundary and Fillmore Streets, and presented the following recommendations:

- That RK&K evaluate stormwater along Boundary Street. Mr. DiCostanzo reported that this recommendation has already been taken up by the Budget and Finance Committee.
- That the Code Enforcement Officer enforce requirements on lots 4, 5, 8, and 9 along Fillmore Street. Mayor Vaughn reported that a letter had already been sent.
- That 15 m.p.h. speed limit signs be installed.

Motion	Move to have the Code Enforcement Officer to enforce erosion control measures lots 4, 5, 8, and 9 along Fillmore Street, and to have two 15 m.p.h. cautionary speed limit signs, or a two-sided sign, placed along Boundary Street.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.a.iii Discussion and Action on Replacing Town Hall Exterior Lights and Fixtures in Accordance with the New Lighting Ordinance.

The exterior fixtures on Town Hall are not in compliance with the new lighting ordinance. It was suggested that the Dark Skies Committee will work with the Code Enforcement Officer on suitable replacement. No action was taken.

5.a.iv Discussion and Action on Reinstalling the Historic Over-Street Light at the Intersection of Washington and Columbia Streets.

Mr. Pechuekonis will speak with the Potomac Edison liaison to explore options for lighting the intersection of Columbia and Washington Streets and for reinstalling the historic light fixture.

5.b Water Commission.

5.b.i General report from the Public Works Administrator.

Public Works Administrator Steve Paradis reported 317 hours on the filters and 6 million gallons produced, with 36 percent unaccounted for water.

Work on Gilbert Street has begun. Rock was encountered at the Harpers Ferry end, and an unanticipated sewer tap was found at a vacant lot.

Sixty-one meters remain to be installed, with 44 targeted for this fall. Sixteen are National Park Service meters. Eighteen are inside sets, ten of them at private homes. All Phase I funds are to be expended by the end of the calendar year.

A chlorine leak occurred at the plant on September 24 at 1:00 p.m., caused by a bad seal on a control valve; emergency responders shut off the gas. The town is considering a move to liquid chlorine, in consultation with GD&F and the State Health Department. Shepherdstown has made the same change; liquid chlorine is more expensive but less hazardous.

A minor leak on Washington Street in Bolivar was repaired by Green Ridge without requiring an additional deployment. A leak on Overview Drive is under investigation.

5.b.ii Water Commission Report.

No separate report. The report was given by the Public Works Administrator under item 5.b.i above.

5.b.iii Discussion and action regarding Water Works staffing.

A Class II Operator candidate has been interviewed. The candidate has worked with and is recommended by former HFWW operators. A background check and reference calls remain to be completed. Chief Operator training is being considered for the PWA, two current Water Operators, and the incoming Class II Operator. The field technician posting remains active.

5.c Treasurer's reports and approvals.

5.c.i Review and approval of financial reports: August 2026.

The Finance Officer presented the financial reports.

Motion	Move to approve the financial reports as presented.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.c.ii Approval of invoices and purchases.

The Finance Officer presented the invoices and purchases.

Motion	Move to approve the invoices and purchases as presented.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.d Budget and Finance Committee.

5.d.i Discussion and action regarding Distribution System Phase I.

The Gilbert Street project is active. The amount of additional funding available will be known on its completion. Improving the chlorine room at the water plant is the leading candidate project.

5.d.ii Discussion and action regarding FY24 Distribution System Phase II — Water Meters.

An update on installations was provided during the October 6. Roughly ten meters will remain unchanged when the phase is complete. Priority is being given to completing the National Park Service and large meters. The customer interface is expected to be deployed within a month. Leak detection training is scheduled for October.

5.d.iii Discussion and action regarding FY26 CDS Distribution System Phase III.

The phase covers the water tanks, pressure boosting on Prospect Avenue, and additional distribution line replacements. The engineers' specifications include an emergency backup electric generator. Permits that expired during the delay, including highway, health, and EPA permits, are being renewed.

5.d.iv Discussion and action regarding Water Works tools and equipment.

