

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

TOWN OF APEX
TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2025
3:30 P.M.

The Apex Town Council met for a work session on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. at the Apex Town Hall located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex North Carolina.

This meeting was open to the public. Members of the public were able to attend this meeting in-person or watch online via the livestream on the Town's YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZRuTD2eW_w

[ATTENDANCE]

Elected Body

Mayor Jacques K. Gilbert (presiding)
Mayor Pro-Tempore Ed Gray
Councilmember Brett Gantt
Councilmember Arno Zegerman
Councilmember Audra Killingsworth (*arrived late; see note below*)

Absent: Councilmember Terry Mahaffey

Town Staff

Town Manager Randy Vosburg
Deputy Town Manager Shawn Purvis
Assistant Town Manager Demetria John
Assistant Town Manager Marty Stone
Town Attorney Laurie Hohe
Town Clerk Allen Coleman
Community Connection Center Manager Darla Bryant
Communications Director Stacie Galloway
Community Development and Neighborhood Connections Director Marla Newman
Community Engagement Specialist Jimmy Torres
Information Technology Director Erika Sacco
Information Technology Project Manager Troy Salahuddin
Interim Budget and Performance Management Director Jessica Hoffman
Interim Electric Utilities Director Ken Weatherman
Interim Finance Director Jessica Murphy-Rhem
Organizational Excellence Director Linda Graham Jones

All other staff members will be identified appropriately below.

[COMMENCEMENT]

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Mayor Gilbert called the meeting to order at **3:44 p.m.**, welcomed everyone in attendance, and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He said the meeting had a delayed start as a quorum was needed.

Mayor Gilbert said the Town Manager will lead us through the work session items with only items slated for discussion on the Utility Billing program.

Town Manager Vosburg said that he was going to defer to Deputy Town Manager Shawn Purvis and Interim Finance Director Jessica Murphy-Rhem for the main nuts and bolts of the presentation.

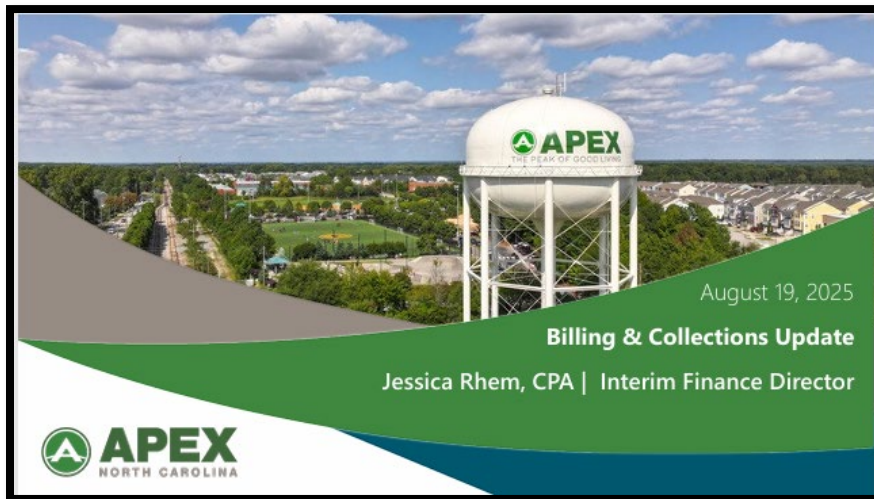
Deputy Town Manager Shawn Purvis said the purpose of today's presentation was to provide the Mayor and Town Council with a high-level overview of the Utility Billing and Collections Division within the Finance Department. He said that Interim Director Jessica Murphy-Rhem had worked closely with the third-party review firm and would have information related to the overall

[UTILITY BILLING PROGRAM UPDATE]

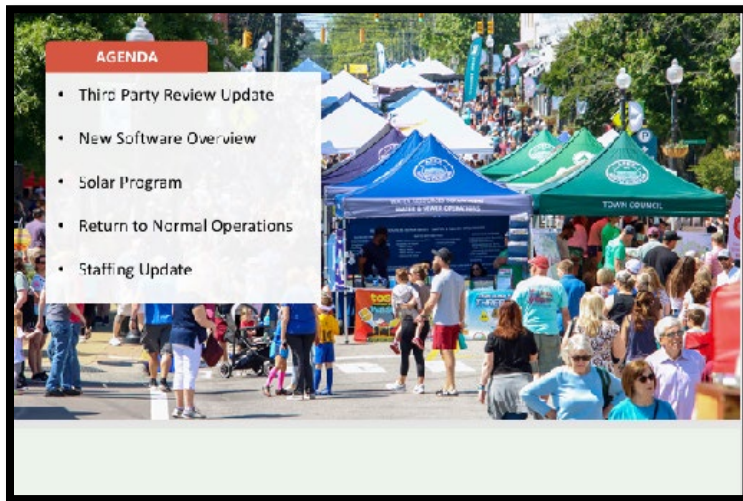
Interim Finance Director Jessica Murphy-Rhem provided the following PowerPoint (PPT) presentation.

CLERK NOTE: Throughout the presentation questions were asked by members of the elected body. Those questions and staff's corresponding responses are denoted below each PowerPoint slide as applicable.

[SLIDE 1]



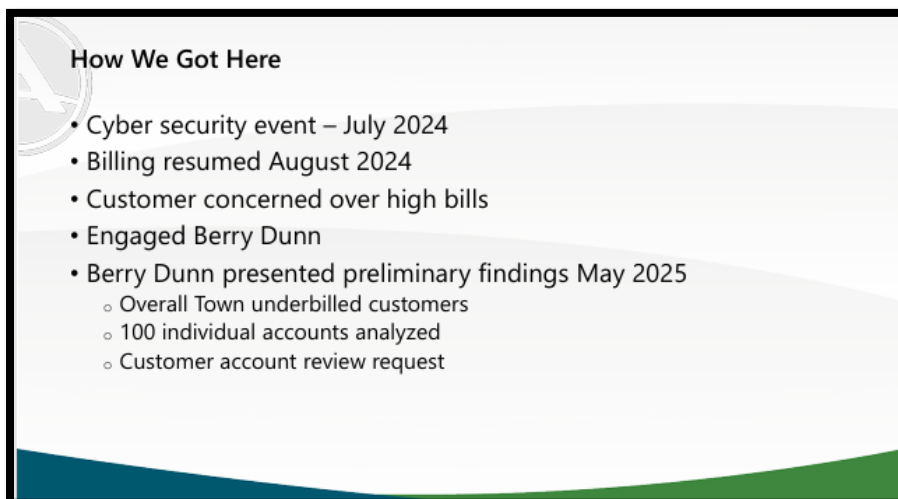
1 [SLIDE 2]



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3 [SLIDE 3]



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5 [SLIDE 4]



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1 **[SLIDE 5]**

Customer Account Reviews

- Request period ended 7/31/25
- 179 customers requested review
- Individual accounts go through multiple levels of review
- Website updates weekly
- Next steps
 - Aug – Conclude analysis
 - Sept – Notify residents
 - Oct – Update customer accounts



2
3 **[SLIDE 6]**

Customer Account Reviews Statistics

	Customer Owes Town	Town Owes Customer
Average amount owed	\$35.44	\$9.52
Highest due	\$73.07	13.67
Lowest due	\$3.16	\$1.44
% Reviewed	88%	12%

20% have gone through the entire review process

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6 **Councilmember Killingsworth** arrived at **3:54 p.m.**

[SLIDE 7]

Third Party Review Summary of Key Findings	
CYCLE 1	CYCLE 2
Base charges paused for customers billed 9/1/24 (approx. 3-month bill)	Base charges paused for customers billed 8/15/24 (approx. 2-month bill)
Non-metered services billed for 3 months	Non-metered services billed for only 1 month
Electric load management credits applied	Electric load management credits not applied
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Resource & staffing constraintsImpact of concurrent projectsBilling system simulation resulted in approx. underbill of \$300k	

[SLIDE 8]

Third Party Review Key Recommendations	
Technology recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct regular system upgradesEstablish clear protocols for system access and troubleshooting
Process Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Document key business processes that are particularly complex, variable, or not well understoodClearly define and communicate special project plans
Organizational Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide cross-functional training between Billing & Collections and metered service staffReview policies to ensure alignment with new system configurations and operational realities

Councilmember Gantt asked for a high-level overview of what kind of policies were referred to in the last bullet.

Interim Director Murphy-Rhem said all the policies that relate to billing and collections, for example how long a payment plan will be offered. She said that any parameters around the billing and collection process, this is the time to look at everything since this will be a new system. She said that the way that meter reading and billing were done did not align, but the end results will always be the same. She said that this is an opportunity to look at what may need to be changed.