An equipment list totaling $5,000 was submitted by the Public Works Administrator.

Motion	Move to allocate up to $5,000 for HFWW tools and equipment, to the extent that the Finance Officer determines the HFWW budget allows.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.d.v Discussion and action regarding streets and grounds engineering contracting procedures for engineering projects.

Motion	Move that all coordination with RK&K engineering be done through the Finance Officer, until a more complete procedure is developed.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

The following projects were identified: the gap between the railroad tie and the macadam at the Town Hall parking lot along Franklin Street; and Boundary Street, in coordination with the Planning Commission, Bolivar Mayor Higdon, and the Bolivar Planning Commission.

Motion	Move that the Finance Officer contact RK&K about scoping solutions for the Franklin Street retaining wall near Town Hall, stormwater mitigation at Boundary Street towards Fillmore Street in consultation with Planning Commission, Henry Clay Street, and potential use and renovation of Old Shipley School.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.d.vi Discussion and action regarding FY'27 funding requests and disbursements.

A new format was presented, bringing all new funding requests together with disbursements of funding that had been provisionally approved, in a single omnibus report for approval.

As with all provisionally approved funding for all organizations, the Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Historic Town Foundation met with the Budget and Finance Committee before spending, in order to confirm that funding is available, that the project cost is within the amount approved, and that the scope of the project remains within the funding parameters.

The Foundation requested that up to $11,766.95 provisionally approved but not spent in FY26 be moved into FY27, and that the funds be applied to architectural and engineering studies instead of basement renovation work.

Mr. DiCostanzo disclosed that he currently acts as the Treasurer of the Foundation, and would recuse himself from any deliberation or voting in regards to it.

Motion	Move to approve the FY27 spending requests and disbursements as submitted, each upon receipt of the appropriate documentation.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Jesse Melton
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

The approved requests and disbursements are, up to:

- $6,000 from 440 City Hall for Town Hall Council Chamber A/V equipment and installation.
- $2,500 from 440 Building Maintenance for a concrete ramp behind the Post Office.
- $11,766.95 provisionally approved under 906 (Arts and Historic Preservation) for the Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Historic Town Foundation's First Zion Baptist Church community center renovation project, moved to FY27.
- $5,750 out of 906 (Parks and Beautification) to Parks and Recreation for Children's Park maintenance and repair.
- $1,200 out of 402 (Economic Development) to Parks and Recreation for WiFi at the Children's Park.

5.d.vii Discussion and action regarding town website.

Mr. Melton reported that the site map process and framework are complete and that migration will begin soon.

5.d.viii Discussion and action regarding FY'27 annual snow removal contract.

The town's bidding policy for large-dollar contracts was not previously followed. Snow and ice removal is considered a large-dollar contract because in heavier snowfall years the total spent can be $50,000 or more.

In light of this, a second week of bidding opportunity was recommended, together with contacting contractors who have submitted bids in recent prior years to encourage them to submit bids. Because the bid was live and because of advertising deadlines, the Mayor was consulted about extending the bid, and directed the Financial Officer to contact the paper to extend the advertisement and the bid deadline to October 23.

The following were recommended:

- That the Budget and Finance Committee review the bids on October 26 and that the Town Council award the contract on November 9.
- That in the event of an unseasonably early snowstorm before that date, the Mayor exercise emergency authority to contact one of the bidders for deployment.
- That the Administrative Officer contact all bidders at the close of the bid to advise them of the snow removal emergency plan in the event of an applicable storm prior to November 9.

Motion	Move that Budget & Finance review the snow removal contract bids during its meeting on October 26th and TC schedule meeting later on the same day to act on the recommendation.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Jesse Melton
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.d.ix Discussion and action regarding FY 2026-2028 Audits.

Motion	Move that the Financial Officer put the State Auditor Office-mandated Audit RFP for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028 out to bid for a period of 4 weeks, with distribution through the SAO, and with a bid notice being placed under glass at Town Hall.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Chris Craig
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

5.e Ordinance Review Committee.

5.e.i Ordinance Review Committee report.