Councilmember Gantt said that he knew what was in the budget as far as rates, but this was a level down, and more operational.

Deputy Town Manager Purvis said that there was more flexibility in the new system with each billing cycle. He said that they are trying to fix other policy items such as the payment plan possibly being a year and other things on the process side.

Councilmember Gantt asked if there is a need for staggered cycles moving forward.

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1 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** said that there is a good chance that there may be a
2 need for more than two cycles.

3 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if this was because of the workload.

4 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** said it was because of the workload on the number of
5 accounts and the details that is required. He said that each billing cycle has 13,000 to 15,000
6 accounts up from 10,000 in the past years with the same amount of staffing. He said that the
7 new system has more flexibility and checks and balances, but it is still time-consuming. He
8 said that staff is learning the new process, and some staff have had a 75% increase in their
9 workload in review and counseling, and this creates a delay in getting the bill prepared and
10 sent out which causes a snowball effect. He said once the statement piece is in place in the
11 future there will probably be multiple cycles.

12 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that the plan was to review having multiple
13 cycles but right now the focus is staff understanding the new system. She said that once staff
14 is back to normal operations then the cycles will be looked at, but they don't want to disrupt
15 the cycles right now.

16 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** asked how many cycles Cary had.

17 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that Cary bills weekly. She said there is a
18 different cycle every week and there is a different person that handles each individual cycle.

19 **Mayor Gilbert** thanked Interim Director Murphy-Rhem. He asked if there was a
20 timeline for a full report from Berry Dunn.

21 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** said that a report was coming soon, and it is close to
22 being ready.

23 **Mayor Gilbert** asked if this report would be made available to the community.

24 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** said the plan was to make it available to the
25 community.

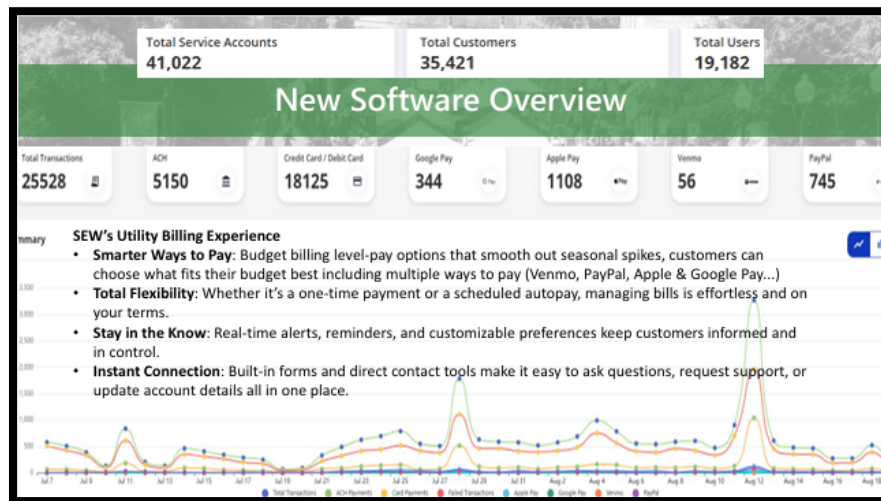
26 **Mayor Gilbert** asked about the contract with Barry Dunn.

27 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** said that the contract with Barry Dunn included review
28 and the report. He said that this was close to being complete.

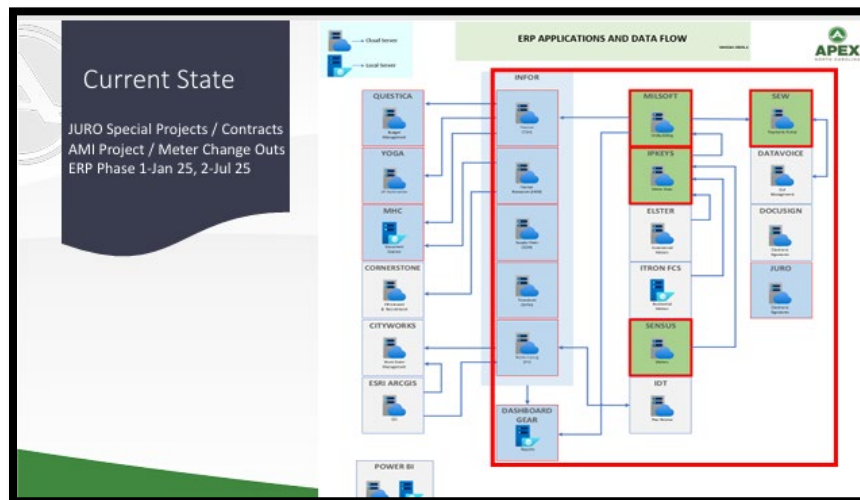
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30 **Director Sacco** continued the presentation.
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[SLIDE 9]



[SLIDE 10]



Director Sacco asked if there were any questions.

Councilmember Zegerman asked how many legacy systems were being replaced.

Director Sacco said that New World, which was the base legacy system and had various modules, was being replaced. She said that they still have New World for now for planning and permitting but it would be phased out by 2026.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Gray said that he would like to know the best way to communicate this process. He said that there were so many pieces to this process. He said staff had done an amazing job of what piece of what residents see but the effect of the cyber-attack is the part that residents do not see what happened behind the scenes, so how could this be explained to the community.

Director Sacco said that there are a lot of departments that are involved in this process and not everyone would be interested in that background. She said there are a lot of tech people in Apex that may want to know more of the background. She said that she would

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1 be glad to break this down if the Council wanted to put this information out. She said that
2 Apex needed to upgrade their system to keep up with the trends.

3 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Gray** said that is a very important point and answers the
4 background question of why Apex needed to add this additional layer.

5 **Councilmember Zegerman** said there were two different topics. He said it started
6 with the cyber events and the impact that they had on billing, but the new system
7 implementation is not because of the cyber incident. He said these are two different projects
8 and that message is not clear.

9 **Councilmember Killingsworth** said that there had been discussions in 2017-2018
10 about implementing a new system.

11 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that this system was accelerated and there is still
12 confusion about the new system issues being related to the cyber incident, and these need to
13 be two separate conversations for the residents. He said it should be more clearly articulated
14 about billing cycles to the residents.

15 **Director Sacco** said that that was correct and these are a different set of issues, and
16 they are complicated. She said the cyber event is over, and this system implementation has
17 nothing to do with it.

18 **Councilmember Zegerman** appreciated that, and said that this was being talked
19 about during this Work Session, but the message could be clearer to the public.

20 **Director Sacco** agreed.

21 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that it made sense to commit to a new system and not
22 invest in the old system, but this does not make this any less difficult for the customers. He
23 asked if the Communications Director Stacie Galloway wanted to provide any information.

24 **Communications Director Stacie Galloway** said the general message has been very
25 difficult the past year to communicate. She said that the staff has done a great job
26 communicating with individual customers with specific questions and those conversations
27 having resolution. She said this takes a lot of time out of the workday. She said
28 communicating this broadly is difficult because with there being two cycles so what is applied
29 to half the town does not apply to the other half of the town, but what is being done now will
30 improve this communication issue.

31 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that the staff that were working on this project were also
32 keeping the town running. He said this is a town that is moving and has a lot of projects, and
33 this puts extra stress on the staff in all areas. He said this is not to minimize what the residents
34 have been through, but the staff have been through a lot with these projects. He said that the
35 fact that staff is still moving ahead on all fronts is amazing.

36 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Gray** said that having these conversations gives an opportunity
37 for leadership to be able to help with communication as well. He said that when there is a
38 new system being implemented and it is not as simple as a bill showing up, there are pieces
39 behind it and helping residents understand helps.

40 **Mayor Gilbert** said that he probably gets the most phone calls of any other Council
41 member, and he has never heard anyone say anything negative about any town staff. He said