Mr. Craig reported that the second reading items had not been circulated and therefore could not be brought forward. The Committee met on September 24.

On Senate Bill 659, the Recorder is to speak with the Town Attorney about specifics and to reach out to the bill's sponsor.

Future topics identified by the Committee:

- The definition of "brush pile."
- Codifying the Parking Commission, which is currently ad hoc; to come before the Town Council in November.
- Confusion around Certificates of Appropriateness within the zoning ordinances.

5.e.ii Discussion and action on second and final reading for approval of Ordinance 2026 Nominations, appointments, and terms pertaining to appointments to Town commissions, committees, and boards.

Deferred.

5.e.iii Discussion and action on second and final reading for approval of Ordinance 2026-07, Expiration of signed permits, concerning expiration dates for permits.

Deferred.

5.e.iv Discussion and action concerning West Virginia Senate Bill 50 (2025) regarding Town elections.

Mr. Craig reported that town elections must be synchronized with County elections, in coordination with County staff, by 2032. A move to rotating four-year terms would require a Town Charter. Charles Town's charter dates from 1910; Ranson revised its charter in 1998 and may be the closest model, and Martinsburg may be a model for some elements. Any charter must be voted upon by the residents. The 2029 election was identified as a possible target for completion.

5.f Internal Office Operations.

5.f.i General report.

The committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, October 15, to discuss town personnel job descriptions.

6. Unfinished Business.

6.a Discussion and action regarding County Commission on WV House Bill 2014 (Power Generation and Consumption Act).

Mr. Melton and Mr. Craig attended the Jefferson County Commission workshop on behalf of the town. The workshop ran approximately three hours. Opposition to the bill was expressed across the board, and the County Commission expressed frustration at its limited options. Discussion covered the County's guardrails document for data centers, revenue sharing, cooling, water, noise, and electrical rates. Municipalities expressed a wish to act in some way. The tone of the workshop was not entirely opposed to data centers, but directed at making them workable. The County's document is going to the Governor.

6.b Discussion and action regarding turkey vultures damaging public and private properties.

A merchant in Lower Town has been feeding the vultures, which is illegal in a chronic wasting disease area. The Code Enforcement Officer will issue a citation.

6.c Discussion and action regarding use of official town logo.

No update.

7. New Business.

7.a Discussion and action regarding A Resolution Opposing the Valley Link North, Gore-Doubs/Goose Creek, and Mid-Atlantic Resilience Link (MARL) Transmission Line Projects.

This item was taken up earlier in the meeting, following item 4.b, under the agenda as amended. Council discussed whether the resolution should follow the same process used for other items before the Council. Reference was made to valleylink.org.

Motion	Motion to table the Resolution until the Town Council is better informed and the proper process has been followed.
Motion by	Christian Pechuekonis
Second	David Simmons
YES	2
NO	4
Result	**MOTION FAILED 2-4**

Motion	Move to adopt the Resolution Opposing the Valley Link North, Gore-Doubs Goose Creek, and Mid-Atlantic Resilience Link (MARL) Transmission Line Projects as submitted.
Motion by	Storm DiCostanzo
Second	Jesse Melton
YES	4
NO	2
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 4-2**

7.b Discussion and action regarding Office Closure Inclement Weather Policy 2026-27 season.

Motion	Move to adopt the Office Closure Inclement Weather Policy 2026-27 season.
Motion by	Chris Craig
Second	David Simmons
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

7.c Discussion and action regarding Urban Deer Hunting Program.

An amendment to commit the matter to the Planning Commission was moved and adopted, followed by the main motion as amended.

Motion	Move that the Urban deer hunting program be revisited with an eye towards communication, areas, and requirements in relation to ordinance 505.08, and commit the matter to Planning Commission.
Motion by	Jesse Melton
Second	Storm DiCostanzo
YES	6
NO	0
Result	**MOTION APPROVED 6-0**

8. Adjournment.

Adjournment at 9:05 p.m. (Motion by Mr. DiCostanzo, second by Mr. Craig, approved 6-0)