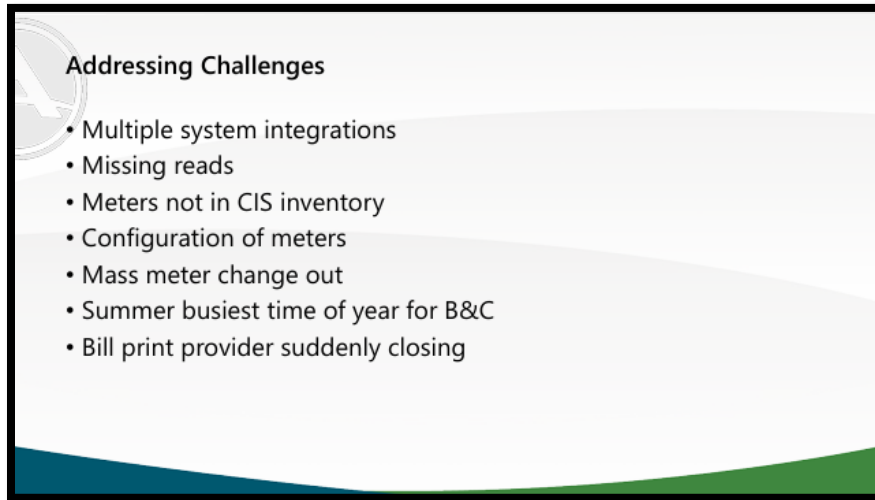
1 that the calls are mostly about the bills that they have received and explaining the system
2 doesn't help in those situations.

3 **Director Galloway** said that there are extreme instances where there is a reoccurring
4 error that those conversations may be helpful.

5 **Mayor Gilbert** recommended consistent communication, like weekly updates
6 regardless of if there are not any updates and said that this creates trust.

7 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that these challenges would be talked about in
8 the next slides.

9 **[SLIDE 11]**



10 **Councilmember Gantt** asked interim Director Murphy-Rhem for more explanation of
11 each of these items in the slide above.

12 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** gave explanations of each of the items. She said
13 sometimes there were meters that weren't communicating, and they have addressed that with
14 upgrades but sometimes still have to do it manually. She said they have also been converting
15 the meters into the new system, which was required for them to work properly.

16 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if when they had to send trucks out to read the meters,
17 would it affect the billing timeline.

18 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said yes, they did sometimes had to send the truck
19 out. She said the other issue was IPKeys not being able to pick up certain meter reads.

20 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** said that it was a software issue that didn't allow it to
21 be picked up, so they had to send trucks out to read the meters. He said that during the one
22 of the first cycles that there were variances in the reads which was a large number of the meters
23 were not coming over into IP Keys, and it was showing the same reading from the month
24 before. He said they were finding out these multiple issues and working on them as they
25 came up, and they have fixed it now. He said that they have 3 different meter systems now;
26 the census system, which is the meter system upgrade, the Itron system which is the old
27 system that is water and residential electric, and then the commercial system which is a mesh
28 network. All these systems pull in the raw data and then staff use that data.

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1 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if the customer was involved with one of these issues,
2 how does it show on their bill.

3 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said it may cause a longer billing period because
4 they may have to send a truck to read the meter which would cause this.

5 **Councilmember Gantt** asked how much longer their billing cycle could be.

6 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that the 3-month cycles were associated with
7 the cyber incident, and was no longer occurring. She said that situations like this would be
8 days longer. She said residents should check the number of days included in their billing
9 cycle if the number seems high.

10 **Mayor Gilbert** asked if there were checks and balances before the bills were sent out.

11 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said there are many reviews before the bills go out,
12 staff and the system check them. She said there are still human errors with the amount of bills
13 going out.

14 **Councilmember Gantt** asked how were high bills that would be caused by a water
15 leak being identified vs. a longer billing cycle.

16 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** recommended that residents take the amount of the
17 bill and divide it into the number of days and do the same for water consumption.

18 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked if some of the information and statistics could be
19 added to the portal.

20 **Director Sacco** said that this information was coming along with tips. She said they
21 were trying to make sure all of this works first. She said that some of the information is best to
22 get on the physical bill right now.

23 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that the billing cycle would have to be stabilized. He
24 asked during this new system deployment of the system how is this information articulated to
25 the residents.

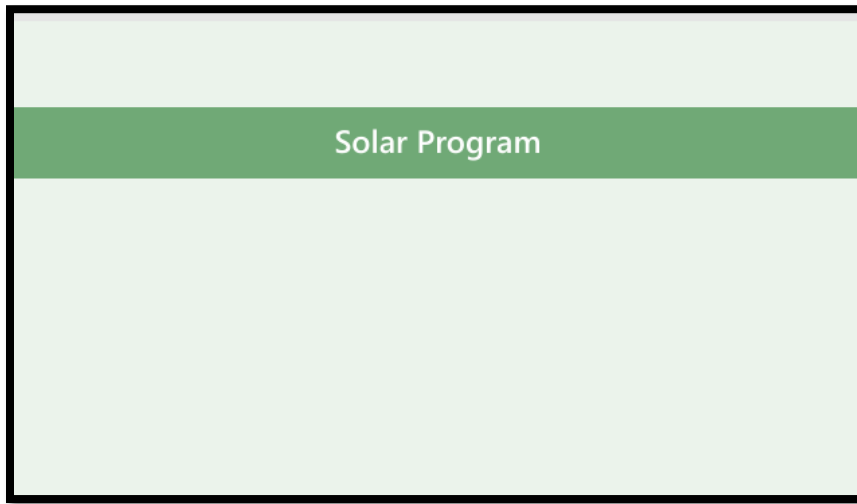
26 **Director Galloway** said that a summary of the information is included in that cycle
27 and now there is a printed in every bill. She said that the website has been updated.

28 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that there is a massive technological change for the
29 town and it's not surprising that there are issues and there should be transparency for the
30 residents, and it can create a trust issue.

31 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Gray** asked what B&C was.

32 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said Billing and Collections.

1 **[SLIDE 12]**



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3 **[SLIDE 13]**



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5 **Councilmember Zegerman** said the program was being changed in the way that it
6 has been administered for funding. He asked if some solar customers would see a change in
7 their billing and the town should be very transparent about this. He asked if there was a place
8 for buyback or power to be used for excess power generated by solar to lower the loads
9 during certain times of the day.

10 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if the billing was taken care of at this time, but the
11 metering was still a problem.

12 **Councilmember Killingsworth** said she would recommend not doing any changes
13 until staff can understand the system.

14 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if the meters were in for the electricity.

15 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** that the mass exchange has not begun yet but will
16 start in September. He said they are still testing and there are about 12,300 electric meters
17 out now and are being tested. He gave an overview of how the meters would work. He said
18 currently how the meter charges are set up is that the rate for delivered and received are the

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1 same, but Council can change this. He said for peak demand for solar in the summer is
2 3:30pm to 5pm and it's impossible to know whether or not solar is going to be able to
3 contribute at that time, so for solar management for peak load management, it is typically
4 going to be done with a battery system or with a natural gas-powered generator.

5 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that he wasn't suggesting replacing this program
6 right now, but to start working towards a policy once all of the information has been
7 gathered.

8 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if all of the billing and meters be in place by next July,
9 so that a policy discussion could happen in the spring for FY 26 budget.

10 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** said that the meter system upgrade would probably
11 be complete next July. He said that there is a study being done now to look at rates for
12 electric and there will be data for Council to see in the spring.

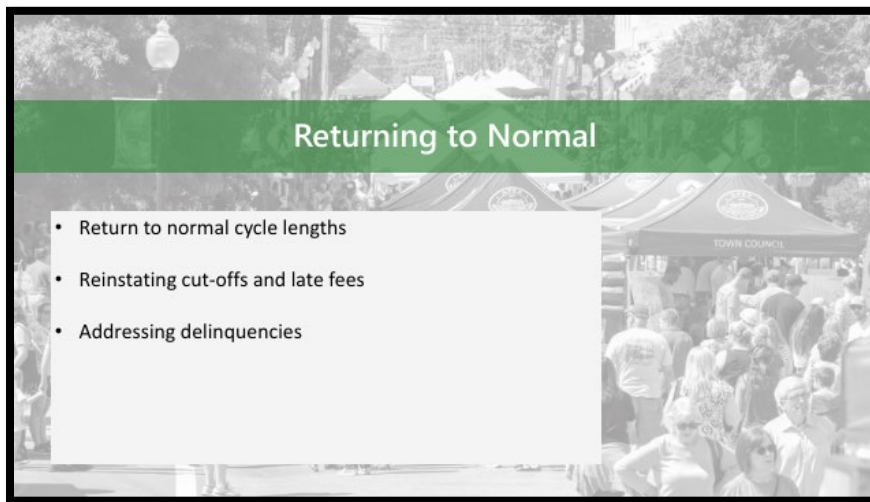
13 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Gray** asked if that would be July 2026 or 2027.

14 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** said July of 2026.

15 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that letters were sent out to solar residents.

16 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked for this information to be placed on the website for
17 those that may be considering solar.

18 **[SLIDE 14]**



19 **Mayor Gilbert** said that adding information about extending unpaid balances into the
20 conversations is problematic, when the town isn't fully stabilized with billing.

21 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that the amount of delinquencies and the amount owed
22 to the town adds up significantly. He said they are trying to think about timing of when to
23 address this to start to recover before getting into the budget rate discussion, otherwise they
24 will have to come in and say that we are short a couple of million dollars across the board. He
25 said those funds have to remain solvent moving forward.

26 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that letting the residents know the intent of bringing
27 back late fees and delinquencies are coming but these systems need to be in place and
28 working.
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1 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that they are trying to space it out and are thinking
2 about February.

3 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that they wanted to be transparent with
4 residents and want to have these discussions so that in February they are not hit by a
5 disconnection or in November have late fees, so they want to at least get this communication
6 started so that they know that things are going back to normal.

7 **Mayor Gilbert** said that he understands. He asked if this topic is scheduled for
8 another Town Council Work Session where it could be revisited.

9 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that there was not at this time, but one could be added.

10 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** said that this meeting is to start the conversation. She
11 said late fees are still months away and by November the system should be stabilized.

12 **Town Manager Vosburg** said the goal at this time is to get the payment plan dialogue
13 out to the public to let them know how this will work and to spread out the payments.

14 **Councilmember Killingsworth** said she wanted to make sure the system is stabilized
15 and to build back that trust before moving forward.

16 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Gray** said that a month might be a short time and there are rate
17 errors still being defined. He asked if a month is enough time to come back with this.

18 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that they can set a month and then adjust the time if
19 needed.

20 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if there were internal numbers that could be shared
21 showing the progression of the issues in the last few months.

22 **Deputy Town Manager Shawn** said not exactly. He said there is information on
23 incoming calls but it's not reliable for identifying true errors since calls can turn out not to be
24 actual issues.

25 **Councilmember Zegerman** said they should go back to the punch list of things that
26 are fixed to be able to track the progress. He suggested a hybrid approach by starting to
27 reach out to those customers with overdue balances and start working with them on a
28 payment plan and helping them understand how they got to this place with the cyber
29 incident. He said that this could be voluntary while still getting things in order around the new
30 billing system. He also requested that Council get monthly updates.

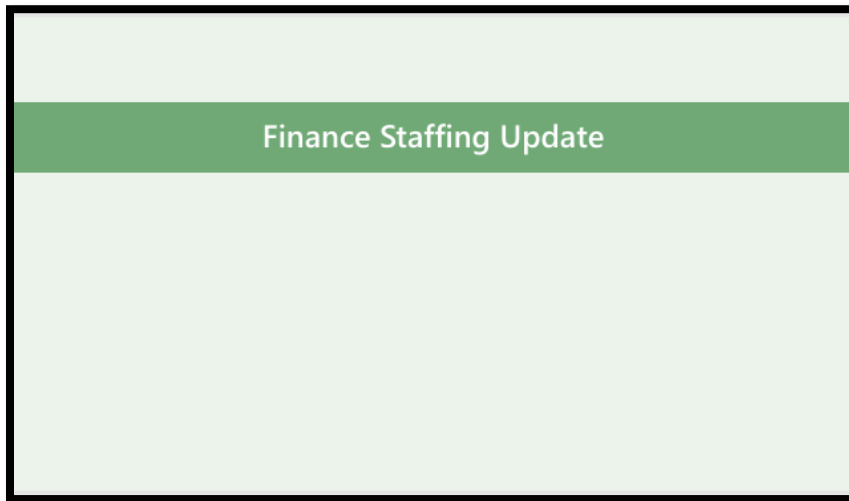
31 **Councilmember Gantt** said that seeing that the number of open tickets is dropping
32 over time would be a vote of confidence that this is getting closer to being back to regular
33 order with the systems. He said that he would like to see data for the information.

34 **Town Clerk Coleman** said this would be a standing item going forward on the
35 Council meeting agenda for the first regular Town Council meeting each month until further
36 notice.

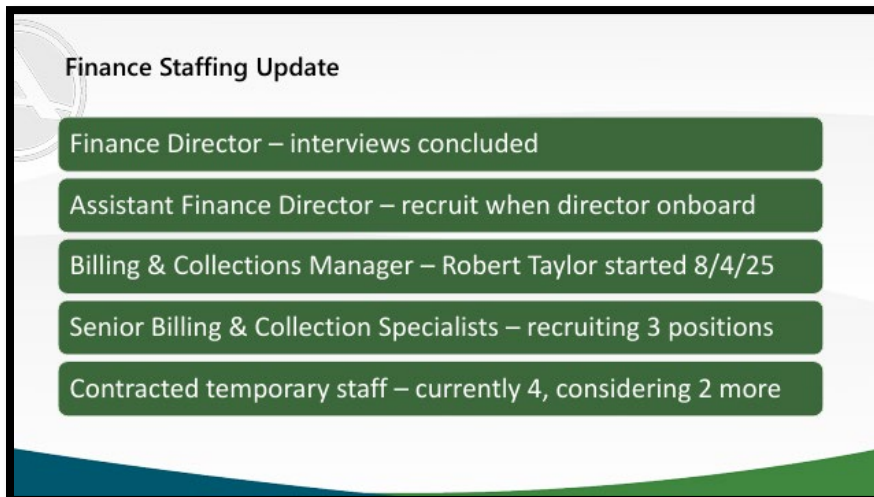
37 **Interim Director Murphy-Rhem** asked if there were any questions and turned it to
38 Deputy Town Manager Shawn Purvis.

39 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** gave the presentation about the Finance Staffing
40 Update.

1 [SLIDE 15]



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3 [SLIDE 16]

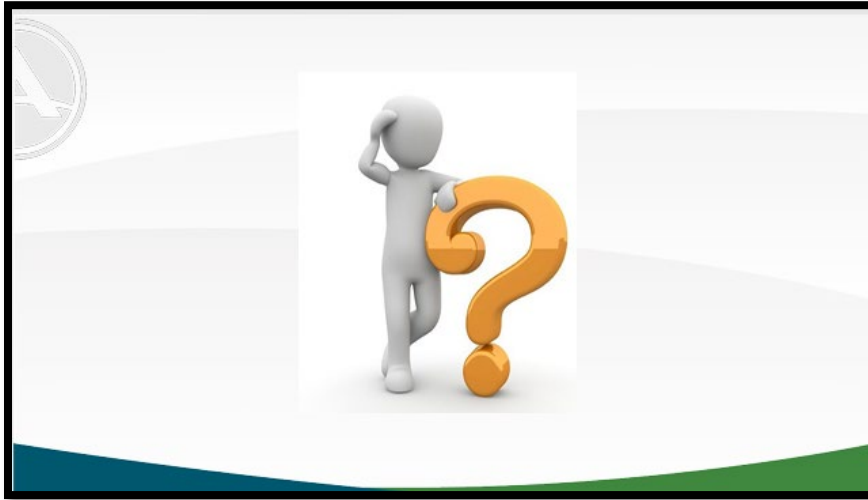


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5 **Mayor Gilbert** thanked the staff. He said the community needs to understand this and
6 this will help quite a bit.

7 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked if the contract allowed hiring contractors
8 permanently if the applicant is suitable for the position.

9 **Deputy Town Manager Purvis** said that it did and if it is the right person they could
10 be hired to a permanent position.

[SLIDE 17]



Deputy Town Manager Purvis concluded the presentation.

Mayor Gilbert asked how bills that are reported as incorrect being tracked to collect data.

Deputy Town Manager Purvis reiterated that with calls it was hard to track calls. He said that typically if they come in, they do everything they can for the issue to be addressed at that time, but these have not always been tracked. He said that the issues that come through AskApex channel are tracked.

Deputy Town Manager Purvis said that staff would look back at records to analyze meter-related issues and get it into a presentable format.

Councilmember Zegerman suggested showing progress over time and that they are being resolved. He said that not all issues are equal, some are complex and time-consuming while others are quick fixes.

Councilmember Gantt asked if there was average bill duration over time tracked.

Deputy Town Manager Purvis said that they have that tracker set up and have had that for about 6 months. He said that they had gotten billing stabilized around December 2024 and January 2025 and when the transition to the new system came there was a blackout week for it and then there were more challenges.

Councilmember Gantt said that a chart that the public could see showing the cyber event impact, followed by a decrease in issued, and then the issues with the implantation of the new system could be helpful for understanding.

[ADJOURNEMENT]

With no additional business being presented before the Council, **Mayor Gilbert** adjourned the meeting at **5:22 p.m.**

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Jacques K. Gilbert
Apex, Mayor

Allen Coleman, CMC
Town Clerk to the Apex Town Council
Submitted for approval by Apex Town Clerk Allen Coleman
Minutes approved on _____ of _____, 2025.